

Society of Dance History Scholars

PROCEEDINGS

Re-Thinking Practice and Theory
International Symposium
on Dance Research

ACTES

Repenser pratique et théorie
Colloque international
de recherche en danse

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Friday 22nd June 2007

	Grand studio	Studio 1	Studio 2	Studio 3	Studio 4
Session I 9:00 am - 10:15 am	Interventions and Ownership Moderator, PRIYA SRINIVASAN	The Mobile-Skeleton and the Alien Body DOMINIQUE BUTTAUD	Theory/Practice Debates in the Context of Doctoral Research in Dance Studies in the UK (1980-2007) Moderator, ANDREE GRAU	Interrogating Methodologies Moderator, THERESA JILL BUCKLAND	The Parisian Stage Moderator, YUN-JEN LU
	RAMSAY BURT Theoretical Interventions and Corporeal Subjectivities		JANET LANSDALE Historical Positions and Conceptual Issues in the Dance Theory/Practice Debate	CHAO CHI-FANG Too Many Thick Descriptions? The Efficacy of Dance in Ritual Complexes within the Anthropological/Ethnographical Approach	CLARE PARFITT Chahut: The Mediation of Rationalism and the Unruly Body in the Cancan
	REBEKAH J. KOWAL How To Do Things with Dances, or Postwar Choreographies of Efficacy		ANNE MARIA MANNON Dancing Histories <i>Loisirs</i> (1933)	CARLO BONFIGLIOLI The Symbolic Reelaboration of Dance: An American Case	JOANNA McNAMARA A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Interpretation of Permutations in <i>The Rite of Spring</i>
	ANTHEA KRAUT Embodied Theories of Dance as Property		HELEN ANGOVE Performing an Interview: An Audience with Lindsay Kemp	TAMARA LEVETZ Conflicts of Memory: Displaying Dogon Performance at the Musée du Quai Branly	NANCY GAYE MOORE 'Gestes métachoriques': The Artistic Collaboration between Valentine de Saint-Point and Vivian Postel Du Mas
Coffee break					
Session II 10:45 am - 12:15 am	Staging Gender Moderator, CHEN YA-PING	Linguistic Tensions and the Politics of Naming Moderator, JANICE ROSS	From Field to Stage Moderator, RAY MILLER	The Improvising Citizen (in Theory & Practice) Moderator, ELIZABETH CLAIRE	Modes of Learning: Interfaces between Theory and Practice Moderator, CHERYL STOCK
	GONJA SIROEN Debut or Domestication of a Dancer?	KENT DE SPAIN Resisting Theory: The Dancing Body and American Scholarship	ON HEE JEONG Witnessing the Birth of a Dance: The Ideal of Korean Ballet and the Premiere of <i>Chun Hyang</i>	ELIZABETH CLAIRE KEITH HENNESSY FRANCINE LOISEAU EMMANUELLE RIGAUD	MARC LAWTON Theory in Alvin Nikolski: Improvising, Exploring, Examining, and Defining
	SYDNEY HUTCHINSON When Women Lead: Changing Gender Roles in the New York Salsa Scene	NADRA MAJEED ASSAF Dance: A Discourse Mode	ANDREE GRAU Dance, Anthropology and Research through Practice		JUDY VAN ZILE Practicing Theory, Theorizing Practice
	SAMUEL N. DORF 'Greek' Desires in Paris: Isadora Duncan Dances Antiquity in the Lesbian Salon	CONSTANCE ADENSI From 'la danse du ventre' to 'la danse orientale': what Theories and Practices Underlie the Choice of Nomenclature?	GEORGIANA WIERRE-GORE EIL BAKKA Constructing Dance Knowledge in the Field: Bridging the Gap between Realization and Concept		JOËLLE VELLE Practitioner/Researcher: Co-Constructing Knowledge
Lunch time					
Session III 2:30 pm - 3:45 pm	Constructing Dance History I Moderator, ANTHEA KRAUT	Site-Body Relationship: Exploring Site-Specific Dance Performance through Practice-as-Research VICTORIA HUNTER	Re-Thinking Historical Relationships: Theory in Practice/Practice as Theory Moderator, LYNN GARAFOLA	Bodies on Paper (and Canvas) Moderator, SUSAN MANNING	Some Things Are Only Effectively Known through their Enactment: An Investigation of the Teaching/Learning of Contemporary Dance Technique
	YVONNE HARDT Staging Dance Theory and History		HENRIETTA BANNERMAN Visualising History/Embodying Text: Martha Graham and Frederick Ashton	JULIET BELLOW Presenting the Past: Auguste Rodin's Cambodian Dancers	KATJA KOLCIC ROBIN GEE NICOLE STANTON BEBE MILLER EIKO OTAKE
	SUSANNE FRANCO Re-Thinking 'Theory' and 'Practice' from an Italian Perspective		HELENA HAMMOND 'A Museum of Props': The 1890 Sleeping Beauty, 19th-Century French Historiography and the Balletic Challenge to the Historical Text	JOHN H. ROPER Elsar von Kupffer: Painting the Body as Soul	
	ALEXANDRA CARTER Practising Dance History: Reflections on the Shared Processes of Dance Historians and Dance Makers		VICTORIA THOMS Theorising Graham's First London Season in 1954: Femininity, Nationhood and Cultural Imperialism	MARION KANT Toy Ballerina	
Coffee break					
Session IV 4:15 pm - 5:30 pm	On Corporeal Rhetoric Moderator, ANNE FLYNN	Corpusmedia Theory to Rethink the Dancing Body HELENA KATZ CHRISTINE GREINER	Cultural Policy, Dance, and Nation I Moderator, YATIN LIN	Transnational Hybridities I Moderator, YUTIAN WONG	Lights! Cameras! Actions! Choreographing Sights/Sites Moderator, KRISTINA HAGSTRÖM STAHL
	ANN COOPER-ALBRIGHT Open Bodies: Training for Survival in a Post 9/11 World		IDA MEFTAH Re-Thinking the History of Dance in the 20th-Century Iran: Nationalizing Dance to Exhibit Iranian Identity	ROYONA MITRA Dancing Embodiment, Theorising Space: Exploring the 'Third Space' in British Asian Diasporic Dance Practice	LANE HARWELL Light(n)ing Bodies: Performing David Parsons' Caught
	NADINE GEORGE-GRAVES Just Like Being at the Zoo: Primitivity and Ragtime Dance		TING-TING CHANG China Reimagined: Negotiating Ethnicity, Gender, and Globalization through Yang Liping's <i>Spirit of the Peacock</i>	SABINE SÄGEL Practicing the 'Dance-Craze': A Cross-Cultural Re-Assessment of Dance, Hysteria and the Discourse of Madness	TOMI HUMALISTO The "Darkness Project"
	DEIDRE SKLAR Contemplation as Corporeal Practice		GURUR ERTIM In Pursuit of the Work: Rethinking Sociological Studies of Dance	PALLABI CHAKRAVORTY Remixed Practice: Theorizing Popular Indian Dance	TOBIAS H. STAHL Framing Chance

Studio 6	Studio 7	Studio 8	Studio 9	West Atrium (2nd floor)	
Transmission (to the Student or Performer) –Creation–Trace, through Conté Notation CATHERINE AUGÉ MICHELLE NADAL	Embodiments and Identities JENNY ROCHE My Hands are Plunged in Oranges...: Unfolding the Experiential Layers of the Dancer's Process from Within JOSE L. REYNOSO A Migrant Fighter's Politicized Spiritual Sensibilities	Dance and Ethics in Theory and Practice: Classroom, Stage, Community NAOMI JACKSON	Densities and Curvatures: Experiences of Laban Concepts of Space ELISABETH SCHWARTZ		Session I 9:00 am - 10:15 am
Coffee break				CONVERSATION I / JACQUELINE SHEA MURPHY What is your daily practice and why? ...	10:15 - 10:45
Touching a Poetic Skeleton TONE PERNILLE ØSTERN	Rethinking Dialogically the Body and Identity in Dance Cross-Culturally: Theory and Practice in Performance ALESSANDRA LOPEZ Y ROYO MARK HOBART NI MADE PUJAWATI	Habits of Speech Moderator, ANN NUGENT BARBARA BROWNING I Saw Valda Setterfield Dancing SALLY DOUGHTY A Dance for Radio CANDACE FECK The "NOVON" Project	Digressions: Laban Notation as Creative Source JEAN-MARC PIQUEMAL NOËLLE SIMONET		Session II 10:45 am - 12:15 am
Lunch time				CONVERSATION II / ISABELLE GIBOT How do you practice your dancing? What methods or techniques of practice help you get better at dancing?	12:15 - 12:45
				Lunch time	12:45 - 2:00
				CONVERSATION III / MICHAEL HUXLEY How is practice different from performance?	2:00 - 2:30
Theorizing Flesh Moderator, ROYANA MITRA NAOMI INATA Non-Integrated Body of Tatsumi Hijikata's Ankoku-Butoh in the 1970s HANNA JÄRVINEN Some Steps Towards a Historical Epistemology of Corporeality TIAGO BARTOLOMEU COSTA The Identity of the Critic	Crossings: Questioning Conventions and Mixing Dance, Sound and Visual Design in Performative and Representative Ways LEENA ROUHIAINEN KIRSI HESMONEN ANTTI NYKYRI TOMI HUMALISTO	Deterritorialization and the 'Global Stage' Moderator, ANANYA CHATTERJEA CINDY GARCIA Salsa Mexicana: Between Translocal Politics and the Global Stage R. DIVAH LARASATI Dancing on the Global Stage: Nationalized Form and Violence MICHELLE HEFFNER HAYES Disciplining Passion: Flamenco as a 'World Dance' Form in the Academy	Du pittoresque en danse, et de la mienne en particulier (extracts) FREDERICK GRAVEL		Session III 2:30 pm - 3:45 pm
Coffee break				CONVERSATION IV / LENA HAMMERGREN What is your practice of choreography?	3:45 - 4:15
Hydrogen Relationships: Immersion at the Core of Double Processes SOSANA MARCELINO CORINNE KREMER-HEIN	Getting Down to the Heels RAJYASHREE RAMESH	Gestural Anacrusis Within Scenic Writing? PHILIPPE GUISGARD LAURENT PECHAUD	Revealing and Concealing the In/Visible-Un/Thinkable in "Articulating Dance" VIDA MIDGELOW JANE BACON		Session IV 4:15 pm - 5:30 pm

Saturday 23rd June 2007

	Grand studio	Studio 1	Studio 2	Studio 3	Studio 4
Session I 9:00 am - 10:15 am	Choreographing the Nationalized Feminine Moderator, YUNYU WANG PRIYA SRINIVASAN Contesting Ownership and Authority: Re-Visionizing Saint Denis' Transnational Co-Performers CHEN YA-PING Lady with Hundreds of Faces: Role Play, Gender Culture and Body Politics in the Performance of First-Generation Female Choreographers in Taiwan (1937-1960) HANNAH J. KOSSTREIN No Fists in the Air: Anna Sokolow and the Cold War	Devising Space, Expanding Time and Dance Dramaturgy DARCEY CALLESON SUSAN CASH HOLLY SMALL	Cultural Policy, Dance, and Nation II Moderator, CHAO CHI-FANG ASHLEY SMITH Scottish Cultural Policy and the Performance of Nationhood CLARE CROFT Photographs and Dancing Bodies: Alley's 1967 State Department Sponsored Africa Tour LESTER TOME The Musical Cuban: Alicia Alonso's Conceptualization of Musicality as a Sign of a Cuban Cultural Identity	Philosophizing Practice Moderator, ISABELLE GIXOT FREDERIC POUILLAUDE The Curse of the Seated BASILE DOGANIS The Body's Thought in Japanese Gestural Arts (Marital Arts, Dance): Theoretical/Theorized Practices and Practical /Pragmatic Theories	Practices and Reputations in Three Workshops of 20th-Century Dance Moderator, CARA GARGANO SELMA ODOM Reputation as Collective Practice: Insiders and Mediators of Balcon's Eurhythmics ALLANA LINDGREN Reputation as a Theory of Aesthetic Practice: Modernist Standards and the Exclusion of Franziska Boas (1933-1950) GARY DAVID DE MATAS Reputation as Social Force: The Astor Johnson Legacy and Trinidad and Tobago's Male Dancer
10:15 - 10:45	Coffee break				
Session II 10:45 am - 12:15 am	Globalized Economies of Staging Moderator, SARA WOLF YATIN LIN East and West, Old and New: On Cross-Cultural Collaborations, a Taiwanese Perspective BRIGET E. CAUTHERY Vincent Sekwati Mamsoe: Trance as a Cultural Commodity ANGELA KANE Dance Politics and Discourse on a Global Stage KAREN A. MOZINGO Feminism, Parody, and Lofte Goslar: Rethinking Ausdrucksanz through Exile and Autobiographical Theory	Between Studio and Stage Moderator, MARC LAWTON ENDRA RIVIERE What Does a Nymph Think when she Dances? JILL NUNES JENSEN What Does it Take to Bend the Lines? JANICE ROSS MAUREL MAFFRE Exquisite Corpse: What is Practice in Ballet? FRANCIS ROUSSEAU The Ballet Dancer in the Mirror	Celebrating Ivor Guest and Continuing to Rethink the Paris Opera's Contribution to Ballet Moderator, JUDITH CHAZIN-BENNAUM LYNN GARAFOLA JANE PRITCHARD MARIAN SMITH	Thinking Through the Body... Again Moderator, LEENA ROUMIANNEN RUSSELL DUMAS JONATHAN SINATRA In the Room Palely Loitering ELIZABETH DEMPSTER The Examination: Thinking Theory through Practice SALLY GARDNER ... A Quality in Our Attitude When We Observe them ...	Embodying Spirituality Moderator, TING-TING CHANG YIN-YING HUANG Inscribing Meaning through Moving Bodies: Practice and Theory in Cloud Gate Dance ... JESSICA VAN OORT Medieval Christian Women's Theories and Practices of Sacred Dance ANN DAVID Choreography of the Temple? Questions of Theory and Practice in the Performance of British Hinduism
12:15 - 12:45	Lunch time				
12:45 - 2:00					
2:00 - 2:30					
Session III 2:30 pm - 3:45 pm	Constructing Dance History II Moderator, GIANINE COCUZZA LINDA J. TOMKO Folies d'Espagne: Construing Spain, Composing France ISABELLE LAUNAY Dance History/History of Dance; Or, How Does the History of Dance (As an Art) Affect Dance ... DEE REYNOLDS Interdisciplinary Dialogues: Towards Dancerly Texts	Scoring the Scene Moderator, SUE IN KIM TARA BROWNER Seeing Dance in the Notes: The Potential for Documenting Native American Dance through Musical Transcription WILLA COLLINS A Fresh Look at Le Corsaire ELENA CERVELLATTI From the Written Word to the Dancing Body: Théophile Gautier's Libretto and Practice of Performance	New Modes of Investigation Moderator, KENT DE SPAIN MICHELLE POTTER Giving a Voice to Dance NANCY LEE RUYTER The Reciprocity of Theory and Practice in the Work of the Dance Artist La Meri ELIZABETH ALDRICH LORAS JOHN SCHISSEL Re-Thinking the Physical Library: The Dangers of Missed ...	Theorizing Depictions and Descriptions: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Dancing in Late Renaissance Europe Moderator, ALESSANDRO ARCANGELI CHLOE DALESME Dance Iconography and the Example of Ball Tableaux: Another View of Practice and Theory in the Renaissance KATHERINE TUCKER MCGINNIS Not the Whole Truth: A 16th-Century Dancing Master's Tale EMILY WINEROCK Hypothesizing a 'Chorea Speculativa': Renaissance Dance in Theory and Practice	Conceptualizing the Historical Body Moderator, RAMSAY BURT MICHEL BRIAND Dance and 'Theoria' in Greek Antiquity: Homer, Plato, Lucien, beyond the Theory/Practice Divide KAREN SILEN Augustine on Dance: The Missing Manual PAUL SCOLIER Encountering Dance: Missionary Discourse, Aztec Ritual and the Theory and Practice ...
3:45 - 4:15	Coffee break				
Session IV 4:15 pm - 5:30 pm	Transnational Performances JAMIE O'SHEA Marketing Locality in a Global Economy: ... MELISSA BLANCO BORELLI Hip Responses: The Dancing 'Mulata' in the Mexican Cabaretera Film <i>Mulata</i> (1954) YUTIAN WONG Orientalism as Transnational Persona	Connectivities Moderator, HARMONY BENCH RAY MILLER Gene Kelly and Invitation to the Dance - Past and Present: A Reconsideration NORAH ZURIGA-SHAW Theorizing the Nature of Choreographic Thinking in William Forsythe's <i>One Flat</i> ... SITA POPAT Revealing The Wizard of Oz ... CHERYL STOCK Accented Body and Beyond: A Model for Practice-Led Research ...	Choreographing Subversion Moderator, CONSTANCE ADINSI MATTIA SCARPULLA Dance and the Historical Event: Lia Rodriguez's Performances ... PAULO PAIXÃO Anthropophagical Politics of the Body ANA PAULA HÖFLING Performing Capoeira Angola's Tactics of Deception in the Chamadas	Slam Dancing with the Boundaries of Theory and Practice: The Arrival of Popular Dance Moderator, SHERRIL DODDS SHERRIL DODDS COLLEEN DUNAGAN SUSAN LAHIN FUNKENSTEIN	
6:00 - 7:30	SDHS Prize Ceremony - Atrium				

Studio 6	Studio 7	Studio 8	Studio 9	West Atrium (2nd Floor)
Siting the Baroque Moderator: MARK FRANKO 12:00 CAROL G. MARSH The Notation and Practice of Baroque Dance: The Case of the Kinski Manuscript 12:30 MARIE GLON The Materiality of Theory: Printing Practices and the Construction of 'Meaning' (Europe, 17th and 18th Centuries) 12:45 FRANÇOISE DARTOIS-LAPEYRE The Role of Practice for Dance Theorists in the 17th and 18th Centuries	12:00 Waiting for the Fifth Arrow: a Genetic Dialogue with Bharata natyam PREETI VASUDEVAN	Siting Bodies Moderator: RACHEL FENSHAM 12:00 HARMONY BENCH Dancing at the Surface: Digital Media and the No-Place of Dance 12:30 MELANIE KLOETZEL Working on Site: Whose Theory, Whose Practice? 12:45 WEI SHU-MEI A Blind Spot: Remapping Dancing Body	12:00 Scores for Dance Collaboration AMOS HETZ	Session I 9:00 am - 10:15 am
Coffee break				10:15 - 10:45 CONVERSATION I / SUSAN LEIGH FOSTER How would you teach someone to be a choreographer? What kinds of theories ...
Critical Articulations Moderator: ELIZABETH ALDRICH 10:45 ASTRID BERNHOFF Site under Construction: Talking 'Reading' Performance' Literally 11:15 CHERYL GRECIET Contact Quarterly: A Tool for Theoretical Analysis Based on Practice 11:30 ANN NUGENT A Critical Approach to Poststructural Dance 11:45 SALLY R. SOMMER Loie Fuller: Interarticulations of Performance and Theory	Processing the Creative Moderator: JOANNA SZYMALDA 10:45 SANDRA NOETH The Body of Identity: Reflections on a Theory of the Solo in Dance 11:15 SABINE HUSCHKA The Paradox of 'Techné' in Dance: A Craft of Imagination 11:30 AURORA DESPRES The Role of Conceptualization within a Choreographic Work's Creative Process: Loïc Touzé's 9	Re-Reading and Re-Writing Moderator: JENS RICHARD GIERSDORF 10:45 BARBARA FORMIS Julie PERISH Reading as Gesture 11:15 GABRIELE BRANDSTETTER FRIEDRIKE LAMPERT Re-Choreographing Performance	11:00 Scores for Dance Collaboration (Continued from Previous Session) AMOS HETZ	Session II 10:45 am - 12:15 am
Lunch time				12:15 - 12:45 CONVERSATION II / MARK FRANKO In looking for dance, what are choreographers and scholars looking at? Where do they find dance ...
				12:45 - 2:00 Lunch time
				2:00 - 2:30 CONVERSATION III / THOMAS DEFRANTZ Do choreographers and dance scholars see the same dance? see dance in the 537th way?
Political Gestures I Moderator: GERHART ERTEM 2:30 LAURENCE PAGES Experiences, Risks, and Rewards in the Practice of Contemporary Dance in Prison 2:45 NIVYANA MARINHO Political Gesture: Subversions Tactics between Theory and Practice 3:00 ALEXANDRA KOLB Goodbye German Democratic Republic! German Reunification in Johann Kresnik's Wendewut	La Cosmografia del minor mondo: Recovering Dance Theory to Create Today's Baroque Practice CATHERINE TURCOY	Practicing Genealogy, Theorizing Transmission in Transnational Contexts (Australian Dance, Ballet, and Butoh) Moderator: AME COOPER-ALBRIGHT 2:30 KATHERINE MEZUR Powdered, Bared, and Twisted: Mis-Translations of Butoh 2:45 RACHEL FENSHAM Take any Choreographer: Unravel, Shake and Twist their Body's Histories, and ... 3:00 CARRIE GAISER Body Calibrations: Constructing Genealogies of Inter-Corporeality	2:30 The Alphabet of the Dancing Body, Two Letters in the Moment: C-Chute (the Fall) and D-Dressage (Rising) ANDREE MARTIN	Session III 2:30 pm - 3:45 pm
Coffee break				3:45 - 4:15 CONVERSATION IV / RAMSAY BURT What do you love about making a dance? about writing about dance?
12:00 In The Presence of a Master: Theorizing Dance through Identity-Mongolia SASHAR ZARIF-RAVANBARSH	Dancing the Quadrille: Pasts, Presents, and Futures 4:15 THERESA JILL BUCKLAND "Not Fit for Ladies?" ... 4:30 INGER DAMSHOLT Theories of the Past in Present Practices: Lancers in Danish Upper ... 4:45 CATHERINE FOLEY Theorising Practice within the Choreographic Process: The Sienna Set Dance	12:00 Baroque Theories of Practice: Francine Lancelot's Legacy CAROL TETEN NATALIE VAN PARYS MARIE-GENEVIÈVE MASSE CHRISTINE BAYLE	12:00 Re-Thinking and Re-Creating Love the Magician Falla's Work NELIDA MONES I MESTRE BARBARA JAQUANIELLO	Session IV 4:15 pm - 5:30 pm
SDHS Prize Ceremony - Atrium				6:00 - 7:30

Sunday 24th June 2007

	Grand studio	Studio 1	Studio 2	Studio 3	Studio 4
Session I 9:00 am - 10:15 am	Transnational Hybridities II Moderator, PRIYA SREINIVASAN	Reimagining the Local Moderator, ANN DAVID	Staging (In)Visibilities Moderator, SABINE SORDEL	Cultural Translocations Moderator, YIN-YING HUANG	A Forgotten Voice from the Past and Present of Korean Dance History: Generational Studies on the Last Artist of Chosen Dynasty (1392-1910) Ju-Yeon Ryu Myung Soo Kim
	JENS RICHARD GIERSDORF From Utopia to Archive: A Dance Analysis	SUSAN LAMBERTH A Fight as Celebration: Embodied Conflict within the Argentine Tango Community in Chicago	SUSANNE FOELLMER Let's Talk about Flesh or What Is Left of the Body, When We Speak about Dance?	TRESA RANDALL "Being With It": Dance Theory and Cultural Transfer in the Work of Hanya Holm	
	SAN-SAN KWAN Choreographing Hong Kong's Handover: Postcolonial Identity Crisis in City Contemporary Dance Company's Revolutionary Pekinese Opera	Yuh-jen Lu Dancing Late Modernity in Taiwan Streets: <i>Carpe Diem</i> Engagements	J'AMIE BLAIR MORRISON Between Theory and Theater: Performing Presence in Samuel Beckett's <i>Mal vu mal dit</i>	SYLVIANE PAGES Tatsumi Hijikata and <i>Butoh's</i> Theories of the Body in French Contemporary Dance Practices	
	GABRIELE KLEIN Re-Thinking Modernity	CHRISTOS PAPAIOSTAS Repertoire: Practice vs. Theory, the Greek Paradigm		CHIA-YI SEETOO While Dancing the Oriental...: Rethinking Aesthetic and Cultural Translations of Sadayakko ...	
10:15 - 10:45	Coffee break				
Session II 10:45 am - 12:15 am	So You Think You Can Analyze Dance? Versions of Reality in American 'Reality TV' Dance Shows Moderator, JENNIFER FISHER	Pedagogical Strategies Moderator, PALLABI CHAKRAVORTY	Sensate Subjectivities Moderator, MICHAEL HUXLEY	Women Dancing: Fantasies and Realities Moderator, YVONNE HARDT	Performing Historical Research Moderator, ALEXANDRA CARTER
	JENNIFER FISHER Eyes on the Questionable Prize: Pondering Messages in the Dance Version of "American Idol"	ANDREA TERRA MENDES Itineraries of a Practice-Based and Theoretical Investigation of "Dancing Corporeality"	OLIVE BEECHER The Theory and Practice of "Experiencing" Dance	REBECCA HARRIS-WARRICK NATHALIE LECOMTE The Sallie-Camargo Opposition: Fact or Fancy?	KATE ELSWIT Petrified? Ascribing Practice-as-Research to Historical Choreographic Intent
	JULIE MCMAINS Reality Television and Off-Camera Dance Realities	MALINI RANGANATHAN Transposition and Didactic Engineering of Kathak, an Indian Classical Dance, ...	ANNE ARNDT BESERRA "Just as It Comes to You": Choreographing Alternatives to the Lacanian Self	MARINA NORDERA Dancing Women Out of Bounds (Italy, 16th and 17th Centuries)	RIBKA KORFF-TOMMOLA Transition in Finnish Free Dance and Modern Dance at the Turn of the 1950s and 1960s ...
	JULIE MALRIG Teen Dance Realities: Televised Teen Dance Programs of the 1950s and Early 1960s	ANADEL LYNTON Integrating Dance Theory and Practice in Mexican Academic Institutions	SUSANNE RAYN Movement as a Bodily Process: On Dancers' Concerns, Awareness and Sensing		VESNA MLAKAR Theory-A Necessity for Practice? ...
12:15 - 12:45	Lunch time				
12:45 - 2:00					
2:00 - 2:30					
Session III 2:30 pm - 3:45 pm	Socialist Dance or the Ideological Ascendancy of Cultural Practices in the Democratic Republic of Germany: the Example of the "Rudolfstadt Festival of Workers' Culture" (1957) Moderator, MARION KANT FRANZ ANTON CRAMER			Theoretical and Practical Study of German Dance Treatises at the Turn of the 17th and 18th Centuries: Between Theory and Practice Moderator, LINDA J. TOMKO	Towards an Expanded Theory of the Choreographic: Studio, Score and Crisis Moderator, PAIVI PARKKANEN
				TILDER RUSSELL Theory and Practice in Taubert: Four Readings	JENN JOY Spasm: Choreographic Crisis
				JEAN-NOËL LAURENTI Practice and Theory in the Reconstruction of French Dance Technique Based on Treatises by Gottfried Taubert and Louis Bonin	NOÉMIE SOLOMON Choreo-Graphies: Re-Doing 18 Happenings in 6 Parts
					VICTORIA ANDERSON Across the Floor
3:45 - 4:15	Coffee break				
Session IV 4:15 pm - 5:30 pm	Keywords for Dance: 'Folk'			'Immersive Theatre': Practice-Based Dance Research Exploring the Possibilities of Altering the Perceptive Space of Dance within the Traditional Theatre CLAIRE BUISSON	
	M.J. THOMPSON Walking: Katherine Dunham and the Mimetic Everyday				
	LISA DOOLITTLE Canadian Diversity in Practice ...				
	PERRY FARTAN Primitivism and Nijinski's <i>The Rite of Spring</i>				
	ANNE FLYNN Embodying the 'Canadian Mosaic': The Great Western ...				
	MICHELE MOSS Folkdance on the Canadian Prairie: Not the Polka				

Studio 6	Studio 7	Studio 8	Studio 9	West Atrium (2nd Floor)	
Political Gestures II Moderator, CLARE CROFT <p>Panel DANIELLE GOLDMAN Improvised Dance as a "Practice of Freedom"</p> <p>Panel KAREN ELIOT Dancing through the War: British Ballet and Public Morale in the Second World War</p> <p>Panel ELIZABETH M. SEYLER Dancing Toward Integration: A Mixed-Methods Study of Argentine Tango ...</p>	<p>Choreographic Process as Live Theoretical Practice BRENDA FARNELL ROBERT WOOD</p>	Movement Systems Moderator, BASILE DOGANIS <p>Panel ELIZABETH MCPHERSON Martha Hill: Putting Theory into Practice</p> <p>Panel NICOLE HARDWINTER-TOPIN The Technique Class: Questionable Evidence</p> <p>Panel CHRISTOPHE APPRELL The Notion of Incorporation in Theories of the Dancing Body</p>	Gender Trouble <p>Panel SOPHILINE CHEAM SHAPIRO Men as Men and Women as Men in Cambodian Classical Dance</p> <p>Panel SANDRA CHATTERJEE Performing Deliberate (Mis)translations: Waiting for Rasika</p>		Session I 9:00 am - 10:15 am 10:15 - 10:45
Coffee break				CONVERSATION I / GABRIELE KLEIN What is praxis and how does it intersect with theory and practice?	10:15 - 10:45
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SOCIETY OF DANCE HISTORY SCHOLARS

CONFERENCE PAPERS COMMUNICATIONS

Ann Cooper Albright, Dena Davida, & Sarah Davies Cordova, compilers/compilatrices

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Twelve Questions on Re-thinking Theory and Practice

Because of the diverse and international compass of the conference, Claire Rousier and I decided to bypass the conventional and hierarchical custom of presenting keynote speakers in favor of hosting a series of discussions open to all participants at the conference. We envisioned these as "micro-ecologies of knowledge production." I wrote the questions and asked my esteemed colleagues to assist in coordinating the discussions. What follows are the notes they took on the individual sessions. *Susan L. Foster*

First Question: What is your daily practice and why? How does that practice connect, or not, with the social? Quelle est votre pratique quotidienne et pourquoi? Comment cette pratique est-elle liée ou non—au social?

Conversation moderated and summarized by Jacqueline Shea Murphy

Some of the daily practices described in this conversation included awareness practices that people saw as preparing themselves to meet the day, and the world. One person described laying down in a hallway space and feeling connected to the world, and to the people in photos on the walls. Several mentioned yoga or described specific yoga poses as daily acts of grounding, meditation, and self-care. These daily practices, several people said, made them easier people to be with – more rested, more social. One person noted how on the days she doesn't practice, "I feel robbed – and I'm the only one responsible, but I put it elsewhere." Many saw caring for themselves as a way of caring for the world and as a kind of direct engagement with it.

Some mentioned the social connection their practice led them to feel with others practicing similarly, in classes, through history, or just with others in general. Several of us noted the role our daily movement practice plays in preparing us to be able to sit and write.

Some people said they had no daily practice, no ritual, in their day to day. Others noted daily activities like bending down and picking up the newspaper (and noting changes to this practice from when opening the paper required widening the arms, to when a tabloid form required less reach). Another named sitting and checking emails habitually as his daily work, along with trying to go for a walk. Another mentioned her daily practice as the act of finding some opportunity to move, be it walking along a river, doing yoga, or gesturing to her neighbors. Someone asked whether she ought to be moving more, and noted the opportunities that walking and walking meditation, with attention to alignment, offered her these days.

Others noted how much daily practice has to do with your age, and many noted how, with age, they have found new ways to practice –perhaps shifting from theater dance to social dance classes (where there are more opportunities), or from ballet to baroque dance, or in cultivating a new relation to ballet as a humbling practice that teaches how hard it is to gain knowledge (an important reminder when teaching students grappling with new ideas). Someone mentioned the work it takes to cultivate a relation to one's body other than as only a site of injuries. Another spoke of the loss of structure, after the death of ballet, and how very risky it felt.

Towards the end of the conversation, the question of daily practice as a form of

research emerged. "I'm practicing everyday. Because I'm a dancer, every day I feel different, and everyday there is a different part of the movement that I try out -- sometimes very vigorous, sometimes very tender," one speaker said.

Second Question: Comment travaillez vous votre façon de danser ? quelles méthodes et techniques vous aident à mieux danser ? How do you practice your dancing? What methods or techniques of practice help you get better at dancing?

Conversation moderated and summarized by Isabelle Ginot

En France, du moins dans le milieu de la danse contemporaine, la définition et le territoire de ce que les danseurs considèrent comme la « technique » se sont profondément modifiés entre les années 80, où les danseurs accordaient une place prépondérante à la technique et au « cours technique », et les années 90 et 2000, où la question de la « technique » s'est beaucoup élargie, passant d'un intérêt pour « l'entraînement » à un intérêt pour le changement perceptif et sensoriel. Aussi, méthodes somatiques, arts martiaux, pratiques sportives (jogging, gym club, etc.) viennent composer la « préparation » du danseur autant, si ce n'est plus, que le cours technique souvent déserté.

Il faudrait donc réfléchir à la fois à ce que sont nos techniques ou méthodes de prédilection, mais aussi, à ce que nous incluons dans cette notion de technique.

Des exemples de techniques sont données. Si la question de « prendre un cours » est absente des débats, chacun a retenu certains éléments de telle ou telle technique et les intègre dans sa pratique personnelle. Il est surtout question de

préparation (être assis, sentir son poids, etc.), d'éveil sensoriel et perceptif.

La notion de technique est évacuée au profit de celles de pratique et d'outils ; beaucoup insistent sur le choix esthétique qui est préalable (implicitement ou explicitement) au choix de la pratique : en vue de quel projet choisissons nous de pratiquer telle ou telle technique ? en vue de quelle esthétique ?

Pour les interprètes qui passent d'un projet esthétique et d'un chorégraphe à un autre, la notion de constance dans une pratique (avoir un entraînement régulier) peut faire place à l'idée de changement. Revenir – parfois à l'aide des méthodes somatiques, qui permettent de défaire les codes gestuels et sensoriels accumulés – à un geste non marqué, ou moins marqué, afin de pouvoir entrer dans le projet suivant. Ainsi, plutôt que « la technique » comme système indépendant que chacun ajusterait ou adapterait à ses propres besoins, il faut penser à la technique comme projet esthétique. Les méthodes somatiques, qui sont elles aussi chargées d'histoire, n'échappent pas à cette règle.

Cet engagement esthétique connaît une variante plus spécifique encore : les pratiques ou techniques choisies par les danseurs sont attachées également à ce qu'ils souhaitent engager au moment de la représentation (performance), autrement dit, au mode de relation spécifique engagé par le danseur avec le public, ou encore la présence. La France de ce point de vue est un exemple assez clair : le moment du retour des pratiques « alternatives » (improvisation, *release techniques*, méthodes somatiques) pour les danseurs contemporains, depuis les années 90, est parallèle à un renouvellement très visible des modes de présence sur scène et à un questionnement explicite sur la présence.

En conclusion, on peut envisager l'idée que le choix de pratiquer une

technique ou une méthode donnée est aussi (ou d'abord ?) un choix théorique.

Third Question: How is practice different from performance?

Conversation moderated and summarized by Michael Huxley

The conversation began with a brief resumé of the two earlier sessions. These had revealed a diversity of people's dance practices and daily practices. Participants were encouraged to consider practice and performance from this broad perspective, and to think about whether their choice of practice is a theoretical choice.

We considered practice / performance from the point of view of the practitioner and in terms of the presence/absence of an audience. These ideas were taken further by looking at what delineates the difference for the dancer between practicing and performing. For some forms of practice the relationship is an intimate one; for instance, in south Asian dance forms. In forms like improvisation there may be no distinction. For many recent dancers performance is seen as a part of their overall practice, not a thing in itself. The dance artist can radically address the practice/performance relationship in terms of how the audience is involved. An example was given of Merce Cunningham's [Anniversary Event] for Tate Modern's Turbine Hall [2003].

It was acknowledged that, for some forms of dance, practice was a general activity where performance was not foregrounded. In other forms, practice includes the performative; especially where that practice anticipates performance.

It was thought that Marcel Mauss's 'Techniques of the Body', Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari – with theory that

produces 'fluidity' and Edward Said, could be called on to open the discussion further.

Fourth Question: What is your practice of choreography? Quelle est votre pratique de la chorégraphie? Vad är din koreografiska praktik?

Conversation moderated and summarized by Lena Hamnergren

As in earlier conversations, it was proposed that we consider choreography as a broad range of practices. However, most of the examples described, did stay within a more "dance-friendly" definition of the term.

One person talked about how she preferred working with different ways of creating movements rather than creating the movements as such. Others described their practices as a form of realizing ideas, or practicing interpretation, or in using a more poetic terminology: as working with vibrations or rhythms. Another suggestion was: to make choreography is to listen to and theorize a listening to your body moving.

An important part of the practices has to do with how choreographers relate to dancers. People discussed the manner in which we conceptualize these different relationships (e.g. to mount work on dancers, set a piece on dancers) – and this issue was also addressed at the conference earlier the same day, as part of an alternative presentation in the session "Habits of speech". Suggestions on rethinking these relationships were formulated, such as "bringing out the dance from the dancer", or "inviting the dance from the dancer". In this context one choreographer remarked how she had found it very important to return to working with herself as dancer.

People talked about the difference between the process and the product in defining your practice, and several agreed they found process-oriented work more stimulating. Others saw the delineation between process and performance as fluid (cf. the previous conversation on Friday, no III). Someone questioned whether it was at all possible to work with dance as a form of art if you accepted commissioned work, implying the need to start creative work from your own standpoint and interests, from within a process without an explicit goal.

A whole range of practices were thus described; some with emphasis on the choreographer's persona and her/his inner world and imaginations, others focusing on how to relate to and work with dancers, yet others emphasizing the making of dances and how one worked with movements, experimentation, improvisation. The group did not discuss in explicit terms of "rethinking" choreographic practices, but to some degree the emphasis on process over product (which was a dominant feature in the conversation) could perhaps be related to the importance given to the former in contemporary re-figurations or re-thinking of artistic-based research, as it is discussed in some parts of the world. But, depending on from what geographical location you look at the conversation, this tendency could also be considered part of a traditional practice of choreography.

Fifth Question: How would you teach someone to be a choreographer? What kinds of theories, if any, might they benefit from knowing?

Conversation moderated and summarized by Susan Leigh Foster

Suggestions for *what* to teach someone who is an aspiring choreographer

ranged from highly specific suggestions for skills, such as time-management and being organized, to broad engagements with various other discourses such as dance history and aesthetics. Some thought it crucial for students to learn to think in movement, to memorize movement, and to reflect on possible next actions. Others thought it crucial to cultivate focus, imagination, clarity, curiosity, and intuition.

Suggestions for *how* to teach someone to be a choreographer focused on the violence inherent in teaching someone to do anything and on the need for teachers to recognize the power relations that exist in any pedagogical situation. Many commented on the need for instruction to challenge existing preconceptions of what dance is or what it looks like. They emphasized the need to inculcate openness and an enjoyment in experimentation and risk-taking. Some stressed the importance of avoiding universal categories and assumptions about the choreographic process. They emphasized the excitement and challenge in acknowledging diverse approaches to dance-making.

The discussion also addressed the need for students to learn to navigate much broader notions of dance history, and specifically, world dance histories, than in previous periods. Many saw teaching choreography as an art of teaching embodied reflection, to which one participant added that she would also encourage all aspiring choreographers to be suspicious of anyone who says they love dance.

Sixth Question: In looking for dance, what are choreographers and scholars looking at? Where do they find dance, where does a thing we call "dance" emerge from what is "not dance"?

*Conversation moderated and summarized by
Mark Franko*

One might think at first this question points us toward the idea of a boundary between dance and non dance, implying the question what is dance? Such a question, it was suggested, might only be approached from a socio-cultural perspective. Further, dance can be considered a discursive formation and as such, as a word among other words, it invites tools for conceptualizing modes of intent, inherent structure, and reception.

But, the question asks more pointedly what choreographers and scholars look “for”. It is possible these two constituencies seek different things in dance. It was suggested that choreographers could be said to look for dance within a disciplinary framework that accounts for their own production of it, and for the recognized practices that engender it. Scholars, on the other hand, could be thought to seek unusual convergences between practices and meanings, a realm of transmutation, and thus to practice a more interdisciplinary gaze. These could be considered different forms of choreographic performativity.

It was suggested that such differences could be understood in terms of territoriality, or acts of territoriality. What sorts of movement are marked out in terms of a relation to the audience that identifies a certain territory in/upon which reception/consumption takes place. What new sorts of territory can be forged? To what degree does the dancer remain separate from these? Implicit in this discussion is the other question: who is the dancer?

Seventh Question: Do choreographers and dance scholars see the same dance? See dance in the same way? Does each orientation contain its own politics of looking?

*Conversation moderated and summarized by
Thomas F. DeFrantz*

I suggested to the group that we focus on the second part of this question: what are the politics of looking at work from particular perspectives?

Someone suggested that we see patterns in certain performances; another participant wondered then how we might recognize dance beyond pattern. We wondered together at the sensibility of “politics” in our formulation. Someone suggested that we engage an expansive definition of the term, and that we consider priorities of perception in order to articulate the politics of looking. We might consider how our locations as scholars or artists construct contingencies of looking that involve choices that are necessarily political.

A participant suggested that choreographers might be more visceral in looking, while scholars might be more visual. Someone else wondered at the possibility for a communication that happens in dance that might be different from looking. The conversation shifted briefly to consider the place of improvisation in this discussion.

We considered the usefulness of outside eyes on the creation of choreographies, and the distinction of being ‘inside’ work (as an artist) as opposed to ‘outside’ work (as a scholar). We wondered at the distance between these two locations. Someone noted that our original question assumes a tension between these positions.

We turned the conversation toward the question of location. In different environments, the distance between these identities of scholar and artist varies. One participant noted that in northern Europe, the separation between the creation of work and the creation of scholarship about work persists as a strong, forceful truth. In

Southeast Asia, another participant offered, there may be a political commitment to the scholar as an outsider to the process of creation.

Someone suggested that we each conduct ethnographic study of our own processes. We might open more space for practitioner/researchers to articulate processes of seeing; this emergent identity needn't replace the perspective of an artist or scholar, but it could create possibilities for different discourses of dance, and ultimately aid in the articulation of the artist's voice.

As the conversation moved to the process of making work and the process of looking at work, we wondered at the separation between the dance that a scholar might see and the visibility of the process that created the work. We ended with the provocative question, is process visible?

Eighth Question: What do you love about making a dance? about writing about dance? Qu'aimez-vous lorsque vous faites de la danse ? dans le fait d'écrire sur la danse ?

Conversation moderated and summarized by Ramsay Burt

This was the fourth conversation in a series that took as its starting point questions that linked making and writing about choreography. Given the focus in this session on love, the conversation seemed to follow two related topics: the emotional experiences which writing about and making choreography produce, and what these might tell us about the relation between them. One person said he always wrote first before he started creating movement. Another said that she moved in order to be able to write better, and that experiencing movement helped her in trying to find the right words. Someone said, however, that you finally have to choose because you can't straddle both.

What happens when one starts to use the word 'love' to talk about making and writing about dance? Many people felt that they loved making dances or writing about dance. One person spoke of the high she felt making dances, the rhythm of doing so and the sense of flow which she said seemed to her like the high of falling in love. Another said that in making dance you have to go beyond yourself, just as loving takes one beyond oneself. Love, however, can sometimes create dilemmas and bring suffering. We can't live with it, and we can't live without it. One person stressed the painfulness of the feelings that unavoidably come up when one is involved in the choreographic process. These two strands seemed to come together when someone suggested that, as writers, our task is to look for emergings of intellectual, emotional events.

Ninth Question: What is praxis and how does it intersect theory and practice?

Conversation moderated and summarized by Gabriele Klein

Ahead of the conference I asked myself why Susan Foster wanted me to deal with this question. I think the discussion of the terms 'experience' and 'practice' are really significant within theories of cultural sociology, like e.g. in Bourdieu's theory where it is conceived as 'praxeology'.

Due to the fact that my lecture took place in the first panel on Sunday Morning, I was only able to join up with the conference at 10.30. Until then Susan took charge of the conversation and informed the audience about the topics and questions of the other ones. As time was limited, I tried to give a brief introduction of the term 'practice' as a concept of cultural sociology. The philosophy offers a vision of practices, which are cultural techniques and deduced

from the speciality of the field. They are usually normative to the field, i.e. that on the one hand practices create rules, standards and values and on the other hand the field itself creates them.

It is an advantage of such an aspect, that the idea of practices versus the idea of agency is not bound to actors as intentional acting people. In a new perspective it is obvious that single actors learn practices and, while learning them, produce themselves as subject, as identity in this field.

Related to the field of the dance, it means that the dance experience consists of an ensemble of practices that people learn from the field which, again, creates “dancing subjects”. Practices do not only refer to performing dance, but represent discursive strategies or techniques of conversation or the way of describing dance etc.

Basically practices are operated on three levels: The fields of work, of connections and of technologies of ourselves, to follow Foucault's terminology.

We discussed these basic considerations during the time left. Above all we reflected the relation between practices and actions. Due to this segmentation a new question raised: Can motions be seen as actions? Besides it could be discussed how to apply the concept of praxeology in order to overcome the virulent isolation between theory and experience existing in the field of dance studies. Thus in order to avoid the statement, that theory means experience and experience means theory.

Tenth Question: How to intervene in the body politic? World politics? How does knowledge in dance studies inform theoretical practice in other realms?

Conversation moderated and summarized by Rachel Fensham, with summaries of French speakers by Isabelle Ginot.

There is the intervention of individuals who visit, for instance Susan Foster visiting my university, that has a body politics, of intimacy, these are tactics that we might consider as scores of collaboration between us.

The examples suggested of ‘ballets that try to be political’ are big gestures, there are more subtle contexts, such as a poem in my university that was translated and performed in three languages - Hebrew, Russian, ?? - this is when texts can melt into one another; there is no report on these.

An intervention in French - RF translation... beside prisoner... modes of action.. of resisting...

Michel Briand : What when dancers are not developing dance as art but are using it in order to help non dancer to reappropriate their own corporeality ; for instance when dancers come to work with HIV patients ; would this be a mode of political intervention.

Another... a pressures... some obstacles... a bit negative.

Isabelle Ginot: For long I've believed in the work of art as sufficient as a political action. In the French context I consider this belief has failed and I'm now turning to the dancers' practices when they are not oriented towards the production of a dance work - as in the previous example. I think there is in France a urgent need to « de-insulate » or « un-insulate » the dance world from the social world.

The project of intervention speaks largely not to the concept of the product. It is necessary to make things complicated, there are no easy answers, we live in complex societies, so we work on many levels.

French again... there is an ignorance of who speaks, it seems economic, it is difficult in this congress to translate.

Isabelle Launay: I think this is a moment to reflect upon our common practice in these 3 days organized by US dance societies. I've been very glad to discover this way of doing, and I think « ways of doings » should be reflected upon. For example for me, for us in the department Paris VIII, we consider that technic and corporeal action are political issues. I think US activists have taught that to us : technics are political, and I haven't found any evidence of influence of these activists in the conference. What have been the language politics ? There is a productivist economy of knowledge production that makes everybody read a paper in 20 minutes, as fast as possible to say as much as possible in the shortest possible time. While doing that, we ignore the work of translators who can't do their job.

What are the implicit hierarchy between us ? How many people came to listen to the Brasilians yesterday ?

The French University is soon to be submitted to the « anglo-saxon model » of efficiency and evaluation. I've been talking to anglo-saxon scholars here who suffer from this system. The pressure for productivity. How many articles have we produced ? In how many conferences have we given papers. And here as see that for the proceedings of this conference we have to summarize our papers in « 4000 words ». How, why can we do that ? I may write an open letter to the organizers about this word counts.

I think we need to stay awake to those issues, stay awake to ourselves.

I would suggest three terms - dance, embodiment, theory. Theory is not coterminous with dance, but it is how theory is modified in a tense or useful way in dance

that is useful. The dancing body is engaging with praxis as theory.

The interface with an audience - not aware of dance studies. Teaching dance is connected to society - we make an intervention with undergraduate students since they are bodies moving.

I want to make three suggestions. First, there is UNESCO convention on material culture, that is an example of politics. It splits the world since there are those in developing cultures that have read this document and those who have not read it. Second, there is a choice of publishing in English to reach a wider public or in Norwegian which takes less work and is more useful. And finally, there are the movements of folk dances as 'invented traditions' or alternatively, the movements of dancing peoples.

There is a cleavage or a misunderstanding staged in politics, we are already worked on by our cultures.

What does politics mean to our audiences? If we get more complex in theory, then we cannot reach a public. Or the more we specialize, the less we speak to the world?

Our institutions bring people to the world, this is capital, yet it is also giving them a voice. I am concerned about the disappearance of the public space? This is leading to a depoliticisation of the public sphere.

I. Launay in response to R. Burt saying that he finds that there are less and less public spaces were we, scholars, can make political intervention :

But it's not for us to wait for these public spaces to be given to us. We have to make those spaces, we have to be responsible for our own practices. We are not to become the instruments of a larger productivist economy, we need to be responsible for the political choices we

make and first of all, in the way we are developing our own research practices.

Conversations entre-nous. There are powers of knowledge, a movement, an appeal.

Eleventh Question: How can dramaturgy theorize the socio-political situation?

Conversation moderated and summarized by Gerald Siegmund

One participant highlighted Pierre Bourdieu's practice/theory interface: the practices are in existence as social habitus: They have to be highlighted in the artistic practice.

Dramaturgy in the narrow sense of the word as it is understood in the German theatre system implies that the choreographer is working with an outside eye. The dramaturge holds a position in between. S/he is inside the working process and outside at the same time. Can they then theorize? Another question that arises is that of the dialectics of form and content. Does the political depend on the content of the piece or can it be understood as the specific social form of interaction that is the artistic process as such?

As an artist one has to be aware of the socio-political context that one produces one's work in. Institutions impose their conditions onto the artistic practice and its product. The shaping role of the institution is usually neither emphasized in the pieces nor in the discussions they spark.

One participant followed on by giving the example of a trend in Sweden to "poor theatre". Many artists consciously refuse to participate in the current socio-economical situation by limiting their production means as a form of critique.

The conversation turned towards finding alternate forms for dance pieces and their presentation.

An important role in this is the question of access to means of production. Even in the so-called independent or "off"-scene it is imperative that producers can sell the piece to other festivals or independent theatres. They thereby take influence on the work which has to lend itself to "selling". It has to fit into programme formats. Thus producers favour products over process based experimentations with open ends such as Xavier Le Roy's "E.X.T.E.N.S.I.O.N.S.".

Whether dramaturgy can influence or even theorize the socio-political situation depends on how far the choreographer is willing to engage in such a process. In a piece by Austrian dancer and choreographer Frank Poelstra the dramaturge was part of the piece commenting on the movement as it unfolded.

Towards the end of the discussion the question arose why the notion of dramaturgy up until that point was so narrowed down? Isn't dramaturgy always a theorizing? Doesn't it relate to the pieces' frames of representation, the images of bodies they deploy, to the way they open up to the world? What implications could such an understanding of dramaturgy have for a historical understanding of the term?

Unfortunately, there was no more time left to explore these issues further.

Twelfth Question: What are the pedagogical implications for universities and for academies of dance of a re-thinking of theory and practice?

Conversation moderated and summarized by Ananya Chatterjea

Since many of the conversations thus far had emphasized the immediate relationship between theory and practice, I took our understanding of their co-constitutiveness, with particular reference to the field of dance, as a premise for this

Conversation. I suggested to the group that we think concretely about the implications of this for those of us teaching in this field, because some choices have to be made about ‘what’ and ‘how’ to teach given the limited time we have with our students. I also suggested that we think through the question of “choice” and recognize that our choices are political.

One participant offered that we examine why choices are offered and that sometimes the offering of many choices in fact flattens them, implying that the weight of these choices are uniform. How then to make for a range of areas to study while not fetishizing choice? Perhaps, one participant felt, one way to avoid the choice-as-ruse phenomenon was to connect pedagogic decisions to broader politics beyond dance.

Another participant pointed out that, however, as in the broader context, choices are often used to diffuse and atomize society. Choice presupposes agency, an ability to realize choices made. What about the many people who don’t have choices available to them? One participant argued that we need to think of what constitutes a choice, so that we do not evoke ideas of an untheorized universe. Rather, particularly in the field of pedagogy, we could think about choices and their implications in terms of organizing categories such as genres, contexts, processes. This kind of reflective process would allow us to weave choices, as intellectual and political acts, back together into a field of action.

The conversation then moved to consider how choices play out specifically in terms of dance research. One participant asked why a choice to focus on “process” immediately indicated a veering away from commercial dance? Another reminded us that thinking of choreography has generally followed the terms of certain lineages. How could we open that up? Also, dance on stage seemed to be normative in the field of Dance

Studies? How could we extrapolate from that to other occasions of dancing? One participant reminded us about the starting point of this conversation and that it remained imperative that through such discussions and debates, we continuously work through theories and practices, as plural categories, such that no one dominant frame of reference be established.

It is important to teach our students to take accountability for the choices they make, but how do we teach that? It is no doubt important to develop understanding of more diverse cultural and aesthetic codes, recognizing that in the era of globalization, we have the opportunity to witness many different kinds and understandings of dance. Once again, since we cannot “know” or understand it all, might Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak’s notion of “planetary” be useful to us—the idea that we share the same space, but work in our own contexts and rhythms, with a clear relationship with each other, and that we have to understand each dance in its own terms and as we encounter it? This is different from the globality/Area Studies model—where all differences are mapped onto a single world or, alternatively, we can only focus on one dance form at a time.

While we did not necessarily reach strategic pedagogic choices, many of the themes that had come up several times through the Conversations—difference, the theory-practice dyad, possibilities of resistance, the location of dance and dancers, the interventionary possibilities of choreography—resonated through this last Conversation, suggesting at least that we had made a collective choice to engage rigorously as a community of thinkers with urgent issues in Dance Studies.

Repenser pratique et théorie: Douze questionsA

A cause de l'envergure diverse et internationale du colloque, Claire Rousier et moi avons décidé de contourner la coutume conventionnelle et hiérarchique de présenter des allocutions d'invité(e)s d'honneur et d'offrir une série de discussions ouverte à tous les participants du colloque. Nous avons envisagé qu'elle soit composée de « micro-écologies de production de savoir ». J'ai écrit les questions et demandé à mes collègues estimés d'aider à coordonner les discussions. Ce qui suit sont les notes qu'ils ont prises lors des sessions individuelles.
Susan L. Foster

Première question: What is your daily practice and why? How does that practice connect, or not, with the social? Quelle est votre pratique quotidienne et pourquoi? Comment cette pratique est-elle liée ou non — au social?

*Conversation modérée et résumée par
Jacqueline Shea Murphy*

Quelques-unes des pratiques quotidiennes décrites lors de cette conversation comprennent les pratiques d'être conscient que certaines gens voyaient comme moyen de se préparer à rencontrer la journée, et le monde. Une personne a parlé de s'allonger par terre dans l'espace d'un couloir et de se sentir en connexion avec le monde, et avec les personnes des photos sur les murs. Plusieurs ont mentionné le yoga ou décrit des poses spécifiques de yoga comme actes journaliers de se positionner, de méditation, et de se prêter attention. Ces pratiques quotidiennes, plusieurs personnes ont mentionné, faisaient d'elles des personnes avec qui il était plus commode d'être — plus reposées, plus sociales. Une personne a noté comment les jours où elle ne s'exerçait pas, « je me sens volée — et je suis

la seule responsable, mais je la mets autre part ». Beaucoup voyaient s'occuper de soi comme étant un moyen de s'occuper du monde et comme un genre d'engagement direct avec lui. Certains ont mentionné que leur pratique les amène à sentir une connexion sociale avec les autres qui pratiquent de manière semblable, en classe, à travers l'histoire, ou simplement avec d'autres en général. Plusieurs d'entre nous avons noté le rôle que joue notre pratique quotidienne de mouvement pour nous préparer à nous asseoir et à écrire.

Certaines personnes ont dit qu'elles n'avaient aucune pratique journalière, aucun rituel, au jour le jour. D'autres ont noté des activités quotidiennes comme se pencher et ramasser le journal (et remarquer des changements à cette pratique entre ouvrir les bras plus largement pour un journal, par rapport à une étendue moindre pour un de format plus petit à l'affût du sensationnel). Quelqu'un d'autre a dénommé s'asseoir et vérifier les courriels comme partie habituelle de son travail quotidien, ainsi qu'essayer de faire une promenade. Une autre a mentionné comme sa pratique quotidienne l'acte de trouver une occasion de bouger, que ce soit marcher le long d'une rivière, faire du yoga, ou faire signe à ses voisins. Quelqu'un a demandé si elle devait bouger plus, et a noté les occasions que la promenade et la méditation en marchant, avec une attention soutenue à son alignement, lui offraient ces jours-ci.

D'autres ont noté combien la pratique quotidienne a à voir avec leur âge, et beaucoup ont noté comment, avec l'âge, ils ont trouvé de nouvelles façons de pratiquer — peut-être en échangeant la danse au théâtre contre des cours de danse sociale (où il y a plus d'occasions), ou le ballet contre la danse baroque, ou en cultivant une nouvelle relation au ballet en tant que

pratique qui rend humble car elle enseigne combien il est difficile de posséder un savoir (un rappel important quand on enseigne aux étudiants qui en viennent aux prises de nouvelles idées). Quelqu'un a mentionné le travail demandé pour cultiver une relation avec son corps autre que comme site de blessures. Une autre personne a parlé de la perte de structure, après la mort du ballet, et combien cela semblait hasardeux.

Vers la fin de la conversation, la question de la pratique quotidienne en tant que forme de recherche s'est posée. « Je pratique tous les jours. Parce que je suis danseur, tous les jours je me sens différemment, et tous les jours il y a une différente partie du mouvement que j'essaie – quelquefois très vigoureux, quelquefois très tendre » a dit un des intervenants.

Seconde question: Comment travaillez-vous votre façon de danser ? Quelles méthodes et techniques vous aident à mieux danser ? How do you practice your dancing? What methods or techniques of practice help you get better at dancing?

Conversation modérée et résumée par Isabelle Ginot

In France, at least in the field of contemporary dance, the definition and the territory of what dancers consider “technique” have changed profoundly since the 1980s when dancers placed great emphasis on technique and the “technique class”. During the 1990s and up to 2000, the notion of “technique” developed and moved from an interest in “training” to an interest in sensory and perceptual change. Also somatic methods, martial arts, sports activities (jogging, going to the gym, etc.) became as much a part of the dancer’s “preparation” as the oft abandoned technique class.

One should then think about both what our preferred techniques or methods are, and also, what we include in this notion of technique.

Examples of technique are given. Even if the question of “taking a class” is absent from discussions, everyone has retained certain elements of such and such a technique and integrates them in his or her personal practice. It is especially a question of preparation (sitting, feeling one’s weight, etc.), of sensorial and perceptive awakens.

The notion of technique is removed in favor of those of practice and tools; many insist on the aesthetic choice which comes ahead (implicitly or explicitly) of the choice of practice: for what project do we choose to practice this or that technique? for which aesthetic?

For the interpreters that switch from one aesthetic project and from one choreographer to another, the notion of staying with one practice (of having a regular training) can allow for the idea of change. Returning – sometimes with the help of somatic methods, that enable the undoing of accumulated gestural and sensorial codes – to an unmarked or less marked gesture so as to enter into the next project. Thus, rather than the “technique” as independent system which everyone would adjust or adapt to his or her own needs, one must think about technique as an aesthetic project. The somatic methods that are themselves laden with history are not immune to this rule.

This aesthetic pathway incorporates a still more specific variable: the practices or techniques chosen by the dancers are also linked to what they wish to set off at the performance, in other words, to the specific relational mode of engagement between dancer and spectator, or even more so of presence. France for this viewpoint is a fairly clear example: the return of “alternative” practices (improvisation,

release techniques, somatic methods) for contemporary dancers since the 1990s happened at the same time as a very visible renewal of modes of presence on stage and an explicit questioning of presence itself.

To conclude, one can think about the idea that choosing to practice a given technique or method is also (or first?) a theoretical choice.

Troisième question: En quoi l'entraînement en danse diffère-t-il de la représentation ?

Conversation modérée et résumée par Michael Huxley

La conversation a commencé avec un résumé rapide des deux sessions précédentes. Elles avaient relevé une diversité de pratiques de danse chez les gens ainsi que de pratiques quotidiennes. On a encouragé les participants à considérer la pratique et la représentation de cette perspective élargie et de voir si leur choix de pratique était un choix théorique.

Nous avons considéré la pratique/représentation du point de vue du praticien et en termes de la présence/absence d'un public. Nous avons poussé ces idées plus loin en regardant ce qui délimite pour la danseuse la différence entre la pratique et la représentation. Pour certaines formes de pratique leur relation est intime ; par exemple, dans les formes de danse de l'Asie du sud. Dans des formes telle l'improvisation il se peut qu'il n'y ait aucune distinction. Pour beaucoup de danseurs récemment la représentation est vue comme une partie de leur pratique entière, pas une chose en soi. L'artiste de la danse peut adresser de façon radicale la relation pratique/représentation selon comment le public est impliqué. L'exemple donné : [Anniversary Event] pour le Turbine Hall au Tate Modern [2003] de Merce Cunningham.

Il a été reconnu que, pour certaines formes de danse, la pratique est une activité générale où la représentation n'est pas mise en avant. Dans d'autres formes, la pratique comprend le performatif; surtout lorsque cette pratique anticipe la représentation.

Il a été suggéré que les "Techniques du corps" de Marcel Mauss, Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari – avec la théorie qui produit une 'fluidité'-- et Edward Said pourraient contribuer au débat.

Quatrième question: What is your practice of choreography? Quelle est votre pratique de la chorégraphie? Vad är din koreografiska praktik?

Conversation modérée et résumée par Lena Hammergren

Comme dans certaines conversations antérieures, il a été proposé que l'on considère la chorégraphie comme étant une étendue vaste de pratiques. Cependant la plupart des exemples décrits restèrent proches d'une définition dansante du terme.

Une personne a parlé de comment elle préférerait travailler avec des façons différentes de créer des mouvements plutôt que de créer les mouvements eux-mêmes. D'autres ont décrit leurs pratiques comme une façon de réaliser des idées, ou pour utiliser un langage plus poétique : comme travaillant avec des vibrations ou des rythmes. Une autre suggestion était : faire la chorégraphie c'est écouter et théoriser une écoute de son corps en mouvement.

Une partie importante des pratiques comprend comment les chorégraphes entrent en rapport avec les danseurs. On a discuté comment ces relations différentes sont conceptualisées (e. g. arranger une œuvre sur des danseurs, monter une pièce sur des danseurs) – cette question avait déjà été adressée plus tôt dans la journée au colloque lors des formes alternatives de présentation

dans la session « Tics de langage ». Des suggestions pour repenser ces relations ont été formulées, telles « sortir la danse du danseur », ou « inviter la danse de la danseuse ». Dans ce contexte, une chorégraphe a remarqué comment il avait été important pour elle de revenir travailler avec elle-même en tant que danseuse.

Certaines personnes ont parlé de la différence entre le processus et le produit pour définir sa pratique, et plusieurs étaient d'accord pour dire qu'ils trouvaient un travail orienté vers le processus plus stimulant. D'autres voyaient la démarcation entre processus et performance comme fluide (cf. la conversation précédente, vendredi n° III). Quelqu'un a demandé s'il était même possible de travailler avec la danse en tant que forme d'art si l'on acceptait un travail commandé, impliquant le besoin de commencer le travail créatif de sa perspective et de ses intérêts, de l'intérieur d'un processus sans but explicite.

Toute une gamme de pratiques furent ainsi décrites; certaines avec une emphase sur la personne du chorégraphe et son monde intérieur et ses imaginations, d'autres se concentrant sur comment être en relation et travailler avec les danseurs, d'autres encore ont souligné la production des danses et comment l'on travaille les mouvements, l'expérimentation, l'improvisation. Le groupe n'a pas discuté en termes explicites comment "repenser" les pratiques chorégraphiques, mais il a abordé la question de l'importance donnée au processus plutôt qu'au produit (un élément dominant de la conversation) qui pourrait peut-être se trouver lié à l'importance donnée à cela dans les re-figurations contemporaines ou les re-formulations de la recherche basée dans l'artistique, ainsi qu'elle est discutée dans certaines régions du monde. Car selon le point géographique d'où l'on comprend la conversation, cette

tendance pourrait être considérée comme une partie traditionnelle de la chorégraphie.

Cinquième question: Comment apprendre à quelqu'un à devenir chorégraphe ? Quelles théories, s'il en est, peuvent s'avérer utiles dans cet apprentissage ?

Conversation modérée et résumée par Susan Leigh Foster

Les suggestions de *quoi* apprendre à une personne désirant devenir chorégraphe comprenaient d'une part des suggestions très spécifiques de capacités telles la gérance de son emploi du temps, et de bien s'organiser, et d'autre part des engagements étendus avec d'autres modes d'énonciation aussi variées que l'histoire de la danse et l'esthétique. Certains pensaient qu'il était essentiel que les étudiants apprennent à penser en mouvement, à se rappeler le mouvement, et à réfléchir aux prochaines actions possibles. D'autres pensaient qu'il était essentiel de cultiver la focalisation, l'imagination, la clarté, la curiosité, et l'intuition.

Les suggestions de *comment* apprendre à quelqu'un à devenir chorégraphe se sont concentrées sur la violence inhérente comprise dans l'acte d'enseigner n'importe quoi à qui que se soit et sur la nécessité de reconnaître que des relations de pouvoir existent dans toute situation pédagogique. Beaucoup ont commenté le besoin d'enseigner le questionnement des préconceptions existantes qui déterminent ce qu'est la danse ou comment elle devrait paraître. Ils ont souligné la nécessité d'inculquer l'ouverture et le plaisir de l'expérimentation et de prendre des risques. Certains ont affirmé l'importance d'éviter les catégories universelles et les présomptions au sujet du processus chorégraphique. Elles ont souligné combien la reconnaissance des

diverses manières de faire la danse était excitante et un challenge.

Il y a eu discussion de la nécessité pour les étudiants d'apprendre à naviguer des notions beaucoup plus étendues de l'histoire de la danse que par le passé, et spécifiquement, les histoires des danses du monde entier. Beaucoup ont vu l'enseignement de la chorégraphie comme un art pour enseigner la réflexion incorporée, et une participante a alors ajouté qu'elle encouragerait toute personne voulant être chorégraphe à se méfier de ceux ou de celles qui disent adorer la danse.

Sixième question: En cherchant la danse, qu'est-ce que les chorégraphes et les spécialistes regardent ? Où trouvent-ils la danse, à quel moment ce que l'on nomme « danse » émerge-t-il de ce qui n'est pas « danse »?

Conversation modérée et résumée par Mark Franko

On pourrait d'abord penser que cette question nous dirige vers l'idée d'une frontière entre la danse et la non danse, ce qui impliquerait la question, qu'est-ce que la danse ? Il a été suggéré qu'on ne pourrait regarder une telle question que d'une perspective socio-culturelle. De plus, la danse peut être considérée une formation discursive et ainsi comme un mot parmi d'autres elle apporte des outils pour conceptualiser des modes d'intention, la structure inhérente, et la réception.

Mais la question demande pertinemment ce que les chercheurs et les chorégraphes « regardent ». Il est possible que ces deux groupes cherchent différentes choses en danse. Il a été suggéré qu'on dise que les chorégraphes cherchent la danse dans le cadre même de la discipline qui rend compte de leur propre production et des pratiques

reconnues qui l'engendrent. On pourrait penser que les chercheurs, de leur côté, recherchaient des convergences inhabituelles entre pratiques et sens, un domaine de transmutation, et donc qu'ils pratiquaient un regard plus interdisciplinaire. Ceux-ci pourraient être considérés des formes différentes de 'performativité' chorégraphique.

Il a été suggéré que de telles différences soient comprises en termes de territorialité, ou comme actes de territorialité. Quelles sortes de mouvement sont tracées en termes d'une relation avec le public qui identifie un certain territoire dans/sur lequel la réception/la consommation prend place. Quelles nouvelles sortes de territoire peuvent être forgées ? Jusqu'à quel point est-ce que la danseuse reste séparée de celles-ci ? Cette discussion amène implicitement l'autre question : qui est la danseuse/le danseur ?

Septième question: Est-ce que les chorégraphes et les spécialistes de la danse voient la même chose ? Voient-ils la danse de la même façon ? Est-ce que chacune des orientations contient sa propre politique du regard ?

Conversation modérée et résumée par Thomas F. DeFrantz

J'ai suggéré au groupe que l'on se concentre sur la deuxième partie de cette question: quelle politique du regard est mise en cause par une perspective ou une autre ?

Quelqu'un a suggéré que nous voyons des dessins dans certaines performances; un autre participant s'est demandé comment nous pourrions alors reconnaître la danse par delà les dessins. Nous nous sommes demandé quelle était la sensibilité de « politique » dans notre formulation. Quelqu'un a suggéré que l'on s'engage à bien définir et expliciter le terme,

et que nous considérons les priorités de la perception pour articuler la politique du regard. Nous pourrions considérer comment nos situations en tant que chercheurs ou artistes construisent des contingences du regard qui engagent des choix qui sont nécessairement politiques.

Une participante a suggéré que les chorégraphes verraient plus viscéralement alors que les chercheurs seraient plus visuels. Quelqu'un d'autre envisageait la possibilité d'une communication en danse qui serait autre que celle de regarder. La conversation a changé de cap brièvement pour considérer la place de l'improvisation dans cette discussion.

Nous avons considéré l'utilité d'avoir un regard extérieur pour la création de chorégraphies, et la distinction entre être « en » oeuvre (en tant qu'artiste) et « hors » oeuvre (en tant que chercheur). Nous nous sommes interrogés sur la distance qui séparait ces deux localisations. Quelqu'un a noté que notre question originelle supposait une tension entre ces positions.

Nous avons orienté la conversation vers la question de localisation. Dans différents environnements, la distance qui sépare les identités de chercheur et d'artiste varie. Une participante a noté que dans le nord de l'Europe, la séparation de la création d'une oeuvre et la création de la recherche sur l'oeuvre persistait comme une vérité marquée et énergique. En Asie du sud-est, un autre participant a ajouté, il se pourrait qu'il y ait un engagement politique envers le chercheur en tant que personne extérieure au processus de la création.

Quelqu'un a suggéré que chacun de nous fasse une étude ethnographique de nos propres procédés. Nous pourrions laisser plus d'espace pour l'articulation par les praticiens/chercheurs des procédés du regard ; cette identité émergente n'est pas là pour remplacer la perspective de l'artiste ou du chercheur, mais elle pourrait rendre

possible des discours différents de danse, et en fin de compte aider l'articulation de la voix de l'artiste.

Au fur et à mesure que la conversation se dirigeait vers le processus de faire oeuvre et le processus de regarder toute oeuvre, nous avons interrogé la séparation entre ce que le chercheur verrait et la visibilité du processus qui a créé l'oeuvre. Nous avons fini sur la question provocatrice, le processus est-il visible ?

Huitième question: What do you love about making a dance? about writing about dance? Qu'aimez-vous lorsque vous faites de la danse ? dans le fait d'écrire sur la danse ?

Conversation modérée et résumée par Ramsay Burt

Voici la quatrième conversation d'une série dont le point de départ était des questions qui reliaient pratiquer et écrire au sujet de la chorégraphie. Vu la focalisation sur « l'amour » de cette session, la conversation semblait suivre deux sujets reliés : les expériences émotionnelles qu'écrire au sujet de et que faire de la chorégraphie produisent, et ce que celles-ci pourraient nous dire concernant la relation qu'ils entretiennent. Une personne a dit qu'il écrivait toujours avant de commencer à créer du mouvement. Une autre a dit qu'elle bougeait afin d'écrire mieux, et que vivre le mouvement l'aidait à chercher les mots exacts. Quelqu'un a dit, cependant, que finalement il fallait choisir parce qu'on ne peut pas être à cheval sur les deux.

Que se passe-t-il quand on commence à utiliser le mot 'aimer' pour parler de faire et d'écrire au sujet de la danse ? Beaucoup sentaient qu'ils aimaient faire des danses et écrire au sujet de la danse. Une personne a parlé du 'high' qu'elle ressentait en faisant des danses, le

rythme d'en faire et le sens de flux qui disait-elle lui semblait ressembler au 'high' de tomber amoureux. Un autre a dit qu'en faisant la danse il faut aller au-delà de soi, exactement comme aimer emmène au-delà de soi. L'amour, cependant, peut quelquefois créer des dilemmes et rapporter la souffrance. On ne peut vivre ni avec ni sans. Une personne a souligné la douleur des sentiments qui remontent inévitablement lorsqu'on est engagé dans le processus chorégraphique. Ces deux fils semblaient se rejoindre quand quelqu'un a suggéré qu'en tant qu'écrivains, notre tâche est de chercher à voir les émergences d'événements intellectuels et émotionnels.

Neuvième question: Qu'est-ce que la praxis et en quoi rejoint-elle la théorie et la pratique ?

Conversation modérée et résumée par Gabriele Klein

Avant le colloque, je me suis demandée pourquoi Susan Foster voulait que je traite cette question. Je pense que les termes 'expérience' et 'pratique' sont vraiment significatifs dans le contexte des théories de la sociologie culturelle comme par exemple chez Bourdieu, où cela se conçoit en tant que 'praxéologie'.

A cause du fait que ma présentation s'est faite lors de la première session du dimanche matin, je n'ai pu rejoindre la conversation qu'à 10h30. Jusque-là, Susan a dirigé la conversation et a renseigné le public sur les sujets et les questions de celles qui avaient déjà eu lieu. Puisque le temps était limité, j'ai essayé de donner une brève introduction au terme 'pratique' en tant que concept en sociologie culturelle. La philosophie offre une vision des pratiques, qui sont des techniques culturelles, et déduites de la spécificité du domaine. Elles ont généralement des effets normatifs pour

le domaine, i.e. d'une part les pratiques créent les règles, les standards et les valeurs, et d'autre part le domaine lui-même les crée.

L'avantage d'un tel aspect est que l'idée des pratiques par rapport à l'idée d'agir n'est pas liée aux acteurs en tant que personnes agissant intentionnellement. D'une nouvelle perspective il est évident que les acteurs seuls apprennent les pratiques et, en les apprenant, se produisent comme sujets, comme identité dans ce domaine.

Par rapport au domaine de la danse, cela veut dire que l'expérience de la danse consiste d'un ensemble de pratiques que les gens apprennent du domaine, qui, de nouveau, crée des « sujets dansants ». Les pratiques ne se réfèrent pas seulement au fait de danser, mais représentent les stratégies discursives ou les techniques de conversation ou la façon de décrire la danse etc. Essentiellement, les pratiques opèrent sur trois niveaux : les champs de travail, de connexions et technologies de soi, pour suivre la terminologie de Foucault.

Nous avons discuté ces considérations de base pendant le temps qui nous restait. Par-dessus tout, nous avons réfléchi la relation entre les pratiques et les actions. À cause de cette segmentation, une nouvelle question s'est présentée : Est-ce que les mouvements peuvent être considérés comme des actions ? D'ailleurs on pourrait discuter comment appliquer le concept de praxéologie afin de surmonter l'isolation virulente qui existe dans le domaine des études en danse entre la théorie et l'expérience. Afin ainsi d'éviter de dire que la théorie signifie expérience et expérience signifie théorie.

Dixième question: Comment les études en danse peuvent-elles intervenir dans la politique du corps ? dans la politique mondiale ? Comment le savoir en matière de danse ou de chorégraphie nous informe-t-il

sur la pratique théorique, même en dehors du champ des études en danse ?

Conversation modérée et résumée par Rachel Fensham, avec des résumés des interventions en français faits par Isabelle Ginot.

Il y a l'intervention d'individus qui rendent visite, par exemple Susan Foster en visite à mon université, qui a une politique du corps, d'intimité, ce sont des tactiques que l'on pourrait considérer comme des marques de collaboration entre nous.

Les exemples suggérés de 'ballets qui essaient d'être politiques' sont de grands gestes, il y a des contextes plus subtiles, tel un poème à mon université qui a été traduit et représenté en trois langues – hébreu, russe, ?? – c'est alors que les textes peuvent se fondre l'un dans l'autre ; il n'y a pas de reportage de ceux-là.

Une intervention en français – RF traduction... à côté prisonnier... modes d'action.. de résister...

Michel Briand : Quoi quand des danseurs ne développent pas la danse comme art mais l'utilisent pour aider des non danseurs à se réapproprier leur propre corporéalité; par exemple quand des danseurs vont travailler avec des patients IVH ; est-ce que ce serait un mode d'intervention politique

Un autre... pressions... quelques obstacles... un peu négatif

Isabelle Ginot: Pendant longtemps j'ai cru à l'oeuvre d'art comme suffisante comme action politique. Dans le contexte français je pense que cette croyance est ratée et je me tourne vers les pratiques de danseurs quand elles ne sont pas orientées vers la production d'une oeuvre de danse – comme dans l'exemple précédent. Je pense qu'il y a en France un besoin urgent de « dés-insuler » ou de « in-insuler » le monde de la danse du monde social.

Le projet d'intervention ne parle pas vraiment au concept du produit.

Il est nécessaire de rendre les choses compliquées, il n'y a pas de réponses faciles, nous vivons dans des sociétés complexes, alors nous travaillons à/sur beaucoup de niveaux.

Français encore... il y a une ignorance de qui parle, cela semble économique, c'est difficile à ce colloque de traduire.

Isabelle Launay: Je pense que ce moment est propice pour réfléchir à notre pratique commune durant ces 3 jours organisés par des sociétés de danse américaines. Je suis très contente de découvrir cette façon de faire, et je pense que l'on devrait réfléchir à « façons de faire ». Par exemple pour moi, pour nous dans la faculté de Paris VIII, nous considérons que technique et action corporelle sont des questions politiques. Je pense que les activistes américains nous ont appris ça : que les techniques sont politiques, et je n'ai aperçu aucune évidence de ces activistes à ce colloque. Quel a été la politique de la langue et du langage? Il y a une économie productiviste de la production du savoir qui fait que tout le monde lit une communication en 20 minutes, aussi vite que possible pour dire autant que possible dans un temps aussi court que possible. En se faisant, nous ignorons le travail des traducteurs qui ne peuvent pas faire leur travail.

Quelles sont les hiérarchies implicites entre nous ? Combien de personnes sont allées écouter les Brésiliens hier?

L'université française va bientôt se soumettre au "modèle anglo-saxon" d'efficacité et d'évaluation. J'ai parlé aux chercheurs anglo-saxons qui souffrent de ce système. La pression de la productivité. Combien d'articles avons-nous produits ? À combien de colloques avons-nous donné des

communications ? Et ici vous, voyez que pour les actes de ce colloque il faut résumer nos communications en « 4000 mots ». Pourquoi faisons-nous ça? Il se peut que j'écrive une lettre ouverte aux organisateurs au sujet de ce décompte de mots.

Je pense qu'on doit rester en éveil en ce qui concerne ces questions, rester éveillés à nous-mêmes.

Je suggérerais trois termes – danse, corporalité [embodiment], théorie. La théorie n'est pas définie par la danse, mais c'est comment la théorie est modifiée de façon tendue ou utile en danse qui est utile. Le corps dansant s'engage avec la praxis en tant que théorie.

L'interface avec un public – qui n'est pas conscient du champ d'études en danse. Enseigner la danse est relié à la société – nous faisons une intervention auprès des étudiants 'sous-gradués' puisque ce sont des corps qui bougent.

Je voudrais faire trois suggestions. D'abord, il y a la convention UNESCO sur la culture matérielle, qui est un exemple de politique. Elle divise le monde puisqu'il y a ceux faisant partie de cultures développantes qui ont lu ce document et ceux qui ne l'ont pas lu. Deuxièmement, il y a le choix de publier en anglais pour toucher un public plus large ou en norvégien qui demande moins de travail et qui est plus utile. Et finalement, il y a les mouvements des danses folkloriques comme « traditions inventées » ou alternativement, les mouvements des peuples dansants.

Il y a un clivage ou un malentendu sur la scène politique, nous sommes déjà travaillés par nos cultures.

Qu'est-ce que la politique signifie pour nos publics? Si notre théorie devient plus complexe, alors on ne pourra pas toucher un public. Autrement dit plus on se spécialise, moins on parle à tout le monde?

Nos institutions amènent les gens au monde entier, c'est capital, mais c'est aussi

leur donner une voix. Je m'en fais de la disparition de l'espace public. C'est en train d'amener une dépolitisation de la sphère publique.

I. Launay répondant à R. Burt qui disait qu'il trouvait qu'il y avait de moins en moins de lieux publics où nous, chercheurs, pouvons faire une intervention politique :

Mais ce n'est pas à nous d'attendre qu'on nous donne ces lieux publics. Nous devons créer ces lieux, nous devons être responsables pour nos propres pratiques. Nous n'avons pas à devenir les instruments d'une économie productiviste plus large, nous devons être responsables des choix politiques que nous faisons et en premier lieu, de la façon que nous développons nos propres pratiques de recherche.

Conversations between-us. Il y a des forces de pouvoir, un mouvement, un attrait/appel.

Onzième question: Comment la dramaturgie théorise-t-elle la situation socio-politique ?

Conversation modérée et résumée par Gerald Siegmund

Un participant a souligné l'interface pratique/théorie de Pierre Bourdieu: les pratiques existent en tant qu'habitus social : elles doivent être soulignées dans la pratique artistique.

La dramaturgie au sens propre du mot tel qu'il est compris dans le système du théâtre allemand implique que le chorégraphe travaille avec un oeil extérieur. Les dramaturgs se positionnent entre les deux. Peuvent-ils alors théoriser? Une autre question qui se pose est celle de dialectique de la forme et du contenu. Est-ce que le politique dépend du contenu de l'oeuvre ou peut-il se comprendre comme la forme sociale spécifique d'interaction qu'est le processus artistique en soi ?

En tant qu'artiste, il faut être conscient du contexte socio-politique dans lequel on produit son oeuvre. Les institutions imposent leurs conditions sur la pratique artistique et son produit. D'habitude le rôle moult de l'institution n'est souligné ni dans les productions ni dans les discussions qu'elles amorcent.

Une participante a continué en donnant l'exemple d'une tendance en Suède vers le « théâtre pauvre ». Beaucoup d'artistes refusent consciemment de participer à la situation socio-économique courante en limitant leurs moyens de production, comme forme de critique.

La conversation s'est dirigée vers l'idée de trouver des formes alternatives d'oeuvres de danse et leur présentation.

Un rôle important dans ceci est la question d'accès au moyen de production. Même pour le secteur dit indépendant ou « off » il est impératif que les réalisateurs puissent vendre l'oeuvre à d'autres festivals ou théâtres indépendants. Ils influencent l'oeuvre ainsi qui doit se prêter à la « vente ». Elle doit être arrangée pour tenir dans les formats des programmes. Donc les réalisateurs préfèrent les produits aux expérimentations qui visent le processus et restent ouvertes tels « E.X.T.E.N.S.I.O.N.S. » de Xavier Le Roy.

Que la dramaturgie puisse influencer ou même théoriser le socio-politique dépend de jusqu'où le chorégraphe veut pousser son engagement dans un tel processus. Dans une oeuvre du danseur et chorégraphe Frank Poelstra, le dramaturge faisait partie de l'oeuvre en commentant le mouvement alors qu'il se déployait.

Vers la fin de la discussion, la question suivante s'est posée pourquoi la notion de dramaturgie jusqu'à ce point avait été si étroitement définie ? La dramaturgie n'est-elle pas toujours théorisation ? Ne répond-elle pas aux cadres de représentation des oeuvres, les images des corps qu'elles

déployent, à la manière qu'elles s'ouvrent au monde ? Quelles implications une telle compréhension de la dramaturgie auraient-elles pour une compréhension historique du terme ?

Malheureusement, il ne restait plus de temps pour aller plus loin avec ces questions.

Douzième question: Quelles sont les implications pédagogiques d'une nouvelle façon de penser la théorie et la pratique pour les universités et les écoles de danse ?

Conversation modérée et résumée par Ananya Chatterjea

Puisque beaucoup des conversations jusque là avaient souligné la relation immédiate entre la théorie et la pratique, j'ai pris notre compréhension de leur co-constitutivité, tout particulièrement en référence au domaine de la danse, comme prémisse de cette Conversation. J'ai proposé au groupe de penser concrètement aux implications de ceci pour ceux parmi nous qui enseignons dans ce domaine, parce que certains choix doivent se faire en ce qui concerne 'quoi' et 'comment' enseigner vu le peu de temps que nous passons avec nos étudiants. J'ai aussi proposé de penser à la question de « choix » et de reconnaître que nos choix sont politiques.

Un participant a suggéré que l'on examine pourquoi les choix sont offerts et que quelquefois l'offre de beaucoup de choix en fait les aplanit, impliquant que les effets de ces choix sont uniformisants. Alors comment rendre possible une gamme de domaines à étudier sans fétichiser le choix ? Peut-être, une participante a ressenti, qu'une façon d'éviter le phénomène du choix-comme-ruse serait de connecter les décisions pédagogiques à une politique plus large que la danse.

Un autre participant a indiqué cependant que comme dans le contexte plus large, les choix sont souvent utilisés pour diffuser et atomiser la société. Tout choix présuppose l'action [*agency*], une capacité de réaliser les choix faits. Et toutes les personnes pour qui la disposition de choix n'existe pas ? Un participant a soutenu que l'on devait penser à ce qui constituait un choix, pour qu'on n'évoque pas des idées d'un monde non-théorisé. Plutôt, particulièrement dans le domaine de la pédagogie, on pourrait penser aux choix et à leurs implications en termes d'organiser des catégories telles les genres, les contextes, les procédés. Ce genre de procédé réflexif nous permettrait de rassembler les choix, en tant qu'actes intellectuels et politiques dans le champ d'action.

Ensuite la conversation a viré pour considérer comment les choix se manifestent particulièrement en termes de la recherche en danse. Une participante a demandé pourquoi le choix de se focaliser sur le « processus » indique immédiatement un éloignement de la danse commerciale ? Un autre nous a rappelé qu'en général penser la chorégraphie a suivi les termes de certaines lignées. Comment ouvrir cela ? Aussi, la danse sur scène semble normative dans le domaine des études en danse ? Comment pourrait-on extrapoler de ça pour d'autres occasions de danse ? Une participante nous a rappelé le point de départ de cette conversation et qu'il restait impératif qu'à travers de tels discussions et débats, nous travaillions avec les théories et les pratiques, en tant que catégories plurielles, afin qu'aucun cadre dominant de référence ne soit établi.

Il est important d'enseigner à nos étudiants qu'ils doivent prendre la responsabilité pour les choix qu'ils font,

mais comment enseigner cela ? Il n'y a aucun doute qu'il est important de développer une compréhension de codes culturels et esthétiques plus divers, tout en reconnaissant que pour cette ère de la mondialisation, nous avons l'occasion d'être présents aux différents types et entendements de danse. A nouveau, puisque nous ne pouvons ni "connaître" ni comprendre totalement, peut-être que la notion de « planetarity » de Gayatri Spivak pourrait nous être utile – l'idée que nous partageons le même espace, mais travaillons dans nos propres contextes et à nos propres rythmes, évidemment reliés les uns aux autres, et que nous devons comprendre chaque danse en ses propres termes et comme nous la rencontrons ? Ceci est différent du modèle de la *globality/Area Studies* – où toutes les différences sont cartographiées sur un monde unique, ou alternativement, on ne peut s'occuper que d'une seule danse à la fois.

Alors que nous ne sommes pas nécessairement arrivés à des choix pédagogiques stratégiques, maints thèmes soulevés à plusieurs reprises au cours des Conversations – différence, la dyade théorie-pratique, les possibilités de résistance, les lieux de danse et danseurs, les possibilités interventionnistes de la chorégraphie – ont résonné pendant cette dernière Conversation, suggérant au moins que nous avons fait en tant que communauté de penseurs un choix collectif pour un engagement rigoureux avec les éléments-clés pressants du domaine des Études en danse.

[Traduit par Sarah Davies Cordova]

Theoretical interventions and corporeal subjectivities.

Ramsay Burt

'I don't like being up here; I don't like this kind of separation. I like the idea of creating a situation and becoming a part of it along with the rest of you. Nevertheless we do need to do specific exercise-type things now & then, so the challenge is to make an exercise situation. Of course the classical western teaching mode is also a situation - if acknowledged as such in terms of performance - with the teacher demonstrating and then correcting: a little talk, a little dance, a little teach. I am not convinced this is the correct way to learn about one's body. [...] I am going to try something different. I am going to launch two distinct & separate entities into this space: this tape with its melange of instructions, explanations and rationalizations, and my body with what I hope will be a continuity of focus and involvement' (Rainer 1969: 12).

This is the beginning of a 'Lecture for a group of expectant people' by Yvonne Rainer that was published in January 1969 in the penultimate issue of *Zero to Nine*. It was a transcript of a tape which she had made for use in dance classes. *Zero to Nine* was a New York-based mimeographed magazine edited by Vito Acconci and Bernadette Mayer which brought together poetry by Ted Berrigan, Kenneth Koch and others alongside concrete poetry, work by members of the Fluxus group, conceptual art by Dan Graham, Sol Le Witt, Adrian Piper and others, and, as well as this piece by Rainer, the score of Steve Paxton's *Satisfyin' Lover*. Acconci's interests at the time, as Craig Dworkin (2006) has put it, concerned working with the movement of language over the self-enclosed performance space of the printed page. Rainer's piece in *Zero to Nine* might be described as an attempt to write a non-hierarchically embodied subjectivity across the performance space of the printed page.

Anglo-American critics and dance historians have a tendency to disapprove of choreographers like Rainer who are good at writing, the term 'cerebral' usually indicating disapproval. A deep understanding of embodied experience is

supposedly antithetical to verbal felicity. There seems to be an assumption that dancers ought to be able to say everything through embodied expression alone, and must therefore have only turned to writing because of an inability to express themselves fully through dance. Yet some choreographers have turned to writing in highly productive and useful ways. At moments of transition where existing critical discourses have become out of step with choreographic practice, choreographers have needed to write in order to create the discursive terms through which their work could be conceptualised. My aim in this paper is to examine three examples where choreographers have intervened within critical discourses. These are: the relationship between Katherine Dunham's anthropological research and her choreography; Yvonne Rainer's writing about her dance practice in the 1960s; and the rise of so-called conceptual dance in Europe in the 1990s. All of these instances, I suggest, exemplify a blurring of boundaries between theory and practice.

One way of avoiding a binary opposition between theory and practice is to locate these problematic terms within the broader public sphere within which theatre dance is produced and received. This context is one in which choreographer, dancers, producers, audiences, critics, and dance historians all play significant roles. When Rainer and Dunham, as dance performers and choreographers, put into words their ideas about dance, they upset what is often understood as a hierarchical relation between writer and choreographer, where the former confers value on the latter. As well as being hierarchical, this relation is also generally taken to be a transparent one in which the more successful the choreographer's work, the more perfectly critic and scholar can understand and write about it, as if its meaning had been directly communicated from mind to mind without the intrusive material mediation of dancers' bodies. In this view of dance's aesthetic nature, all the bodily traces of the intervening roles - dancer, producer, and audience - become invisible,

whereas each is involved in reciprocal exchanges which together generate the public sphere within which, according to eighteenth-century aesthetic theory, critical judgments take place. Any discussion of this public sphere depends upon assumptions about who the public includes, who can speak for it, and which artists can claim its support. When choreographers intervene within theoretical discourses, they are, in effect, challenging ideas about who can speak for the public. By disrupting the hierarchical relationship between artist and critic, they create a more inclusive space for public participation within the arts. It is this aspiration to open up embodied experience of theatre dance to a more inclusive public that I shall argue was the underlying motivation of the three instances of artistic intervention which this paper discusses.

Katherine Dunham's brief anthropological activities are often given far more attention in accounts of her life and work than her achievements as choreographer and director of a dance company for nearly 30 years. When she returned to Chicago in 1936 after her anthropological field trip to the Caribbean, she found herself torn between academic study and working as an artist. Although she subsequently published three books and several essays based on her research, she made the decision not to complete a doctorate. Her supervisor Melville Herskovits and her mentor Robert Redfield both supported her in this decision, agreeing that she could disseminate knowledge about African American dance and music traditions as effectively in the theatre as she could within the academy. The bias towards anthropology in accounts of her life, that was particularly evident in her recent obituaries, in my opinion reveals an inability to accept the way she blurred the boundaries between scholarly and practical forms of research.

Two anecdotes from my brief acquaintance with Miss Dunham reveal the way she intervened within theoretical discourses. In 2000 I introduced her to a Black British film maker visiting New York. After he showed her a video of a short film he had recently completed, she reciprocated by showing him some of the film she had shot in Martinique in 1936 which had just been transferred to video. While watching a scene showing black farm workers operating a

sugar cane mill, my friend became excited. He had made a documentary about Franz Fanon, and his researchers had combed film archives around the world without finding any footage like this of ordinary black people in the Caribbean during the 1930s. Miss Dunham responded that she had filmed it because, at the University of Chicago, they had been taught that everything was of interest and a significant part of culture. No one else with a movie camera seems to have thought along these lines at the time. Nevertheless this incident reveals Miss Dunham's confident belief that liberal theoretical approaches would bring about improvements for ordinary people of colour.

In another conversation when the term 'primitive dance' came up, Miss Dunham became troubled. She recalled that in Berkeley during the 1970s some black activists had criticised her for using the word 'primitive', but surely, she said, that was what some of the dances which her company performed, were. The 'primitive' as a concept, though now discredited, was part of the framework of anthropological ideas Miss Dunham had absorbed as a student. When Sol Hurok managed her company in the early 1940s, the programme for their show *Tropical Revue* mixed popular and instructive pieces in a way that maximised their sensational impact. After one of her more serious pieces *Rites de Passage* was censored for lewdness in Boston, Miss Dunham reorganised the programme into three parts. It began with so-called 'primitive' dances showing African origins, continued with folk dances from the Caribbean and Southern United States, and finished with pieces representing contemporary urban dances like *Ragtime* and *Barrelhouse*. Her intention was to show what were at the time called retentions of African movement forms and cultural traditions running through all these stages. This didactic structure, which she went on using for years, challenged the widely held prejudice that 'the Negro' had no culture. By doing so she changed black and white peoples' understanding of the way dance embodies cultural values.

My second example examines the way writing helped choreographers focus on bodily experience during the 1960s. Yvonne Rainer wrote several essays and reviews, many of

which were collected in her 1974 book, *Work 1961-73*. This was a time when advanced choreographic practice, alongside developments in new music and the visual arts, was taking a conceptual turn. Probably the best known piece of Rainer's writing is the polemic statement 'NO to spectacle' which comes in a postscript at the end of an essay on *Parts of Some Sextets* which was published in Richard Schechner's *Drama Review* in 1965. The way Rainer introduces this suggests that her purpose is as much to explain her work to herself as it is to enlighten her readers. It describes, she says,

an area of concern as yet not fully clarified for me in relation to dance, but existing as a very large NO to many facts in the theater today. (This is not to say that I personally do not enjoy many forms of theater. It is only to define more stringently the rules and boundaries of my own artistic game at the moment.)

(Rainer 1974: 51)

Writing thus became a way of exploring new conceptual starting points for choreography and alerting her audience to ways of thinking about what she was doing. Schechner's *Drama Review* provided a forum for progressive theatre directors, choreographers, and artists involved with happenings and Fluxus to write about their own practice and that of their colleagues. Similarly, the monthly magazine *Artforum* was founded in the 1960s as a publication in which artists themselves could write about contemporary work. By publishing critical writing, these artists were not only usurping the critic's role and defining for themselves the theoretical context which spectators needed to understand in order to appreciate their concerns. They were also challenging the habitual subject positions that spectators took up in relation to artworks and performances.

The art critic Craig Owens has proposed that the emergence of minimal and conceptual art in the 1960s overthrew a legacy from the Enlightenment that had divided the arts into discrete disciplinary categories.

In Germany, Lessing, and in France, Diderot, located poetry and all the discursive arts along a dynamic axis of temporal succession, and painting and sculpture along a static axis of spatial simultaneity. Consequently the visual arts were denied access to discourse, which unfolds in time, except in the form of a literary text which, both exterior and anterior to the work, might supplement it.

(Owens 1992: 45)

Artists like Rainer were changing audiences' subjective experiences of time through drawing attention to the object-like movements of the new dance. Discussing her *Trio A*, Rainer noted: 'What is seen is a control that seems geared to the *actual* time it takes the *actual* weight of the body to go through the prescribed motions, rather than an adherence to an imposed ordering of time' (1974: 67).

I would be surprised if anyone in this room today saw Steve Paxton and Yvonne Rainer's piece *Word Words* which was only performed once, for a small audience in the gym at Judson Memorial Church on 29th January 1963. This consisted of a solo danced by Rainer, danced again by Paxton, and then repeated a third time by both together in unison. It is more likely that people here today might have seen Jérôme Bel's 1998 piece *Le dernier spectacle* (The Last Performance). In this a woman in a white silk dress said she was Susanne Linke and danced an extract from the latter's 1978 piece *Wandlungen*. Then one after another three men, also in dresses, danced it. These four repetitions lasted nearly thirty minutes, their gradual familiarity increasingly making spectators aware of the endurance of watching. Just as recent European dance has contributed to a revival of interest in Judson Dance Theater, knowledge of Bel's piece can help us imagine some of the impact of repetition in Paxton and Rainer's *Word Words*. As Rainer observed in 1968: 'Repetition can serve to enforce the discreteness of a movement, objectify it, make it more object-like. It also offers an alternative way of ordering material, literally making the material easier to see.' She then wryly added: 'That most theatre audiences are irritated by it is not yet a disqualification'

(1974: 68). Repetitious performance makes the beholder aware of the work's duration by putting them in the position of watching something they recognise. Its familiarity robs it of the novelty it had previously exemplified, but this creates the potential for people to adopt new kinds of subject positions through perceiving and reflecting upon the work in a less habitual manner.

This raises questions about the relationship between conceptual dance in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s and some recent European dance. At stake are questions about history and progress. In a review from 2001 of *Herses* by the French choreographer Boris Charmatz at the Kitchen in New York, Sandra Aberkalns commented that it consisted of the kind of movement 'that was in vogue here in the U.S. 20 to 30 years ago (i.e. been there, done that)' (Aberkalns 2001). Charmatz's 1999 piece *Con fort fleuves* used as a soundtrack a recording of a poem by John Giorno that Yvonne Rainer had used in 1968 during her piece *The Mind is a Muscle*. Aberkalns seems to have assumed that serious work can only emerge through a break with the past, a positivist view of artistic modernism that dance has perhaps hung on to for longer than other art forms. As the American art historian Thomas Crow wrote in 1996: 'Almost every work of serious contemporary art recapitulates, on some explicit or implicit level, the historical sequence of objects to which it belongs. Consciousness of precedent has become very nearly the condition of major artistic ambition. For that reason artists have become avid, if unpredictable, consumers of art history' (Crow 1996: 212).

Many recent European dance artists like Bel and Charmatz are avid, if unpredictable consumers of dance history which they have used to make works which challenged the largely tacit assumptions about what dance might be. By doing so they have engaged in a kind of institutional critique. As their colleague Xavier Le Roy has observed, the dance market has 'influenced and sometimes to a large degree also determined how a dance piece should be. Most of the time, producers and programmers have to significantly follow the rules of global economy' (Le Roy quoted in Ploebst 2001: 65). This he argues depends upon a particular view

of the relation between contemporary dance and its history. As Bel has put it, an older generation of French choreographers had 'lost themselves to the illusion that they were totally without forefathers and would always have to invent things from scratch' (Bel quoted in Siegmund 1998: 36). Aberkalns also seems to believe choreographers must invent things again each time from scratch. Much recent European dance has deliberately engaged in the kind of reflective dialogue with the past which Thomas Crow has described. Rainer herself has recently looked back to fin de siècle Vienna in *After Many a Summer Dies a Swan - Hybrid*, and to Balanchine's *Agon* in her *AG Indexical, with a Little Help from H.M.* Following Crow one could argue that every piece of serious contemporary dance recapitulates, on some explicit or implicit level, the historical sequence of embodied practices within which it belongs. This was what Katherine Dunham was demonstrating when she used the order of her pieces to draw attention towards retentions. Unless dance scholars rethink the relationship between theory and practice in non-hierarchical terms they will remain largely unaware of the performative interventions which choreographers sometimes make within their domain.

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Le mobile – squelette et le corps alien

Dominique Buttaud – Alain Josserand

Le corps est fait pour bouger. Certes ! Mais il semble produire en même temps une entrave au développement de son propre mouvement, comme en témoignent l'apparition de raideurs, rétractions, douleurs, blessures, chez tout un chacun, chez les sportifs les mieux entraînés et les danseurs les mieux formés. A tel point que peut naître une addiction au travail physique, dont le but serait de guérir ces inconvénients, et l'avatar de les aggraver.

Il existe pour moi un bougé naturel du corps et un bloqué culturel à tendance douloureuse et addictive. Du côté du bloqué culturel, des forces agies contre le bougé, que je qualifierai de « diabolotin ». Du côté du bougé naturel et avant même l'action locomotrice dans l'espace environnant, une « mobilité interne » du corps que je dévoile et postule comme « source » de tout mouvement harmonieux, c'est-à-dire ne générant ni rigidité, ni tension, ni douleur, ni addiction.

C'est Geneviève Mallarmé qui m'a ouvert l'accès à un « interne du corps » à partir duquel j'ai pu développer ma propre recherche. Alain Josserand, compagnon de route, m'a imposé deux exigences. La première est celle de la verbalisation anticipatrice, dans les termes les plus précis possibles, de toute proposition d'action. Le mot remplace donc le montré, et la représentation du projet remplace l'imitation. La nécessité de se « représenter » un intérieur du corps naturellement invisible m'a contrainte à inventer la représentation du squelette (au sens de l'invention d'un trésor). Vue dans sa globalité, la représentation du squelette est celle d'un mobile autoporteur, auto ajustable et auto équilibré. Ces trois fonctions « auto » sont caractéristiques du « mobile – squelette ». Elles sont directement liées à ma lecture du squelette, donc à la représentation du mobile – squelette dans sa globalité, que l'auditeur institue dans son appareil de pensée. Entre mon « dit » du squelette et son « entendu » par l'élève, à l'origine de la représentation, les « fonctions auto » génèrent « la mobilité interne » de la représentation, dont la réalisation dans le corps transite par le « défaire » et les réajustements qui en résultent. Je commence en

effet chacune de mes séances par un temps collectif face au squelette, dont je fais une lecture orientée par la préoccupation du jour. Le vu (perception) du squelette par l'élève est immédiatement lié à un entendu (langage) qui en assure la représentation : il ne peut pas y avoir de représentation sans le porté de la perception par les mots du langage ; porté, transporté, interprété et stocké (i.e mémorisé). Cette lecture, je la reprends individuellement avec chaque élève en situation de travail. Celui-ci ne dispose plus alors de la vision du squelette (hors champ de sa perception) mais uniquement de sa représentation mentale. Ces mots de ma lecture, je les associe à des touchers de certaines zones spécifiques de tensions, touchers qui accroissent l'efficacité de la représentation.

Cette activité, qui relance, nourrit et entretient la pensée du corps rassure car elle révèle une cohérence interne, cognitive, et affranchit de simples systèmes de croyance ou de dépendance « à un autre » en voie d'idéalisation, symptôme de non travail mental. Il en résulte un éprouvé de soulagement et d'augmentation de la confiance en soi.

La deuxième exigence d'Alain Josserand fut, plutôt que de les rejeter, de prendre en compte les pensées que je qualifiais de « folles » qui me venaient lorsque je faisais travailler certains élèves. Leur mise en mots institua le « diabolotin ».

C'est en sommes un renversement épistémologique que j'opère en considérant que le mouvement naît de la représentation du mobile squelette, étai de la mobilité interne à travers ses réajustements, et non de l'action musculaire directe. La représentation du mobile – squelette joue donc le rôle de « commande » de la mobilité.

S'affrontent alors, en un inconscient des représentations du corps, les logiques du mobile-squelette et celles du diabolotin. Soit, côté squelette, les processus « auto » qui découlent de la représentation ; et côté « diabolotin », des actions musculaires via les représentations d'un corps « alien », obéissant à des logiques étrangères à celles du corps. Les pensées folles, constitutives du diabolotin, ont pu émerger dans ma pensée dès l'instant où j'ai pu disposer d'un référentiel

permettant de représenter l'invisible de l'interne du corps. Référentiel constitué par les repères donnés et ordonnés que constitue le mobile – squelette. Le diabolin en sommes fournit à l'appareil de la pensée des informations fausses, véhiculées par certaines « sensations ».

Les logiques du corps que je propose ne prennent sens qu'à partir d'une deuxième invention, un second renversement épistémologique que j'ai appelé « la logique du sol porteur ». Je refuse d'utiliser les notions d'appuis et de centre de gravité que génèrent les lois de la pesanteur pour favoriser l'observation de la résultante de ces forces liées à la pesanteur. Le sol est porteur, il exerce une force porteuse indissociable des fonctions d'auto ajustement et d'auto équilibration. La défaillance de ces fonctions auto, qui sont liées à l'activité idéoverbale, sont cause de chutes, particulièrement fréquentes chez le grand vieillard¹ où la défaillance des fonctions cognitives assure le triomphe de la gravité sur la force du sol porteur qui n'est plus relayée par le mobile – squelette. La bipédie est le fruit de l'alliance entre la force du sol porteur et les fonctions auto, supportées par l'activité idéoverbale de la pensée.

Je considère que la bipédie, et le redressement qui y conduit, est permise et gérée par un « os – clé » : le sacrum. Le sacrum est un « centre de distribution » : il distribue deux fonctions essentielles du squelette : d'une part, le porté de la tête, par l'intermédiaire de la colonne vertébrale, et d'autre part la bipédie par l'intermédiaire des os iliaques. Ces derniers ont un rôle de mise en suspens du membre inférieur, ainsi rendu disponible à la bipédie, qui n'attend plus que la commande pour se réaliser.

En résumé, la représentation idéale du mobile –squelette, d'origine fondamentalement acoustico – verbale, gère :

- Le conflit avec le corps alien dont l'émergence physique est le diabolin.
- Le relais de la force du sol porteur grâce à sa fonction autoporteuse.
- La mobilité interne du corps grâce à ses fonctions d'auto-ajustement et d'auto-équilibre.
- La bipédie, via le sacrum distributeur.

A présent, je vous propose un parcours de découverte et d'expérimentation de mes conceptions, et tout d'abord ce petit jeu : voulez-vous m'indiquer où est articulé le membre

supérieur, et sa ceinture scapulaire, au reste du squelette ?... Je compte six réponses différentes... pour une seule articulation. Le diabolin vous joue ses tours de malice, en faussant votre représentation. Consultons notre juge – arbitre, le squelette qui nous dit « l'articulation du membre supérieur et sa ceinture scapulaire au reste du squelette est celle de la clavicule sur le sternum ». Vous comprenez la pertinence et l'importance de la lecture du squelette, qui associe d'emblée un voir à son expression verbale, un perçu aux mots pour le dire. En fait, c'est plusieurs lectures du squelette que je suis en mesure de proposer, en fonction du référentiel retenu. Il va de soi que toutes ces lectures sont conciliables, puisque référant à la représentation globale du mobile – squelette.

Par exemple, la lecture en fonction de la force du sol porteur, qui s'exerce du bas vers le haut, c'est-à-dire du sol porteur [la semelle du pied] vers le porté de la tête définit ce que j'appelle « l'ordonnancement » du squelette. Il s'agit d'un invariant : quelle que soit la forme prise par le corps, la structure de travail, l'ordre de succession des os et de leurs articulations est invariable, ainsi que le sens de lecture, du bas vers le haut. Déjà, je vois vos corps changer de comportement : ils se libèrent de cette curieuse idée « d'enfoncement dans le sol » et se montrent disponibles au redressement du corps et à la bipédie

Je vous propose d'introduire une variante de cette lecture en fonction du sol porteur : la variable d'ajustement est la position du corps sur le sol. Dans le cas précédent, le corps était debout sur le sol. Je propose à ceux qui travaillent de s'allonger sur le dos (la moitié qui fait travailler suivra mes indications). Dans cette position couchée, le sol, est porteur sur une surface plus grande, ce qui nous délivre de notre peur de tomber souvent exacerbée dans les moments du défaire musculaire, créant alors une retenue au défaire. Le sens de la force du sol porteur indique une lecture de l'arrière vers l'avant. Ce sens de l'arrière vers l'avant est ce que j'appelle « l'orientation » du squelette. Voyons en la pertinence. Je demande à ceux qui font travailler de soulever les pieds de leur partenaire d'une quinzaine de centimètres : Pourquoi ? Si vous regardez le squelette, vous constatez que le membre inférieur est à une quinzaine de centimètres plus en avant que le plus en arrière du sacrum ; ce qui signifie que, sans l'articulation du fémur à l'os iliaque, nous ne pourrions pas poser les membres

inférieurs au sol lorsque nous sommes couchés. Le membre inférieur, très en avant, ne sera jamais un prolongement latéral de la colonne vertébrale: il est déporté vers l'avant par l'os iliaque. La représentation du squelette est orientée de l'arrière vers l'avant.

Je vous propose à présent de reprendre notre petit jeu : voulez-vous m'indiquer sur votre corps où se trouve la tête du fémur ? Surprise, surprise ! encore quelques tours de malice du diabolin, qui vous inspire autant de réponses différentes sur la foi des fausses informations fournies par le corps alien !. Je vais donc toucher vos têtes de fémur. Je constate que votre surprise ne fait que croître ! Et confirme l'absolue nécessité de la représentation du mobile – squelette, qui garantit une mobilité interne vivante et sécurisante.

J'ajouterai à présent à cette lecture en orientation une lecture en ordonnancement. Je touche le tibia au niveau de l'articulation du pied (bas) puis du haut de la diaphyse (haut). Grâce à ces deux repères, vous pouvez voir dans votre représentation, l'ensemble du tibia dans la jambe et plus particulièrement la diaphyse que je viens de localiser et sa longueur. Comme vous le constatez un relâchement musculaire survient aussitôt, et il se crée une différence observable entre la jambe concernée et l'autre. Différence entre la jambe qui se défait des actions musculaires qui entravent sa mobilité (constitutives du diabolin, agi par les représentations du corps alien) et la jambe telle que le diabolin la met en forme. Vous aviez l'impression de ne rien faire, et pourtant vous constatez une différence entre les deux jambes.

Je dois tout de même vous dire que tout n'est pas toujours aussi facile et d'apparence aisée. Ce travail réclame en effet de l'élève une très grande concentration et une importante activité mentale, qui utilise ce que Alain Josserand a appelé une « violence appropriative et identificatoire »²³ dont la fonction est de déconstruire puis reconstruire ce qu'il a entendu. Une très grande bienveillance du Professeur, et sa continuité dans l'accompagnement de ce processus sont nécessaires à sa réussite.

Dès lors, la représentation du mobile – squelette, suffisamment établie, permet le laisser faire et le défaire qui s'en suit, et nourrit la mobilité interne du corps. Elle rend obsolète les schémas de correction et de placement. Autoporté, auto ajusté, auto équilibré, la représentation du mobile – squelette détoxique, désaliène la représentation du

corps alien, invalide le diabolin, libère la chair et régénère le mouvement interne.

La médecine s'éloigne, la danse s'impose.

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Notes

- ¹ Serge Alain Josserand : La chute du vieillard ou la démence en travail de trépas dépressif. L'Information Psychiatrique vol. 79 n°9 novembre 2003
- ² Serge Alain Josserand : De la figuration à l'articulation somato-psychique : esquisse d'une structure autoporteuse du sujet. In Bulletin de la Société de Psychanalyse de Paris n°60 avril – mai 2001.

The Symbolic Re-creation of Dance: a Mexican Example

Carlo Bonfiglioli

In this paper I will examine the genre traditionally known as Dance of the Conquest of Mexico. Strictly speaking, this is not a dance but a dance-theater whose representative referent is, as indicated by its very name, the event that changed the course of Mexican history: the Spanish Conquest of Mesoamerican territory.

The dance is currently performed in indigenous as well as in mestizo contexts, and both urban and rural settings. Changes of context often entail changes of styles, seen primarily in variations in the details of the choreography, music, dress and paraphernalia, scenography, the management of representative times, the theatrical use of the body, the content of verbal declamations, and other expressive elements. Detailed analyses (Bonfiglioli 2005) show that each case is different from the others—we are speaking of hundreds of cases—but not all variations have the same analytical importance; most of them leave unchanged the representative substance of the dance, that vision of the past that emerges from the sequence of episodes, from the roles played by the personages and from the relationship among other constitutive elements.

The data that support the reflections that I am going to present come from a careful, in-depth analysis that I carried out in the 1990s on approximately ten cases of this dance genre, as well as from some historical and cultural issues related to this subject of inquiry. This allowed me to identify, first, a large number of verbal and nonverbal characteristics and elements and to systematize them according to certain patterns of regularity; second, an internal coherence of each performance; third, a paradigmatic and genealogical transformation of the variants of which the system is composed. As the result of a given historic process and as the expression of different cultural settings, the topic of my talk—the symbolic re-creation of dance—has to do with the latter point: to re-create is to transform, in time and space, with the understanding that both history and culture constrict, each one in its own way, the processes of symbolic re-creation.

Nevertheless, we must not overlook the fact that the field of creative possibilities is infinitely greater than the number of resulting creations. Therefore, the arbitrariness inherent to all creative processes continues to be a firm premise of my analyses, despite the constraints. Moreover, creators' freedom to choose is limited not only by historical and cultural considerations but also by the logic that governs the system in which that freedom operates; in other words: we have to be different yet at the same time we have to say something analogous.

A final warning: given the analytical complexity of the topics I have mentioned, I will use only a minimal portion of the data available to me. I hope that the material I have chosen is sufficiently clear to allow me to weave my reflections together and share them with an audience not highly familiar with the context of Mexican dance.

Structural components and content of the dance in question

Two general characteristics define these performances: (1) *The formation of two rival sides*, and (2) *the ethnic, religious, and epic-military nature of the conflict being portrayed*. Such traits are not exclusive to the Dance of the Conquest of Mexico; they also characterize other genres of dances of conquest—for example, those of the Reconquest of Spain and the Conquest of Guatemala and of Peru. What differentiates one subgenre from another is, obviously, the historical-geographic references that vary from one context to another.

The topics that serve as the foundation for the antagonism between two sides—the military conquest of a territory and its riches at the hands of the Spanish, and the religious conversion of the Mexicans—are performed in different ways and have varying degrees of importance in each performance. Conversion is at times accepted by the Mexicans, in other cases it is imposed through force or rejected until the end. Moreover, military confrontation may be direct

or indirect, explicit or implicit; it may occur at the beginning or increase throughout the performance; it may be resolved pacifically or through violence; it may or may not entail a prior harmony; it may be expressed through verbal challenges and through alliances and betrayals; it may entail division/unity within the group, drawn-out wars between armies and individual duels; or it may be resolved with a few machete blows or through the divine intervention of the Apostle James. But the most surprising aspect of this representative variability has to do with the final result of the conflict. For obvious historical reasons, the final victory of the Spanish should be a foregone conclusion, and, indeed, in most cases it is. In a couple of cases, however, the conflict ends with a victory by the Mexicans and in still others with peace between the adversaries. I will return to this point shortly.

Historical sources tell us that the conflict involved different ethnic groups and countless personages. Nonetheless, this diverse array of groups and protagonists and the intricate interaction of alliances therein comes down, within the performance stage, to two sides—Spaniards and Mexicans—and a few personages, three of whom appear in all the variants of the dance: Captain Cortés, as the leader of the Spanish side; Emperor Moctezuma, as the leader of the Mexican side; and Malinche, generally portrayed as the wife of Cortés. The presence of a fourth personage, Mexican Emperor Cuauhtémoc (Moctezuma's successor), is very important, although it is not a part of all portrayals. Their performances inform an important ethical system, expressed in the following set of antagonisms: indecisiveness/firmness; grief/exaltation; conversion/apostasy; betrayal/loyalty; cowardice/heroism; magnanimity/covetousness. On this point, I must stress that the role carried out by each personage within this value system is strictly related to the functions performed by the other personages. The same happens with the other representative components. Roles and functions can vary, of course, from one performance to another or even within a given performance, in accordance with the constraints imposed by the system and with the narrative requirements of the representation. This is why we have different visions of Mexico's past.

Two colonial variants

Now, let us leave aside the earliest Mexican antecedents of the dances of the Conquest of Mexico, which more resembled a parade than a dance-theater, as well as the antecedents in the Iberian Peninsula of those Mexican antecedents. Let us turn, instead, to the period from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, when *théâtre édifiant* and the portrayals that concern us were handled by friars of different religious orders as a tool to celebrate the triumphs of the *Holy Faith*, in church atriums and on certain dates of the Catholic Calendar. A libretto of the Dance of the Conquest, known as the Martínez Gracida Codex and apparently written by Dominican friars in the eighteenth century, exemplifies the structural characteristics of the Colonial variants.

The leitmotif of this variant is conquering as a way of converting and its tone is decidedly pro-Hispanic. In it, all things related to the Spaniards are oriented toward this “noble purpose”; consequently, all the episodes should be read from this perspective. The Spanish leader, Cortés, is presented here as a soldier at the service of a religious truth (the same as that professed by the friars who organized these representations); his plan is linear, his action determined, unfaltering, and unvanquished. Nevertheless, before going to war against the Mexicans, he attempts to sway his opponent, Moctezuma, with kindness and persuasive arguments. He is helped in this attempt by Malinche, who betrays her husband, Moctezuma, but the attempt fails; Moctezuma refuses to convert. Hence, faced with the stubbornness of the Mexican leader, Cortés is left with no option other than the military one. The ensuing war is brief. Moctezuma surrenders and asks Cortés for forgiveness, but Cortés sends him to prison for his punishment to serve as an example. The rest of Mexicans are converted.

What is striking about this variant, that follow, more or less, the official colonial chronicle of the events, is that the Spanish are portrayed as having no faults and having virtues. Their superiority is, in reality, the superiority of the true God over the false Mexican gods. It is understood that the purpose of this variant was

to show, in an *edifying* manner, how Mexicans came to be Catholics. The topic of the territorial conquest has little importance and is subordinate to the religious purpose.

In another variant, in Xicotepec de Juárez, Sierra Norte de Puebla (McAfee 1952), from the first half of the nineteenth century, the “historical adjustments” are surprising. Cortés praises the virtues of Christianity and invites Moctezuma to convert. The two leaders exchange words of peace and love. Moctezuma “wholeheartedly” accepts the sacred water of baptism. Solemn music celebrates this act of understanding and harmony. When, the other Mexican leader, Cuauhtémoc, appears on stage to urge his people to combat the Spanish, Moctezuma and Cortés answer him with words of peace, inviting him to convert, but Cuauhtémoc declares war on them. In the ensuing fight, Cortés invokes the Apostle James, the angels, and the Virgin Mary to intervene in the battle to defeat Cuauhtémoc. Cuauhtémoc dies and goes to Hell. Moctezuma is pleased by the victory of the Holy Faith.

The post-Independence variants

Nevertheless, once Independence is achieved and consolidated, between 1821 and 1867, a rewriting of history in nationalist code prevails throughout the country. The dance-theater representations of the Conquest of Mexico suffer the same fate and, at the end of that century and the beginning of the twentieth, the dance librettos are passed from the hands of the friars to the hands of lay educators who make their own adjustments to the texts. It is during this period that Colonial variants go through an important modification, in keeping with the new objectives.

The driving force behind the variants corresponding to this second period is “conquering versus resisting,” for which reason the theological conflict is downplayed and the military confrontation is emphasized. An adamant reaffirmation of the valor and heroism of the Mexicans and of their refusal to surrender is superimposed on a basic scheme inherent to the dances of Moors and Christians, which are richer in combats and challenges than the Colonial versions of the Conquest of Mexico. In this type of variants, the personages are

characterized according to new purposes: Cortés becomes evil and Moctezuma good; or, Cortés and Moctezuma become evil and Cuauhtémoc becomes a national hero who sacrifices his life to defend his people and his native land. For the first time the topic of Cortés' covetousness—his interest in Moctezuma's gold—appears, and, in certain cases, his behavior is deceitful and cowardly. Within the code of the military confrontation, the Mexicans' successes multiply and the final result of the confrontation shifts to a pro-indigenist code. Three ways of doing this stand out. The first, and most striking, is to attribute the victory to the Mexicans, as if the history of the Conquest had ended with the episode of what is known as the Noche Triste (the “sad night” of the Spaniards), the natives' only military victory against the Spaniards. The second, and more common, way is to attribute to certain traitors, principally Malinche, the responsibility of the Spanish victory (leaving to the other Mexicans the merit and the honor of resistance).

A current indigenous trend

A third manner of symbolically resolving the confrontation was adopted a few decades ago in certain indigenous communities of the State of Oaxaca. In these variants, the staging of which is now in indigenous hands, the role of the Spaniards is drastically downplayed. At times children, known as “Soldaditos” (“little soldiers”), play that role, which is, in and of itself, very eloquent; but, in at least one case, the Spanish side has disappeared from the stage. By contrast, the role of the Mexicans is portrayed by experienced dancers who are held in high regard in the communities and who solemnly and lavishly execute numerous choreographic pieces with the evident purpose of evoking, through an elegant and affected gestural esthetics, the majesty of the ancestors more than their valor.

Nevertheless, the downplaying or the loss of one of the two sides points to a significant change in the dance structure of the Conquest genre. With it comes, at the least, the explicit representation of the conflict, a fact that is reinforced with the—also important—suppression of dialogues. But the conflict does not disappear completely, since the Spanish side is still present in the variants of the neighboring

villages or in the memory of the dancers. To minimize or eliminate the Spanish side is equivalent to symbolically defeating it (see also Harris 1997 and 2000). The importance of these cases lies, thus, in stating, through an ostentatious choreography, luxurious dress, and grandiloquent music, a triumph that in current times, characterized by formal education, is difficult to sustain.

It is valid to ask if, at the root of these portrayals of the Conquest of Mexico that stubbornly insist on showing an imaginary victory of the native peoples and other distortions of the historical record, there operates a highly naïve *savage mind* that seeks to conceal the unconcealable. In reality, what is naïve is not the indigenous vision of history but to think that history is the object of a “re-presentation.” What can be affirmed, based on these examples, and paraphrasing Turner (1981:10-11), is that the Conquest of Mexico only serves as an initial referent that in most cases inspires the discursive frame of the ritual processes, but that soon becomes a sort of metatopic for thinking about the events and the personages in a new condition. In any case, if what concerns us is the historical record, we must not forget that those victorious Spaniards of the sixteenth century were defeated 300 years later, in the War of Independence; and that another foreign army, this time French, was also defeated 50 years after that, ending the period known as the French Intervention, by Mexico's first and only indigenous president. I am referring to Benito Juárez, Zapotec and Oaxacan, as well as to the indigenous who suppressed the Spanish side from their own representations.

What I have tried to show with this brief comparison of variants is the transformation of history through mythic thinking. In this kind of thinking the correspondence between historical records and represented facts is less important than the logic through which these records and facts are rearranged and re-elaborate. The categories of thought referred to by the historical events and the imagined acts of which each variant is composed are determined from the outset: conflict/peace; victory/defeats; encourage/cowardice; conversions/apostasy, and so on. What changes, depending on historical and cultural context, are the representative forms

and the type of solutions adopted, and this is what, in the final analysis, explains the currency and the symbolic recreation of the Dance of the Conquest of Mexico.

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Chahut: The Mediation of Rationalism and the Unruly Body in the Cancan

Clare Parfitt

This paper addresses one particularly Parisian strand of dance history which feeds into the current debate over the relationship between practice and theory. The argument advanced here is that our contemporary conceptions of practice and theory are strongly shaped by the changing relationship between notions of rationality and irrationality in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The example of the cancan will be used to show how these philosophical ideas were applied to dance, and to point towards the ways in which dance history can enlighten twenty-first century issues.

The distinction between rationality and irrationality was first formulated by Greek philosophers, but it re-emerged with the questioning of religion in the West in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and reason became the foundation of Enlightenment philosophy. Enlightenment thought placed reason as the pinnacle of an historical progression from the primitive to the civilised, a model that would develop in the late nineteenth century into social evolutionism. The white, upper class, male subject enjoyed a position at the top of this scale, whereas women, the working classes, and other races were placed somewhat lower down.

Norbert Elias (1994), writing in the 1930s, showed how this scale was largely constructed through the body. He argued that since the Renaissance, the European body has undergone a process of civilisation in which it has learnt to exercise self-restraint over its spontaneous physical urges and impulses, closing itself off from other bodies and from interactions with the outside world. He called this body *homo clausus*, or closed man, implying a body with a firm outline, that doesn't let anything in or out. According to Elias, this conception of the body was constructed largely through prescriptions of manners and etiquette, which placed taboos on activities that broke bodily boundaries, such as sweating, for example. He argues that this development helped to generate the self-detachment necessary for scientific thinking, and the closed off body therefore became associated

with scientific rationality. This model of a scale from the irrational to the rational with *homo clausus* at the top was a powerful one, because it facilitated the idea that rationality, or theoretical thinking, could be separated off from the materiality of the body, and exist in a pure realm unaffected by the passions and emotions. Elias does not discuss the implications of this civilising process for the distribution of power between bodies of different genders, classes or races, but this theme is taken up by Dorinda Outram (1989).

Outram argues that *homo clausus* only reached its fully developed form in the wake of the French Revolution, when the new French nation was constructed on the model of the rational, closed, specifically male, middle-class body, drawing on the Roman Stoic tradition of detachment from bodily passions and emotions. Female, working class and racially other bodies were excluded from this national body politic, and therefore from the French electorate, on the basis that their bodies were open to external influences and internal urges, and were therefore irrational. This separation between rational male bodies and irrational female ones is evident in Jacques-Louis David's famous Revolutionary painting *The Oath of the Horatii* (1784), in which the strong, resolute bodies of three brothers pledge their allegiance to Rome before battle, while their mothers and sisters cry. Outram contends that the subtext to the French Revolution was a struggle between rational and irrational conceptions of body, a battle that rationality won. The bourgeoisie rose to cultural and political power after the Revolution, bringing with them the rational physical ideal, although without the heroic, active aspects of Revolutionary Stoicism captured by David. The rational body became what Outram calls a 'non-body' (Outram, 1989: 156), merely a vehicle for the rational mind it contains, projecting all of its openness and materiality onto irrational others.

What I think Outram ignores, however, is the extent to which the excluded irrational body retained a potency, through the Revolution and for the rest of the nineteenth century, to liberate the individual from the constraints of rational

behaviour. This potential became culturally significant in the late 1820s, as Charles X increasingly restricted personal freedoms, and it became clear that the liberatory ideals of 1789 were being sidelined (see Hauser, 1951). The disenfranchised masses rallied for another revolution, and it was in this second revolutionary moment that the irrational body re-emerged as an emblem of freedom.

French romanticism of the late 1820s and 1830s produced images of the grotesque, irrational but liberatory body, such as Delacroix's painting *Liberty Leading the People* (1830), which depicts a bare-breasted female figure leading working class and petit bourgeois men over the barricades in the Revolution of 1830. These images also influenced French ballet in the 1820s, as female ballerinas took centre stage and performed with an otherworldly freedom of movement. However, at this same moment, a dance form was emerging which would take the performance of irrationality far beyond the limits of romanticism. The cancan was inspired by rumours of the freer dancing body being performed in romantic ballet at the Paris Opera. In working class dance halls in Paris, this idea of a body liberated from the confines of rationality was applied to the quadrille, creating a parody of what had previously been a bourgeois dance.

The pre-cancan quadrille had used the civilised conception of movement that derived from the court ballet of Louis XIV. This involved verticality, a sense of lightness and resistance to gravity, centralised control of the external limbs, outward presentation, limited body contact between men and women, and classical alignment and proportion - the very features of the rational body. This can be contrasted with the early cancan, which involved a greater sense of gravity, breaks and angles in the body rather than verticality, greater energy, exaggerated and isolated movements of the outer limbs, such as kicks, greater body contact between men and women, and improvisation. By freeing the limbs from central control, and liberating the dancer from set figures, the cancan performed a body that appeared to escape the rational regulation of the mind, and was therefore irrational. In this early form, it was sometimes called the *chahut*, meaning uproar. Like the quadrille, it was initially danced by both men and women, as a social dance, not a

performance. But in the 1840s this began to change.

The dance had become popular in public carnival balls in Paris, where all the classes mixed. Although certain male cancan stars emerged in this context, such as Chicard and Brididi, female dancers began to dominate its performance. At the same time, bourgeois men began to withdraw from performing the dance, and restricted themselves to spectating. What emerged was a dynamic that the film theorist Mary Ann Doane describes in relation to early cinema spectatorship: "a denial of the [white, bourgeois, male] body through the projection of contingency and embodiment onto the white woman or racial other" (Doane, 1993: 15). In other words, bourgeois men asserted their rationality by denying their bodiliness, and therefore withdrawing from the dance into intellectual spectatorship. At the same time, lower class women, many of whom were courtesans or prostitutes, took on the embodiment of irrationality in order to offer bourgeois men a moment of release from rational norms, at a price.

The cancan was not the first dance form to construct the relationship between performer and spectator in this way. In romantic ballet the rejection of the male dancer was accompanied by the cultivation of a specifically male spectatorial role by critics such as Theophile Gautier. But although romantic ballet began to figure the ballerina's body as irrational, for example in the hysteria of *Giselle* discussed by Felicia McCarren (1998), it still retained elements of the aristocratic performance of an artful body that Sarah Cohen (2000) describes. The cancan, however, broke entirely with this tradition, making irrationality the central theme of its performance, and rationality, or the struggle to maintain it, the central theme of its spectatorship.

In the cancan of the mid- to late nineteenth century, the distinction between spectator and performer was directly mapped onto the distinction between rationality and irrationality. The irrationality of the cancan dancer was expressed through her grotesque body, to use Bakhtin's (1984) term, a body which emphasises the orifices which allow substances to move into and out of the body, and the reproductive organs, which define the body as unfinished, involved in a perpetual cycle of birth and death. By contrast, contemporary illustrations of the Moulin Rouge

show the spectators to be predominantly male, clothed in bourgeois attire, upright, and respectable. However, the primary distinction here is not in fact between male and female. Although the performer/spectator relationship in the cancan was modelled on the gender division of the heterosexual relationship, there were also many women in the audience at the Moulin Rouge whose bourgeois respectability qualified them for the role of rational spectator. Furthermore, the version of the cancan performed at the Moulin Rouge, called the *quadrille naturaliste*, incorporated male as well as female dancers, such as Valentin le Désossé (Valentin the boneless). While gender-crossing was common at the boundary between performer and spectator, the distinction between rationality and irrationality was less negotiable.

An ideal distinction operated in the cancan between performer and spectator which corresponded with that between the rational and irrational, low and high, body and mind. Performer and spectator were therefore split along the lines of Cartesian dualism, and in fact the Enlightenment distinction between rationality and irrationality had philosophical roots in Descartes' mind-body split. In the late nineteenth century, this distinction was given scientific weight by a renewed interest in evolutionary theories, particularly those of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, as well as Charles Darwin. The relationship between the irrational performer and the rational spectator was now conceived as an encounter between less and more evolved humans. For example, the journalist André Chadourne located himself on the rational, evolved side of this equation in 1889 by declaring his wish to, "stop those horrifying exhibitions of women found in the worst gutters... these Goulues, these Grilles-d'égout who dance on the French stage the kind of dance steps that are unknown even to the lowest form of savages" (Chadourne cited in Gordon, 2003: 631-632). However, Chadourne had clearly witnessed these horrifying exhibitions. Spectatorship could be aligned with scientific observation, and facilitated the application of theories, such as social evolutionism, and the making of theoretical and moral judgements. Any other kind of bodily interaction with the cancan dancer, however, would compromise rationality. This evolutionary distinction between performer and spectator was

reproduced in many nineteenth-century dance forms, including blackface minstrelsy in America, which was contemporaneous with the cancan, and several late nineteenth-century dance forms including American burlesque, and European appropriations of Middle Eastern dances.

However, as Jane Goodall (2002) has argued, nineteenth-century performance often had an ambivalent relationship to science, reflecting it while at the same time distorting the ordered world it presented. Like several other nineteenth-century performance genres, such as epileptic singing described by Rae Beth Gordon (2001), the cancan undermined its embodiment of evolutionary difference by threatening to infect the rational with the irrational, seducing the bourgeois spectator to degenerate down the evolutionary scale. For example, the journalist Edgar Baes, warned of the risks of attending the Moulin Rouge: "More than one [spectator] sticks his tongue out and twists his arms craving more, hypnotized by the hectic transports of a monstrous and degrading lack of decency" (Baes cited in Gordon, 2001: 97). Cancan spectatorship was fraught with the risk of becoming infected with irrational embodiment. In fact the cancan was often described in the same terms as hysteria, the supposedly contagious pathological affliction of late nineteenth-century lower class women. The infectious irrationality of the cancan was part of its attraction, offering a release from the rational conventions of bourgeois life, but it also threatened the social status of the spectator, which was based on maintaining rationality. The cancan dangerously exposed the fact that rationality could only be maintained by a constant act of denial of the materiality of the body.

Perhaps for this reason, when Loïe Fuller offered an alternative to the irrational model of the female dancing body in the 1890s, the cancan quickly fell out of fashion. Fuller rationalised her body by transforming freedom of movement from an act of seduction into high art. By doing so, she liberated the spectator from the threat of irrationality. The bourgeoisie, keen to prove their rational disembodiment, quickly rejected the cancan, and switched their allegiance to new, more modern dance forms. The art critic and collector Roger Marx wrote of Fuller in *La Revue Encyclopédique*:

Her success is due to the contrast between her kind of dancing and that to which we have recently been subjected. Too many danseuses have been giving poor imitations of “the Andalusian’s impish stomping” or have emphasised a swaying of the hips and a rotation of the pelvis, or have resorted to other bodily contortions. These women wear as little as they can get by with, and what they wear accentuates the buttocks and the breasts. Loïe Fuller is utterly different. She keeps her body straight, and she derives effects from the very profusion of her garments.

Marx cited in Current and Current, 1997,
55

Fuller was described as chaste and innocent (see Garelick, 1995) in comparison with the cancan and the other late nineteenth-century dance forms which presented the female body as an irrational attraction.

In the twentieth century, the emergence of a rationalised female body shifted the distinction between rationality and irrationality away from the performer/spectator relationship onto different types of dance practice. Modern dance entered the realm of high culture, while the cancan and other dance forms which hypnotised the spectator, were relegated to the low culture of working class venues, tourist attractions or dance interludes in film musicals. Dance critics often focused their theorising on dance as high art, regarding low dance practices as entertainment that resisted rational analysis.

However, in the late twentieth century, postmodern perspectives have allowed a critique not only of the modernist rejection of the low, but of the underlying Enlightenment distinction between rational and irrational. Dance studies has emerged out of the postmodern impulse to subject areas previously dismissed as irrational to theoretical investigation. However, the incorporation of dance into the historically rationalist realm of scholarship also raises certain issues. In terms of the place of dance studies in the wider academic arena, the wish to raise the status of the discipline by dispelling the notion that the body is irrational, must be balanced against the need to recognise the unique capacity of the body and the choreographic process to operate in ways

that escape, confound, and sometimes subvert the hegemonic rationalist order. And within the discipline, the moves towards integrating practice and theory in university teaching and in practice-based research, must be accompanied by a willingness to question which dance forms are regarded as amenable to theoretical analysis, and which forms are excluded from the notion of ‘practice’ by their previous designation as irrational or low. The cancan, as a product of the Enlightenment scale of rationality, can help us to historicise these struggles, and to understand the sources of the powerful forces which have shaped them and are still at play today.

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Transmission – Création -- Trace

Catherine Augé

Notre titre - transmission, création, trace – a un air d'évidence :

D'abord on apprend, puis on crée et ensuite on laisse des traces.

À la réflexion, le fait de pouvoir écrire le mouvement suppose d'être capable :

- d'en faire une analyse préalable
- de transcrire sa pensée du mouvement.

Une écriture du mouvement est donc déjà une création en soi. C'est une langue qui ne naît pas spontanément, contrairement aux langues vivantes, « maternelles ». Organisée par un être humain, elle organise un mode original de la pensée par l'action, et de l'action par la pensée. Dans ce sens, ceux qui conçoivent les notations du mouvement sont véritablement des créateurs. Et ceux qui l'utilisent peuvent l'être aussi. Une écriture du mouvement, quelle qu'elle soit, est action et doit conduire à l'action.

Deux constats découlent de ces premières réflexions:

Premièrement, l'utilisation d'une notation du mouvement, pour un danseur, un professeur, un chorégraphe, se situe au carrefour de la pratique et de la théorie. Ceci justifie notre présence aujourd'hui parmi vous.

Deuxièmement, notre intervention aurait aussi pu se décliner ainsi : création (d'une notation ou par la notation) transmission, trace (d'une chorégraphie, ou d'une synthèse pédagogique)

Nous l'avons dit, toute écriture induit un processus de pensée spécifique.

Il suffit de voir une page de notation Conté [image d'une partition] pour que s'impose un désir de lien avec la pensée musicale. Le signe de base est la note.

Pour certains, cela paraîtra une évidence ; danse et musique sont sœurs, pour d'autres, cela semblera une contrainte exagérée.

Pourtant, étroit ou relâché, écriture ou pas, le lien existe : Le monde sonore est lié au monde du mouvement.

Chez le bébé, déjà, cris et gestes sont les grands organisateurs intrinsèques. Un bébé qui ne bouge pas, qui ne pleure ou ne crie pas, ne peut pas finaliser l'organisation de ses fonctions corporelles et émotionnelles.

Et tous les peuples du monde ont initialement liés intimement geste et cris, danse et musique.

Pierre Conté (1991-1971), à la fois compositeur, chorégraphe et biomécanicien de haut niveau, a d'abord élaboré une « technique générale du mouvement », pour lui un maillon manquant en matière d'éducation généraliste de la danse. De cette technique générale, découlera naturellement, dans les années 1930, le solfège corporel que représente sa notation qui va utiliser, nous l'avons vu, les références mêmes de la musique (principalement en matière de rythme) et s'appuyer, dans le domaine de l'espace, sur les données de la biomécanique moderne.

Pour vous familiariser avec le système de notation Pierre Conté, nous avons choisi de vous présenter les éléments simples en images.

Dans les années 1950, Jean Painlevé, un des premiers cinéastes de vulgarisation scientifique se passionne pour cette notation du mouvement et réalise un documentaire pour exposer les modalités de ce système.

[film sur l'écriture]

Parlons maintenant de la transmission avec notation du mouvement.

Nul ne doute que les êtres humains ont choisi, sans choisir, de transmettre leurs danses par le moyen le plus évident pour le mouvement : le mimétisme.

Les danses traditionnelles parlent de bain d'imprégnation. L'enfant entend une musique qui le baigne, vit les gestes qui l'accompagne, pénètre l' élan musical et corporel qui s'en dégagent et entre dans la danse sans s'en apercevoir, comme on parle sa langue maternelle.

À l'heure actuelle, alors que nombre de danses passent par un apprentissage, par des « cours » de danse, le mimétisme , principalement avec le professeur, accessoirement avec d'autres élèves, peut-être plus avancés, joue encore un grand rôle.

On sait maintenant que certains neurones, appelés « neurones miroirs » , interviennent dans le mimétisme. Quand je regarde quelqu'un en mouvement, inconsciemment, mes propres aires cérébrales correspondant à ce mouvement s'activent. Et cela d'autant plus que je suis impliquée par le geste et/ou par la personne qui le fait, donc par un ensemble de référents personnels émotionnels ou techniques préalables.

Dans la lignée des recherches d'Alain Berthoz sur l'empathie, une étude a été réalisée auprès de danseurs issus de

différentes techniques. Les aires cérébrales correspondant aux mouvements montrés sur écran étaient d'autant plus activées que le danseur classique, par exemple, regardait une variation de danse classique plutôt qu'une variation d'un autre style. De même un danseur contemporain pour la danse contemporaine.

Une partition de danse pénalise t'elle à ce mécanisme d'empathie ?

Par rapport à la bonne activation des neurones miroirs, le fait d'analyser un mouvement multiplie les référents qui les activent ; et lire, et encore plus écrire, c'est analyser. Avec l'analyse, la reconnaissance des mouvements de l'autre s'affine, se précise ; on peut penser que l'activation des neurones miroirs est ainsi améliorée.

Mais une partition, n'est-ce pas aussi ouvrir d'autres possibles dans la transmission ? En complément du mouvement que me montre le professeur, la partition en elle-même représente un autre référent au mouvement.

Une partition m'appartient, je lis ce qui est écrit, mais l'interprétation de ce qui est écrit , et aussi de ce qui n'est pas écrit, me revient.

C'est déjà un acte de création. J'exécuterai ce qui est proposé, mais revisité par mon propre monde de coordinations, mon imaginaire et non en reproduisant inconsciemment les coordinations dessinées par le corps d'un autre. A côté de celles activées par les neurones miroirs, je vais utiliser d'autres voies synaptiques.

Pour les enfants qui n'ont pas une grande mémoire corporelle, pour lesquels les coordinations ne s'engramment pas trop d'un cours à l'autre, le fait de pouvoir passer par d'autres biais que la mémorisation corporelle peut être salvateur. Sans oublier qu'une partition,

cela s'emmène à la maison et que, comme un musicien, un enfant comme un adulte peut travailler sa partition de danse quotidiennement, la mémoriser en étant sûr de faire juste .

Et puis, ce qui est écrit est écrit mais.... Ce qui n'est pas écrit m'appartient !

N'est-ce pas une des clés de la liberté, en pédagogie comme ailleurs, qu'être libre à l'intérieur d'un cadre plus ou moins contraignant ?

En ce qui concerne la pédagogie avec la notation Conté, et son parti-pris de relation avec la musique, la contrainte (ce qui est écrit) se fera souvent (pas toujours) par le temps, le rythme des appuis, des différents segments du corps, donnant ainsi la priorité au dynamisme du mouvement . on aborde là la problématique des vitesses, avec les phases d'accélération et les phases de décélération.

Ainsi, devant une partition, se produira ce type de réflexion :

« il faut que je sois là à ce moment-là, avec cet agencement corporel global précis, cet espace à parcourir pour chaque segment corporel, avec cette nuance là, cette demande d'expression là, etc... »

Comment est-ce que je m'organise pour arriver ? quelle stratégie vais-je choisir ? n'est-ce pas dans ce choix sans cesse renouvelé, au gré des partitions, que se joue la richesse des mélodies cinétiques ?

Pour illustrer cette démarche, nous vous présentons aujourd'hui un travail d'atelier avec écriture autour de deux rythmes bien particuliers.

Nous travaillons depuis deux ans, Michelle Nadal et moi, avec une équipe de professeurs de danse, ou de musique, des Conservatoires Municipaux de la Ville de Paris. Cette formation en notation Conté a été rendue possible grâce à la volonté d'Anne-Marie Sandrini l'inspectrice de la danse de la Ville de Paris, à la suite d'une expérience auprès d'enfants danseurs du conservatoire du 6^{ème} arrondissement.

Cette formation a pour but de former les futurs intervenants en notation du mouvement, mais aussi de permettre aux professeurs d'intégrer la notation Conté au sein de leurs cours, car les enfants peuvent, dès 7-8 ans appréhender cette écriture, comme ils le font avec le solfège musical.

Le premier thème présenté s'articule autour des hémioles. que peut bien être une hémiole ? en musique, une hémiole désigne l'insertion d'une structure rythmique binaire dans un rythme globalement à trois temps, ou inversement. Ici, la musique est une valse très célèbre au début du 20^{ème} siècle : *walzing the blues*. Une valse, donc, un trois temps, traditionnellement : 1-- 1-- .or là, le premier thème se construit autour du rythme :

1-3-5- 1- - 4- - [ne pas dire les chiffres], ce qui revient à dire que l'on fait 3 fois 2 au lieu de 2 fois trois.

[partition rythmique] *lecture rythmique des hémioles avec les mains et/ou avec les pieds*

Sur cette base rythmique, les étudiantes, par groupe, ont composé une partition en notation Conté, avec des mouvements retardés, des mouvements indirects, des alternances d'en-dehors et en dedans.

Démonstration.

Les partitions des différents thèmes sont projetées en même temps qu'elles sont dansées sur scène [partitions].

La deuxième démonstration s'est organisée autour de syncope au 2^{ème} tiers de temps, base rythmique qui nous est proposée par une musique de Philippe Agou. De style plus contemporain, on y trouve des rebonds et des impulse. La composition est d'une des étudiantes, Chrystel Calvet. Chaque cellule a ensuite été notée par les autres étudiantes.

Enfin, nous arrivons aux traces : Souvent, on nous dit que maintenant, avec les supports vidéo, les notations du mouvement sont dépassées. Mais cela ne revient-il pas à dire que les enregistrements audio rendent les partitions de musique caduques pour les musiciens ? Une version vidéo ne peut être qu'un témoignage, au demeurant très précieux, mais incomplet, d'un moment t, avec une interprétation particulière, et ne peut pas prendre la place d'une partition qui perdure en dehors des interprètes, et laisse apparaître en filigrane la pensée du chorégraphe.

Noter les œuvres d'un chorégraphe, quand celui-ci ne possède pas de notation, présente, outre la conservation de l'œuvre, un intérêt de participation active pour le notateur. Car écrire, c'est forcément choisir. Au cours de discussions avec le chorégraphe, on va éclairer les choix principaux qui y président, préciser l'analyse de l'œuvre et choisir ce dont il faut garder la trace.

Mais en matière de création, le meilleur notateur d'une œuvre n'est-il pas son créateur lui-même ? Il est le plus apte à savoir ce qui doit être écrit pour que l'essentiel de son message perdure. De même pour les professeurs, pour retenir et

enrichir peu à peu ses progressions pédagogiques.

Pour noter les traces laissées par les danses traditionnelles, ou d'autres types de mouvement, l'acrobatie par exemple, le système Conté, système ouvert, propose des grilles placées en tête de partition. Ces grilles indiquent les signes spécifiques nécessaires pour un système gestuel donné.

Tout comme le système musical transcrit aussi bien une comptine pour enfant ou une œuvre magistrale, le système Conté permet de transcrire les premiers pas et les œuvres chorégraphiques les plus complexes.

Pour conclure, on peut dire que, sans éliminer les portes d'entrées sensorielles et proprioceptives, qui sont essentielles, la notation Conté offre à la danse une porte d'entrée supplémentaire, tout aussi ludique. Elle induit un moyen supplémentaire de compréhension, de mémorisation, de créativité. Ce n'est pas une panacée, mais un outil remarquable.

Nous vous invitons maintenant à passer de la théorie à la pratique.

Vous pouvez passer sur le plateau pour déchiffrer ensemble une variation simple sur le rythme des appuis.

Souvenez-vous :

Sur la ligne du fa, l'appui sur le pied gauche.

Sur la ligne du la, l'appui sur le pied droit.

Les directions utilisées : 1 pour l'avant, 3 pour l'arrière, 2 pour le côté, 0 pour ce qui est sur place.

“My hands are plunged in oranges”... :

An Experiential Account of a Working Process

Jenny Roche

This presentation incorporated the live performance throughout, by the author, of movement from “The All Weather Project” by Liz Roche. The movement sections were integral to the presentation and are indicated below in italics.

“I am going to start by dancing for you...”

Movement: Live performance of solo approximately 10 minutes in duration

This is the introduction....

Through my PhD research, I am examining the choreographic process from the perspective of the independent contemporary dancer, through embodying this role as a researcher/participant. My methodological frameworks, which utilise video documentation and journal writing, could be characterised as ethnographic, multi-modal embodied theorising, leading to “multi-dimensional theorising” (I adopt this term from Susan Melrose). In this way, I am unwinding the embodied practice of dancing, through the co-existent layers of experience, towards forming a theoretical understanding of the issues that arise for the dancer. The issues that I have identified as relevant to my research are those relating to the dancer’s ‘moving identity’ or way of moving, as a mutable and adaptable form that must alter and re-adjust to each different choreographic engram or movement vocabulary, that she/he encounters. I am examining this interplay between stability and change. I also reflect on the impact of destabilisation and flux on the dancer’s identity in a wider sense, as she/he relates outwardly to signifying factors within the social strata.

Today I am going to bring you through a reflection on the working process of a dance piece as experienced from the inside. By doing so, I hope to capture and elucidate the multi-dimensional layers which existed for me within

this process. Through displaying these fragments together, I endeavour to invoke the ‘totality’ of the experience.

Throughout my research, I am also working as a dancer and often, with Rex Levitates Dance Company, Dublin, that I co-direct with my sister, Liz Roche and it is the creative process of one of her pieces that I wish to discuss here today.

In my research I am exploring what it means to be a part of the creative unfolding of another artist, to be both a live self-aware participant in the choreographic process, and the material through which the choreography is realised and the dance formed.

Movement: Floor sequence

Therefore, when I discuss this work, I do so with the understanding that I am dealing only with an aspect of the process, which would not convey the whole truth for the choreographer who created it or indeed for the audience who witnessed it. What I am discussing is the interface between myself and the unfolding choreographic schema and the nuances of our exchange.

Movement: Phrase A: starting diagonally, twist up until swipe forward with left leg, right arm curved.

My research questions:

Please bear with me, as I read this passage from André Lepecki (2006):

And if the theological stage hosts choreography, an art that had to mute the body in order to fully become autonomous, then it is the dancer’s body’s expressivity that has to be muted becoming nothing more than a

faithful executor of the designs of the
absent, remote, perhaps dead, yet
haunting power of the master's will.
(Lepecki 2006:54)

*Movement: Phrase C: swish step into leg arm,
jump back, ending in diagonal forward, left arm
in front*

This passage haunts me at the moment in my practice as a dancer. Is this always the case? Does all choreography mute the dancer's body's expressivity? Is the role itself inherently a subservient and passive one? My research is concerned with the identity crisis that may arise when the dancer moves from one process to the next, how she/he balances and resolves the multiple embodiments inherent to her/his profession. I am aware of the ways in which choreography can impose itself on the dancer, how it can colonise the body as an alien schema. Or as Lepecki (2006:63) calls it, "a haunting machine, a body snatcher". However, the All Weather Project doesn't quite feel like that.

Movement: Phrase D: fall to left steps demi-point forward. Ends side bend fall

The All Weather Project takes place in a specifically constructed garden. In the first instance, in 2006, the setting was the financial services centre in Dublin's Docklands area and last Saturday it was performed in the courtyard of the Irish Cultural Centre in Paris on rue des Irlandais near Pantheon.

The piece is a series of solos which are constructed over a two-week period through the refinement and organisation of the memories and associations of the dancers. This work is particularly interesting to me in relation to my research, as it adopts a number of approaches within a simple choreographic structure, in order to create an original solo for each of the five dancers.

The working process

Liz wrote about her starting point for the process:

In the making of this project I employed an entirely different approach than usual to the generation of the choreography. I sent the five

performers a questionnaire that I had compiled for the purpose of gathering their individual personal responses to the material I was working with. I asked that on the first day of rehearsals they would attend with these questions answered.

The Questionnaire:

Please bring:

1. 2 songs or pieces of music (not classical) that you feel are inspired by nature, summer, gardens, that you resonate with.
2. Put in writing:
 1. What worries you personally about what is happening to the environment and ecology?
 2. What comforts you personally about what is happening in the environment and ecology? (Please refer to the natural world and not humans)
 3. Describe in the form of a short story a memory you have of yourself being affected physically or mentally by the natural world – a memory in which you have experienced the force of nature (positive or negative). In addition please note:
 - a) What you were wearing in the memory
 - b) How old you were
 - c) The lasting affect of the memory in your life now
 4. At least two verses or stanzas of a poem that inspires a connection to nature for you.

Movement: Phrase E (a): reach side, side on centre up until pulling the lower leg up.

Movement: Phrase E (b): step back, pearly queen into jump

In The All-Weather Project, to build the solos, we started by learning five phrases of movement, with the instruction to arrange the order of how they appear in sequence, construct moments of transition between the phrases and to set the dynamic and quality of each phrase. Although the movement is uniform, we are asked to embody it in an individualistic way. So

that it makes sense to us, so that it feels comfortable. I discussed what this means with Liz. It is not setting a particular way of dancing the movement, but rather, it is being open to re-discovering it anew each time. To being engrossed in the sensation of what is happening in the body.

What is the difference between showing and doing? In rehearsals, I show her my ordering of the sequences, my body displays the structure, without thought for the layers of dynamic or quality. To me, this movement is an abstract structure that can be displayed and discussed objectively, something that is initially external to my body, to quote N. Katherine Hayles (1999:199) “an inscription that functions as if it were independent of any particular instantiation”. However, Liz can’t see whether it works until I embody it, discover and inhabit it, thus the inscription must become an “incorporating practice” which “cannot be separated from its embodied medium, for it exists as such only when it is instantiated in...a particular kind of gesture” (Hayles, 1999: 198).

Although the movement phrase exists as specific information to be passed from one body to the next, it manifests differently in each body and this difference is encouraged within the process. Lepecki (2006) writes of the ‘difference revealed at the core of repetition’ and how:

Every time a different body brings to the same piece of dance unconscious variations on emphasis and uncontrollable micromarks of individualities, we witness a moment in which that “intractable” identification of dancer and dance is fundamentally subverted.

(Lepecki, 2006: 62)

That, which is also revealed through the different arrangements of the same material by each dancer, is perhaps the ‘moving identity’ of the dancer. It is something that reads almost as a sub-text to what is visually perceived; is it the background?

Each solo has a similar structure. The dancer enters the space and says “I am going to start by dancing for you”. She/he then dances a given phrase of movement at the same time as the

chosen song. When this is finished, the dancer relates her/his story which is accompanied by movement. She/he then says “and I like this space over here” and points to a space on the platform. Finally she/he dances echoes from the given phrase while reciting a poem or story.

Personal narratives

In the All Weather project, we worked with stories, orations of our memories of nature, moments when we were aware of the presence of nature around us. We tell the story of this moment in simple language, with attention to the detail of what we are wearing, how our bodies are responding in the moment and we tell all of this in the present tense.

Movement: spoken with accompanying movements:

I am moving outside in a garden and it starts to rain. I am wearing a very cheap Dunnes Stores windcheater, olive green and the rain starts to hammer away, dripping down the back of my neck into all the nooks and crannies revealed through the cheap stitching. It feels unstoppable, eroding me. Now, I realise that I am standing still through all this weather that is happening around me. I dig down into the earth to stabilise myself. I pretend to be a rock against the persistent flow of water. I endure....it was intense.

This is an instantiated moment, an embodied memory that is revealed through the simplicity of the phenomena that arise in these short moments. My life is made up of millions of these moments, which merge into the story I weave myself about myself,

but both the unified story and the coherent self are myths of identity. For there is no coherent “self” that predates stories about identity, about “who” one is. Nor is there a unified, stable immutable self that can remember everything that has happened in the past. We are always fragmented in time, taking a particular or provisional perspective on the moving target of our pasts, addressing multiple and disparate

audiences. Perhaps, then, it is more helpful to approach autobiographical telling as a performative act.

(Smith & Watson, 2001:47)

Thus, this story is wholly true and at the same time, not-true, as it can never capture fully the moment objectively. Through the telling of the story of this moment however, I offer so much more than a 'myth of identity', I offer the sense of how I perceive myself in the world. Hayles (1999) writes that

Information, like humanity, cannot exist apart from the embodiment that brings it into being as a material entity in the world; and embodiment is always instantiated, local and specific.

(Hayles, 1999: 49)

Therefore, although I am engaged in this particular process, there is a leakage of my own narrative, my own meaning, operating behind the scenes. This narrative incorporates my location, my gender, my life script and all the other unconscious configurations and inconsistencies that compiled together create an experience of 'self'. This process triggers these elements in the following way...

My connections

The movements that accompany this text have their own origins. I had a memory of a conversation with American dance artist Lisa Nelson in Limerick University on a smoke break from one of her teaching sessions. She was examining a climbing plant that had attached itself vein-like up a wall. She said something about the subtlety of the plant's nervous system, how sensitive it must be. This exchange came back to me during the process and I saw my connection with nature as related to the nature in me and that if nature on a wider level had been damaged or compromised, that this was also reflected in my own body. Therefore I sought to work within the area of balancing and maintaining balance. When I started this process in 2006, I was recovering from a serious illness and so I traced these places of concern in my body, the places that I wished to re-align. I move from the pituitary gland to the thyroid and then

to the heart, liver and spleen. The kidneys into the adrenals (I push into them when I say "I dig down into the earth to stabilise myself"). Why not use this opportunity to heal myself?

Dancing in the gardens in Dublin and Paris, we were surrounded by living plants that gave the performance space its structure. Everything was alive and supported us in a completely different way to a studio or indeed a theatre. Your feet feel different dancing on grass....

This constructed garden created a space to interplay between artifice and reality. The grass is living and real, yet it rests on a constructed platform. Our solos are lived for real and also performed, perhaps there is no inside or outside, real or artificial. It is just the interplay between layers of the experiential. The poem that I brought to the process was not strictly a poem, but some prose, written by Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. This is what it means to me...

The background revealed

There is a constant tension in my life between what I am focusing on and what I am shutting out in order to focus. I have always had to suppress so much in order to perform, the lights, the audience, the uncomfortable floor, the mobile phone that goes off in the theatre. I think I am trying to retrieve all of these moments now, "what was happening in the background?" That's what fascinates me. When we rehearsed the All Weather Project in the Irish College, some Irish students were drinking out in the garden. They were quiet enough when I danced, but when Arnau began his solo, they seemed to become uncomfortable to see a man dancing. They had to leave, what is in this background?

Abstract non-narrative contemporary dance still holds a contested space in the Arts in Ireland. Perhaps the representation of unconscious modes of meaning, symbolic and metaphoric messages which rely on the body itself as a communicative tool, challenges the literary logo-centrism of how we Irish chose to represent ourselves.

In the promotional literature for the celebration of Dublin as European City of Culture in 1991, the city was presented predominantly as one of masculine literary modernism.

(Nash, 1997: 119)

Oh yes! And we're in the Irish College in Paris, where they have been training male priests since 1578 and now celebrate Beckett and Joyce. This is often the background that I have to suppress in Ireland, this general discomfort with the body moving without words, when the body starts to speak its own language.

Well, I chose Frida Kahlo's words, words that she had written to her husband Diego Rivera. I chose them because when I read those words years ago, I couldn't understand how she could feel this sense of nature in her body so deeply. I had shut out so much feeling in my body to be able to dance. From my training as a ballet dancer from the age of nine, to my years of dancing for other people, balancing discipline and control with the desire for freedom through movement. But there is no being 'here' without the body.

Movement: next passage spoken with accompanying movement

The vegetal miracle of my body's landscape is in you the whole of nature. I traverse it in a flight that with my fingers caresses the round hills, thevalleys, longing for possession and the embrace of the soft green fresh branches covers me.....our words have never gone outside. Only a mountain knows the insides of another mountain. At times your presence floats continuously as if wrapping all my being in an anxious wait for morning. And I notice I am with you. In this moment, still full of sensations, my hands are plunged in oranges, and my body feels surrounded by you.

(Kahlo in Herrara, 1983: 374)

And...I wrote this in my journal during the process

I can no longer stand the body's leakage- its biological reality. It has moved from metaphor to flesh and this expansion outwards can no longer be contained.

I cannot contain it in these movements. My need is for restriction/structure/definition for there is no real solid structure anywhere to be found. I come up against the boundaries of my biology, my gender, my culture – yet nothing holds fast or solid as I can perceive it, therefore I am beyond it. This exercise in dancing for others is an exercise in finding containment.

Movement: Phrase B: My phrase up until corner

The All Weather Project invites the performer to deepen her/his sensation within the movement, through connecting to the specifically created 'organic' setting. There are no harsh theatre lights to negotiate, nor flat smooth dance floor to treat as earth and no fourth wall as front. The body, in this setting can perhaps feel its aliveness more acutely. For me, it is more possible to bring my attention into the moment, to notice the detail and stay with it, to move away from an idea of executing pre-formed movements, into discovering the movements as they unfold.

And finally, I will try to bring you with me into this memory.

Movement: next passage said with accompanying movement

I am lying on the grass. I am lowering my legs slowly. My body feels heavy into the soft ground. I look forward at the audience; I can feel them all around me. I am opening my arm to the right and laying my head into the palm of my left hand. I can smell the grass and the earth now, underneath me. I see four guys out of my right eye. They are Parisian dancers; I wonder what they are thinking. I run my arm along the grass, tracing my fingers through the soft brush and I think, "I'm only going to have one chance to do this".

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“Greek” Desires in Paris: Isadora Duncan Dances Antiquity in the Lesbian Salon

Samuel N. Dorf

In his preface to *Les orientals*, Victor Hugo declared: “In the age of Louis XIV one was a Hellenist, today one is an Orientalist.”¹ In reality, the two modes of approaching Ancient Greek culture have engaged in a complicated *pas de deux* for centuries. France’s Gallic past has always linked this great culture of the West to a mythologized Ancient Greek world. The French reincarnated the legends, histories, politics, and arts of an imagined classical world since at least the sixteenth-century in their politics, painting, sculpture and music; moreover, each time they dipped into this quasi-fictional pool of ancient memory, its modern representation has clung to one of two predominating trends – Orientalism or Hellenism.

While binary systems (be they Apollonian vs. Dionysian, or Hellenist vs. Orientalist) have helped make some sense of these phenomena, they are subjective and blurry – certainly not objective – and it is critical to explore the binary system on a case by case basis, from individual to individual. Once we define *who* is creating the seemingly mutually exclusive categories of Hellenists and Orientalists, we can only then ask how their system accounts for liminal artists dancing around, in between and through these two seemingly monolithic categories. This paper seeks to understand how one artist – Isadora Duncan – navigated this terrain and how some of her lesbian audiences received her “Greek” gestures. While the traps of the binary system are many, the purpose is to create a separate space of reception – a new frame, one in which we can re-approach a familiar question with new insights – early twentieth-century dance in terms of lesbian erotics.

Duncan’s dance has often been characterized as “Greek” by the dancer herself as well as by her critics. Still, the question remains, what was Greece to Isadora Duncan? Was it the Pantheon, the Acropolis, the baths, the Senate, the island of Lesbos, the writings of Plato, the plays of Euripides, none of these things, all of them, or a combination of some of them?

Duncan most famously discussed her art in a speech, *Der Tanz der Zukunft*, a most consciously composed Wagnerian essay on the future, present and past of dance. The speech delivered to the Berlin Press Club in 1903 became her manifesto on dance. As Ann Daly writes in her monograph on Duncan’s dance on tour in America, “Most significant, Duncan used this opportunity [“The Dance of the Future”] to build upon a compelling, but largely imaginary, past – specifically, the ancient splendors of the Greeks – to create a foundation for the ‘Dance of the Future.’”²

What will this dance of the future look like, and how will it be Greek? Duncan states early on that: “If we seek the real source of the dance, if we go to nature, we find that the dance of the future is the dance of the past, the dance of eternity, and has been and will always be the same.”³ She then, of course, demonstrates the eternal beauty of the ancient Greek poses she studied in statuary and on pottery in museums and concludes, “Therefore,” she writes “dancing naked upon the earth I naturally fall into Greek positions, for Greek positions are only earth positions.”⁴ Here, Duncan equates the aesthetic of ancient Greece with a universal aesthetic, with nakedness, simplicity, internationalism, and general sense of ahistory. Duncan’s dancer of the future will be international, not a nymph, not any other mythological, heavenly or supernatural creature, she will not be a “coquette” either, she says. She will be a *woman* “in her greatest and purest expression.”⁵

Despite all of these claims to international, eternal aims in dance, Duncan, in her autobiography *My Life*, repeatedly denies that her dances were anything but American. The connection between ideas of classicalism and Americanism resides in Duncan’s unfailing belief in a universal conception of aesthetics. Her project is a paradigmatic modernist approach, one that privileges an artificial objective concept of form and simplicity over subjective ideas of identity. That is to say, while Duncan waxes poetically about freedom in movement and body, she simultaneously positions herself and the freedom in her art apart from similar

projects (e.g. jazz dance, popular dance) that do not fit into her conception of art.

In *Done into Dance*, Daly writes how Duncan defined this conception of her dance as high art, and how she raised the dance from the bottom of the cultural landscape to the top of American society. Daly identifies Duncan's process as dance defined by exclusion: a dance that situated itself outside discourses that raised questions of propriety and morality. Daly drives the point home in her appraisal of Duncan's oppositional conception of art.

Dancing was considered profane, so she elevated her own practice by contrasting it to that of "African primitives." The fundamental strategy of Duncan's project to gain cultural legitimacy for dancing was one of exclusion.⁶

Focusing on Duncan's American tours, Daly highlights the "African" as the abject pole that the dancer positions herself against; however, her French audiences had a whole host of alternative (and these are Daly's terms) "uncivilized, sexual, and profane"⁷ dances to compare to Duncan's.

As a contrast to the discourse on the "Greek" Duncan, I offer the opening scene from Camille Erlanger's opera based on Pierre Louÿs' orientalist Greek novel of the same name, *Aphrodite*. Set in Alexandria in the year 57 BCE, the opera tells the tale of Chrysis, a lesbian courtesan who while attending orgies, lures a sculptor to steal and murder for her only for him to reject her. In the end of the opera she is crucified for her crimes. The novel's eroticism and references to lesbianism were not in the least bit subtle and adapting Chrysis's raw sexuality for the opera stage proved a difficult undertaking.⁸ The opera opens with Chrysis's two very young lesbian handmaidens (Myrto and Rhodis) playing flutes and singing an erotic song about Eros and Pan. While they perform their music, Théano (Rhodis's sister) "executed poses and steps."⁹

The famed English soprano, Mary Garden created the role of Chrysis for *Aphrodite*, but apparently, the real draw of Erlanger's opera was Régina Badet, the dancer who originated the role of Théano, the dancing sister of Rhodis. In numerous reviews, Badet received more press than Mary Garden herself.¹⁰ Julie McQuinn distills a number of these reviews below when she writes:

The critics raved: [...] "Mlle Régina Badet flies into a passion and writhes, whirls, and dances with an extreme frenzy"; "even more colorful, striking, real.... Are the evolutions of the dancer Théano, for which M. Erlanger was inspired by ancient Greek songs – totally authentic." [...] she has the "grace of a little savage."¹¹

The performance made Badet a star and the dancer went on to appear in numerous other exoticized Greek dance performances.¹² But how different was Badet's dance to that of Duncan? Scant information is available save the reviews. A manual for the Opéra-Comique's staging of *Aphrodite* includes no information on what Badet actually danced.

While there is little critical material to compare, the dancer's inspirations show how Duncan's dancing found its way to Régina Badet's opera stage. In an article for *Cœmedia Illustré*, Mme Mariquita, the *maitresse de ballet* at the Opéra-Comique and a renowned expert of exotic dance, discusses how she approached the Greeks:

I imagine, I evoke, I reconstitute... my ideas clinging to a gesture seen on old pottery, on an antique vase, in the succession of poses on a bas-relief. I supply to the lacunas, I unite the gestures and I give birth to the movements. [...] I am only an interpreter! I neither invent nor create Greek art.¹³

The similarities in her methodology and prose correspond all too close with that of Duncan albeit without Duncan's rhetoric of universal beauty. As the foremost authority in her day on creating exotic dances for the stage, it is quite telling that her work resembles that of Duncan. Like, Isadora, Mariquita choreographed *contemporary* dance rather than recreating ancient ones and as Badet's teacher and overseer of dance at the Opéra-Comique, the *maitresse de ballet* lead the young dancer and supervised with her choreography.¹⁴

Louis Laloy, the French music critic and scholar, also saw a connection, or at least similarities between Badet and Duncan when he wrote:

All the adepts of antique gesture, not excepting Isadora Duncan, a pastoral Greek, and Régina Badet, a sugarplum Tanagra figurine, have made the mistake of

transferring to the stage appearances which they copied from bas-reliefs or vases, not sparing one art any of the conventions peculiar to the other.¹⁵

At least in Laloy's mind, the two women failed in the same way, and while they represent different fantasies of Greece for Laloy, they nonetheless both play similar roles of Greece. Similar connections between ballet and modern dance traditions have been noted by Lynn Garafola as well.¹⁶

Even more telling is the photographic evidence. A photo spread from *Le Théâtre* on Badet's performance of Théano from *Aphrodite*, shows strikingly similar poses to those of Isadora Duncan. In particular compare the detail from the upper right hand corner depicting Badet from the third scene of the opera with a photo of Duncan taken years later from her *Ave Maria*. (See Figures 1 and 2)

FIGURE 1: Régina Badet as Théano in scene three of *Aphrodite*, 1906. Photo by Boyer from *Le Théâtre* (April, II, 1906): 15.



FIGURE 2: (left) Régina Badet in *Aphrodite*, 1906; (right) Isadora Duncan in *Ave Maria*, 1914.



The resemblance is uncanny, and perhaps more than coincidental. While there is a distinct difference between Badet's more mimetic arm position (as if she is lifting or carrying an object) and Duncan's lowered elbows and relaxed wrists (a praise, or despair, gesture),¹⁷ there are clear similarities between the Badet spread and Duncan's later work.

Duncan did not take on the kind of notoriety given to Badet. A large part of this was due to Isadora's aesthetics of exclusion discussed earlier, and part of this aesthetic of exclusion was defined by with whom Duncan associated. Chief among Duncan's benefactors were respected and established members of the aristocracy and social elite: Countess Elisabeth de Greffulhe, and the Prince and Princesse Edmond de Polignac.

The queer Polignacs first saw Duncan at the salon of Meg de Saint-Marceaux in the winter of 1901. They found themselves immediately drawn to the young American dancer: the Prince envisioning artistic collaborations, the Princesse sought a friend, perhaps a lover, and an artistic muse. After this first encounter, Duncan was quickly brought into the Polignac salon.¹⁸ Her collaboration with the Prince yielded a program of "Danses-Idylles" planned for performance, *chez* Polignac: The greatly expanded guest list for this event signals the Polignacs' aim at assisting the young Duncan in wooing more

patrons.¹⁹ Years later, after Duncan had already established herself as the leading figure on the international dance scene, she famously started a relationship with Paris Singer, the similarly wealthy brother of the Princesse de Polignac.

Naturally, the Polignacs saw something in Duncan's dance that attracted them, and the dancer could count on the Polignac and Singer families' assistance (as least through her affair with Paris Singer), but Duncan had other patrons in these early years as well. Comtesse Elisabeth de Greffulhe, another queer leader of Parisian social society, staged one of Duncan's first major salon debuts in Paris, quickly followed by a recital at the salon of Madame Madeleine Le Marre where Duncan notes, she "saw among [her] spectators for the first time, the inspired face of the Sappho of France, the Comtesse [Anna] de Noailles ..." ²⁰ a poet and one of the Princesse de Polignac's most intimate friends and lovers. Also, notoriously in the audience of one of these early recitals was none other than Natalie Clifford Barney, yet another lesbian American expatriate.

A tantalizing story (perhaps partly fictionalized) has come down to us of one of these early salon performances in Paris around 1900 where Natalie Barney, her lover Renée Vivien, and her mother were in attendance. The three Americans sat in the front row, and when Duncan learned that fellow countrywomen were in the audience, she asked her accompanist (none other than a young Maurice Ravel) to play the "Star-spangled Banner." Suzanne Rodriguez retells the rest of the story in her biography of Barney as such:

She invented a free-flowing dance to match the music, and, at its climax, grabbed the skirt of her Greek tunic and lifted it high. Beneath the graceful, flowing white robes she was completely nude.²¹

Barney and Duncan became friendly after that encounter, and in 1909 (when Barney opened her famous salon) Duncan was an early regular. Rodriguez notes that Duncan only occasionally danced at these gatherings, but it is clear that she participated in other capacities. What these capacities were exactly remain unclear; however, as Susan Manning has demonstrated, Duncan indeed had lesbian affairs with women: Mercedes de Acosta among others.²²

Duncan was also a good friend of another famous member of Natalie's inner homoerotic circle, Eva Palmer-Sikelianos (one of Barney's lovers). It was Palmer who introduced Barney to Greek literature, and culture. Married to a Greek poet, Anghelos Sikelianos, (whose sister was later married to Raymond Duncan), Eva befriended Isadora Duncan due to their shared expatriate status and love of Ancient Greece.²³ And in the 1920s, (while it was apparently more common to see Raymond and Penelope Duncan at Barney's salon than his sister)²⁴ Isadora was not too far away from Barney's world. At least in Barney's mind, Isadora featured prominently in her backyard "temple à l'amitié."²⁵

In 1929, Barney drew up a "map" of the leading figures behind her salon, where among the names closest to the temple, Duncan would have found herself along with other such notables as Renée Vivien, Proust, Apollinaire, and Pierre Louÿs, of course. Clearly there was an active lesbian spectatorship in these early works, but more importantly, a diverse early American, lesbian patronage of Isadora in her first years in Paris.

But did Duncan get it? Clearly, Duncan associated with the important group of lesbian upper-class patrons of Paris. But was she "in the know?" Was Isadora Duncan representative of this decadent homoerotic Graecophilia? Duncan herself made sure (à la Daly's aesthetics of exclusion) to distance herself in many ways from some of this group's activities after the fact. Most pointedly she demonstrates this in her description of the 1900 debut *chez* Elisabeth de Greffulhe. "The Countess hailed me as a renaissance of Greek Art," Isadora wrote in her autobiography, "but she was rather under the influence of the *Aphrodite* of Pierre de Louÿs and his *Chanson de Bilitis*, whereas I had the expression of a Doric column and the Parthenon pediments as seen in the cold light of the British Museum."²⁶ The next comment she makes in her autobiography has been often quoted by those working along with Duncan to distance her from this group. In his biography of Duncan, Peter Kurth notes that Isadora had read the works of Sappho along with Louÿs' ravishing lesbian poetry; however, he writes "the lesbian sensibility went right over her head."²⁷ Duncan writes albeit years later:

The Countess [de Greffulhe] had erected in her drawing-room a small stage backed with lattice, and in each opening of the lattice work was placed a red rose. This background of red roses did not at all suit the simplicity of my tunic or the religious expression of my dance, *for at this epoch*, although I had read Pierre Louys [sic] and the *Chansons de Bilitis*, the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid and the songs of Sappho, the sensual meaning of these readings had entirely escaped me, which proves that there is no necessity to censor the literature of the young. What one has not experienced, one will never understand in print.²⁸

She goes on to discuss how she was “still a product of American Puritanism” after all.²⁹ But realistically, there is no way one could read Louys’s *Chanson de Bilitis* without noting the sensuality. Unless, Duncan was literally a child when she read these poems describing in voyeuristic erotic detail the ways in which Bilitis and her female companions made love – she could not have missed *some* eroticism there. Even if she read them in a watered-down English translation, or early on in her French education, the language is simple enough; moreover, these poems were the talk of all of Paris. Louys’s writings were not something one would pick up at the local bookseller on the Seine on a whim. *Les Chansons de Bilitis* was a book one sought out, bought, and read privately, or a book one was given with a wink and a nod.³⁰ Almost a how-to-guide, Louys’s *Bilitis* shows his readers his own Orientalist fantasy of what women are capable of doing without men.³¹

She knew what this sensuality was all about, and she knew the women she danced for had first hand knowledge of it too (as had she). She attended the salons, and must have witnessed at least some of it in her early days in Paris. Tantalizing stories inundated the newspapers and rumors spread by word of mouth quickly on the streets and in the salons of Paris. The question though remains: how aware was Duncan of the lesbian spectators in her early private audiences? Was Barney’s tale of Duncan’s “finale” to the “Star-Spangled Banner” one of many untold stories of Duncan responding to the sexual tastes of her audience? Was her Hellenistic Art really that separate from the sexualized Greek dances of her Orientalist contemporaries? I think not.

When Daly writes, how Duncan “...elevated dancing from low to high, from sexual to spiritual, from black to white, from profane to sacred, from woman to goddess, from entertainment to ‘Art.’”³² What Daly misses is that this might have been true for many Americans, but perhaps some lesbian Americans in Paris saw her differently. Perhaps Duncan’s popularity is in part due to the leftover Oriental flavor of Greece portrayed in a new way: a dialectical understanding of Orientalism and Hellenism, sexual and spiritual, black and white, profane and sacred, woman and goddess, and entertainment *as* Art.

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Notes

¹ “Au siècle de Louis XIV on était helléniste, maintenant on est orientaliste.” All translations are by the author unless otherwise indicated. Victor Hugo, *Odes et Ballades, Les Orientals*, vol. 1 of *Poésie* (Paris: La Librairie Ollendorff, 1912), 619.

² Daly, *Done into Dance*, 29.

³ Isadora Duncan, “The Dance of the Future [1902 or 1903, 1909],” in *The Art of the Dance*, edited and introduced by Sheldon Cheney (New York: Theatre Arts, Inc., 1928), 54.

⁴ Duncan, “The Dance of the Future [1902 or 1903, 1909],” 58.

⁵ Duncan, “The Dance of the Future [1902 or 1903, 1909],” 62-63.

⁶ Daly, *Done into Dance*, 16.

⁷ Daly, *Done into Dance*, 7.

⁸ See Julie McQuinn, “Unofficial Discourses of Gender and Sexuality at the Opéra-Comique during the Belle Epoque,” PhD Dissertation (Northwestern University, 2003).

⁹ “performs poses and dances.” Louis de Gramont, printed libretto to *Aphrodite*, English version by Leonard Marsh (New York: G. Schirmer, 1914; and Paris: Société des Éditions Musicales, 1905), 2.

¹⁰ McQuinn, “Unofficial Discourses,” 165.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Among these were the operatta, *Sapphô* in 1912.

¹³ Georges Talmont [and Mme. Mariquita], “Comment Madame Mariquita monte un Ballet,” *Comœdia Illustré* 1^e Année, No. 1 (15 December 1908): 23.

Je n’écris rien... je pense, je réfléchis, je règle dans mon esprit, mais ce travail mental n’est qu’une préparation... Je ne règle rien, définitivement, avant d’être dans la salle de danse, avec mes danseuses. Je sais alors le poème... Je l’ai longuement médité. Et tandis que le compositeur me joue sa partition, j’adopte le poème à sa musique, j’en suis les lignes essentielles ; pour le détail, pour le mouvement, pour l’expression, je l’interprète, suivant mon inspiration. Mes efforts tendent à lui conserver son harmonie, son caractère particulier par tous les moyens que la mimique et la danse mettent à ma disposition.

Je me suis aussitôt empressée de visiter des musées, j'ai regardé des vases antiques, des fresques, des statues... et dans des documents longuement examinés, étudiés avec soin, j'ai trouvé des poses, des attitudes, des gestes, sur quoi reposera tout mon divertissement... Que voulez-vous, je ne suis qu'une interprète !... Je n'ai ni inventé, ni créé l'art grec...

¹⁴ Georges Talmont [and Mme. Mariquita], "Comment Madame Mariquita monte un Ballet," *Comœdia Illustré* 1^e Année, No. 1 (15 December 1908): 23.

¹⁵ Louis Laloy, *La Grande revue*, 25 June 1912, 847; in Deborah Priest, *Louis Laloy on Debussy, Ravel and Stravinsky* (Aldershot, England and Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate, 1999), 156.

¹⁶ See Lynn Garafola, "Soloists Abroad: The Prewar Careers of Natalia Trouhanova and Ida Rubinstein [1996]," in *Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005).

¹⁷ See Susan A. Manning, *Ecstasy and the Demon: Feminism and Nationalism in the Dances of Mary Wigman* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 34-37.

¹⁸ Duncan recounts in her story of the event that when the Princesse left her small apartment on that first personal encounter, she left behind an envelop containing two thousand francs (an exorbitant sum of money for only the "prospect" of a collaboration).

¹⁹ On 22 May 1901. Kahan, *Music's Modern Muse*, 117.

²⁰ Duncan, *My Life*, 61.

²¹ Suzanne Rodriguez, *Wild Heart, A Life: Natalie Clifford Barney's Journey from Victorian America to Belle Époque Paris* (New York: Ecco, 2002), 113-14. Duncan's "Star-spangled Banner" performance precedes her famous "La Marseillaise" by at least a decade. An Daly notes that in 1914, "Duncan's body was enfolded in a blood-colored robed that bared her shoulders and, according to some reviewers, bared a breast at her moment of triumph." Daly, *Done into Dance*, 185.

²² Susan A. Manning, "Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, and Lesbian Spectatorship," Paper given at Twenty-first Annual Society of Dance History Scholars Conference (University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 18-21 June 1998), 5; subsequently published as "Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham und die lesbische Rezeption," *Tanzdrama* 44/45 (1999): 18-25.

²³ Margaret Reynolds, ed., *The Sappho Companion* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 292.

²⁴ Raymond and his wife would arrive "in their flowing Greek robes and offering a touch of exoticism," Rodriguez, *Wild Heart, A Life*, 247.

²⁵ Barney's "Temple of Friendship," a shrine installed in her backyard to Sappho and the freedom of the ancient lesbian love in Greece, attracted the majority of upper-class lesbian women in Paris in the early twentieth century. Here women engaged in Duncan-esque dances (sometimes nude) before retiring to the main house where other more intimate activities took place.

²⁶ Duncan, *My Life*, 60.

²⁷ Peter Kurth, *Isadora: A Sensational Life* (Boston, New York, and London: Little, Brown and Company, 2001), 74.

²⁸ Emphasis mine; Duncan, *My Life*, 60.

²⁹ Duncan, *My Life*, 60.

³⁰ Natalie Clifford Barney, *Adventures of the Mind* [1929], translated by John Spalding Gatton (New York and London: New York University Press, 1992), 32.

³¹ It should also be noted that Louÿs also wrote a blatantly pornographic how-to-book for children, which was never published in his life time. His *Manuel de civilité pour les petites filles à l'usage des maisons d'éducation* begins with a glossary of the most depraved expletives and base names for sexual acts and organs in the French language.

³² Daly, *Done into Dance*, 16-17.

Renegade Gender: Theorizing the Female Body in Extreme Motion

Sara Wolf

In this essay I examine the artistic praxes of Elizabeth Streb, Sarah East Johnson, and Li Chiao-Ping, three United States-based choreographers who engage in forms of high-intensity physicality that they themselves as well as critics have at various times considered as “extreme motion.” In particular, I am interested in the manner in which their projects, different though they are one from the other, renegotiate gender through the intense “doing” of their movement practices.

MacArthur Fellow Elizabeth Streb is perhaps the best known of the three; over more than two decades she has developed a distinctive body of work that foregrounds high-impact, gender-neutral bodily action. Her style has influenced a generation of women choreographers, including Sarah East Johnson and Li Chiao-Ping. Johnson’s practice takes shape in the all-female acrobatic/postmodern dance troupe LAVA, while for Li, athleticism combines with modern dance for expressive effect.

Though their aesthetic projects diverge in distinct ways, the three share a predilection for physical challenges that often involve momentum, challenging moves, risk, or even pain. Another point of convergence among the three choreographers is their awareness of the feminist implications of their work: Dismantling *de rigueur* stagings of gender in dance is stated as a key aspect of Streb’s choreographic project on the company’s Web site¹; Johnson describes LAVA as a community of strength in which women support one another as they test their limits²; and Li has explained that the genesis of her work lies in a childhood spent trying to be a son to her father and working against physical limitations imposed on her as a girl.³

To consider these three choreographers together would neatly situate their work within a feminist reading of modern and postmodern dance’s historical trajectory in the U.S. That is, it would accept the premise that the promise of modern dance lies in its potential to rework how bodies are perceived in public performance through conscious bodily engagement. Working

within this analytical framework, one could say that contemporary women choreographers who engage in deep investigations of strength, force, risk, and velocity such as these three are at the forefront of theorizing the physics of female gender in dance anew.

This interpretation would not be incorrect. However, I would like to shift how gender is employed as an analytic frame, away from the feminist belief in the power of motion to belie gender-specific stereotypes of physical capability—which these artists abide in—to instead consider the gendered body as constructed performatively through motion. In so doing I hope to demonstrate how the physical labor particular to Streb, Johnson, and Li’s work opens a space of possibility for “undoing” gender.

My use of the phrase “undoing gender” references Judith Butler’s theory of gender, which subtends my investigation today. Butler conceptualizes gender as a compelled, reiterated embodied performance that constitutes the subject. It is, Butler writes, “a kind of doing, an incessant activity performed, in part, without one’s knowing and without one’s willing.” At best, Butler continues, “it is a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint.”⁴ The question of agency haunts Butler, with some readers concluding that if doing makes gender so, or more accurately makes a subject so, then it follows that the potential might exist for an individual to simply do their gender differently. Yet one cannot simply undo the conditions of one’s constitution. Agency resides in formulating a critical relation to the regulatory technology of cultural and social norms through which a body becomes legible as a gender.

It is against this theoretical backdrop that I wish to examine Streb, Johnson, and Li’s practices of doing, which work in critical relation to the “scene of constraint” of dance world norms that condition their critical and popular reception. And it is in this context that I use renegade in the title of my presentation. Synonymous with outlaw, the renegade is the embodiment of agency; a figure of contestation, questioning what constitutes the dance event as well as the dancer. In looking at

each of these three choreographers, I pinpoint one site of negotiation for undoing the doing of gender within a scene of constraint produced by critics, audiences, and, at times, choreographic colleagues.

Negotiation #1: Renegade Acts

As one of the forerunners who paved the way for the current moment, Elizabeth Streb has been situated on the definitional fringe of dance, teetering on the edge that divides art from mere entertainment. This is due to Streb's resolute focus on human movement potential in relation to action, not "dance" per se. Though she employs many standard choreographic strategies for her eponymous company, which is consistently reviewed by dance critics, Streb turns to the crash-and-burn worlds of boxing, monster truck rallies and extreme sports for both inspiration and rhetoric. Evening-length shows carry titles such as "STREB: Extreme Motion" and "STREB vs. Gravity"; individual segments are called "action events" or "action studies."

Though Streb has repeatedly stated that her interest lies in "action as subject, rather than the body as object,"⁵ the endeavor to foreground the physics of motion—speed, momentum, spatial arc, weight—can atomize her performers into aggregated moving particles that hurl, vault, dive, bounce, scramble, hang, flip, free fall, carom, smash and suspend from an array of walls, ramps, and architectural scaffolding. Trained in Streb's signature PopAction technique, the troupe maneuvers through a range of tasks without narrative or hardly a trace of expressivity—I say hardly because, though the movement does not signify emotional or narrative content, it is clear that the performers nevertheless revel in a gleeful, "no holds barred" willfulness as they crash through glass walls or swan dive off high platforms. Microphones attached to structures and hidden beneath floors amplify the sound of arrested motion when the arc of a moving body comes into contact with a surface, the forceful "whomp" and "splat" of each impact audibly imprinting the audience's perception of the performer's experience. The liveness of this experience cannot be underestimated. For his 1990 film adaptation of Streb's piece *Impact*, director Michael Shankman alternately zoomed in close to

motional waves of bodies in motion or layered successive images of the dancers as they threw themselves against the clear Plexiglas walls that contain them in order to translate the immediacy of the live experience for the screen.

The relentless pace and bruising, seemingly punishing, physicality of a Streb performance have led to criticisms of unnecessary brutality—more so, Streb contends, than she would have received if she were a male choreographer. In a 2003 interview she told me, "I still fight the transgression of being a woman asking for those types of moves—it's not polite, you know. I suspect that a lot of the language thrown at my work over the last couple of decades would've been different if I were a guy. Instead of calling it 'violent' and 'sodomasochistic,' it would've been considered 'athletic' and 'rambunctious.'"⁶

More than the fact that a woman has generated the gamut of tasks that female and male company members rise equally to meet, I am interested in the totality of engagement that is required of the performers to accomplish Streb's choreography. This economy of motion leaves no room for superfluous movements or gestures, let alone fillips of gender performativity. Bodies aren't completely effaced in this economy. On the contrary, the performers' sleek muscularity is purposefully highlighted by form-fitting unitards or sportswear.

Yet, as Marcia Siegel wrote in a 1998 review, "There's no indulgence here, no pretty curves or subtle oppositions, nothing extraneous to survival."⁷ It is as if the act itself has taken over—must take over—in order to be fulfilled and the dancers are subject to its logic. Thus, Streb does not only stage female and male bodies democratically executing daunting feats, though this certainly can be seen as a critique of the dance scene's gender norms. By foregrounding bodies fully engaged in seemingly superhuman actions, the work rivets the audience's attention to the act itself, not the particularity of which body is doing it. Repertoires of gendered styles of embodiment have not been erased so much as rendered inessential to the task and thus, to a large degree, irrelevant. The particular motional demands of the actions thus might be considered constitutive acts that shift preconceptions of what constitutes the body of the dancer as well as what constitutes a dance event.

Negotiation #2: Renegade Community

In Sarah East Johnson's troupe LAVA, all the performers are women—strong women who flip, tumble, shoot through hoops, clamber up one another's torsos to stand astride shoulders, in addition to other feats of acrobatic prowess. Such antics are used to describe elemental motion of geological forces—the movement of tides, tectonic plates, and the like—which serve as central metaphors in evening-length works combining acrobatics, film, music and such reflexive postmodern performance elements as autobiographical vignettes and audience participation. For the past few years, Johnson has been setting concerts in small black box theaters, with audience members seated on opposite sides of the performing area or in the round. The troupe, dressed in street clothes, casually chats up folks while they warm up before the show, adding to the informal atmosphere that pervades the proceedings.

Though acrobatic feats are foundational to her work, Johnson persistently undercuts their spectacularity. In addition to the elements I've already mentioned (the everyday clothing, the informal setting), Johnson foregrounds the communal labor involved in accomplishing each feat. Johnson's 2006 *[W]HOLE: the [whole] History Of Life on Earth*, for example, features a revolving series of duets on a low flying trapeze that have the offhanded air of a conversation. The partners, focused on the accomplishment of getting in and out of various inverted entanglements, do not pause for applause at the end of any particular feat. Instead these spool out in an object lesson on the imaginative possibilities of bodies fitting together.

The work demands a level of physical familiarity amongst the performers; they know well each other's weight, height, shape, and are at ease with using available body parts such as a crotch for a hand or foothold. Even such details as the circumference of a forearm becomes valuable knowledge, not as an abstract set of measurements but as a history of lifting, catching and carrying one another. The troupe has worked together long enough to have created a visible sense of community based on trust and this history of touch.

The intimacy they exhibit is not incidental to Johnson's work: the camaraderie amongst the women as they labor together is as much the point of a LAVA concert as its science lessons and ecological messages. Johnson further highlights this aspect of kinship and support in trapeze duets sprinkled throughout each show as well as in duets that literally bind the women together. Attached back-to-back or by one hand they investigate the weight and momentum with which they are now endowed and playfully discover new ways to move together as a unit.

The performers' focus is key to this effort. Acrobatics, Johnson has explained to me, is "a practice of doing rather than seeing yourself doing. The performer's visibility is always multidirectional. There is no room for that outside eye."⁸ The quality of focus required for the gyroscopic partnering of acrobatics also subverts an audience's relation to the event by providing the opportunity to view the dancers' bodies not in the singular, as spectacular objects for visual consumption, but in relation to one another and to their mutual labor. LAVA thus subverts regulatory technologies of gender by formulating an epistemology of doing based on intimate, supportive relationality.

Negotiation #3: Renegade Representation

Li Chiao-Ping provides my final "case study." Integrating a background in gymnastics and the ethos of such 1980s-era choreographers as Pooh Kaye and Molissa Fenley, Li's movement style is marked by fast, compact bursts of athleticism and has been alternately described by critics as defiant, ferocious and powerful. Like Streb and Johnson, Li relishes strength, speed and precision. The similarities stop there, however, for Li's use of intense physicality reiterates a more familiar modernist faith in the expressive potential of movement.

Li's choreographic project also differs in that she maintains a career as a soloist as well as running a dance company (based in Madison, Wisconsin) and often creates work that engages an autobiographical impulse by incorporating revelatory narrative about growing up Asian in America.

Where continuity exists is in Li's engagement with highly physical doing to potentially "undo" gender norms that make the subject socially

recognizable. For Li, this critical negotiation is deeply connected to her experience with cultural stereotypes and pre-conceptions about what she can and can't achieve as an Asian American woman. Raised in San Francisco to immigrant Chinese parents, she became acutely aware of how her gender intersects with her cultural heritage after moving to the Southern U.S. for her first teaching job.⁹ It was there that Li was abruptly introduced to class and race-based codes of social recognition and "proper" femininity. Gendering does not merely intersect with racializing processes; these are interconstitutive, with whiteness, as Li discovered, serving as the unmarked grid of intelligibility on which "woman" appears.¹⁰

By way of example, one need only look at Li's 1991 autobiographical solo *Yellow River (Hwang Ho)*, which features a repertoire of quick-fire phrases demanding enormous strength, control, and accuracy. Interestingly, though, one of the most telling moments in the dance is when Li slowly crosses the stage on the tops of her feet, bearing down and seeming to crush her toes as she inches painfully along. This choice can easily be seen to signify the Chinese practice of foot-binding, as well as a determined overcoming of the limitations of such gendering practices.

For Li, then, movement provides an arena to be seen that elsewhere has been denied for Asian women. In setting her own terms for how far she will push her body, in defying expectations by incorporating extreme moves, Li shifts the representational apparatus that renders her indecipherable as "woman." Extreme motion thus alchemically transmutes the limitations of living in a racist society into a site of possibility.

For dancers and choreographers, movement is often a powerful resource, an act of unqualified agency. Butler's theory of gender performativity contextualizes the presumption of agency by considering the regulatory and representational technologies that constitute mover and audience alike.

In this essay I have investigated the potential for addressing these norms in Streb, Johnson and Li's choreographic projects. By applying the notion of constitutive acts to Streb's gender-neutral action studies, Johnson's relational acrobatic partnering, and Li's physical autobiographies, I have sought to highlight

specific nodes of negotiation. What has become clear to me in the process of writing this paper is the common impetus shared by all three choreographers to rewrite the visual contract with their audience by shifting how the dance event and the dancers themselves are perceived. Perhaps the potential for undoing gender lies, ultimately, in the audience's labor to look differently, to engage what might be called renegade perception.

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Endnotes

- 1 <http://www.strebusa.org/pages/what.html>
- 2 Author interview with Sarah East Johnson, May 8, 2003.
- 3 Gigi Berardi, "Li Chiao Ping: True Grit and Grace" [sic] and author interview with Li Chiao-Ping, June 6, 2007.
- 4 Judith Butler, "Gender Regulations," *Undoing Gender*, 1.
- 5 Marcia B. Siegel, "Whammers: Streb Takes No Prisoners."
- 6 Sara Wolf, "It's Not The Meat: Lesbian Choreographers Redefine Motion."
- 7 Siegel, *ibid.*
- 8 Author interview with Sarah East Johnson, Sunday, October 1, 2006.
- 9 Author interview with Li Chiao-Ping, June 6, 2007.
- 10 I am indebted to the work of such theorists as Lauren Berlant and David L. Eng for their work on the inter-constitutivity of racializing and gendering discourses.

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Resisting Theory: The Dancing Body and American Scholarship

Kent De Spain

Preamble:

I feel a little uncomfortable up here with what I'm about to say. Taking on theory at an academic conference is a bit like criticizing the bible at a revival meeting. But I do feel like there are some things that need to be said, although I don't claim to have formed these ideas into a complete and coherent whole as yet. Most of this material was written on an intellectual bender a few years ago and needed to age and breathe like a good bottle of wine before I could return to it to see what had been wrought. Time limitations also make it so that I can only dip into what is a deeper well than can be explored here, but I still want to take this opportunity to engage in a bit of teoriography; to poke dance theory with a stick and see if I get a rise out of it. So I'll start by reinstating my paper's original, less conservative, title:

A Theorist Theorizes Theory
Or
Yes, Virginia, I Sense the Irony in a
Postmodern Academic on an Anti-intellectual
Rant

Over the course of the past 20 years or so, dance theory has come into its own as a legitimate field of study, one that even has the potential to contribute unique ideas and approaches to other areas of academic discourse. Much of that development, I think, can be attributed to the work of broadly educated dance scholars adopting and adapting critical paradigms from other fields to the demands of studying dance art and practice. Critical theory, cultural studies, and a handful of "isms" have helped dance see itself more intimately contexted in relation to the reflection and production of cultural meanings. As pre-jailbird Martha Stewart might have said, "That's a good thing." But (and isn't there always a "but"?), postmodern theory has taught us to be sensitive to the negative spaces. Presence implies absence. Action implies agency for some and not for others. Well-intentioned power still looks

like power to the powerless. So I have a few things to say regarding the dark side of theory, not to halt the "progress" of dance studies in any way, just to make sure that as we step forward we continue to recognize who/what we might be stepping upon.

Postmodernism has revealed to us the breakdown of the historicized, centralized, positivist point of view, and I do not think that many of us miss it. We have seen the dance history we thought we knew deconstructed and reconstructed repeatedly in the shifting politics of discourse. We have learned a new set of values, values that relate to the relativistic, fragmented, and subjective margins. And we have even learned to see the fragments in ourselves, and to notice our own marginality within specific cultural or social contexts. What we have not been quite as quick to recognize (we know it, but do we really *know* it?) is the hegemonic nature of discourse itself. In the self-perpetuating rush to produce and publish, and in the dance field's chip-on-my-shoulder need to keep up with the theoretical Joneses, I sometimes fear that we are in danger of losing track of the unique values which make dance a human art/practice worthy of such intense study. So, by working from the general to the specific, I want to take this opportunity to explore just a few of the ramifications of theoretical discourse in dance.

My first concern is with theory itself. In science, theories are ideas offered up as a way of explaining phenomena, something to be tested and proven/disproven. In critical studies, theories are not so much "proved" as "approved of" through the success (relevance, notoriety, etc.) of a particular line of discourse within a discipline, or across disciplines. But whether scientific or critical, I see theories more like "strange attractors" (an idea from the study of chaotic systems), images/ideas that have a kind of gravitational pull, allowing the turmoil of our thoughts and experiences to coalesce in structured ways. As such, theories must be seen as both invaluable and insidious.

Our experiences are both synchronic and diachronic: synchronic because of the simultaneous, multichannel, only partially integrated, nature of exteroceptive and interoceptive sensation; diachronic because of the inescapably linear flow of human time, with its anticipations, presence/absence, and reflections. Without organizing structures, our experiences would simply overwhelm us. And that is why we cannot afford to treat theories as mere explanations of experiential phenomena. Theories, as cultural and personal products, interact with experience at a much deeper level, which is why I once wrote that, "Theories are the stories we tell ourselves to make our experiences match our values." The first step toward responsible discourse is to maintain the liminality of both our values and our changing theoretical foundations to increase awareness of how what we experience of dance has already been shaped by theory before we can begin to reflect on it.

My next area of concern is "postmodern" theory. As we in the industrialized West recognized the disintegration of our modernist paradigm, and the breakdown of ideals such as "progress" and "history" and "pure art," we needed to find ways to understand the world as newly constituted (or, if we step out from behind the shadow of the passive voice, we might say that we needed to constitute the new world). In particular, we needed to recognize (establish) where we stood in relation to the ever growing, ever fragmenting, cultural periphery. With all the best of intentions, we began to explore issues of marginalization and agency, the "male gaze", desire, and postcolonialism. And we began to understand that "truth" looks different depending on whether you are holding the weapon or facing it (regardless of whether that weapon is military, economic, or cultural). Lumping theory into one big category and critiquing it would seem to do a disservice to "good" theory or, at least, "well-intentioned" theory. But we in the West have a long history of good intentions gone awry: the Inquisition; Manifest Destiny; the "White Man's Burden;" "Better Dead Than Red," and now, of course, "Spreading Freedom and Democracy Around the World."

When we finally recognized that the modernist umbrella was not big enough to cover the expanding periphery (the periphery was not really expanding, we just became better at seeing it), we simply began to construct a larger umbrella: postmodern theory. On its surface, postmodern theory carves out a discursive space for alterity, both within and beyond the margins of the dominant culture. And from the viewpoint of dominant culture that is exactly what postmodern theory does. But postmodern theory is also an (mostly) unconscious academic project, launched from within the cultures that dominate the production and distribution of theoretical discourse, to reestablish intellectual/theoretical hegemony over a fragmenting world. By confessing our sins as members of a dominant colonialist culture, we have granted ourselves the absolution of our own newfound enlightenment. We have politely granted the marginalized a new theoretically empowered space at the margins (marginality has even developed its own sort of cultural cachet) without either ceding them actual power or leaving them the hell alone. To hand someone agency simply reinforces your power to take it away. And to theorize someone as a victim of marginalization can deny or undermine his or her own experienced sense of resistance and agency.

Writing about what postmodern theory looks like from the Latin American viewpoint, Nelly Richard states this eloquently:

The fractured syntax of postmodernity allowed the Center to be the first to meditate about its crisis of centrality and about recovering the transversal proliferation of its margins. The periphery, one of the margins now reintegrated into the rhetorical complex of the disintegrated, sees itself today forced to re-diagram its axis of polemical confrontation due to this perverse inflection of the Center, which aims at appropriating the periphery's alterity and its anti-hegemonic protagonism. (Richard, 1993: 157)

If we truly value the agency of "others" (and I believe that we do), we are faced with a

difficult dilemma: How do we continue to broaden and deepen our understanding of dance practices -- particularly dance at and beyond the margins of our own culture -- through discursive engagement, without, at the same time, reinforcing existing and unequal power structures? I have two answers to this question. The first is: we can't. Power cannot help but act from a position of power. The second answer is: If we do continue, and I think that we should and will, we must do so with vigilant awareness of our position. We must recognize that all we are really doing is telling stories about ourselves in relation to "others". If we hope to learn more than that, we must hope (not coerce) that others will tell their own stories in their own way. We must also learn to question theory before and during its application to specific dance contexts so that we may better weigh the ramifications against our values.

An example of some of these issues would be helpful here -- especially how theory alters experience and how discourse follows its own agenda and reinforces existing power structures. In 1987, at a time when scholars were just trying on their new discursive dancing shoes, Ann Daly used then current feminist discourse on the male gaze and the patriarchal presentation of women to take on George Balanchine and *The Four Temperaments* (1946). I use the words "take on" because her essay, *The Balanchine Woman: Of Hummingbirds and Channel Swimmers*, understandably had a bit of a Daly and Goliath tone to it. Before that time, there seemed to be a tacit understanding that, yes, there was quite a bit of manipulation going on, but this was Balanchine, and ballerinas so dominated his repertoire that no one could think of him as denigrating to women. But while Daly's essay makes a strong case for reevaluating the place of women within the power structure of Balanchine's work, what is a bit unclear is why she chose as her example a then 41 year old dance without contexting her analysis within the historical period in which it was choreographed. If she had done so, the women who looked so "manipulated" to her in 1987 might have seemed downright liberated in 1946.

Be that as it may, the portion of Daly's analysis on which I want to focus is a particular

lift from the duet in the third theme. In discussing the interaction between the male and female in this duet, Daly finds the ballerina to be a "submissive instrument," and that "her position is contingent on the manipulations of her partner." She follows:

By arranging and rearranging the ballerina's body, the man (first the choreographer, then the partner, and voyeuristically the male-constructed spectator) creates the beauty he longs for...She is a bell swung to and fro, a figurine to be shown left and right, or an instrument to be strummed. In what Schorer called the "drag step," the man literally carries the ballerina on his back. Her legs are lifeless, following after her like limp paws. (Daly, 1987: 14)

This last lift, the "drag step," seems to be an unusually contested discursive site. In 1994, Stephanie Jordan and Helen Thomas wrote an essay examining Daly's gender-based reading of *The Four Temperaments* and seemed to find her description of this step particularly troubling:

In the "drag step," with the man reaching out and upwards, the effect of energy and work is increased by the woman clinging aggressively to his back. We do not read this as Daly does: "the man literally carries the ballerina on his back." Nor do we see her stretched legs and points pushing into the floor as "lifeless, following after her like limp paws." (Jordan and Thomas, 1994: 11)

What I find interesting here is not that Jordan and Thomas disagree with Daly's interpretation, it's that they wholly question her perception of the movement. Parsing out whether the man is carrying a passive ballerina or she is actively clinging to him might be no easy task. But surely we should be able to discern the difference between "lifeless,...limp paws" and actively "stretched legs and points." Part of the problem in forming a judgment in this dispute stems from the fact that neither Daly nor Jordan/Thomas cite the source of their

observations. They both speak as if there is one *The Four Temperaments* to be observed, rather than as many versions of the piece as there have been live performances and documentations (even a documentation of a specific live performance would be experienced differently based on framing, angles of shots, and three-dimensional live space versus two-dimensional screen space). Even so, we must ask how much searching a work for passivity and manipulation predisposes one to seeing it? Or, in the terms of this essay, how much feminist theory alters the actual experience of specific partnered movements?

But this drag step has more discursive lives than a cat. In 1996, Brenda Dixon Gottschild published her book *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance*, in which she worked to reveal the previously ignored influence of African and African-American aesthetics on contemporary American dance. In her examination of Balanchine's works, Gottschild finds *The Four Temperaments* rich fodder for critique:

The male leads his partner into deep, parallel-leg crouches (it would be misleading to call them plies), which she performs while still on pointe. Then, standing, he offers his back to her. Facing his back, she wraps her arms around his neck, drapes the full length of her body against his, and leans on him. He moves forward for several steps, dragging her along. This exit looks like a cleaned-up, slowed-down variation of a typical "Lindy" exit. (Gotschild, 1996: 73)

With this observation, Gottschild not only challenges us to look at Balanchine's movement in a new light, but she also brings into question just what it was that earlier critics/scholars were looking at when they analyzed this dance. In this case, instead of something seen that might not be there (Daly's "limp paws"), it was something *not* seen (Balanchine's Lindy reference/appropriation) that clearly was there. It seems likely that such writers would have seen films of Lindy Hoppers performing this

signature exit, and would also have known that Balanchine had worked with Lindy Hoppers on *Cabin in the Sky* (1940) a few years before he choreographed this work. To again put it in terms of this essay, how did the theories under which earlier critics engaged with Balanchine's work contribute to their failure to experience the Lindy connection?

Although Daly and Gottschild agree on the unusual off-balance nature of the partnering in the third theme, they seem to disagree on what it means. For Daly, "The extreme to which the third theme exemplifies what a ballerina can look like with the support of her partner makes it an archetypal pas de deux." While for Gottschild:

What is so interesting about these duets is how they deconstruct and defy the traditional European ballet canon of verticality and male support of female centeredness, essentials in the classic pas de deux. (Gotschild, 1996: 73)

I would propose that the next important reading of *The Four Temperaments* could arise from the idea that Balanchine was a victim of alien abduction, or perhaps was an alien himself. Wasn't this piece made just a year before the purported crash of an alien spacecraft in Roswell, New Mexico? And how could any normal person make that many great dances? Clearly there was some kind of alien-accelerated choreographic mental process going on (although I don't know what happened with *Stars and Stripes*). And what about the aesthetic behind the Balanchine ballerina? Long necks, elongated limbs, tiny heads? Come on, you've seen the abductees drawings of the aliens! I don't know what all these other scholars were seeing. How can anyone miss the clear fact that this drag step is a reenactment of an abduction scenario from Balanchine's own life?

Recently, dance theory has explored a way out of this interpretational conundrum, essentially by asking theorists to leave less room for other interpretations by more thoroughly arguing with themselves. This approach, intertextuality, allows for traces of various meaning systems to be tracked as separate entities within a work and then compared and contrasted to discover richer and more complex

interpretations. Far from clarifying matters, though, intertexts and interpretational indeterminacy offer rich fodder for someone bent on using performance works to reinforce pre-chosen theoretical constructs (although I don't view that as an inherently bad thing as long as the construers admit their role). I have other concerns: first, one of the inherent dangers of intertextuality is the implication that the more numerous and complex a scholar's intertextual readings are, the greater the depth of his/her understanding; second, that a bias toward seeing performing bodies as complex sets of intertexts will weight viewers more toward disembodied cognition and away from real-time embodied experience; third, that the need to continually re-engage with a performance in order to produce intertextual threads will favor the processes and products of documentation over the evanescent and ephemeral present of live performance; and third, that seeking complexity of intertexts will bias scholars toward post-modern (read: Western) dance forms and away from an ethnographic engagement in the unfamiliar, in which they are still trying to come up with an initial interpretative understanding. In the end, a cynical theoriographic analysis of the development of intertextuality would make us suspect that, no matter how linguistic we tried to make them, individual "isms" became too familiar, too easy to understand and apply. When it became too difficult to out-Deleuze and Guattari one another, we simply had to come up with a more convoluted approach.

I am poking fun here to emphasize an issue: We talk about cultural products -- in this case dances -- as if each were a "thing" unto itself that if looked at closely enough could be solved like a puzzle. But this only works at the macro level, where a piece such as *"The Four Temperaments"* is simply a linguistic gloss for a constantly shifting cultural construct, an open set of experiences and interpretations organized around and stimulated by a recognizably similar set of movements and sounds. But the closer you try to get to *The Four Temperaments* the more it disappears from view. Different performances experienced by different people holding different values and theoretical constructs lead to different and sometimes incompatible

interpretations. Linguistic communication demands that we find a way to refer to the objects and processes within our culture, but language loses some of its cockiness at the level of specific embodied experience.

And make no mistake, language is at the crux of the issues I am questioning here -- the power of language in the continuing efforts on the part of social science and critical theorists to encapsulate/analyze/theorize the "representation" and "desire" and "agency" and the like in media and the performing arts. While such theory might be useful in the intellectualization of experience, it does not, I believe, contribute more to embodied experience than it takes away. Linguistic constructs can act as a gloss for what is an inherently complex and downright messy somatic experience. In my view, somatic experience is our primary investigatory tool in our relationship with cultural constructs. The cultural power of a linguistic gloss has a tendency to make us shortcut experiential investigation and accept an area of experience ("desire", for example) as "understood" or, at least, "understandable" instead of fully dancing the cultural resistance and complexity of individual somatic differences. Of course, all experience is culturally mediated. But by the same token, all culture is experientially mediated. The interaction and interpenetration of culture and experience is the ground upon which we develop "desire" and "agency."

Over the years, we theorists have been, and are still, engaged in a continually developing process of "writing the dancing body." But did anyone bother to ask the body if it wanted to be written? We have honed our linguistic and analytical skills to the point where we can read intertexts on the fly, but we have failed to notice that all of those texts are linguistic constructs while the dancing body is speaking in another kind of language altogether. We have gone from a time when we could hardly speak about the body, right past the body, to a place where we can't seem to shut up about the body. At least too little to say somehow acknowledged the difficulty in speaking from/about embodied somatic experience. Too much to say seems too often to ignore embodied experience altogether. Instead of writing the body, we are speaking for

it. Feminist theory asked us to become aware of our tendency to view the body as object. Why is treating someone else's body as text more politically acceptable than treating that same body as object? Theory, in its own will to power, has shown no qualms and even no awareness that it has appropriated the dancing body towards the accomplishment of its own agenda. Not only are dance and dance theory not the same thing, but more and more I see their values and intentions in conflict. The day may come when we are forced to take up sides. Literally and figuratively, where do you stand?

I know where I stand. [I take off my shirt here to reveal a T-shirt that says: "My Body is Not Your Text"] I just hope that I'm not too late.

When I received my copy of André Lepecki's *Of the Presence of the Body* (Lepecki, 2004), I couldn't help feeling that it should have been called *Of the Absence of the Body* because, while there is some lovely and thought-provoking writing within its pages, I couldn't find my body in there anywhere. As always, I find my body right here with me, moaning and complaining about too little sleep and not enough dancing, goading me into the studio where I can explore the changes in myself – today. But I also had a more haunting thought. Maybe I don't have my body anymore. Maybe André and the other authors found it strewn along the highway I traveled to my doctorate and my position as a professor of dance. I *know* that it is always, already inhabited and inhibited by my culture, unwittingly performing my gender and ethnicity in a daily dance of theoretical desire; but perhaps it is gone from me altogether and I just don't know it. Perhaps it *is* there within the pages of Lepecki's book, and I have to just keep reading to get it back.

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Dance: A Discourse Mode

Nadra Majeed Assaf

Introduction

In the past twenty years of my life I have literally watched myself develop, grow and change. When I take the time to introspectively analyze myself, I am amazed at how many times I have altered my way of thinking or speaking or interacting. I realized that change is a continual process, a constant struggle to improve and acquire new and better methods of analysis; new and better means of 'being'. Reading articles about culture and its affect on other areas of development and communication helped me to finally come to terms with my sense of belonging, or rather my lack of it. Being that I am the birth product of a culturally integrated marriage. I never felt as if I 'belonged' to either of my cultural heritages but rather as if I belonged to something was of a combination.

This was not my only dichotomy; I was also at a trying point with my educational development. In the high school system in Lebanon a student must chose in their final four years whether they want to be classified as Literary, Scientific, or Mathematic with each category stressing the relevant material. Even though I interested in Literature and the Arts I found myself being pushed by my teachers and family into the math category due to my excellence in that field. Hence I graduated with a high school "mathematic" diploma thus setting precedence for what my university education would be. My first two years at university were spent jumping from major to major not being able to decide on what I wanted to emphasize. Everything seemed so "cut and dry" within the system: *you are good in math, you become a math major*. But that did not leave any room for the other interests I had. Finally I found myself choosing to be a finance major (with a load of electives that ranged from Shakespearean Analysis to Modern Dance). This was the best way for me to solve my problem, but the 'solution' did not end the 'trouble' for me. By the time I finally finished my studies I had obtained a degree in Finance, a degree in

Theatre a degree in Dance and a degree in TESOL.

After I graduated I began teaching and my 'problem' moved with me. My teaching career started with teaching dance at university level in the United States. After a year there, I decided to come to Lebanon. The only university position available at the time was teaching English. After two years of teaching English I requested to be allowed to teach the two dance courses that were offered by the university. My dean (at the time) was shocked. "Why does an English teacher want to teach dance!?" It took me two more years to be able to convince the university to allow me to teach those courses.

The experiences of those years in my life led me to the conclusion that people view dance in a very different way than I do. In 1986 I was a graduate student at Sarah Lawrence College in New York studying dance when I was introduced to the work of Susan Leigh Foster who is one of the leading dance academicians in the world today. At the time Foster had just written a book titled "Reading Dance: Subjects and Bodies in Contemporary American Dance" (1986). In the book Foster used one of the literary methods of analysis developed by Roman Jakobson (1960) and applied it to dance. It was an innovative way of looking at dance and the study she did was one of the pioneering factors in allocating dance into the field of academic importance and research that it is in today.

Other dance academicians have similar outlooks: Gay Morris says of dance research: "[It] always deals in some way with the body, but one of the challenges now is how to mend the dichotomy between the mind and the body that has marginalized dance for too long." (1996: 10). Cynthia Novak (1990) also comments on the manner in which researchers look at the body as if it was an "independent entity". She explains that it is this type of narrowness that allows the dichotomy to remain. Amy Koritz (1996), an English teacher who has done research in dance, argues that dance and its

association with other disciplines would help many categories. She also comments that the works of dance scholars Susan Foster, Susan Manning, Mark Franko and Cynthia Novak have helped to bring dance closer to the “intellectual mainstream”.

In addition to the dance academicians attempting to bring dance to a less ephemeral state we have prominent linguists (Barton, 2000; Gee, 1999; Kress, 2001, 2000; and Street, 1994) working on viewing language in a more multi-modal manner.

Being a dancer and teaching both Dance and English I find myself at an intersection between these two diverging lines of thought. My interests have begun to seem less “unnatural”. Reading Gee (1999) helped me by drawing attention to the issue of bringing together minds and bodies. He defines his ideas of little “d” and big “D” discourses as “use of language” and “non language stuff” and says that he is interested in the analysis of language as it is fully incorporated with the other essentials of social practice. In this paper I am attempting to further decrease the gap between dance and the field of language by using his theory and method (Discourse Analysis) and applying it to a dance that has been constructed and executed to a literary poem.

Language and Communication

Gunther Kress (2000) draws our attention to the fact that communication modes have begun to change. In addition to the typical modes of speech and writing we have the visual mode as well. He continues by emphasizing his idea that the exclusion of these ‘new’ modes of communication from educational regimes does nothing more than hurt the ‘West’ and the western system of education thus making it “ill-equipped” to confront the latest setting of communication. Kress also stresses his opinion that language is not monomodal and researchers need to re-work their structures to view language as multimodal. He wants us to believe that there are other factors affecting communication and these should not be taken for granted.

His ideas follow along the same line of thought as those of Brian Street (1994) who works from an idea of “ideological model of literacy” which he explains as being a

“multiplicity of literacies”. Not one literary practice but rather a compilation of meanings and cultural contexts which help to define the whole. Street agrees with Kress’s idea and states that the West views the person as a “single, persistent and whole individual”(p.140) as if this type of definition would work when applied to each and every social context. What happens when change occurs? Under the Western definition there appears to be no space for change.

Another similar opinion comes from David Barton (2000). Barton explores links between the field of education and everyday life. The changes that a person experiences through growth and development can help to affirm who the ‘person’ is as much as any standard test, or even any stable measure. Even though research heading in the direction of multimodality appears novel, the basic premise of multiplicity of modes started around the late seventies. One of the founders of multimodality is Bourdieu (quoted in Berthelot, 1991: 397) who states that incorporation (particularly body and physical movement) of all the surroundings is needed to understand the aspect of what is established. Further explanation of this: if you do not consider every piece of the whole then the whole ceases to be.

Berthelot (1991) describes the importance of the body and its ritualized functions in defining the issue of being. He stresses the fact that one cannot ignore the importance of any symbolic associations which links the “body to image forming dimension which solidifies into media stereotypes” (1991: 397-398). Berthelot’s main concern was one of the sociological discourses and the role the body played in it. If such disciplines as Sociology and Cultural Studies have been attempting to accentuate the importance of the body in their course of research and analysis should other disciplines not follow in accord?

In answer to the above question, I would like to point out the ideas of Gunther Kress (2001) who stresses the fact of his belief in the link across the disciplines by analyzing the effect of socially and culturally significant factors on the development of Language. He takes us through the process of change in linguistic thought: from the idea of language as a

base from which all other aspects contrive; to the idea of all other maneuvers affecting language.

Norman Fairclough adds clarification to this 'new' manner of viewing disciplines and their affect on each other. He makes reference to Halliday who coined the term 'transdisciplinary' as opposed to 'interdisciplinary' when implementing research which views language socially. Dance is a social activity and a social message therefore the use of dance to further language studies and language multimodality does not seem to be too far out of bounds. Dance is in the realm of further investigation. Dance academicians are searching and researching the fields of communicative competence in order to find a place for dance in academia.

In the years of studying different literatures dealing with literacies, language, linguistics, dance and culture, with the intention of gaining a better understanding of how "we" communicate, I have come to the conclusion that the mainstream of thought has been towards "multi-modal- literacy" "cross cultural" "globalization" ... all terms which involve a mixing and matching of sorts. Most of the literature has delved into culture and language or social studies and language (both combinations found under the larger umbrella of communication). However a few researchers have mentioned the body and the visual. In a very interesting essay by Margaret Wetherell the author makes a detailed analysis of the interview Lady Diana had with Martin Bashir. At the end of this fifteen-page study Wetherell poses a series of questions:

"Are bodies part of discourse, however? What are the boundaries? What is discursive and what is extra-discursive? Is there anything extra-discursive? The circumstances of Diana's death were intensely physical... That surely is real beyond talk." (2001: 27)

Even after a study of discourse the analyst herself had questions about the placement of body in the whole structure. It is this question and others similar to it which have led researchers to look more closely into the body

and its correlation with language and communication.

Other Modes of Communication

Another interesting and innovative research was carried out by a group of academicians: Sally Mitchell, Victoria Marks-Fisher, Lynne Hale and Judith Harding (2000). These four women conducted a study of writing practice in a discipline where writing is not the main issue at hand. They chose to analyze the way in which dancers approach the task of writing academic essays. Building on Harre's model of personal identity formation and Gee's discourse analysis the researchers analyzed the essays of the dancers (which were about the task of choreography and their experiences while attempting to create their dances) and found that in addition to "comment on the making of the dances, [the writing] creates meaning which is both unique and a part of the discourse" (2000: 87) They state that the above correlation allows them to draw an analogy between "choreography" and "writing" (2000). One section of the study states that parallels between the task of "choreographing" and that of "writing" were drawn out whenever possible. Mention of 'transitions' and their corresponding component in dance were discussed and in particular whether something such as a 'transition' could be 'danced'. Several detailed analogies were studied and the mention of the similarity between dance creation and essay writing was recognized and commented upon by the dancers (2000: 92-93). Once again we see research which studies the correlation between dance and language.

Two other prominent researchers, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, have done very important work on the 'physical' and its influence on communication. In their book *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (1996) they bring up several issues which link 'that which can be seen and touched' to the process of "ingesting" the total message.

Another researcher who deals with language in a more multimodal sense is Paul Gee (1999). He outlines the six building tasks he says are present in any spoken or written form of communication. He also talks about the tools we use to further investigate "the world of talk and

interaction” (2000: 12-13) These are viable means to measure and analyze communication and its realm of ‘motion’ however, can these ‘tasks and tools’ be used in measuring other forms of communication (i.e. not speech nor writing)? The structure dance undergoes to become a communicative event is similar to the structure used in language to develop a spoken or written piece of discourse. Foster (1986) outlines this process in her book *Reading Dancing*. She comments about the fact of the viewer (though untrained in dance) can learn to develop an understanding of the movement. The viewer can become aware of “choreographic codes and conventions” (1986:59) that make dance noteworthy hence comprehend the social context and the ‘language’ structure of the dance. Dance is sharing terminology with language and language learning; even the title of Foster’s book *Reading Dance* draws a similarity between dance and written language (that which can be read).

In addition, Goellner and Murphy (1995) discuss the long road down which dance has traveled. They discuss the problems that dance has faced in being accepted academically. They state: “For most of its life, the field of dance studies had largely been divided in its research methodologies between history, movement analysis, anthropology, and aesthetics.” They go on to explain that ‘we’ see dance today as moving towards a different venue. Dance is working on bridging the separation that exists between the mind and the body. Dance is even challenging the dichotomy that holds verbal or written language in privilege to bodily or kinesthetic language. Dempster goes into detail about how the body moves in different genres of dance. She focuses particularly on Modern Dance which she terms as an expression of “interiority” as opposed to external expressions (1995: 28).

More and more can be seen in the literature about the body and its importance to the whole method of communication, culture and language. However the body should also be connected to a format which would help to quantify it. Dance is one such format and its link to that world of language should be studied and developed further as it has been in the field of culture and cultural studies.

Methodology

I chose to use the theory and method developed by James Paul Gee (1999) for discourse analysis to analyze part of the dance titled *The Beginning of Rebirth* in order to demonstrate how similar dance is to language. Dance is a discourse which is very similar to spoken as well as written discourse. I chose a piece of the dance, the part that was danced to a recitation of the poem *Joy and Sorrow* by Gibran Khalil Gibran. I decided to work with this particular dance for two reasons: first, I am very interested in the relationship between the spoken word and movement; second I am the choreographer of the dance and I was curious to see if what I think of as a choreographer fits into the frame work of what I work on as an English teacher.

The dance is a section of a larger body of work titled *LIFE: this is it...or so you thought*. The entire work is an intertwining of spoken language and movement (dance) all put together to enhance the message of what ‘life is and what it has to offer’. The piece I chose to use for my analysis here has particular significance because the movement is being executed to the recitation of the poem. Both the dancer and the choreographer worked side by side in analyzing the poem and explaining what the meaning held for each. Ultimately the dancer had to conform to what the choreographer needed to ‘see’ thus enabling the choreographer’s message to be clear.

In notating the dance I used typical dance terminology in English, the same as would be used in teaching a dance class. I also used spatial directions to indicate the placement of the dancer in the overall space. I noted the poem line as it was divided by the author and placed the coinciding movement sequences beside each.

I then used Gee’s model for discourse analysis and focused on how dance is similar to language. I chose Gee for the main reason that he discusses the issue of D/d discourse and gives importance to the factors that influence discourse (D-discourse) other than language (d-discourse) itself. Dance has a similar type of structure in that other factors influence the discourse (dance) other than just the actually language (movement). My main focus is on the

similarities between the analogy of a spoken piece of discourse and a danced piece of discourse. I believe that this type of analogy can lead to a clearer and more definite understanding of communication as a whole and ‘dance and language’ particularly.

Analysis

Note: In this section I will show only part of the analysis due to the space constraints.

Gee divides the constructs of speaking and writing into six tasks which I have attempted to apply to the function of dance. Two of these tasks are explained in what follows:

Part One: Semiotic

Gee explains semiotic as the “cue or clues” which allow for the meaning of the communicative method and ways of understanding which apply to the situation at hand.

In this case, the dancer is herself a part of the symbols that relate to semiotic building. She is a modern dancer and the audience, the viewers, other dancers, anyone participating in the knowledge of the performance would be able to relate to that. Based on the fact that the audience is also listening to a poem being recited while the dancer is executing the dance, the performance attains a certain level of knowledgeability. This would reflect a certain class standard and thus emphasizes the fact of semiotic building even more. The most apparent social language in the dance is the one used to represent modern dance as opposed to other styles of dance. The movement in the piece sets it apart from other styles of dance and lets us understand the fact that the dancer is of a certain group or function. Particularly moves which have to do with the torso and the contracting and releasing of said body section. These are specific movements that allow the viewer to identify the movement as modern dance and not another type of dance.

Part Five Identity and Relationship

Gee describes this task as the use of clues to clarify which ‘identities’ are relevant to the situation and what types of values, knowledge,

beliefs, acting and interacting are present in the context.

The dancer establishes an identity for herself that is not the real her. She is playing a role on stage thus fulfilling the requirements of the choreographer and the idea of the whole production. I found myself amazed at this part of the analysis. I asked her what she felt as she danced the piece she said she felt “strong” and “sad”. I asked her if she felt the dance represented ‘her’ in any way. She said that she felt it was true to her and her feelings about things in life. I asked her if she felt it was the movement or the words that most affected how she identified herself in the piece. She said it was both. She commented on the fact that though she had read the poem before (in three different languages) she had not grasped a total connection to the meaning until she danced it.

The most predominate factors leading to identity building are found in the actual execution of the dance (i.e. dancer’s performance) and the choreographic means and spatial awareness:

1. Dancer performs movements which guide her from one place to another within the space
2. Dancer performs movements which elevate her from the floor
3. Dancer connects to the floor
4. Dancer moves within an oval space (bringing things to a full circle)
5. Dancer changes moods within the piece
6. Dancer uses facial expressions (though at a minimum)
7. Dancer is not mimicking the words- Use of body as an instrument of expression

To sum up, I believe dance is a mode of communication and the similarities between the structure and function of dance and language are obvious. Gee’s work helps to clarify this point and expand on the idea of communication being multimodal as well as the issue of language being integrated with other forms of communication to broaden the scope of perception.

Conclusion

There is a saying that goes “a picture is worth a thousand words”. I am not quite sure I agree with the quantification placed on the visual as opposed to the verbal. How could a picture be worth a thousand words? Does this mean words are not worth much or does it mean that the visual is much better? True I am a dancer. True I teach English language. True I believe the two go hand in hand, however it is also true that most people view me as ‘unusual’. Reading the literature available out in the academic realm, I have come to the conclusion that each and every aspect of the communicative ‘whole’ is very important. We cannot ‘view’, ‘listen’, ‘hear’ or even ‘understand’ the message without appreciating and even comprehending the complete aspect of the communiqué. The struggle to find what is the proper analysis of language and linguistic means has led researchers to the fork in the road. Many have chosen the path that leads to multimodality. I consider myself a ‘multimodal’ person. I function ‘multimodally’. I often have trouble focusing on one thing at a time, but more importantly I find it impossible to function when one issue in my ‘multimodal’ life is not quiet up to par. Is this wrong? Maybe some people would tell me it is however, I look at life and its ‘message’ as a complete function of “the sum of its parts”. Not one-thing progresses without the rest. To simplify: if we chose to isolate that which we consider language from the rest of the message, a proper understanding of the process will not be achieved. Based on this I have tried to draw parallels between what I find to be an interesting and thorough method of discourse analysis (Gee) and the execution of a dance. I know this paper simply highlights issues that can be studied and analyzed in more detail. I have asked additional questions in hope to continue to strive to find answers. After reading the literature and analyzing different issues I believe that the continuum of globalized education has put us in a position where the question is no longer: “Does Dance fit into the academic realm of linguistic research?” but rather “How” and “Where”?

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De la danse du ventre à la danse orientale :

quelles théories et quelles pratiques derrière le choix du nom

Constance Adinsi

Mon but dans cette présentation est de montrer que le nom donné à la danse induit une théorie et oriente une pratique de la danse concernée. Une manière de repenser la théorie et la pratique en danse serait aussi de penser le danseur comme une personne au travail.

En tant que psychologue du travail, le travail s'analyse comme un lieu où se joue les problématiques de l'identité, de la reconnaissance et de l'objet du travail. Parallèlement, en tant que professeur de danse « du ventre ou orientale », j'éprouve des difficultés à me reconnaître dans les discours sur la danse orientale et à me penser comme danseuse orientale même si j'accepte la filiation des danseuses « orientales ».

Dans un premier temps, nous rappellerons quelques-unes des raisons avancées pour justifier le changement de nom. Nous différencierons ensuite les éléments de théorie et de pratique que nous pouvons déduire de ce changement de nom. En considérant la danse comme un travail, nous dégagerons les théories et les pratiques qui en découlent. Ce qui nous amènera à nous interroger sur l'effet du changement de nom.

Les termes utilisés tout au long de cette discussion utilisent les définitions courantes¹ :

- art : expression par les oeuvres de l'homme d'un idéal esthétique.
- artiste : personne qui se voue à l'expression du beau
- danse : action de danser, suite de mouvements du corps volontaires, rythmés (le plus souvent au son de la musique) ayant leur but en eux mêmes et répondant à une esthétique.
- pratique : activités volontaires visant à des résultats concrets (opposée à théorie)
- théorie : ensemble d'idées de concepts abstraits, plus ou moins organisés appliqués à un domaine.

Pourquoi changer de nom ?

Pour présenter quelques-uns des arguments avancés pour justifier, le passage d'un nom à l'autre, je me suis appuyée sur un entretien de Leila Haddad, souvent présentée comme la pionnière dans cette danse en Franceⁱⁱ. Selon elle, le terme de danse du ventre véhicule une image péjorative et les danses du Moyen-Orient et de l'Afrique du Nord sont systématiquement appelées danse du ventre. Il est donc nécessaire de produire un discours de réhabilitation pour modifier l'approche de cette danse et s'aligner sur le modèle de la danse classique occidentale (discours, écoles, mise en scène..). Les préjugés sur cette danse viennent de la rencontre entre l'Occident puritain et l'Orient plus libre. Même si l'impulsion des mouvements vient du ventre c'est une mauvaise traduction du terme d'origine qui signifie danse orientale.

En entendant l'un ou l'autre nom, on peut imaginer les éléments de pratique et de théorie ci-dessous :

Eléments de pratique véhiculés par les deux noms	
<u>Danse du ventre</u>	<u>Danse orientale</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mouvements du ventre • Rythme non spécifié • Musique non spécifiée • Esthétique : liée au ventre ou non spécifique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mouvements orientaux • Rythmes orientaux • Musique orientale • Esthétique orientale
Pratique « ouverte » axée sur le corps	Pratique encadrée par des éléments culturels
Eléments de théorie véhiculés par les deux noms	
<u>Danse du ventre :</u>	<u>Danse orientale</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Une partie du corps qualifie la danse • Une partie du corps suffit pour danser et peut qualifier la 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Un espace culturel, qualifie la danse • Pour danser, de façon positive, il faut un espace situé

<p>danse de façon négative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Le contexte est le corps et une partie déterminée <p>Le corps est péjoratif (théorie du corps)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> culturellement Le contexte est situé géographiquement et culturellement <p>La culture est positive (théorie de l'identité)</p>
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Les arguments présentés pour le changement de nom véhiculent aussi une théorie de l'art où l'idéal esthétique de la danse orientale serait l'imitation du modèle artistique de la danse classique dominant en Occident, par le biais de la production d'un discours spécifique, de nouvelles formes de pratiques et de transmission (écoles et chorégraphie par exemple). C'est aussi parallèlement, la reproduction d'un modèle culturel, supposé existant dans un espace temporairement et géographiquement donné : l'Orient. L'art serait donc imitation et reproduction.

De même, on observe aussi que la matière de la danse, ses mouvements spécifiques sont secondaires pour la reconnaissance positive de la danse. Ce qui semble sous-entendre que le corps en tant que matière peut être péjoratif. De plus, cela laisse supposer que ce rapport péjoratif au corps du modèle culturel ambiant n'a pas pour objet d'être subverti. L'art n'aurait pas une visée subversive, mais normative d'adaptation au modèle dominant ou à des modèles culturels. En recherchant une reconnaissance par le nom, on peut aussi comprendre que la reconnaissance par le nom précède la reconnaissance par l'œuvre.

Un nom pour travailler

L'identité positive de l'artiste dépendrait d'une reconnaissance inscrite dans le nom choisi, plutôt que dans la spécificité de l'œuvre. La reconnaissance précéderait l'œuvre et viendrait d'une approche culturelle et non pas de ce qui est spécifique dans la danse, en tant qu'art et pratique spécifique. L'identité du danseur est culturelle, normative et non pas créative, subversive et individuelle.

Derrière la modification du nom, se dessine également une théorie du public. Le public serait à éduquer par un discours et serait à la recherche d'une « approche culturelle ». Il ne transférerait pas la vision négative de la danse du ventre à la danse orientale et plus globalement à la culture orientale. Enfin, le public se déplacerait pour la

culture, la norme et non pour le plaisir d'être surpris, questionné, impressionné par l'œuvre. En filigrane se dévoile le postulat de la culture comme objet monolithique donné, figé qui n'évolue pas et peut donc être re-présenté.

Nous voyons donc que derrière le changement de nom, la pratique est orientée et des théories sur l'art, la culture, l'identité sont implicitement véhiculées.

L'analyse des contextes des appellations peut également permettre de mieux comprendre les motivations au changement de nom.

Analyse des contextes	
Danse du ventre	Danse orientale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rencontre et opposition entre un ventre corseté en occident et un ventre libre en orient : campagnes napoléoniennes. Personne hors de sa culture nomme en observant le mouvement Nom montrant : mépris, attirance, fascination de la différence et du corps Nom centré sur soi et sa perception, Rapport Occident/Orient Ce qui attire est ce qui aguche, étonne, excite : le corps en mouvement.. Nom donné par les « spectateurs », et ceux qui organisent « les spectacles » Hommes Colonisateurs Aguicher, attirer Payer pour quelque chose d'érotique/exotique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rencontre avec une danse classique institutionnalisée, et d'une danse hors institutions, à transmission orale : immigration Personne hors de sa culture nomme face à une danse classique valorisée Nommer pour rejoindre le modèle dominant en « oubliant » le corps Nom centré sur l'autre et sa culture Rapport Orient/Occident Ce qui va attirer : c'est la découverte d'une culture, posé comme « figée ». Nom donné par une danseuse avec l'objectif de gagner sa vie par la danse Femme Immigrée Valoriser Payer pour quelque chose de culturel

La danse du ventre avec son objectif d'attirer les spectateurs de la période coloniale, a insisté

sur ce « qui satisfait » ce regard « masculin » ou « de colonisateur ». Les mouvements ont alors été mis en valeur en fonction de leur exotisme/érotisme. De même, des costumes exotiques/érotiques aguicheurs ont été choisis. Mais, actuellement, pour que la danseuse gagne sa vie avec la danse, le public doit venir au spectacle et payer. Mais il semble que dans un premier temps, pour avoir envie de payer, il doive retrouver des repères. Ainsi, nombreuses sont les danseuses qui reprennent les costumes érotico-exotiques, malgré leurs discours. Les critères de la danse occidentale sont repris et appliqués dans l'enseignement de la danse, le

discours et les mouvements. Et, parallèlement, on observe une mise à l'honneur des danses folkloriques et rurales, dans une recherche de pureté culturelle qui semble s'éloigner de la danse du ventre « d'origine ».

Examinons l'hypothèse selon laquelle le changement de nom s'inscrit dans une dynamique de travail. Dans ce cas, nous avons des danseuses qui travaillent avec l'objectif de gagner leur vie par la danse. Le nouveau nom semble actuellement bien établi avec quelques modifications de la pratique.

Une tentative réussie ?

La difficulté à s'affranchir des modèles peut s'expliquer par le fait que le danseur travaille. En effet toute personne travaille en fonction de trois directions qui sont chacune des sources potentielles de conflits. La danseuse travaille pour elle-même, pour les autres et pour l'objet qu'est la danse.

La danseuse travaille pour elle-même : par les raisons intimes et personnelles qui l'amènent à choisir cette activité pour gagner sa vie, (par exemple : travailler son corps, créer, être artiste, pour les costumes, pour être valorisée.)

Elle travaille aussi pour les autres : les autres danseurs, les institutions, le public, les circuits de reconnaissance sociale. Nous savons que la reconnaissance acquise comme membre d'un groupe est psychologiquement plus confortable que la reconnaissance recherchée en tant qu'individu particulier et unique. Ce qui peut expliquer la difficulté à se poser comme artiste individuelle et singulière en dehors des appartenances culturelles.

Pour finir elle travaille aussi pour l'objet du travail ; la raison d'être de la danse (par exemple une pratique corporelle, artistique, culturelle, compétitive ou expressive)

A partir du changement de nom, nous avons pu dégager des éléments de théories ;

- sur l'art et la place du corps dans l'idéal esthétique de la danse,
- sur le danseur : pourquoi il danse, pour la reconnaissance ou pour la performance, pour qui
- sur la pratique de la danse: reproduire
- des codes culturels ou se laisser la possibilité de s'en affranchir
- sur la culture comme objet figé dans un instant et un espace à reproduire.

Pour nous, le danseur dont le métier est de danser, pratique et théorise nécessairement la danse. Par le choix du nom de la danse, il perpétue ou propose d'emblée une théorie du corps et de l'identité, perpétue ou propose une théorie de l'art, s'inspire ou rejette les pratiques corporelles particulières. En dansant, il pratique et engage son corps : il est dans une activité physique et pratique. En dansant, le danseur doit concilier les trois directions de son travail : le travail pour soi, le travail pour les autres et le travail pour l'objet de son travail. Ce faisant, au travail, il est dans une activité intellectuelle de théorisation **-implicite** ou **explicite** qui lui permet de concilier ces trois directions de son travail.

Dans le travail, la pratique de la danse, il y aurait donc a priori trois grands champs théoriques engagés :

une théorie sur soi-même et son identité pour soi : le danseur comme artiste créateur, reproducteur, représentant culturel, etc. ;

une théorie sur les autres et les « meilleurs » circuits de reconnaissance sociale : danseurs, publics, institutions, etc. ;

une théorie sur l'objet de la danse : corps en mouvement, représentation, création, reproduction de modèles sociaux, culturels, etc..

En travaillant, nous construisons des théories implicites et/ou explicites sur nous, les autres, l'objet de notre travail. En dansant, en travaillant nous avons donc des théories sur nous-même en tant que danseur, sur ce que nous devons faire

pour être reconnu comme danseur par les autres et sur l'objet, le but de la danse.

En quoi le changement de nom peut-être gênant ? Selon nous, il laisse croire que l'artiste peut faire l'économie d'une identité individuelle et qu'il peut être le vecteur d'une culture. Le regard péjoratif sur le corps est accepté au lieu d'être subverti. Enfin, il y a une continuité de la posture coloniale : le nom est géographiquement centré, que ce soit par rapport à l'Occident ou à l'Orient. La « danse orientale » serait la danse d'un Autre, qui existerait à l'Orient de celui qui nomme.

Comment alors danser à partir d'un Autre, autre corps que le sien. Quelle identité pour soi dans son rapport à l'autre peut fonder ce type de nomination ? Vers quels Autres est alors dirigée la danse et que devient l'objet de la danse ? Ce qui peut nous amener à nous interroger sur les théories et les pratiques que véhiculent les différents noms donnés aux différentes formes de danses.

Repenser la pratique et la théorie en danse, signifierait réévaluer et dévoiler la place du corps dans la danse, les fondements de l'identité pour soi du danseur, qui précèdent la mise en mouvement des corps.

Repenser la pratique et la théorie en danse nécessiterait de s'interroger sur la façon dont les environnements socioculturels contraignent les danseurs à définir et à concilier identité pour soi, reconnaissance sociale et objet de la danse.

Repenser la pratique et la théorie en danse impliquerait de soulever les postulats pratiques et théoriques implicites véhiculés par les noms donnés à la danse et de façon plus globale par la manière de la qualifier.

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- ⁱⁱ Entretien de Leila Haddad – danseuse – chorégraphe et professeur de danse orientale – Dansons Magazine – Avril 1993 – présenté sur son site <http://www.leilahaddad.com/Publish/biographie/1/interviewtildamoubayed.pdf>

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Notes

- ⁱ Dictionnaire « Le Nouveau Petit Robert » 1998

Pertinence des catégories esthétiques traditionnelles pour la danse contemporaine à l'époque du multiculturalisme

Joanna Szymajda

Dans ce texte nous allons nous interroger sur la question de la pertinence des catégories esthétiques les plus souvent employées dans les recherches sur la danse par rapport à l'interculturalité comme un facteur engageant une coexistence et/ou une confluence des esthétiques différentes (et pas seulement des poétiques différentes). Afin d'établir une piste pour nos recherches, nous allons nous concentrer sur des aspects linguistiques et sémiotiques des notions évoquées aussi bien par des critiques que par des chercheurs et des praticiens dans leur discours sur l'interculturalité de la danse. Il y est possible de distinguer (bien qu'arbitrairement) trois catégories sémantiques des termes qui feront notre base d'analyse:

1. La première – la plus générale - consiste sur la distinction entre les notions de **l'interculturalité, du multiculturalisme** et du terme anglais **cross-cultural influences**.
2. La deuxième se réfère à l'esthétique dite classique de l'art et elle englobe les termes des **mimesis, diegesis et représentation**.
3. Les termes assemblés dans la troisième catégorie se rapportent à l'esthétique de la mise en scène. Y apparaissent donc : **métissage / hybridation/ syncrétisme/ hétérogénéité/traduction/ intertextualité**.

I.

Le terme du *multiculturalisme* évoque une coexistence des cultures, en d'autres mots l'existence simultanée des cultures. Des interactions qui se produisent en conséquence de cet état créeront le contenu sémantique de la notion de *l'interculturalité*. Ainsi, *l'interculturalité* paraît en effet comme résultat du multiculturalisme. Dans des travaux anglophones nous trouvons aussi le terme de *cross-cultural influences* qui met l'accent sur le fait d'« étudier » ou d'« observer » une culture par une autre. C'est ainsi ce positionnement où on parle de l'interaction le Moi – l'Autre, bien

que les limites de cette distinction ontologique puissent être élargies selon les circonstances.¹

Quant à la danse, les exemples les plus « visibles » et les plus lisibles d'une telle interculturalité seront celles où on mélange les danseurs de plusieurs origines dans un spectacle afin de mettre en relief leurs morphologies et kinesthésie diverse, ou bien celles où sont introduits les mythes et les récits des cultures diverse, des formes d'expression provenant des esthétiques différentes, etc.²

II

La mimesis – ce terme – pas tout à fait univoque – est employé dans le discours esthétique sur le théâtre, le drame et d'autres arts tels que peinture, vidéo, cinéma.³ La genèse antique de *la mimesis* ainsi que ces « avatars » ultérieurs ont été jusqu'au aujourd'hui beaucoup discutés. En effet, la notion de *la mimesis* n'est pas dans l'usage courant dans le discours sur la danse et c'est effectivement dommage. Nous avons accepté plutôt le terme de la *représentation* qui est la traduction française de *la mimesis* et qui pourtant ne souligne qu'un aspect de cette notion primordialement platonicienne.⁴ Il est intéressant d'approfondir ici la caractéristique de la *mimesis platonicienne*, qui est définie comme réflexion-image reproductive des idées, et de ce fait se référant plutôt aux notions de *l'image* et de la *réflexion* tout en impliquant la passivité du sujet⁵. Or, la même idée révélant de la pensée d'Aristote consiste sur l'action créative (*praxis*) étant aux sources du processus de la *mimesis*.⁶

L'exemple de la *mimesis* classique dans la danse feront les ballets conçus à partir d'une partition (qui serait alors comparable au *muthos* de la tragédie grecque) et dont la *praxis* se réalisait par la danse même. Ce schéma est également pertinent pour un certain nombre de chorégraphies contemporaines ayant comme

source récit mythologique (*Antigone, Ulysse, Sacre de Printemps*).

La mimesis revisitée par les époques suivantes a pris de nouvelles dimensions. La Renaissance a nié la réalité comme l'objet de la mimesis, en la remplaçant par l'art antique (afin que l'artiste imite ce qui est parfait et pas la réalité – celle-ci n'étant jamais idéale).⁷ Ensuite, la traduction française du terme même (comme « représentation ») a effacé de son contenu le processus de l'*imitation* en faveur des processus du *remplacement*, de l'*indication* et de la *schématisation*. Le sens de l'art (comme le souligne entre autre, Paul Ricœur) s'est ainsi déplacé et ce n'était plus l'**imitation** de la réalité mais désormais l'**analyse** de la réalité.⁸ Avec l'arrivée du postmodernisme, l'esthétique de l'art a dû se confronter aux problèmes jusqu'à alors ignorés. La réalité se montrant tellement « irréaliste », a forcé un autre regard sur la question de la représentation. Le **texte** – compris comme produit purement culturel – a succédé la réalité comme objet de l'art. Ainsi, l'art n'imitait plus, elle n'indiquait plus ce qui est réel mais renvoie au caractère secondaire de son objet. Comme l'explique Ricœur, ce que l'art (la littérature) présente, est déjà symbolisé dans les formes de culture. Il évoque également la notion de « la fusion des horizons » dérivant de la pensée de Gadamer et signifiant la fusion du monde du « texte » avec celui du spectateur (compris comme son expérience ultérieure dans la pratique culturelle).⁹ Cette fusion serait-elle alors un symptôme de l'optique selon laquelle l'œuvre d'art – ce qui fait pour nous un spectacle de danse – est un processus ne se réalisant que dans la réception.

C'est ainsi dans cette dernière époque qu'apparaît la notion du « *simulacre* » de Baudrillard ou bien de « *la mimesis paradoxale* » signifiant la représentation de l'impossibilité de représenter le monde (surtout chez Beckett).¹⁰ Prenons ici l'exemple d'une des récentes créations de Maguy Marin – *Umwelt* (2005). Ne serait-elle pas une dernière conclusion sur la pensée de Beckett après son fameux *May-B* ? Cette impossibilité d'imiter, de représenter la réalité se transforme ici en refus total de participer dans processus quelconque d'affirmation de la réalité.

Ce panorama tout court des différentes conceptions de mimesis a eu comme objectif de démontrer que *la mimesis* peut nous servir en tant que modèle d'analyse de la danse et son évolution. Aussi, nous voyons que des enjeux idéologiques et esthétiques sont apparus dans la pensée moderne, postmoderne et contemporaine de la danse analogiquement aux autres arts.

Nous avons évoqué aussi le terme d'évolution afin que nous puissions revenir au sujet principal de ce discours – l'interculturalité dans la danse. Car de ce point de vue, les influences interculturelles ne sont pas un simple échange des techniques, mais elles évoluent vers un discours philosophique sur l'art comme moyen de représenter et d'analyser le monde. Les choses se compliquent à tel point, que la *mimesis* étant un « produit » purement occidental avec l'entrée sur les scènes européennes d'autres esthétiques (orientale, africaine, etc.) exige une nouvelle revendication. Et cela notamment par rapport aux œuvres qui empruntent plus au moins librement, des différentes esthétiques et poétiques.

Comme l'avoue un des danseurs de la CIE Selia ni Senyou, la notion de la représentation n'a pas été connue en Afrique avant l'arrivée de l'homme blanc.¹¹ L'art et la danse ont été considérés comme une partie naturelle de la vie sans laquelle le bon fonctionnement de la société ne pouvait pas être assuré. Nous pourrions alors suggérer que ce type de danse doit être caractérisé dans le terme de *l'action performative* et pas *mimesis* (n'ayant pas comme but la représentation mais souvent l'affirmation (p.e. du statut tribal comme le montre Bogumil Jesiewski).¹² Or, dans les esthétiques orientales la question se présente encore différemment. Par exemple, dans les textes de l'esthétique classique indienne le corps est considéré comme un organe sensoriel, ainsi la danse n'est pas uniquement une représentation (d'ailleurs, ici on devrait parler plutôt de l'incorporation) mais aussi et avant tout – c'est un acte de connaissance.¹³

III

Dans cette partie nous allons nous concentrer sur les aspects linguistiques des termes se référant à l'esthétique même de la mise en scène. Souvent utilisés comme

synonymes ils ne le sont pourtant pas, ce que nous allons démontrer suite à une démarche simple d'analyse des définitions de ces notions en question.¹⁴

a) Métissage – *croisement de races différentes.*

Hybridation – *croisement naturel ou artificiel entre deux variétés, deux races d'une même espèce ou entre deux espèces.*

Ce type de l'interculturalité nous trouverons dans des danses de noirs américains, qui ont émergé alors surtout dans l'époque du colonialisme et ont été créées en conséquence d'un certain mélange (tantôt ironique, tantôt inconscient) des styles des danses de « blancs » avec des danses d'esclaves. Un autre exemple provient de la scène contemporaine, il s'agit notamment d'une création de Tero Saarinen s'intitule *Hunt*. De cette version solo du *Sacre du Printemps* émerge tant au niveau conceptuel que tangible, une image de l'homme-hybride, de l'anima-animus unies, qui a pu être constituée grâce à l'emploi des projections multimédia. C'est le corps du danseur seul qui unit en soi les forces traditionnellement représentées dans ce rituel slave comme antagonistes.

b) Syncrétisme – *combinaison relativement cohérente (à la différence de l'éclectisme), mélange de doctrines, de systèmes. Fusion de deux éléments culturels, religieux différents.* Cette définition nous fait penser à un chorégraphe belge – Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. Par rapport à la technique même de la danse il est intéressant de voir comment, dans plusieurs pièces (*Zéro degré, Foi, d'avant, Tempus fugit*) Cherkaoui joue avec cette notion du syncrétisme. En effet, il réussit à créer des passages entre les mouvements dansant de différents styles (step, jogga, kathakali, cirque, etc.) sans que cela influence la fluidité et l'intégralité du mouvement même.

c) Hétérogénéité – *caractère de ce qui est hétérogène – qui est de nature différente, qui est composé d'éléments de nature différente, qui n'a pas d'unité.* Cette notion paraît être une matrice d'interprétation parfaite pour la dernière création de Robin Orlyn. Son « *L'Allegro, il Penseroso et il Moderato* » est un triptyque non seulement parce qu'il est composé sur la base des textes de John Milton et la musique de Haendel qui sont également des triptyques textuels et musicaux. Ce spectacle divise de la même manière l'espace

scénique afin d'y établir un espace de la projection vidéo d'un film tourné en Afrique du Sud (lui-même composé de trois parties), un deuxième espace où règnent les danseurs et les chanteurs et un troisième où se place la musique. Ces espaces, bien qu'ils coïncident ne créent pourtant pas une unité, bien au contraire, leur hétérogénéité semble être perpétuellement soulignée. En outre, ces espaces physiques renvoient aux leurs homologues imaginaires (un pays, un corps, une époque, une figure, etc.) également non-cohérents dans leur statut ontologique.

d) Traduction : *action, manière de traduire : exprimer, de façon plus ou moins direct, en utilisant les moyens du langage ou d'un art.* Ma question serait-celle: est-ce que par rapport à la danse, peut-on parler de la traduction intersémiotique ou intra-semiotique et dans quelle mesure ? Un exemple intéressant fut ici « *Antigone* » de Mathilde Monnier mise en scène à Burkina Faso avec un groupe de danseurs en partie originaires de ce pays et en partie occidentaux. Ce qui a été étonnant pour la chorégraphe ce le fait que se soient les danseurs africains qui ont su tout de suite et sans une élaboration mentale préalable, incorporer le sujet dansant telle que fut cette tragédie grecque considérée comme un des fondamentaux de la culture européenne. Or, la même chose pour les danseurs européens ne s'est fait qu'à partir d'une longue élaboration intellectuelle du mythe qui a été suivi par des séances d'improvisation et d'incorporation du sujet. L'explication d'une telle situation où le mythe « inconnu » à la culture africaine (au moins dans notre conscience occidentale) a été sans aucun problème « traduit » corporellement, Monnier trouve dans le fait, que les cérémonies funéraires font parti vivante de la mémoire collective en Burkina Faso, rafraîchi de surcroît par des événements tragiques de la vie politique faisant un « écho » particulier du mythe de l'Antigone.¹⁵ Ainsi, nous pouvons considérer ce cas comme exemple d'une traduction intersémiotique, c'est-à-dire, d'une transmutation contemporaine du mythe grecque (alors une matière primordialement non-dansante) par l'incorporation dans les mouvements et gestes dansés des danseurs africains. Un rapport pareil de transmutation concerne les danseurs

occidentaux qui se sont retrouvés très éloignés de ce mythe n'étant leur connu que par le biais de leur scolarité.

Par contre, la traduction intra-sémiotique serait-elle celle qui consiste en transposition des signes purement dansants d'un système ou d'une forme de danse en autre. Je pense ici à certains exemples comme celui du hip-hop qui monté sur une scène de théâtre perte tout d'un coup sa référence sociale (ou bien elle n'est plus la même) et qui de l'autre côté, fait une source des emprunts esthétiques du style pour de chorégraphes contemporaines.

Aussi, nous pouvons risquer une constatation que la transposition de certaines danses de leur milieu d'origine, que ça soit la rue, la plage, le bar, le studio, le petit théâtre d'avant-garde de Tokyo, dans un autre milieu culturel qui fut souvent « une scène occidentale » c'est déjà une traduction car le signifiant (en employant ici les termes de la théorie de Ferdinand de Saussure) ne trouve de référence que dans un système. Or, ce système faisant un fond d'interprétation pour le signifiant, n'est pas le même si on transpose p.e. une danse dite « orientale » sur scène européenne. De l'autre côté, on retrouve une situation semblable dans le cas où c'est une danse occidentale (style, pas, rythme) qui est acculturée par une danse non-occidentale (comme le montre Sally Banse sur les exemples des danses afro-américaines ou bien Roger Copeland évoquant une anecdote où le style de Michel Jackson grâce à MTV, devient le prototype de danse d'une tribu africaine).¹⁶

e) Intertextualité : la notion de « *l'intertextualité* » porte en soi les origines littéraires. Inventée par un critique littéraire russe, Michail Bakhtine, elle dérive d'une théorie sémiologique. *L'intertextualité* définit la circulation entre les œuvres des thèmes, des citations, des références, des styles, des motifs, etc. Ainsi, cette notion renvoie à tous ce qui est « emprunté » dans la structure d'une œuvre.¹⁷ Elle peut être nommée selon Julia Kristeva, « *la permutation de textes* » et selon Umberto Eco « *le collage intertextuel* ». ¹⁸ Un concept pareil est apparu chez Gérard Genette sous le thème du « *palimpseste* » qui indique notamment, que tout texte littéraire s'élabore à partir des événements vécus par son auteur et même bien plus encore à partir de ses lectures. Comme si un plagiat,

conscient ou non, était la condition même de la création.¹⁹ Le structuralisme a élargi le champ référentiel de l'intertextualité sur tous les produits de la culture en transposant la catégorie du texte sur des œuvres autres que littéraires, alors unissant la peinture, la photographie, le film, la publicité, etc. Dans cet espace dit « intertextuel » même la société et l'histoire peuvent être comprise comme les textes.²⁰ Comme le dit Barthes : « *Le texte, dans sa masse, est comparable à un ciel, plat et profond à la fois, lisse, sans bords et sans repères ; tel l'augure y découpant du bout de son bâton un rectangle fictif pour y interroger selon certains principes le vol des oiseaux, le commentateur trace le long du texte des zones de lecture, afin d'y observer la migration des sens, l'affleurement des codes, le passage, les citations...* »²¹

Dans cette optique non seulement un spectacle ou bien une oeuvre chorégraphique peut être décrit en tant que « texte » mais aussi le corps dansant même car tant de traits définissent le corps dansant comme « un texte culturel »²², porteur d'un certain héritage culturel, sociologique, historique, mythique, qui inéluctablement constitue un dialogue avec tous les autres « textes culturels » liés au spectacle, quel que soit leur statut ontologique. Contrairement à ce que vient d'être dit sur d'autres termes ci-dessus mentionnés, la notion du *texte* et de *l'intertextualité* possède ce potentiel d'englober en soi toutes les modalités dérivant de la pratique du métissage de la scène contemporaine chorégraphique.

Nous pouvons de nouveaux citer ici les travaux de Robin Orlyn, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, ou bien d'Abou Laagra, Françoise et Dominique Dupuy, CIE Haddy Maleem et leur version du *Sacre du Printemps* (2004) exécutée par les danseurs africaines, Martin Nasser et son « *Peplum* » (2004), et tant d'autres.

Suivant la pensée de Genette – *l'intertextualité* nous envoie aussi bien à la pratique consciente du chorégraphe, celle « corporelle » du danseur ainsi que celle qui se réalise dans le processus de la réception d'un spectacle. En outre, grâce à sa qualité du « palimpseste » elle « englobe » également métissage, hybridation, transmutation et des influences interculturelles. Aussi,

l'intertextualité ne se limite pas à l'espace de la scène (ou bien d'un studio ou d'autres), mais elle permet l'intégration de la figure du Spectateur avec son bagage « textuel » en tant qu'un agent de ce processus. Car le texte ainsi compris est en effet un processus - tout comme l'est la danse.

Cette réflexion nous amène jusqu'à une conclusion qu'en effet, en acceptant ce terme du *palimpseste* et de *l'intertextualité* nous admettons par le même une certaine incapacité de jugement par rapport à ce phénomène qui fut l'interculturalité de la scène contemporaine chorégraphique. En effet, il nous est très difficile parfois, de reconnaître toutes les sources d'inspirations d'un chorégraphe ou bien d'analyser tous les mouvements empruntés d'une autre poétique que celle occidentale. Dans un sens, c'est type de « *spectature* » est un signe de nos temps, une réflexion de ce « *zapping* » omniprésent qui influence souvent des créations chorégraphiques immédiatement contemporaines.

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Notes

- ¹ Ces limites dépendent naturellement de la définition du *Moi* laquelle serait employée. Elle peut être différente selon le paradigme psychologique ou bien sociologique choisi.
- ² Cette pratique est courante par exemple chez la CIE Montalvo-Hervieu, d'autres exemples nous délivreront certains travaux de la CIE Kuba Khan Investigation, Mathilde Monnier, Françoise et Dominique Dupuy, etc.
- ³ Pavis Patrice, *Dictionnaire du théâtre*, notion « Mimesis », Paris, Dunod, 1996. Melberg Arne, *Teorie mimesis*, Universitas, Cracovie, 2000, p. 52-60.
- ⁴ Aristote, *La poétique*, trad. Fr.R. Dupont-Roc et J. Lallot, Seuil, 1980, p.145.
- ⁵ Platon, *Le Baquet*, L'Aire, Lausanne, 1979.
- ⁶ Aristote, ibidem. Pavis P., ibidem.
- ⁷ Pavis P., ibidem.
- ⁸ Nycz Ryszard, *Tekstowy świat. Postrukturalizm a wiedza o literaturze*, Cracovie, 2000, p.179.
- ⁹ Ricœur Paul, *Temps et récit*, t.1, Edition du Seuil, Paris, 1983, p. 146-155.
- ¹⁰ Voir : Baudrillard Jean, *Simulacres et simulation*, Galilée, 1981 et Lehmann Hans-Thies, *Le théâtre postdramatique*, Paris, L'Arche, 2002.
- ¹¹ Sanou Salia, *Propos sur la danse en Afrique*, dans « Danse : langage propre et métissage culturel », Actes du colloque sous la direction de Chantal Pontbriand, Parachute, 2001, p.217.

- ¹² Jesiewiecki Bogumil, *Ce que danser veut dire*, dans „Danse : langage propre et métissage culturel”, op. cit. p.101 – 110.
- ¹³ Voir : Vatsayana, K., *Biologiczne podstawy estetyki*, dans „Estetyki filozoficzne XX wieku”, red. Wilkoszewska Katarzyna, Cracovie, 2000.
- ¹⁴ Toutes les définitions citées dérivent du dictionnaire « Le Petit Robert de la langue française », version électronique Larousse, 2001.
- ¹⁵ Monnier Mathilde, *Antigone l'Etrangère*, dans « Danse : langage propre.. », op. cit. p. 191-198.
- ¹⁶ Banes Sally, *Our hybrid tradition*; et Copeland Roger, *Vital Hybrids vs. Vulgar Corruptions: The fate of Authenticity in the Age of Globalisation*, dans “Danse: langage propre...”, op. cit, p. 21-31 et 53-63.
- ¹⁷ Tadié Jean-Yves, *La critique littéraire au XXe siècle*, Pierre Belfond, Paris 1987, p. 247-251.
- ¹⁸ Adshead-Lansdale Jane, *Dancing texts. Intertextuality and interpretation*, Dance Books, London 1999, p. 15.
- ¹⁹ Genette Gérard, *Palimpseste*, Edition du Seuil, Paris, 1982.
- ²⁰ Tadié J-Y, op. cit., p. 223.
- ²¹ Barthes Roland, *S/Z. Essai*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1970, p. 20-21.
- ²² Foster Susan, *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1986.

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Witnessing the birth of a ballet:

The ideal of Korean ballet and the Premiere of *Choon Hyang*

Ok Hee Jeong

In May, 2007, Universal Ballet Company in Korea (UBC) premiered a new ballet called *Choon Hyang*, based on the most famous love story among traditional Korean narratives. In the story, Choon Hyang, the daughter of an old female entertainer, falls in love with a young aristocrat Mong Ryong. While Mong Ryong was away taking the civil service examination, the local governor Byon imprisoned Choon Hyang for declining his advances. When Mong Ryong came back as a secret royal inspector, he punished Byon and rescued his true love.

In the midst of so many other dance performances, what is so significant about this particular ballet? What intrigued me most is that *Choon Hyang* is a “collective attempt” at “Korean ballet.” The term “Korean ballet” conventionally refers to ballet works with Korean thematic elements or movements. However, unlike other terminologies indicating dance genres or styles, e.g., Argentine Tango or Balanchine-style ballet, the term “Korean ballet” indicates not qualitative characteristics accumulated in the past but the will to have them in the future. In the sense that the conception has emerged prior to the substantial dance phenomenon, I regard “Korean ballet” not as a simple terminology but as an ideology. In addition, the collective dance-making process in *Choon Hyang* is unique in that it is different from the modernist process wherein artistic intention is conventionally attributed to a single choreographer. Intention in *Choon Hyang* is found in its nature as a “project” for which diverse entities collaborate and negotiate with each other. Here, the context is more significant than the text. If *Choon Hyang* were a “project” with underlying hypotheses and specific goals, I wonder how the dance as a “group project” could be articulated and realized. While observing *Choon Hyang*’s showcase in 2006 and the premiere in 2007, I witnessed the birth of a ballet

out of endless negotiations between entities with disparate ideas and viewpoints.

This is an ethnographic study of a full-length ballet, and I consciously use the term “ethnographic” in two ways. First, a work of dance tends to be viewed from an “end-point perspective” and is considered to have a complete shape and an irreversible conclusion. However, I emphasize the ambiguous, open-ended and fluid state of the work in that a work of dance is not an accomplishment of the past but a dynamic discourse of the present. Second, although cultural privilege in ballet has been challenged with new insights, ballet is still far from the realm of ethnography. The rarity of ethnographic studies on ballet can be attributed to the notion that ballet is too familiar for Western dance scholars to perceive in distance as an intriguing research subject. However, by looking at ballet from another perspective, I intend to extract new meanings out of seemingly well-known dance practices. By observing and analyzing the meaning-making process of ballet in the ‘present tense,’ I perceive the dance making process as a human practice through which the issues and worldviews of contemporaneous people shimmer—even in ballet works with many conventional devices and repetitions.

In addition, the fact that I, the researcher, am a former dancer of the same company adds another layer of meaning. Having an experience as a company member, and having close relationships with colleague dancers, I can be neither objective nor disinterested in what is happening during rehearsals and performances. In reverse, the fact that a former dancer came back to study them means that the company members could not help but influence what and how I collected “data.” In this context, I am conscious of the dialectic established between the researcher and the subject and of the trace of the meaning-making process.

The Showcase, June 2-3, 2006

Choon Hyang is not the first work of “Korean ballet”; there have been several attempts since ballet was introduced in Korea in the second quarter of the 20th century. However, *Choon Hyang* is significant in that it succeeds UBC’s first Korean ballet, *Shim Chung* (1986), which has been recognized as the most successful Korean ballet repertoire in terms of history, popularity, and international recognition. As a work that aims to succeed and to differentiate itself from *Shim Chung*, *Choon Hyang* cannot be conceived without being compared to *Shim Chung* not only in choreographic intentions but also cultural and political significance. Julia H. Moon, the general director of UBC, explains the situation as follows:

When *Shim Chung* premiered in 1986, the level of ballet in Korea was quite poor. If you watch the video recording of the time, it’s very unsophisticated from the current perspective. As we can see by today’s standards, Korean ballet has greatly improved. In making *Choon Hyang*, the increased expectations of audiences and the improved level of dance became a great burden....In some sense, *Shim Chung* was a lucky case since it has improved along with the progress of ballet in Korea without that kind of a burden. However, the expectation for *Choon Hyang* is so high even from the opening so that, if not satisfied, it can even harm the reputation of the company.¹

UBC produced *Choon Hyang* to satisfy the demand for a new ballet, and in doing so, they felt that it should be symbolic rather than realistic, contemporary rather than classical, and compact rather than grandiose. In the interview, Julia Moon articulated *Choon Hyang*’s stylistic goal as a “neo-classical Korean ballet.” Moreover, to minimize the risk of investing in a new production, UBC held a showcase a year prior to the official premiere. As such a practice is rare in dance, this shows how scrupulously the conceptual motto was pursued in making *Choon Hyang* a cultural product tailored for the global market.

However, having a noble goal does not guarantee its success. What troubled UBC most, in fact, was the absence of a qualified choreographer that could take charge of the entire project. Thus, UBC decided to adopt an acclaimed contemporary Korean dance version and adapt it into a ballet.

Satisfied with the choreographic structure and synopsis of the Korean dance by the artistic director of the National Dance Company of Korea, Jung Hye Bae, Julia H. Moon decided to invite Bae as the producer of the ballet version, and let UBC’s director/choreographer Brian Yoo translate it into ballet vocabulary. For the production, UBC invited guest artistic collaborators including fashion designer Jung Woo Lee, theater designer Kyung Soon Chun, and composer Kevin Barber Pickard (who had also composed for *Shim Chung* 20 years ago).



Picture 1. Showcase Poster of *Choon Hyang*

Familiar with UBC’s realistic and grandiose staging of classical ballets, I wondered how *Choon Hyang*’s exceptional demands—the abstract ideal, the adaptation of a different genre of dance, and guest artistic collaborators—could be realized. How did participants articulate the ideal and

negotiate with each other? What kind of issues emerged out of this process and what did they say about the community? My fieldwork with this inquiry began as I greeted my ex-colleague dancers. First, I simply asked them what they thought of the ballet and its “unusual” characteristics; surprisingly, most dancers were not as interested in the particularity as I was. None of them had watched the video records of the original version and did not know why each part was done in such a manner.

For example, an interesting conflict between the dancers and the choreography arose from the scene where the two lovers Choon Hyang and Mong Ryong strip in Act I. Before this they just met each other, and after this they made love—of course, they danced *Pas de Deux*. Since their initial, heart-throbbing first encounter was reduced to a gentle exchange of glances, many Korean dancers felt that “stripping and making love” as soon as they came to know each other went against “Korean traditional Confucian morality.”² I found it interesting that what troubled most was not *Pas de Deux* itself, which symbolized lovemaking, but the suspended and detailed manipulation of undraping Choon Hyang’s three-layered garment. While *Pas de Deux* with its various lifting and turning techniques was not seen as “erotic” to dancers who were familiar with classical ballet, disrobing on stage was considered so.

Moreover, although the dancers were not well-informed as to why the scene was directed in such a manner, no one dared to ask. The lack of discussion reveals the hierarchical and sectionalized working mechanism of the ballet company. Dancers did not intrude into the realm of “creators,” they accepted what was assigned to them. Noticing the stymied communication among the participants as seen in this episode, I became self-reflective regarding my role in this context. As a former dancer I had embodied knowledge and opinions to share with them, but as a researcher I also needed to maintain a certain distance. Finally, I began to mention those issues during the interviews with directors and artistic collaborators, and, naturally, the interviews turned into discussion sessions. Of course, such “discussions” meant there was a danger of me imposing my hypotheses on them. However, as my questioning stimulated them to reflect on

things from another angle, the interviews discouraged the repetition of prepared answers and encouraged lively and dialectic ideas. For example, as I delved into the topic of universality vs. particularity of Korean culture in the interview with composer Kevin Pickard, he adjusted his position and said, “Now, you’ve really interested me,” and he talked for another hour. In this process, I was not a passive data collector but a co-discussant promoting mutual dialogue.

No matter how meticulously the ballet was planned, the degree of “how modern” or “how Korean” was not easy to agree upon. Talking with individual collaborators, I found that each had disparate understandings. For example, the costume designer thought that the costume should be even more modern than what was decided on, and the scenery designer thought that the scenery should be more realistic than what was used. Moreover, while the costume was accepted as “stylistic,” the scenery was regarded as so “coarse” for the ballet stage that the designer was changed right after the showcase. When the showcase was done, directors and teachers of UBC commented that they gained many ideas on how to complete the whole work.

The Premiere, May 5-7, 2007

When I returned to UBC this year to research the premiere of *Choon Hyang*, I first noticed that the final outcome was quite far from the original goal; rather than a ballet with a contemporary style and compact volume, they ended up with a realistic and grand scale ballet. So Young Lim, marketing executive of UBC, attributed the change to the feedback from the showcase. Assessing the showcase, the company concluded that the preoccupation with abstract concepts such as “symbolic,” “contemporary” and “Korean” prevented participants from being attentive enough to each other and to the requirements of each scene. As a result, UBC decided to focus more on accurately delivering the proper message or emotion in each scene, which naturally shifted the production toward the previous style with which UBC had been accustomed: grand and elaborate. It may sound ironic that the showcase became the impetus to digress from the ideal rather than to approach it. However, does that mean it was a fruitless project?

Although UBC did not achieve the ideal they had planned, *Choon Hyang* was significant in that it helped them to realize many crucial qualities left unnoticed in doing classical ballet repertoires. The most obvious issue was the dancers' acting ability as seen in their struggle to embody their respective characters. Dancers who were used to classical ballet felt challenged to perform the role of unfamiliar Korean characters. For example, a male principal who found it difficult to dance the role of the lustful corrupt governor since he had only danced the part of princes for 10 years. Also, two female dancers who filled the role of the humorous yet devoted mother of Choon Hyang confessed that they felt at loss when they were told, "In this scene, Choon Hyang is dragged out so you have to be restless. Try it!" without concrete choreography or focused training. Moreover, dancers' interpretations of characters were not necessarily consistent with what directors wanted from them. Hwa Young Choi, one of the two casts as Choon Hyang's mother, interpreted the character as a flippant and prattling rural lady, while the company seemed to seek a rather elegant and devoted mother figure for ballet stage.

However, these challenges also became a chance for them to develop their artistic capacities. Principal dancer Hyon Jun Rhee, who had recently debuted, explained what he realized in dancing the role of Mong Ryong as follows:

When I dance classical ballet, I have to focus on making my steps impeccable. Naturally, I often confront my physical limitations. However, what matters in *Choon Hyang* are how much I concentrate on it, how seriously I devote myself to it, so that this ballet motivates me to dance from the bottom of my heart.

Also, Rhee's partner Yena Kang mentioned about the experience of having an artistic agency in interpreting her role.

When two lovers finally reunite with each other, I cry much more than the other two cast members do. While they interpret the scene lyrically, I rather literally cry a lot. It's because teacher Neff adjusted the scene in accordance

with the dramatic elements in my dancing, which I think works well. I am very happy about this process since my own artistic interpretation was not discouraged but encouraged in this ballet, which is extremely rare in classical ballet.

Moreover, Kang also pointed out the significant differences between the role of Choon Hyang and that of Shim Chung. According to her, the role of Shim Chung was choreographed specifically for the original cast dancer Julia H. Moon, the current general director, and has been so dominated by her image and personality for twenty years that there is little room for descendant dancers to establish their own interpretations of the role. In the context of a classical ballet company, to become the original cast of a ballet allowing unlimited interpretation without precedent prototypes—either princesses by famous Western ballerinas or a Korean filial daughter by Julia Moon—is a precious opportunity for dancers to enlarge their own artistic capacities.

While the conceptual goals were resiliently adjusted for the sake of the work, the discourse of those conceptions, particularly "Korean-ness," still persisted on the micro-level. For instance, casting a Russian in the role of Mong Ryong became an issue much as had happened when Kevin McKenzie danced the role of the Korean King in *Shim Chung*'s premiere twenty years ago; the delicate material and flat-patterned Korean costume *Hanbok* conflicted with what was considered a proper ballet costume; the main backdrop of the Act 1 depicting peach blossoms was misunderstood by many audiences as cherry blossoms (which symbolizes Japan and raised a delicate issue for a "Korean ballet" considering the historical conflict between two countries); and some audiences and critics were dissatisfied with the snow scene since it reminded them of *Nutcracker*. (Hearing of the comparison with the *Nutcracker*, producer Bae retorted, "Is Korean snow different from American snow?")

In particular, the fact that UBC is a Korean classical ballet company with more than a dozen foreign dancers adds another interesting layer of meaning in terms of "Korean-ness." For *Choon Hyang*, Western dancers were told to spray their hair black and even to have make-up done by professional Korean make-up artists to diminish

their “foreignness” in Korean ballet. This decision contrasts with the convention in ballet that Korean dancers are seldom asked to “Westernize” their black eyes and black hair in classical ballets performed by UBC. While dancers occasionally wear wigs in classical repertoires, e.g., pink wigs for Flower Waltz in the Kirov version *Nutcracker*, it is the cast members for Flower Waltz—not Korean dancers—that are asked to wear wigs. I think the unusual preoccupation with the “Korean look” in *Choon Hyang* reveals the psychological resistance of “Korean ballet” as a cultural ideology.

Conclusion

After the premiere, Julia H. Moon told me about things that needed improvement, including the orchestration, the drama, Pas de Deux and so on. The ballet premiered, and yet this does not mean that it is completed. The moment of the birth of a ballet that I witnessed passed, and it left behind a creation called *Choon Hyang*. It will slowly transform itself with shifting tastes and demands. When it ceases to change, it will have solidified its place as a “classic.”

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Endnotes

- ¹ All interviews quoted in the article were conducted with video recording during the fieldwork, and were shown as video clips at the conference presentation. Also, the interviews were conducted in Korean, and translated in English by the researcher.
- ² I put aside the fact that the original story of Choon Hyang is more erotic than the dancers’ vague understanding in that lovemaking scene of two young lovers, aged 15, is described in detail. The disparity between the original story and the dancers’ general assumption can be attributed to the fact that this story is so prevalent through various texts and media that people know the story even without reading it.

Dance, anthropology, and research through practice

Andrée Grau

Introduction

In the past fifteen years or so many discussions and debates have taken place within the broad fields of Performance and Dance Studies about the links between practice and theory. The multitude of terms used to describe the field, e.g. 'practice as research', 'practice based research', 'practice-led research', 'practice through research', 'research by practice', 'performance as research', suggests that, whilst acknowledging that there are fundamental epistemological issues that can only be addressed in and through practice, the investigation of creative-academic issues is nevertheless not an uncontested field and that indeed it resists close definition.

My paper examines some of these issues but rather than look at the fairly young disciplines of Performance and Dance Studies I will go back to earlier discussions coming out of anthropology, ethnomusicology, and folk life studies, where practice, rooted in fieldwork, has been central to investigative research¹. Indeed the question asked in the call for papers 'how does thought move and how does movement think?' had been asked by the anthropologist and ethnomusicologist John Blacking 30 years ago when he suggested that the ultimate aim of thinking was "to be thought" and that this ability was what is generally called genius, inspiration, or creativity. In his words: 'it is a movement of the body; we are moved into thinking' (1976:7). In a television series, which he wrote and presented for Ulster Television, Blacking argued:

Each individual as a baby has thought in movement before thinking in words. Every time we dance we become close to the ground of our being, concerned with the quality of our relationships with other beings, and the elegance of the structures by which life is achieved.

(Blacking 1987-8)

The starting point of my discussion is my understanding that the anthropological approach is

by definition performative. Its key concept, 'culture', developed by Edwin Taylor in 1870, is performative in the sense that cultures exist only in performance, being, as Blacking put it, "products of human individuation ... re-interpreted, translated, by every individual and every generation" (Blacking 1986:3). Cultural knowledge exists in the mind at various degrees of consciousness and it takes shape through movement, sound, touch, odour and so on. The knowledge that human beings have is therefore both implicit and explicit and it is simultaneously somatic, intellectual, and emotional. The premise of this paper then is that socio-cultural history, values, ethics, bodily senses, and feelings are all interconnected.

My presentation will be twofold:

1. I will discuss in what ways fieldwork, the canonical methodology of anthropology is both ideology and practice through examining the performative aspect of its key method of participant observation
2. I will then discuss 'Learning to perform' as a research technique.

My argument is informed by some thirty years of investigation and fieldwork experiences on four continents.

Fieldwork

The folklorist Beverly Stoeltje discussed entering the field to carry out ethnographic research as similar to:

Looking into a pool of water. Depending on the light and time of the day, one may see a reflection of oneself, refracted perhaps because of the ripples on the surface. At sunset the reflection of the surrounding trees and foliage appear, and eventually one sees deeply into the water, simultaneously becoming aware of the underwater world, the forest, the sunlight, and one's own reflection.

(Stoeltje, Fox, and Olbrys, 1999: 158)

Fieldwork, and participant observation, is certainly at the core of the anthropological venture. Because ‘much of culture [...] is learned but not taught’ (Rice, 1995: 274), the ethnographers’ presence in the field is essential.

Fieldwork is both the rite of passage of anthropologists when they enter the discipline and their ‘union card’ so-to-speak during the rest of their career. Anthropologists Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson argue that for research to be accepted as ‘anthropological’ relies on the ‘extend to which it depends on experience in the field’ (Gupta and Ferguson 1997:1). It is the ethnographer’s presence in the field that brings a stamp of authority to what anthropologists do. It is their act of witnessing which gives validity to their work and through fieldwork, *intimacy* is used as an investigative tool, with all the problems this entails, both practically and intellectually. As anthropologist Vered Amit puts it:

There is surely no other form of scholarly enquiry in which relationship of intimacy and familiarity between researcher and subject are envisioned as a fundamental medium of investigation rather than as an extraneous by-product or even an impediment.

(Amit, 2000:2)

It may be worth noting here that this intimacy, whilst searched for by researchers, is certainly not a given. On the other hand it can sometime be overwhelming, as for example when my partner first, and I later, were adopted into Tiwi Aboriginal families.

Anthropological fieldwork involves “social survival” for researchers, as fieldworkers have to find a space they can operate from. Anthropologist Mondher Kilani argued that ‘in the field the anthropologist plays his/her identity’² (Kilani, 1994:42). Whilst for anthropologist Kirsten Hastrup, ethnographers deliberately subject themselves ‘to a world beyond their competence’ (Hastrup, 1995:17). I would argue that it is this very instability that is at the root of the performativity and its creative sideline of the fieldwork experience.

What we have in fieldwork therefore, is two types of knowledge being brought together: on the one hand an intellectual knowledge that is all about establishing hypotheses, elaborating theories and finding meaning for human actions; and on the other an experiential knowledge coming out of living among a group of people. One does not stop living simply because one is removed from home. Indeed this would not even be possible: my first Australian fieldwork among the Tiwi, for example, lasted 14 months without a break. In the field I am a researcher but I remain a person. Life and work cannot be disentangled, either physically or conceptually (cf. Grau 1999).

Robert Lavenda and Emily Schultz, describing anthropologists’ work, argued:

Anthropologists get to know people as individuals, not as “data sets”. They remember the names and faces of people who, over the course of a year or more, have become familiar to them as complex and complicated men, women, and children. They remember the feel of the noonday sun, the sounds of the morning, the smells of food cooking, the pace and rhythm of life. In this sense, anthropology has been an *experiential* discipline. (Italics in the text)

(Lavenda & Schultz 2000: 5)

In trying to make sense of what is going on, ethnographers are involved in a ‘subject shift’, to use folklorist Jeff Tilton’s expression where ‘one acquires knowledge by figuratively stepping outside oneself to view the world with oneself in it’ (1995: 108).

In the process, links are made with one’s previous reality. Relating to her first field trip, one of our MA students Amaryllis Tsegou considered:

I could not but relate at certain moments with the locals and the celebration: the two saints which are honoured have a predominant place in the Greek orthodox pantheon, but also in my family (my mother’s name is Helene and my grandfather’s, uncle’s, and cousin’s Constantine), being absent from my

mother's celebration, this one felt in a way a very intimate "replacement"
(Tsegou 2007: 44)

The fieldwork experience is a dialogue; and fieldwork is about inter-subjectivity. It is about engaging with real people, with their conflicts and consensus, looking at what Victor Turner called their *social dramas*, whilst at the same time living *social dramas* of one's own. Anthropology is about building bridges of understanding between self and other and, as another of our students, Fiorella Arenas, put it 'the real challenge of the researcher is not on how much information he/she gathers but his/her ability to establish relationships, making possible conversations with "strangers"' (Arenas 2007: 11).

'The dynamics of self in the field' (Stoeltje 1999:160) needs therefore to be examined as it is at the root of the data that is collected. Extended fieldwork provokes intense self-examination, which can take the researchers by surprise. Anthropologist Martha Ward has commented on this:

After the fact and in private, many of us have discussed the failed marriages, madness, depressions, or the changed lives of our colleagues. Few of us [...] honestly or eloquently document how immersion in another culture alters our very definition of self.

(Ward 1985: 477)

The relationship between ethnography and autobiography is noted by many, acknowledging that reflexivity is an integral part of the work.

The reflexive approach, very much in vogue since the 1980s through the work of male anthropologists such as James Clifford, Michael Fisher, George Marcus, and Paul Rabinow, is certainly not new. Early in the twentieth century, Zora Neal Hurston (1891-1960), a student of Franz Boas, pursued a research topic that has been said to represent 'an extension of [her] identity and intellectual interests' (Stoeltje 1999:161). She did anthropology-at-home, decades before such enterprise was even considered by anthropologists. Furthermore she defied the scholarly conventions of the time and presented her fieldwork findings through performances, fiction as well as through

more orthodox scholarly publications. Other female anthropologists followed suite: Anthropologist and dancer Katherine Dunham, a student of Alfred Radcliffe-Brown and Robert Redfield at the University of Chicago, chose to present much of her findings through performance. Others such as Laura Bohannan chose to share her personal experience of the field through a novel, written under a pseudonym (Smith Bowen 1964). Anonymity was also the strategy of the author of *Reflections of a woman anthropologist: No hiding place* whom, according to Ward:

[did] not "study" humor, pain, poverty of environment, or relationship between the sexes. She experience [d] them, live [d] in them, and [found] herself changed into new forms of "becoming"

(Ward 1985: 477)

In her own words she was 'simultaneously an apprentice researcher and an apprentice human being' (Cesara 1982: 100).

Similarly, Claude Lévi-Strauss, the 'father' of structuralism, can be said, somewhat ironically, to also have introduced reflexivity into ethnographic history when he described himself as proceeding in the manner of Kantian philosophy (cf. Stoeltje 1999:166, Lévi-Strauss 1964: 18-19).³

Anthropologists and folklorists have therefore always been reflexive and private experiences were often at the basis of scholarly work. They rarely said so in their writing, however. Stoeltje, for example, comments that in the 1970s she did not mention in an article that it was rooted in her life history and that the diary she quoted from was her grandfather's, because 'at that point, it was acceptable to conduct fieldwork in one's own community and even in one's own family, but it was not yet conventional to acknowledge these relationships in print (Stoeltje 1999: 169). It is also worth noting that when anthropologists did and do talk about themselves, the account is rarely entirely candid. As anthropologist Esther Newton put it, for example,

When a fieldworker writes in the first person, she or he thinks and sometime feels, but never actually lusts or loves.
[...]

Most “reflexive” anthropology, which explicitly spotlights how ethnographic knowledge is produced, has rendered sex and emotion between ethnographer and informants more abstract than before.

(Newton 1993: 5)

This would be worth investigating further, but I want to turn to the other aspect of my talk, that of ‘learning to perform’.⁴

Learning to Perform

Considering the importance of experience as a way of gathering anthropological data it is interesting that with a few exceptions, students of anthropology were not encouraged to participate in musical, let alone dance performances, or if they did, not to make too much of an issue of it. This meant that for most of its history, even though anthropologists tended to study societies with very rich musical/dance cultures, these rarely entered anthropological monographs. And whilst the Turnerian concept of ‘social dramas’ or the idea of the ‘presentation of self in everyday life’ offered by the sociologist Ervin Goffman have been embraced by many anthropologists, the notion of performed ethnography, which Turner promoted towards the end of his life has been seen with great suspicion and it is interesting that his late publications appeared in performance rather than anthropological publications (cf. Turner and Turner 1982 for example). Similarly Mette Bovin ‘provocation anthropology’ has been frowned upon in many anthropological circles (Bovin 1988).

It seems that the situation was similar in folk life studies in the US. Richard Dorson, for example, is said to have discouraged students from studying music as their dissertation topic, and, according to folklorist Carol Silverman he ‘did not view playing as an acceptable tool of folklore fieldwork and analysis’ (1995: 308). In her view ‘in most folklore and anthropology programs musical performance is as best irrelevant, or at worst seen as taking away from the precious scholarly focus’ (1995: 308). This is rather interesting and in contrast with the European situation, where in the 1960s and 1970s folklorists tended to be practitioners involved in the revival movements taking place during the period, though whether they brought their practice into their

scholarly writing would need further investigation outside the scope of this presentation.

It must be said, however, that on both sides of the Atlantic at the time a parallel movement emerged where ethnomusicology students were encouraged to become ‘bi-musical.’ The concept and technique was developed in the 1950s by Mantle Hood, who felt that musical eurocentrism could only be challenged through the practice of non western music as students, through it, would develop ‘an ability to hear’ (1960:56)

In the 1950s when John Blacking was doing his fieldwork among the Venda of South Africa he felt that learning to perform was a crucial research technique if one were to gain any deep understanding of the principles underpinning music and dance.

I decided to begin my general study of Venda music with a detailed study of the children’s songs. I thought it would be a good plan to learn Venda music by the same process as the Venda themselves, and that by singing children’s songs I might improve my pronunciation and my vocabulary.

(Blacking 1967: 28)

For him, once fieldworkers had established a good rapport with the people they worked with and gathered a lot of material about the folk views on how music and dance fit within the broader socio cultural systems, they should, whenever possible, participate in performance ‘and invite criticism of [their] performance’ (1973: 214)

Bi-musicality, however, is somewhat a misleading term in that, as ethnomusicologist Charles Seeger put it in the 1970s it is not a high level of musicianship that is necessary. For him a degree of ‘competence of performance is necessary for the knowledge *about* the idiom that is the essential stuff of the study’ (1977: 325) (*italics in the text*). What is important is for the researchers to go beyond their competence, and by going through this process question the bodily knowledge they take as given (not as easy as it seems for Western dancers in particular)

More recently ethnomusicologist Charles Keil argued that:

All the listening in the world does not conditions your mind-body to *be* musical and therefore to take the next step in listening... Unless you physically do it, it's not really apprehensible, and you are not hearing all there is to hear inside the music.

(In Keil and Feld 1994: 29-30)

In a letter written in 1972 to then psychologist/musician and soon to become ethnomusicologist John Baily, Blacking wrote:

Your experience in sensori-motor coordination is going to be particularly useful because I am more and more convinced that some of the essential structures of music are rooted in the body. [...] I am sure that your experience as a musician, as indeed mine as a pianist, will have indicated to you the very close relationship which exists between 'dancing' with the body and producing musical sounds as a result of this activity' (in Baily 1994: 3).

This is what is interesting for us involved in dance. Scholars like Blacking, Baily, Keil and Turner have emphasised embodiment in their work. Learning to play, or enacting ethnography as a preparation for fieldwork, is about engaging in a physical not just a cognitive level. Through actively engaging in the traditions we study, we are involved in enacting and re-formulate them, and whilst one needs to be cautious and aware that being able to perform to the satisfaction of our teachers does not mean performing with the same consciousness as theirs, 'inter-musicalities' and 'inter-choreologicalities' can help the fieldworker apprehend different conceptualisations of sounds, bodies and movement in space and should be encouraged, especially if it destabilises the position vis-à-vis their own bodily knowledge.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the MA students studying the Anthropology of Dance with me at Roehampton University during the 2006-2007 academic year, as it is their probing questions that made me write this paper.

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Endnotes

- ¹ This presentation is part of a bigger project looking at the performative aspects of fieldwork. Here I deliberately chose not to draw from the field of the anthropology of dance and cognate disciplines, to bring to the attention of dance scholars the work of non-dance scholars. In a forthcoming publication the different branches will be brought together.
- ² Translation from French by author
- ³ Notre problématique rejoint celle du kantisme, bien que nous cheminions sur d'autres voies qui ne conduisent pas aux mêmes conclusions. L'ethnologue ne se sent pas obligé, comme le philosophe, à prendre pour principe de réflexion les conditions d'exercice de sa propre pensée, ou d'une science qui est celle de sa société et de son temps, afin d'étendre ces constatations locales à un entendement dont l'universalité ne pourra qu'être hypothétique et virtuelle. (Lévi-Strauss 1964: 18-19)
- ⁴ I must stress, however, that I do not necessarily encourage the inclusion of autobiographical details. I abhor 'confessional anthropology'. Personal details should be included, in my view, only to situate the socio-political position of the researcher as this may colour his/her research and if they enrich the theoretical discussion. I have little respect for works that tell us more about the researcher than the researched.

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Constructing dance knowledge in the field: bridging the gap between realisation and concept¹

Georgiana Gore² and Egil Bakka

Apologia

EB and GG: Our presentation arises from discussions during the last two years concerning appropriate methods for constructing dance knowledge.

EB: These include methods in fieldwork for accessing the kind of knowledge from which dancing springs, the knowledge of dancing people,

GG: as well as the appropriate methods for constructing academically based dance knowledge as a result of our fieldwork.

EB: I am coming to our discussions from traditional dance or folk dance. I see dance as intangible cultural heritage, and accordingly dancing as a part of the world's diversity, as in biological diversity. I believe that movement diversity is equally important. For me dances and dancing matter.

GG: For me too, Egil. But, as an academic anthropologist and one-time choreographer, I'm less directly engaged in promoting dance diversity and more concerned with understanding how diversity is promoted, the decision-making processes involved and the network of relations constructed to do so, which involve actors such as yourself.

EB: Our discussions also emerge from my pre-occupations as an ethnochoreologist with differences in approach, especially when I compare my own to those used by anthropologists like you, Georgiana. It seems to me that anthropologists have come to privilege interviews and discussions with dancers. They almost seem to have discarded observation, filming and analysis of actual dancing, and consequently the basis for analytical work with dance movement.

On the other hand, researcher colleagues, such as Desmond (1994: 58) and Farnell (1999: 157) have argued that we need to develop skills for analysing movement, to become movement literate, that we need to be able to write and read movement texts, for example Labanotation scores, and develop other such tools in our field.

GG: Methodological and epistemological issues have been one of my ongoing preoccupations; and while Egil's have often been related directly to concerns about methods for maintaining,

transmitting and revitalising dance traditions, my own have been connected to an early realisation that what you study and the results obtained are configured by the research methods and theoretical perspectives that you use. As I said last year in Cluj, Romania : 'You can't crack a nut with a steam roller and hope to eat it' (Gore, 2006).

EB and GG: And we both agree on this point although our perspectives are evidently different.

The plot

GG: So now we've reached the plot. It's true that anthropologists now engage in more dialogical modes of knowledge construction. They have rejected traditional observational techniques on the grounds that these are overly positivist; that they only enable documentation of the dancers' behaviour from an external point of view, the researcher's perspective. They therefore cannot account for the meaning attributed to action unless through the researcher's inferences. Nor can observation render the agents' perceptions and experiences, that is their subjective or "insiders'" point of view. This is why anthropologists have come to rely increasingly on generating verbalisations from a variety of interview techniques, without, I add, entirely abandoning participant observation.

EB: I cannot see that observational techniques are overly positivist as such, and I do not argue that they should stand on their own. Certainly these techniques alone will not sufficiently take into account the perspectives of the agents; but, as part of a research strategy, I think they are underestimated. In my mind, dance knowledge is not only about the meanings of the agents, but also about the actual skills and movement patterns which carry and even create meaning. Therefore, movement patterns need to be documented through observation, filming and analysis as part of the construction of academic dance knowledge.

Presenting the characters

EB: We need to present our characters now, the concepts we wish to put into play. For me, there are

two dimensions of dance through which we can access dance knowledge.

One dimension is the realisation of dance – the fact that somebody is dancing. It is through this dimension that dance is experienced as such.

The other dimension is the skills and knowledge which a dancer has accumulated, and which enable him or her to dance a specific dance. This includes, of course, the meaning the dance has for him or her. I suggest calling this the dance concept. Accordingly we could say that when I dance or realise a certain dance, it springs from my dance concept. So in order to understand a certain dance I think it is a definite advantage to access both dimensions, both realisation and concept.

GG: I think I may want to react here to something which is, perhaps, part of the basis for our disagreement. I'm uncomfortable with the idea that we "access" dance knowledge, if the knowledge is assumed to pre-exist our intervention in the field. I don't mean that dancers don't have ideas about what they do, your dance concept. But it seems to me that the researcher plays an active role in producing the knowledge, not only through his involvement in the field (*'the observer is himself part of his observation'* (italics in original) as Lévi-Strauss (1999: xxvii) posited as early as 1950), but because the dance knowledge is always constructed in the interaction between researcher and dancer. It's really a question of cognitive transaction and co-construction of knowledge.

EB: I think we need to distinguish between two kinds of dance knowledge. First: The skills transmitted and norms negotiated in a "dance society", that is in a group which shares the practice of a dance. Second: The results of interaction and negotiation about this first kind of knowledge, when a researcher wants to fix it in some way as academic dance knowledge.

Maybe, we should rather refer to the dance knowledge of dancing people as the dance concept. The concept enables dancing people to dance a dance according to norms, to recognise it when other dancers do it, and, to some degree, to talk about it and describe it.

GG: Let me bring our third concept, tacit knowledge to the stage for discussion.

So, is the dance concept the same as tacit knowledge? And if so, isn't it then sufficient to gain access to that knowledge through provoking verbalisation?

EB: I think about a dance concept as having knowledge at several levels, some tacit, some not. Some aspects of a concept are available for us to verbalise directly, particularly if the dance has been

instructed to us in words. Example: Which hand do you use when you shake hands with someone? This is hardly tacit knowledge to us here. Some tacit knowledge is not conscious, but is straightforward, and we can easily verbalise it just by observing ourselves. Example: Which hand do you use to open the door? I have found out that most people do not know before they try, but after trying, they know and can tell me.

Some tacit knowledge, however, is of a complex nature and we cannot easily verbalise it even if we practice the knowledge every day. Example: Can you please instruct my daughter who broke her leg, how to ride a bike, so that she can do it when she is well again without prior practice?

GG: The question of how to elicit tacit knowledge, or knowledge concerning action (goal directed action) has produced a number of answers. Many of these come from research done in cognitive and/or phenomenological psychology. A common technique is stimulated recall from video film of the initial action. The dancer comments a video film of his/her dancing, and the verbalisations are recorded. This reveals much about the dancer's experience and thought processes, but also about how the researcher conducted the interview and how this configured the verbalisations on the action. A more phenomenologically based technique uses no external artefact to stimulate verbalisations. This is the explicitation interview³ developed by Pierre Vermersch (1994) and colleagues, in which the agent is replaced in the lived situation which is the object of the interview, under the controlled guidance of the researcher. Through remembering or reminiscing on this original situation, verbalisation concerning the subjective experience, including its affective and cognitive dimensions, becomes possible. It aims to avoid a situation of post-rationalisation, in which the interviewee talks around the experience and not of the experience. This kind of interview might well yield the kind of information about how you balance on a bike for your daughter to understand what's at stake.

Action

EB: We shall now show you a filmed extract of a Norwegian dance, the "gangar from Setesdal", and try to demonstrate how each of us would interrogate the material using our respective methodologies in order to bridge the gap between realisation and concept.

EB: Documenting traditional dance is a standard procedure at my institution³ we film each couple doing the same dance several times. Then we



Birgit Austad and Aslak Austad from Setesdal are dancing gangar during a filming session in 1970 Photo: Gunvor Bakka Rff-sentret.

transcribe each realisation, and compare transcriptions. In this way improvised patterns stand out, that is, as differences between different realisations. This dance material is well known to us in its conventional taught forms, but this kind of analysis of the models and of the pioneers of teaching enables us to discover hitherto hidden patterns.

When we analysed the film you saw, we discovered that norms for improvisation seemed to be different between dancers on the film and younger dancers.

Younger people saw it as a norm for the man and the woman in a couple to coordinate their steps, like this. They considered this – where we do not coordinate our steps – to be wrong. *(EB and GG do the simple step version together in coordination and then EB changes his pattern so that they are not coordinated.)*

GG: This norm appears not to have existed among the older couples. The man and woman quite often danced without coordination, and did not seem even to try to coordinate their steps. *(GG then leaves EB who, alone, continues dancing the more complex version.)*

We also discovered a variation in step technique among some older dancers, which no younger

dancers knew existed. Both older and younger people performed the step like this. *(EB shows the step on his own.)*

But the older people had this alternative to the step, which no younger dancers therefore used. *(EB shows the alternative step.)*

So the repertoire of steps and how these are deployed is part of the dance concept?

Egil's exposé

EB: Yes, but for me these step patterns are good examples of the very deep layers of tacit knowledge. These kinds of patterns could probably only be discovered through the dimension of realisation.

They would probably not be discovered without sophisticated analytical tools applied to filmed material. In other words, I think that the patterns are a layer of the dance concept which the dancers themselves could not verbalise without being given the analytical tools of the researcher and being trained for it.

As to the coordination of the steps between man and woman, the older dancers might easily adopt the conventional opinion that the steps ought to be coordinated. They may claim this when we elicit their dance concept verbally, and have probably been doing so even in demonstrations and teaching.

GG: This seems to mean that you don't have any confidence in the verbalisations, because the dancers tend to give only idealised understandings and nothing from their own experience and knowledge. But, perhaps this is underestimating their capacity for reflexive analysis, and what is needed are the appropriate methods. I think it might be possible to provoke verbalisations of experience and complex tacit knowledge, and thus to train the dancers to analyse their experience through the techniques that I mentioned earlier.

EB: Interview techniques are definitely interesting. I have also tested what I called 'dialogue in movement' (Bakka, 2002), researching through the shared experience of dancing, the other approach I defend, but which we finally don't have time to go into now.

Georgiana's exposé

GG: Let's go back to the "gangar". From what you say, the step variants you demonstrated and which emerge as improvised in the dance, are as important as the improvisations between the man and woman. It's now too late to use the explication interview technique with the dancers on film, but it would be possible to do so with the younger dancers in order to understand, for example, their choice of step at a

given moment in the dance. Maybe there's even a pattern to the improvised choices.

The idea of this kind of interview, as I indicated earlier, is to put the interviewee in touch with his/her experience during a very precise moment of action, and to request that he/she describe or narrate the actions undertaken, their sequence, the feelings and thoughts associated with the specific actions. The focus has to be on the specific task as undertaken. For example: 'At the moment, Egil, when you placed your weight on your left foot, what were you thinking about?' Because of its relation to lived experience, it is evident that the interview must ideally be done as close in time to the action or dancing in question. So Egil, do you agree that we should now begin an interview so that I can better understand what the differences are between the alternatives that you just demonstrated?

Resolving the plot

EB : No, I don't think we have time for it now. I think we should start resolving the plot. Is there an obvious conflict between the two of us? Did our concepts clarify, or did they play dirty tricks on us? Do you as a dance anthropologist really discard the analysis of realisations or look at them as being of little relevance for constructing our academic dance knowledge for the future?

For my own part, as an ethnochoreologist, I certainly see the value of advanced dialogue or interview techniques to elicit verbalisation of the dance concept. I've done my share of fieldwork interviewing, and also shown dancers films of themselves. I felt it was really hard to get beyond conventional opinions and expressions. Maybe it's because traditional participatory dance of the kind we saw, in my opinion, lacks intentionality at its detailed level. The ultimate flow experience, which a dancer is searching for, takes over, when he or she can let go of all preoccupations concerning what the body ought to do, and just let it happen without reflection. The ultimate experience for me is the harmony with my partner, with musicians and with context. The question is then, is this a repetition of conventional sayings or is it really my lived experience?

For me, my tools for analysing realisations seem a lot sharper than the tools I have for interview and dialogue, but I would certainly like to learn more about the explicitation interview.

GG: We could go on discussing for a lot longer, but I think we should begin winding up. Let me now reveal my hand: of course participant observation is necessary, as are filming and analysis, but it all boils down for me as to how you use them, how you treat

the material generated. One example of an effort to couple more phenomenologically based approaches with observationally based movement description is of course Deirdre Sklar's work (1999, 2005); though dare I suggest – in case she's here in the room – that her descriptions of dance experience don't access the same level of experience that the explicitation interviews do?

EB: A plot is also about understanding relationships between characters, so let me try to look at the relationship between the realisation and the concept. It seems to me the results you get from approaching dance through the two can never be harmonised or can never totally match.

GG: I would go so far as to say that the gap between concept and realisation will always remain, as this is necessarily an asymptotic relationship.

EB: As I understand it, an asymptotic relationship is like when you see a railway track on a large plain, the two rails seem to get closer due to perspective, but they actually never meet, or, only theoretically in infinity.

Yes, I agree, but for me to work with both rails or both dimensions at the same time enhances the knowledge of both of them, and in some sense diminishes the gap between them.

Epilogue

EB: You have witnessed a dialogue across differences.

GG: We agree to disagree,

EB and GG: and so the audience like in any good play becomes the judge, taking sides with one character or another, or as in a Brechtian play maintaining distance on action and appreciating the play of concept-characters.

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Endnotes

¹ Structured like a drama and presented as a choreographed dialogue between ourselves and with PowerPoint, this paper was the result of a close collaboration, each of us contributing to the overall structure and to each other's spoken parts. The presentation included a brief DVD extract of a traditional Norwegian dance, and short dance demonstrations by the presenters. We have retained the dialogic structure, which formally enacts some of the content, the letters EB and GG therefore indicating the passages delivered respectively by Egil Bakka and Georgiana Gore. The headings refer to the PowerPoint as well as highlighting the dramatic structure. The oral presentation's syntactical and grammatical "errors" have been left, unless they render the meaning obscure or ambiguous.

² Georgiana Gore presented, at the conference, under her French professional name, Georgiana Wierre-Gore.

³ For further information on this technique consult: <http://www.expliciter.net/>.

⁴ Rff-sentret - The Norwegian Centre for Traditional Music and Dance.

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Loie Fuller's *Ballet of Light*:

Re-imagining a 1908 Media Spectacle in the Digital Age

Jody Sperling

Loie Fuller's 1908 *Ballet of Light* was a cinematic spectacle involving the projection of images—including underwater landscapes, stellar constellations, volcanic eruptions, and an aurora borealis—onto transparent gauzes hung at the front of the stage. Fuller's company of young dancers, known as her "muses," danced barefoot, without "fleshings" and in "the flimsiest of draperies" behind, and/or amongst the drop-screens.¹ As they waved scarves in flowing motion, they became swept up in morphing environments. Fuller harnessed the technology of her day—magic-lantern projections and sophisticated lighting plots—to depict natural phenomena. She took her audience on a geographic journey—much like an IMAX movie—through the sea, the frozen north, up to the heavens, and finally landed in a garden of butterflies.

Ballet of Light had its premiere in London and toured the United States in 1909. Last year, Margaret Wilson at the University of Wyoming approached me with the idea of setting a Fuller-style recreation on the students. After reading reviews of *Ballet of Light*, I knew that this was the one I wanted to try. Here's an excerpt from the review that sparked my imagination:

As [Loie Fuller] has contrived it, her *Ballet of Light* is half-luminous background and half-illuminated motion. Misty gauzes screen the front of the stage. Upon them, and through them to other gauzes beyond, stream changeful lights of many hues. They project upon the gauzes and upon the spectators' fancy images that now bear some resemblance to fantastic landscapes that again are mere riots of luminous splotches or luminous bars, and that yet again seem like some ordered kaleidoscope of interplaying lights. Within these gauzes, the dancers

moved like so many Loie Fullers with youth renewed. As they flowed from motion to

motion and pose to pose or as they made play with their scarves, light above, below, before, behind, poured upon them. They became as butterflies with light touching, mottling, firing their wings. They became as nymphs of flame in a sea of fiery vapors in which they waved and curled yet more fiery scarves. . . . The dance illuminated and not the dance itself was the goal. Eyes had swam and fancy rioted in an orgy of luminosity.²

So how do you recreate an "orgy of luminosity"? I had worked with magic-lantern images previously for my *Magic-Lantern Dance* (2000), a collaboration with Terry Borton of the American Magic-Lantern Theater. I knew how rich these projected images could be. I had recently transferred all of the original slides for that piece to DVD so that I could perform the solo at the Reynolda House Museum without Terry being present to operate the lantern. All we needed was a high-powered video projector to cast the video on my costume as I moved. The video projection, though slightly pixilated, was not far off from the original. So I knew that video was the way to go with *Ballet of Light*.

Given the constraints of time, budget and technical support for this project, I figured the simplest way to accomplish our "light orgy" was to have a single source video projector (as opposed to the multiple sources implied in the review) onto one front "gauze" or scrim. The video would create the environment for the dancers who would appear, when side-lit, as being in front of the image.

For the project, I collaborated with scenic designer Roger Hanna (who had just won a

Bessie Award for his work with Susan Marshall). We had fun attempting to reproduce some of the vintage lantern effects with digital video editing. You will see some examples later.

The biggest issue that we had to face is that no music was credited on the programs or reviews for this piece. I found this strange because all the other dances were given detailed musical credits and so much of Fuller's approach relied on music visualization. To fill in the gaps, I collaborated with pianist Jeffrey Middleton (with whom I have worked for almost a decade) to create a medley of image-appropriate music. Knowing well the extraordinary range of music that Fuller used, by virtually the whole canon of classical composers, I felt drawn towards powerful themes. I rejected one or two initial selections as being too "tasteful." Jeff and I eventually settled on a scenario, somewhat simplified from the original, and then chose music to illustrate each section. Our final selection includes, among other composers, Satie, Ravel, Debussy, Chopin, Grieg, Delibes ("Flower Duet" from *Lakmé*), and ends with the famous overture theme from Rossini's *Barber of Seville*. The result is full of contrasts and recognizable melodies. As we envisioned it, the medley is an over-the-top romp through many geographies.

Once we had the score recorded, the next stage in the process was to create a "music video." I knew I only had one week in January to choreograph the dance, so Roger and I worked in the fall to prepare a DVD with all of the projections synchronized to music. In essence, I came into the choreographic process with my "sets" on disc and then fashioned the dancers into the visual environment.

While most of the reviews of *Ballet of Light* were positive, one critical review is very telling about some of the potential pitfalls of using projections:

The whirling, floating, iridescence of Miss Fuller's famous dance got much of its brilliance by contrast with a black background. Light the background, as happens when you threw lantern pictures upon the gauze that separates audience from performers, and you break that contrast. You get softer,

sweeter effects now and then—mother-of-pearl or a sort of peach-blow daintiness—but never the dazzling, smiting splendor that made Miss Fuller's art such a tempest of beauty.³

In addition to the lack of contrast between figure and foreground, the writer points out another problem:

And just this mother of pearl or peach-blow loveliness brings a woe with it. It makes the lantern slides a horror. Painted by hand and with some delicacy they become crude and almost grotesque when enlarged on the gauze. They look like daubs. This method, perhaps, were it not for the exquisite refinements of color and the fleeting, poetic charm of gossamer textures when the dancers fill the bottom of the picture with their swirling draperies. It is a little like setting a sunflower—one might say cabbage—next to a bowl of pink roses. Or, to keep closer to the distinction, it is a little like allowing sign painter to produce the background for a Meissonnier.⁴

So the writer here raises the problem of resolution. This is an issue that we still face today. Instead of "daubs" of paint being blown up though, we have potential pixilation. And in the lack of video resolution, there is a risk of the image looking like a video game.

[At this point in the presentation, I showed clips from the performance of *Ballet of Light* by students at the University of Wyoming and discussed the way in which the projected digital video recreated and adapted magic-lantern techniques:

Sea: Bubbles Rising. Effect could have been produced manually in lantern-era.

Fire: Tank Slide. Video of antique lantern slide that holds water. When drops of food coloring are dropped into the "tank," swirls of color appear to *rise* on the screen because of the

inversion effect of the lens. Effect is multiplied and enhanced digitally.

Space: Moving concentric rings. This pattern comes from lantern slides that were used to teach astronomy. The image is then digitally replicated and made to move.

Aurora Borealis / Angels: “Mother-of-pearl” Effect. This section illustrates how the soft contrast between colors in the foreground (the projected image on the scrim) and the hues thrown on the dancers’ costumes from the side can create iridescent effects.

Garden of Butterflies: Digital Chromotrope. A chromotrope is a kind of magic-lantern kaleidoscope. A similar effect, shown here, can be produced via Final Cut Pro.]

Conclusion

Given today’s preoccupation with intermingling technology and performance, it is interesting to examine Fuller’s sophisticated use of magic-lantern slides in the creation of an overwhelming and transporting dreamscape. Using digital methods to recall these effects raises issues about the transposition of texture and brilliance. Fuller may have had to deal with daubs of paint on her slides and issues of resolution, but she did not face the matter of pixilation nor did she worry about the image looking like a video game.

The assumption with technology is that there is a constant trajectory of improvement. I don’t want to repudiate the advances of the last hundred years, nor do I want to fetishize obsolescence, however I think that we should understand the different textures that different generations technologies offer. I hope this kind of re-enactment—using video to imitate lantern slides—can be a creative exercise that produces unexpected and visually provocative results.

The fact that *Ballet of Light* was “half-luminous background and half-illuminated motion” made it almost impossible to photograph. The lack of visual information

about the piece is made up for by colorful written accounts. By employing an open and creative process in my re-envisioning of Fuller’s work, I am also advocating in general for a stronger role of “imagination” in the process of remembering dances from the past—even ones that would presume a greater authenticity. If theory and practice have anywhere to meet, it is in the mingling of scholarship with an active choreographic imagination.

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Notes

- ¹ “Night of Dancing: No Shoes, Stockings or Tights,” *Hartford Courant*, 12 January 1910. In Robinson Locke scrapbook of Loie Fuller clippings, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, p.109.
- ² Unidentified clipping, Locke scrapbook, p.93.
- ³ Unidentified clipping, Locke scrapbook, p.112.
- ⁴ Ibid.

Theory of Alwin Nikolais : improvising, exploring, examining and defining

Marc Lawton

Trained in the 1930s by Hanya Holm, thus inheriting from the German pedagogy that grew from *Ausdrückstanz*, also marked by journalist and theoretician John Martin and philosopher Susanne Langer, Alwin Nikolais (1910-1993) established his school and company in New York City and gradually designed in the 1950s several tools he used in his work. A great teacher and a prolific choreographer, his legacy is today palpable, providing the dance with an enlarged theoretical field.

Expanding from Laban's philosophy, Nikolais refined and enriched it by borrowing from other fields: Jung's psychoanalysis, McLuhan's sociology, Arnheim's gestalt psychology. But overall, he experimented on the bodies of his company members, among whom Murray Louis was a key figure. His approach grew from a constant shuttling between his principles – which he called the “big four”, i.e. space, shape, time and motion – and the sentient experience of the dancing body.

The practice of dance produces its own norms: without outside theoretical knowledge, but through both respecting and modifying pedagogic praxis and theory, Nikolais elaborated his own dance language and teaching tools, which were used in daily class – a triad of technique, improvisation and composition. This pedagogy, still popular and used today around the world, provides body and mind with an immediate awareness of the on-going factors present in dance movement.

Theory class

When teaching occurs, so does theory. In Nikolais's daily class, after technique came precisely “theory”, a class which “purpose was to theoretically investigate, through improvisation, the many facets of the principles of dance” (Nikolais and Louis, 2006: 35). Improvisation with Nikolais also enabled

instant concept, instant choreography, and instant performance. He was looking for the fulfillment, balance and consonance of these three areas.

(Louis, 1980: 146)

Improvisation, a key-element of modernity in dance, seems to embody here that privileged moment when practice and theory merge and acknowledge each other. Taking from Mary Wigman to whom she was a long-term assistant, Hanya Holm, from 1931 on, taught her American students her “class lesson”, which featured experimentation and verbalization. Nikolais renamed it “theory”, and described it as an attempt of Holm to destroy the tendency to imitate:

Hanya extensively utilized improvisation, which greatly encouraged the flow between the mind and the body. Improvisation coaxed out of hiding that infinite source of human information buried in the inner caverns of the brain and led it to play its substance upon the physical instrument. All these theories and processes are useless without the eagle eye and sensitivities of the master.

(Nikolais, 1992: 55-56)

In the same essay, Nikolais also recalled how intense and complete Holm's teaching was, referring to it as “Jungian rather than Freudian” and as a “general” technique, i.e. not reflecting the qualities of one particular artist. Its main goal was “classic consonance”, as opposed to the “dissonance of the agony and the ecstasy”, which he claimed he found in other artists' work of the time. Drawing a parallel between Cunningham and Nikolais, Gay Morris speaks of objectivity when dealing with the work and philosophy of these two choreographers. She clearly states the importance of improvisation in Nikolais's approach:

Although Nikolais's theory constituted a rational system, its overall aim was to unfix habits and rigidities rather than to impose them. In particular, his use of improvisation was meant to give direct access to the motional content that lay beneath emotional representation.

(Morris, 2006: 188)

New tools

The "big four" quoted above belong to the analytical approach Nikolais took from Laban. They constitute the keystone, the law to which you always refer and come back to, whether you are teaching, dancing, composing, improvising or watching. A whole panel of action verbs and adjectives allows for teaching premises (using no patterns or codification) and exploration potential. Principles of shape and motion replace Laban's weight and energy flow: shape stresses Nikolais's concern with the visual and sculptural aspects of the dancing body, whereas motion acts as an overall principle, gathering the natural laws of movement, the dancer's inner motor base as well as a qualitative experience on a more subtle level. Space is explored thoroughly in all directions and dimensions with architectural clarity, including inner space and projection, and time focuses among other aspects on duration and illusion. All four principles relate to an enlarged palette of the senses.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, Nikolais designed specific tools to allow his new vision of dance to take shape: decentralization, immediacy, gestalt are among them. These means have one goal: conveying a new definition of dance as the "art of motion", communicating its own intelligence and initiating a whole new field of exploration which Nikolais named abstraction.

"It (the dance) dictates where it wants to go", said Nikolais: whether he chose from the material his dancers produced while improvising or when he advocated following the organicity of a growing gestalt in composition class, he relied on intuition in his

choices. Claudia Gitelman, in the conclusion of her recent essay, comments:

While some choreographers of his generation used scores, game rules, and other predetermined structures, whether contrived or aleatory, Nikolais claimed spontaneous decision making (...). He advised: "Don't rationalize the means. Work from intent. Develop a feeling for it." In the same interview he expressed admiration for the "orderly German theory taught by Hanya Holm" and "the precise concepts" she used in teaching. Two roots of Nikolais's pedagogy and choreography – an intellectually determined calculus of motion, and trust in the unpremeditated – suggest an apparent paradox inherent to modernism

(Gitelman, 2007: 43)

A document on intuition

A film by Alain Plagne for the French television documented this in 1984. The excerpt shown today to illustrate this paper features three aspects.

First we see Nikolais teaching, clearly using no pre-defined patterns and calling for the power of imagination to work on the quality of 'rebound' in technique class; then Nikolais asks his dancers to improvise with body parts, shape and peripheral space: we see here the sense of trust between dancers and teacher, the immediacy of the motional responses and the concentration of those watching. Simultaneously, we feel how directive Nikolais was with his voice and drum accompaniment (not to mention his obvious "eagle eye"!). No reference is made to music or emotion, emphasis is put on experimentation and invention, accuracy and total involvement, and, in a nutshell, we experience how "the artist's esthetic development is inextricably bound to his pedagogy" (Gitelman, 2007: 40-41). Finally Nikolais, after humorously stating how "dancers want to look pretty when they should be more "primitive" and be shaped as if they were clay", uses the image of sending down

into the ground a pipe to get to the water: “you start pumping, hoping that, luckily, it (i.e. the connection between your mind and your vision) will happen”. This is a good example of how Nikolais relied on intuition and also on the idea of source.

Context and challenges

The belief in an universal law has of course to be contextualized. In the 1950s, as Gitelman states, Nikolais “rejected prewar modern-dance esthetic, which was representational and psycho-socially configured” (Gitelman, 2007: 29). As Merce Cunningham did at the same period, he “jettisoned characterization, literary and musical motivation, and discarded heroic, emotional and gender displays, leaving the exploration of communication inherent to movement itself” (ibid). Nikolais’s major tool, decentralization, had two purposes: first an ideological formation responding to esthetic and socio-cultural conditions of the time, and also a pedagogical strategy used to overcome limitations of movement vocabularies.

But the resulting ‘depersonalization’ of dancers and students and the abstract pieces such as *Noumenon*, *Web* (1953) or *Kaleidoscope* (1956) and *Cantos* (1957) challenged critics and audiences. The new took over from mythological past, as seen in Graham dance dramas. Invention with props, unisex tights of bright color on electroacoustic music questioned current gendered narratives of the dance stage, frequently choreographed to symphonic music. Spectacle of light, color and shape destabilized viewers’ usual agendas where clear identity and sentiment prevailed. Gitelman furthers this by seeing an element of social critique in Nikolais’s attempts in an age of the “so-called Organization Man, where social mechanisms vaunted predictability and consistency” (Gitelman, 2007: 31).

On a personal level, I was trained in Angers, France, when Nikolais was appointed director of the new National Center for Contemporary Dance (CNDC) in 1978, and only recently have I been able to question the alleged universality of Nikolais’s tools and syntax. Can one use these on all continents at all times? Can any dancer grasp them,

whatever his/her culture and identity may be? A thorough investigation would surely help to be more critical towards this legacy, given the following contexts of the 1950s: historical - the USA during the Cold War, socio-political - emphasis on heterosexual norms, rampant homophobia and power of the teacher-choreographer, artistic - prominence of abstract expressionism in the visual arts, poetry of the Beat generation and issues of improvisation, and technological - discoveries in the fields of sound, lighting and textile industry. This question is even more relevant considering the little scholarly work that has been published on Nikolais until recently.

A new instrument

Nikolais’s unique combination of practice and theory was born at a certain moment in history, influenced by twentieth century modernism and highlighted by an ideology – meant here as an ensemble of imaginary representations. This ideology, as pointed out above, had a lot to do with the strong personality of its creator, his charisma and the extraordinary momentum he created. One can even speak of ‘beliefs’ in Nikolais’ theory – the most famous one being surely ‘Motion, not emotion’. His quest for the universal and for the source of art comes with a further need for the dancer to remain autonomous while responding to the environment.

In order to achieve this ambitious goal, he needed a new instrument he named the ‘metaphorical dancer’. Familiarized with his *theory*, such an artist became capable of revealing Nikolais’s vision.

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Praticien/chercheur : co-construire les savoirs

Joëlle Vellet

1- Introduction

La transmission de la danse par l'artiste lui-même, danseur chorégraphe ou danseur passeur est au coeur de nos questionnements actuels (en danse contemporaine depuis plusieurs années, auprès de différents chorégraphes et en différents contextes, depuis trois ans en danse traditionnelle d'Auvergne).

Que fait le danseur quand il conduit l'autre dans sa danse: une danse choisie, voulue, révélatrice de choix artistiques propres, de conceptions du corps en mouvement ? Nous cherchons à comprendre ce que font réellement les personnes lorsqu'elles sont en situation de transmission, nous renseignant sur la danse elle-même d'une part, mais aussi sur le sens de l'activité du danseur en situation d'enseignement ou du chorégraphe en situation de création, lorsqu'il permet à l'apprenti danseur ou à l'interprète de créer la danse dans des qualités gestuelles spécifiques.

Dans le cadre de cette communication, nous souhaitons aborder une problématique qui est apparue au cours de la recherche, dans l'expérience même de celle-ci. Elle nous a permis d'interroger d'une part la relation praticien-chercheur et d'autre part l'activité réflexive et pratique du danseur transmetteur.

Un processus spécifique de relation entre chercheur et praticien apparaît effectivement, il est généré par le dispositif de recherche. C'est l'impact de la méthodologie choisie et mise en œuvre lors de la recherche qui est en jeu dans cette réflexion.

Les différentes facettes du travail de recherche, et notamment les observations et les entretiens qui ont constitué notre terrain, ainsi que les analyses que nous en avons faites, nous conduisent effectivement à remarquer que la méthodologie adoptée semble agir sur le développement artistique et pédagogique des danseurs transmetteurs. Elle contribue d'une part à l'affinement de la connaissance de la danse, et d'autre part à une forme d'amélioration des conditions d'enseignement

de celle-ci pour le danseur transmetteur lui-même. Une nouvelle forme de construction de connaissances apparaît, co-construction de savoirs ou complicité opérante... conséquente au travail de recherche et à la dynamique créée par la méthodologie mise en place.

2- A présent quelques précisions sur la constitution du terrain.

L'étude évoquée est issue d'une recherche en cours, qui interroge la *spécificité* de la "bourrée", danse traditionnelle d'Auvergne, telle que pratiquée et transmise aujourd'hui par des *danseurs passeurs*. La bourrée est une forme emblématique de la région, encore très présente dans l'imaginaire auvergnat, et dans certaines pratiques (existence de bals, ateliers et stages, une dynamique de création musicale importante). L'étude porte sur la bourrée à 3 temps dansée en couple. C'est tout à la fois la personne qui danse et qui transmet, et l'objet danse qui nous intéressent. C'est la question de la tradition confrontée à l'instant contemporain que nous étudions à partir de ce questionnement.

Des questions nous préoccupent et guident la recherche : pourquoi peut-on dire aujourd'hui que l'on danse la bourrée ? Qu'est-ce qui doit demeurer pour que perdure la danse au plus près de la tradition tout en s'inscrivant dans un contexte social et culturel actuel ? A partir des questions telles que - comment est dansée, comment est apprise aujourd'hui la bourrée d'Auvergne - accéder à ce qui est ainsi révélé de ce qui a traversé les temps et reste en mouvement dans cette bourrée ?

Il nous importe ici, d'une part, d'observer, de décrire et de comprendre les modalités de transmission de la danse et, d'autre part, d'identifier la spécificité de la danse transmise.

Les observations ont été faites en Auvergne, lors de situations de stage ou atelier réalisés par Les Brayauds, Centre

Départemental des Musiques et Danses Traditionnelles du Puy de Dôme (Cdmdt 63), au cours d'une part d'un festival nommé Les Volcaniques, Festival des musiques et danses de pays, 10^{ème} et 11^{ème} éditions (2005 et 2006), stages de musique instrumentale, de danse, de chant, mais aussi rencontres et conférences, soirées festives, spectacles, et bien entendu bal. Et d'autre part lors d'un atelier de quatre heures donné à leur demande à un groupe de danseurs amateurs qui se retrouvent toute les semaines pour apprendre les danses du répertoire auvergnat, à Clermont-Ferrand. La transmission de la bourrée dans ces différents contextes est confiée à deux frères, Eric et Didier Champion, experts reconnus nationalement pour l'enseignement et la pratique de la bourrée d'Auvergne, et créateurs du Cdmdt.

Quelques mots de précisions sur la bourrée: les origines de cette danse sont très controversées. Les discours à ce sujet se doivent d'être prudents et réservés car les sources pour fonder les thèses contradictoires manquent (Canteloube, 1936), (Delzangles, 1930), (Liethoudt, 1991), (Guilcher Y, 1998). Jean Michel Guilcher évoque le «problème insoluble de l'origine de la bourrée» (1975).

Tout au long de nos échanges nous dirons «la» bourrée mais en fait il y a de nombreuses bourrées et des variantes importantes dans les bourrées. L'Auvergne est une région du centre de la France, appartenant au grand Massif Central où la bourrée est une forme pratiquée de longue date (Limousin, Morvan, Haute Auvergne, Basse Auvergne, etc...). Le Puy de Dôme est un des 4 départements de l'Auvergne. Les collectages qui ont été réalisés par les danseurs que nous observons se situent dans l'ouest du département: Combrailles et Artense essentiellement. Bourrées à deux temps et bourrées à trois temps existent sur le territoire du Massif Central, mais celles à trois temps sont peu répandues et localisées à la haute auvergne. Le pas de base est commun mais la bourrée est une danse difficile et complexe.

La bourrée est aujourd'hui pratiquée, selon l'Agence des Musiques Traditionnelles en Auvergne, par «trois mondes distincts: les groupes folkloriques dans une version

spectacularisée, les danseurs traditionnels qui les ont toujours connues et aimées, et les revivalistes qui se sont, depuis les années 70, réappropriés ce patrimoine commun.» (AMTA, site internet de l'agence, 2005). Les frères Champion appartiennent à la troisième catégorie, celle des « revivalistes ». Ils ont appartenu à un groupe folklorique pendant 15 ans, avant qu'ils ne commencent à s'intéresser et à collecter les danseurs de tradition. Se mettant alors en rupture avec les folkloristes, ils enseignent différemment depuis une douzaine d'année.

L'anthropologue Egil Bakka distingue deux catégories: «les danses qui demeurent vivantes en raison de leur vigueur et de leur popularité» d'une part et les « danses qui sont consciemment cultivées, enseignées et entretenues par un désir de les préserver, de les maintenir, de les pratiquer » (Bakka, 2002). Si nous nous référons à cette distinction, la bourrée nous apparaît être dans une double appartenance, inscrivant un nouvel espace, un « entre deux », de part le contexte spécifique dans lequel elle s'inscrit.

En effet, de part la présence forte de la bourrée en Auvergne tout particulièrement, elle se situe pour une part dans la première catégorie énoncée. Dans les années 70-80, beaucoup de vieux dansaient encore la bourrée dans la société rurale et dans une forme de pratique populaire. Aujourd'hui encore on trouve quelques vieux danseurs dans les fêtes de village. Si la bourrée symbolise encore très fortement la danse des auvergnats, nous émettons l'hypothèse que cela provient surtout du fait que la bourrée n'est pas seulement une danse, mais c'est une musique, un chant et une danse. Mais par ailleurs, les danses que nous étudions sont transmises dans un contexte qui n'est plus celui du bal traditionnel mais dans des moments « formels » et organisés, « danses consciemment enseignées, entretenues par un désir de les préserver » pour citer à nouveau Bakka. La nécessité est en effet reconnue aujourd'hui d'apprendre en des lieux formels car l'apprentissage par imprégnation dans le lieu social du bal ou de la fête familiale n'est plus suffisant. Mais il n'y a pas que les lieux de la pratique qui se transforment nous ne pouvons oublier la

culture des corps en mouvement, les savoirs faire contemporains, le sens et les représentations de la danse traditionnelle et de ses lieux de pratique et d'expérience, les modalités de transmission donc...

Cette deuxième catégorie nous rapproche des pratiques de « revivalisme » que certains nomment « folklore ». Une distinction est nécessaire cependant entre revivalisme et folklore telle qu'elle existe en France (Guilcher Y, 2003). La pratique que nous étudions est celle d'une forme de revivalisme, mais non folklorique. En effet des dres mêmes des danseurs, cette danse est vivante et c'est la danse de bal qui les intéresse au plus haut point, et non la mise en scène de cette danse de bal.

3- Quelques repères à propos du cadre théorique de référence.

L'investigation scientifique que nous développons se centre sur une description fine de l'activité de transmission, visant ainsi à analyser les connaissances qui sont à l'œuvre et qui conduisent l'artiste à agir comme il le fait. En prenant en compte les contingences d'un environnement mouvant et dynamique, mais aussi les principes et conceptions qui se trouvent être aux fondements d'une pensée actuelle du danseur (à cet instant précis de son parcours et de son histoire), nous nous situons dans une perspective théorique où l'activité de transmission est située, au sens où Suchman (1987) a pu la définir, elle se déroule dans un contexte particulier, forme d'écologie de la situation. Les connaissances mobilisées par le danseur chorégraphe ou le passeur de danse dans l'activité de transmission sont en partie implicites, enchâssées dans des savoirs faire, mais elles structurent de façon sous-jacente l'action de ces danseurs dans la situation professionnelle. Et la situation dans laquelle s'inscrit l'activité de transmission ne se définit pas indépendamment de la signification qu'elle a pour l'acteur qui la vit.

Par ailleurs l'étude des pratiques discursives situées, c'est-à-dire qui apparaissent en cours d'action et s'actualisent dans des interactions, en relation aux gestes bien entendu, nous est un outil précieux pour analyser ces situations de transmission. Outil

que nous avons développé au cours de notre thèse (Vellet, 2003). Nous avons développé une recherche, en danse contemporaine, pour comprendre en quoi et comment les discours en situation, tenus pendant le temps de transmission de la danse (création ou enseignement) contribuent à l'émergence du geste dansé et de ses nuances qualitatives. Nous nous sommes donc centrée sur une analyse qui rende compte de la manière dont les discours agissent sur la production et l'élaboration du mouvement, sur la façon dont ils travaillent le sensible, l'imaginaire, la perception... de façon à faire émerger les qualités singulières d'une danse. Et l'étude des discours dans leurs relations aux gestes nous apparaît être un outil précieux pour nous permettre de comprendre l'activité de transmission de ces danseurs traditionnels.

4- Méthodologie

La problématique développée dans cette communication mettant en jeu la méthodologie choisie, il est temps de la préciser.

D'une part, notre démarche emprunte les outils de l'ethnographie classique : (1) une construction du terrain, observation avec prise de notes et enregistrement vidéo et micro HF pour recueillir au mieux les discours et les gestes *in situ*, de façon à pouvoir mettre en relation ceux-ci. (2) Une forme d'immersion participante (participation à différents moments du stage : repas, moments informels de rencontres et discussion, spectacles, concerts et bals organisés chaque soir et le dernier jour du stage ainsi que concours de bourrée...). (3) Une étude de textes. (4) Un entretien semi directif.

Mais d'autre part, elle fait appel à un entretien d'autoscopie, entretien d'auto confrontation simple (Clot, 2001), où le danseur commente à notre intention l'image de sa propre activité de transmission. C'est une forme de transdisciplinarité méthodologique à laquelle nous faisons appel. Cette méthodologie provient notamment des travaux de l'ergonomie et d'une clinique de l'activité (Clot et Faïta, 2000).

Nous accédons ainsi aux commentaires et aux intentions des frères Champion. C'est la confrontation avec leur propre image, et ce que

cette dernière révèle de leurs actions et de leurs discours, qui va nous permettre de comprendre les significations de leurs actions en contexte, puisque nous travaillons sur des pratiques discursives situées qui apparaissent en cours d'action et s'actualisent dans des interactions. Il est important pour nous de mettre en relation ce que nous avons pu observer avec ce que les danseurs traditionnels disent de ce qu'ils cherchent à faire. L'analyse est double : elle porte sur les discours dans l'action, et sur les discours tenus par les acteurs transmetteurs sur l'action.

5- Quelques résultats et éléments de discussion à vous proposer.

Au-delà de l'observation descriptive et compréhensive des situations de transmission et de la danse elle-même, la méthodologie développée avec l'entretien d'auto confrontation permet de reconsidérer les relations chercheur-praticien. L'intérêt de la méthodologie choisie (originale dans les recherches actuelles en danse) est qu'elle permet d'accéder aux intentions des danseurs et au sens de leur action. Pour ces danseurs apparaît la possibilité de produire une nouvelle conceptualisation de leur activité à travers la confrontation avec de nouveaux interlocuteurs et la confrontation aux traces de leur propre activité. Elle permet donc aussi de reconsidérer les relations chercheur / praticien.

La méthodologie se trouve être au service du développement artistique et pédagogique des « danseurs passeurs ». Et nous souhaitons à présent développer quelques aspects qui nous ont conduit à cette affirmation.

*** Premier point.**

L'approche ethnographique nous a permis de saisir un élément important : dans la transmission de la bourrée, il s'agit de perpétuer un élément de la tradition tout en lui gardant une dynamique vivante et mouvante au sein de la société, et ce souci se croise avec le fait que cette danse demande inventivité et improvisation au sein même d'une forme, d'une attitude, d'une façon de penser... En effet, les dispositifs d'enseignement de la bourrée visent la transmission d'éléments de vocabulaire et de syntaxe chorégraphique

identifiés et maîtrisés, formes convenues et reconnaissables. Cependant la bourrée revendiquée par Eric et Didier Champion est une danse inventive et dotée d'une grande variabilité dans le déroulement *in situ* de la danse. La bourrée à trois temps dansée à deux appelle donc une part d'inventivité : la variabilité est le signe d'un « bien danser » comme en témoignent ces danseurs de tradition auprès desquels les frères Champion ont réalisé les collectages. La bourrée proposée par les frères Champion est une danse où l'inventivité et la singularité s'inscrivent dans la variabilité compositionnelle de la danse et dans la variabilité interprétative du geste, et ce toujours et uniquement dans la relation à l'autre.

Cette analyse issue de nos observations est confortée par l'entretien d'auto confrontation, et celui-ci nous permet d'aller plus en avant dans la compréhension de ce qui se passe dans l'activité des danseurs transmetteurs et dans les significations de celle-ci.

L'exemple de la place accordée dans l'enseignement à la question de la formation du couple peut être choisi à titre d'illustration. A travers un apprentissage technique insistant sur le respect des plans symétriques entre les deux danseurs dans la bourrée, quelque soit l'évolution dans l'espace, l'éloignement ou le rapprochement, ainsi que sur la réalisation des tours, ce qui est en jeu c'est la relation entre les danseurs et la construction de la complicité et de la densité du couple, garante d'une part d'inventivité et de variabilité. On ne cherche pas à réaliser des tours pour faire une figure gestuelle ou chorégraphique, mais pour être dans la complicité et le jeu avec l'autre : la rotation permet de comprendre le couple ! *« Travailler les plans pour cette rotation c'est ce qui donne de la cohésion au couple et c'est ce qui fait que les deux danseurs dansent ensemble quoi / pour nous / les plans cela n'a pas que / qu'une utilité esthétique / c'est ce qui fait que le couple est un »* (Entretien d'auto confrontation du 20 juillet 2005). Dans un premier temps donc nous avons pu mettre en évidence que la question essentielle pour eux était : comment générer chez l'apprenti inventivité et respect de la tradition ? Ce que

j'observe est en relation forte avec ce qu'ils en disent, confrontés à leur image. En effet la méthodologie offre aux frères Champion plusieurs contextes discursifs successifs à propos de la même activité : entretiens préalables aux observations, discours tenus durant l'activité de transmission, débriefing aussitôt après la réalisation des séquences filmées, entretien d'auto confrontation, etc. Elle leur ouvre ainsi la possibilité d'une nouvelle conceptualisation de leur activité à travers des confrontations avec d'une part de nouveaux interlocuteurs et d'autre part avec les traces de leur propre activité. Notre souhait était que les sujets observés par autrui puissent devenir les observateurs de leur propre activité.

C'est notamment ce dispositif qui leur a permis de préciser ce qu'ils faisaient auparavant mais qu'ils avaient abandonné (et que l'on ne voit donc pas sur la vidéo), ce qu'ils refusaient de faire bien que les danseurs le leur demandent, ce qu'ils pourraient faire en d'autres circonstances ou à un autre coût, ce qu'ils faisaient sans être certains de bien faire, et surtout ce qu'ils ne parvenaient pas à faire. Bref, comme le dit Yves Clot, d'aller au delà du « réalisé » pour dire « le réel de leur activité ».

* Deuxième point.

La situation méthodologique les engage également à construire un regard croisé. Car ils sont en binôme dans cette activité réflexive.

Particularité de cette méthodologie : l'un et l'autre s'interrogent, l'un et l'autre se complètent, l'un oblige l'autre à préciser, l'un permet à l'autre de dire autre chose ou autrement la même chose. Car chacun est très attentif à ce que dit l'autre, chacun répond indépendamment et est impliqué en même temps par la réponse de l'autre. Compléments, précisions, affinements sont générés par ce regard croisé qui est provoqué par l'entretien d'auto confrontation. Mais questions et limites apparaissent aussi.

Par exemple, alors que dans leur discours a priori ou a posteriori, les deux frères disent ne pas toujours être d'accord, ne pas avoir les mêmes priorités dans leur pratique de stage, prétendent penser différemment, la situation

d'auto confrontation et de dialogue qui s'installe les conduit à constater et reconnaître qu'ils recherchent la même chose, qu'ils sont tout à fait d'accord, mais ensuite leurs propres termes surgis dans le contexte dialogique sont « *en fait nous n'éclairons pas la même chose* » (EAC du 20 juillet 2005).

Le sens de leur complémentarité prend encore plus de force, car elle apparaît comme la réponse au paradoxe qu'ils identifient, que nous avons nommé « la double contrainte » (Vellet, 2005): chercher à maîtriser ce qui est appris - Didier Champion pense qu'« *il faut que le stagiaire soit capable de reproduire / car s'il est capable de reproduire il est capable d'aller plus loin* »- et chercher à comprendre pourquoi et comment il faut s'engager dans la danse - Eric pense qu'« *il faut que la stagiaire comprenne l'esprit dans lequel la danse se fait* ». Cette activité réflexive sur leurs modalités de transmission les amène dans un premier temps à percevoir leur complémentarité différemment : non plus comme une différence voire divergence mais une forme de répartition de rôles entre eux deux.

* Troisième point. Au cours du premier terrain (juillet 2005), nous observons que les frères Champion, par la mise en situation et par le discours d'accompagnement, donnent les clés pour tenter d'intégrer par l'activité même cette double contrainte de la variabilité et de l'inventivité. Mais suite à la rencontre avec le chercheur, aux entretiens réalisés, etc., nous observons au cours de notre deuxième terrain (juillet 2006) que des choses ont changé. L'étude des discours nous donne à comprendre que ces derniers sont importants car ils donnent « sens », « situation » relation à la danse traditionnelle... ce qui n'est pas accessible par le geste dansé lui-même. J'observe pour ma part que la quantité de discours ayant pour objet de « contextualiser » et de « donner sens » à la danse a fortement augmenté.

D'autre part, nous observons que de nouvelles propositions apparaissent au cours du deuxième terrain, et qu'elles sont en relation avec le sens et la pratique traditionnelle de la danse : Didier Champion

demande aux danseurs de rentrer dans la danse en couple sans se mettre au préalable ensemble et en attente. Ils doivent être là dans l'espace, indépendants les uns des autres, comme présents à autre chose et soudain rentrer dans la danse (comme le faisaient les vieux danseurs de bourrée collectés). Cette observation est corroborée par les remarques immédiates et spontanées de Didier qui dit lors de ce deuxième terrain *« aujourd'hui je n'ai pas dit la même chose pour ce premier jour de stage »* et encore *« nous savons de mieux en mieux dire aux stagiaires ! »*.

Nous pouvons dire que la danse est culturellement située et signifiante pour les frères Champion, et qu'ils tiennent de plus en plus à faire partager cette dimension, « embarqués » comme ils le sont par cette réflexion et explicitation de leur propres choix de pratique pédagogique qui sont apparues dans la confrontation avec la chercheuse à plusieurs reprises dans l'entre deux stages. Ils affirment plus fortement ce qu'ils veulent faire et se donnent le droit de faire. La situation de recherche semble les avoir conduits à davantage de désir de donner à comprendre le contexte de la danse ainsi que le sens profond d'être danseur.

* Quatrième point. L'état et la pratique de réflexion dans laquelle nous pouvons dire que la situation de recherche les incite à être, les engage alors à affiner la question du sens de leur pratique, à travers celle-ci interroger ce qui génère les formes et l'essentiel des contenus à transmettre. C'est la question de la tradition qui resurgit. Que transmettons-nous ? A partir de quels collectages ? Et cela leur permet d'interroger plus finement la question : est-ce que nous pratiquons et enseignons une danse traditionnelle ? Que signifie « une pratique traditionnelle » aujourd'hui ? Etc. La tradition ne peut être pensée comme produisant des modèles immuables et conformes, qui excluraient toute forme de transformation dans le temps, toute variation créative. L'innovation, la variabilité sont les facteurs du vivant de la tradition. La tradition va donner le lien et permettre de constater la différence comme le précise Jean Pouillon (1975, 1993).

Par ailleurs, le dispositif dialogique leur permet aussi de réaliser un travail d'élucidation, de prise de conscience de leurs savoirs faire et des limites de ceux-ci, leur permettant d'identifier les difficultés ou les limites de leur action, leur donnant les moyens de les dépasser, car il les met dans une nouvelle activité de recherche qui n'est plus seulement générée par l'observation des stagiaires en train de danser mais par l'observation de leur propre activité de professeur guidant les stagiaires... une prise de conscience plus fine de leur propre activité d'enseignement.

Pour exemple, nous pouvons évoquer les retours fréquents en feed-back, suite à l'observation des stagiaires en train de danser, qui concernent « l'engagement dans la danse et l'écoute ». La possibilité d'être "à l'écoute", d'être "dans la danse" nécessite de la part du danseur une manière d'être et une capacité d'interprétation et de présence qui sont essentielles et pourtant qui ne sont pas dans les pratiques habituelles d'enseignement des pas et des figures, des syntaxes des danses traditionnelles. Les frères Champion perçoivent très justement ce manque. Cela devient un obstacle à la transmission. Comment faire acquérir aux stagiaires cette capacité à être engagé, à être à l'écoute, être présent dans tout le corps, être dans une conscience de soi, de l'autre, de l'espace, de la musique ? Mais identifier plus clairement un problème, c'est pouvoir commencer à lui trouver des solutions.

Pour conclure, il apparaît clairement que le dispositif créé par la relation dialogique entre chercheuse et praticiens influence directement leurs pratiques d'analyse et d'affinement de ce qu'ils font dans l'acte de transmission, leur permettant de préciser les relations entre leur conceptions propres et leurs intentions et ce qu'ils mettent en place sur le terrain. Ce n'est pas seulement une « performance pédagogique » qui est améliorée, c'est surtout une contribution à la vie de la bourrée telle qu'ils la proposent aujourd'hui qui en est éclairée et située.

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une danse pour la radio: deux

Sally Doughty

Walk through the frail:pulse duet I have with Kerry, quietly talking it through to self. Go through to Lisa's solo before directly addressing the audience.

Bonjour, hello, guten tag, labdien, sa wat dee kha ... oh, no, I'm sorry, that's wrong. That's not how this starts. Just bear with me a moment... *(Walk to notes, pick them up and refer to them).*

Bonjour, hello, my name is Sally Doughty and today I'm giving a very formal, conventional paper, er, no I'm not, sorry, that was last week's conference. *(Read notes more thoroughly).*

Hello, my name is Sally Doughty. My presentation today is a performative paper titled 'une danse pour la radio: deux'. In it, I make explicit notions of documentation, recycling and appropriation of movement material. Referring to previous works I've made, I articulate ideas about improvisation and documentation, making my voice as practitioner paramount in the work. I will discuss processes that are generally deemed tacit within choreography, and place emphasis on revealing creative choices that I make. Therefore, dissemination takes place through this performative act.

But before I that, I'll give a little context for this paper:

Improvisation is central to much contemporary dance making, being used both as a way of generating movement in rehearsal and as a performance mode. However, strategies for analysing and evaluating improvisation as a creative process have been sadly neglected in writings on dance. The voice of the dance practitioner is often absent from mainstream and accessible literature, with documentation more often than not being offered by those who are external to the creative process. It was this gap in literature that prompted my personal movement research and writings in an attempt to make my creative processes and decisions more explicit.

So, something I now know I use quite a lot in my work is an idea about collapsing, and by

that I mean that a dancer can collapse and be 'restacked' by other dancers around them. So, the first time I used this idea... *(interrupted by attempt to catch collapsing dancer)*

The first time I used this idea... *(interrupted by attempt to catch two dancers and support another's knees).* **"Who's going to go? No, it's not me, I've just caught Kerry's head. Amanda, I thought you were going to get Jayne's knee. Oh, you've done that already? Okay, well the whole structure's fallen apart but don't worry, it's okay, we'll look at it again later on".**

Sorry about that. So, the first time I actually used this idea was in a piece that I made in 1996 called 'bound to', and I've used it since in various ways but most recently in a piece I made in Latvia in 2004 called 'Izkraso Pats', the idea being that out of the collapsing, dancers can be taken in to lifts and supports, so there was a sense of collapsing upwards that I was dealing with. *(Get chair and sit on it).*

I have previously established a framework for how improvisation can be used to generate movement in rehearsal for work that's going to be fixed for performance. This framework constitutes a three stage process which is, one: original or raw material is created through improvisation; two: that raw material can be reworked qualitatively or structurally, and three: that reworked material can be fixed structurally. Directors working with improvisation in this way often develop a library of material that houses this raw and reworked material, allowing the movement to be taken out, manipulated further and returned to the library until the next time. Improvisation therefore is not just used as a means of generating material. It is also used as a process for manipulating and structuring it.

A director will work with a specific movement library for each dance piece they create but there may well be recurring movement questions or themes that are revisited in each new work.

I recently interviewed Berlin based dance maker Meg Stuart who explained that,

In rehearsal I will always reference back, things do fold back. It always starts with the material that was from the last piece and sometimes I build up a frustration in the studio so that the dancers try and get to something new. I'm not on a trip from A to Z but it's like I have my obsessions, I have my issues, things I want to see. (2006)

She also referred to a collaborative film she made with Pierre Coulibeuf, called 'Somewhere in between'. She describes this as an improvised film drawing from and making reference to her previous productions. Notions of reappropriation, recycling and documentation were fundamental to the structure and content of the film.

It's clear then that choreographic work can document creative processes and decisions that are made. As art historian Thomas Crow writes, 'Almost every work of serious contemporary art recapitulates, on some explicit or implicit level, the historical sequence of objects to which it belongs'. (Crow 1996: 212)

So in my work I'm dealing with the concept that archive material is recycled to become current which in time becomes archived which can become current which can become archived....

When I began to think about ideas for 'une danse pour la radio: deux', I looked back at a lot of my previous choreographic works and it struck me that there are various movement questions or themes that I revisit a lot, so I've managed to log a sort of personal choreographic network, identifying where ideas started, and in which piece, and where they have now developed to, and in which piece. So I've identified three main areas that I revisit....no, there are four, sorry. So I've identified four main areas that I revisit in my work... No, I'm sure there are three, I think my notes are wrong. There were four; accumulation was on my list but, but now, but now it's, but now it's not. Anyway, there are three main areas that I revisit in my work. One is collapsing that we've looked at already, another is the use of lines, and the other is the use of echoes. I'm just going to talk through lines and echoes for you now.

Lines are used as a way of getting dancers on and off the space, much like an exiting and entering device (*stand up, put paper on chair, walk to centre of space*). So, let's imagine that this is a quintet (*refer to left hand*) and here's a line of dancers (*refer to right arm*). The line of dancers moves across the space and picks up the dancers, just like a broom might sweep the floor and leave a bit of dust or debris on the ground. Or, maybe here's the line of dancers (*refer to left arm*) and it moves across the space and drops off the quintet (*refer to right hand*), again, just like a broom might sweep and leave a bit of dust or something behind. So there are ideas that I'm working with here to do with cleaning, cleansing and sweeping. And it occurred to me while writing this paper that there are similarities between these ideas and a photographic project that I'm doing right now. So I'm just going to talk to you a little bit about my photography, if you don't mind. What I'm doing photographically is, well you know how you might find clothing that people have either lost or thrown away? (*address audience directly*). Who has ever found something like that in the street? Yes? Ok, well you know what it is I'm talking about then!

So, what I'm doing is finding these items of clothing, so let's say that's a vest (*place sheet of paper on floor*), photographing them, putting on rubber gloves because I don't want to touch them with bare hands because frankly some of them are quite disgusting! So, gloves on, pick it up, take it home then I wash it, iron it then I wear it (*lie down on floor*). And from that point, one of two things can happen (*stand up*). I either put it back in the street where I found it and photograph its decay over a period of time, or I pick it up, (*pick up paper and fold it into eighths*), take it home, pop it into a forensics bag and hang it in my wardrobe as evidence of the event. So it just struck me then that there are ideas that I'm dealing with to do with cleaning, cleansing and debris in my choreography and photography that I thought I'd share with you. Anyway, back to this. Echoes are used as a way of drawing attention to, or highlighting particular aspects of movement. Now, that movement can either have happened before the echo, or at the same time as it. And echoes are generally designed to create a hint or a trace of

the original movement, so are generally performed with a much quieter quality. So, I'm going to give you an example of an echo.

Imagine then there's a line of 15 dancers stage right, with a gap in the middle. Anne Jane is stage left, no sorry, that's wrong. That's a different piece. (*Walk back to chair, pick up paper and sit down*).

My recent practice based research has investigated the still (photographed) image in relation to improvisation. Through my own practices and research into photographers, including Gregory Crewdson, Judy Olauson and Izima Karou I have become really fascinated in the parallels between photography and improvisation and how I might use them both in my work. The photography I'm doing looks at notions of disposability through finding, photographing, recycling, re-appropriating and documenting found items of clothing. There is a very clear synergy that exists between the treatment of the items and the treatment of movement material, which is that they can both be disposed of, recycled, re-appropriated, documented and reused.

So, I'm going to show you an example of an echo (*remove chair and paper from space*). Imagine then there's a line of 15 dancers stage right, with a gap in the middle. Anne Jane is stage left, she's going to run in to the gap and act as a trigger, which knocks out a trio to perform upstage left. (*Run out of the line to perform upstage right*). I'm Lisa. Three dancers run out to perform downstage right (*run in a semi circle to down stage right*). I'm Lara. (*Perform brief movement phrase*). When they finished that, they all went into some unison material, which started with something like this (*perform movement*) then it got really complex and intricate. I'm not going to show you that today because I just want to keep this paper moving on. I can do it though (*demonstrate a little of it*), but I'm not going to.

Anyway, back to echoes. Imagine then that I'm Michaela, and I'm standing in my line of 15 dancers. I'm just going to echo Lisa's opening move. **"So, guys, where shall we go from? Ok, let's take it from where Ann Jane runs and acts as a trigger to knock you three out to perform up stage left. I'll take it from you Anne Jane, so when you're ready. (Perform**

Lisa's opening move as an echo). **"Ok, that's great, let's stop. Thanks guys"**.

So it's quite simple really. Throughout the piece, Michaela echoed Lisa, Xavier echoed Jerome, Giselle echoed Pina and Trisha echoed Steve. So you get these movement references through time and space. (*Perform movement material, finishing with the 'complex, intricate' movement*). I can do it, but I just want to keep this paper moving on. (*Run in semi circle down stage whilst taking off sweatshirt*).

It amazes me the kind of things I've found in the street doing this photographic project. (*Place sweatshirt on the floor*). I'm still waiting for the little black Chanel number, I haven't found it yet but I'm forever hopeful! So what have I found? Crikey, sweatshirts, countless single socks, gloves and shoes. A wig, an oven glove, a couple of pairs of jeans, some men's dress trousers, a couple of frocks, a shirt, some rain macs...and I always think, how can that person have got home not knowing that she'd lost her wig, or that she only had one high heel shoe on? It never ceases to amaze me. So, photographically I'm creating a narrative which I hope fills in the gaps around the time that the person lost that particular item of clothing. Oh, actually, that reminds me, you remember the piece I spoke about earlier, 'Izkraso Pats' that I made in Latvia? Well, that actually means 'fill in the gaps', so there's another link there I thought I'd share with you. Anyway, I'm creating a narrative for each item I've found, and there are about five or six photos related to each item. I think my most successful narrative so far is one that involves the oven glove, which I found in a very chic district of Leicester, in England. Does anyone here know Leicester? Does anyone here know Evington? (couple of hands go up). Okay thank you, so you know the area I'm talking about then. Great! Anyway, I found the oven glove on the verge one day, photographed it, took it home, washed it, wore it and you know the rest. I think my favourite shot from that whole narrative is one where I'm laying in the street like a dead person, and I've got the oven glove on. (*Wrap the sweatshirt around right hand and lay down*). My photographer is over there (*point down stage left*).

To photographer: How's this? Oh, a bit further back? Yes, I thought I was a bit close to the road! (*Move back a little*). Better? Great.

So, I'm lying here like a dead person, trying not to be too dancery about how I've died. It's quite difficult! There are cars going by, there are pedestrians going by having a really good look. In my oven glove hand I'm holding a beautiful white china plate, and I'm covered from head to foot in le déjeuner. So, what is there? There's des pomme de terre, des legumes, du petit pois, some cauliflower (sorry, I've completely forgotten my French here!), carrots, sprouts, and there's beouf bouginion. I'm vegetarian, it was the worst part of the whole project frankly. So I'm laying here and I'm covered in sauce, and so is the grass around me.

To photographer: How's this looking? Ok to go? Ok, tell me when you're done. (*Assume dead person position and wait*). Thanks.

(*Kneel up*). People always ask me why I lay in the road like a dead person, and I say that's a really good question. The reason I do that is because through doing this photographic project it's occurred to me that the optimum thing that one can possibly lose is another person. (*Stand up*).

So, imagine then, there's a line of 15 dancers stage right, all facing stage right. In that line there are three gaps, and it goes something like this. There are two dancers and a gap, there are eight dancers and a gap, there are four dancers and a gap and there's one dancer at the back. That does make 15, believe me. Stage left, there are three dancers lined up with those gaps, so at the back there's... (*address the line of dancers stage right*) **"where the hell's Catherine? What do you mean she's gone? Well where's she gone? Oh, she hasn't has she? Well look, I'm not going to run the piece with one person missing because we've done that before and the whole structure falls apart. So, let's do this, why don't you guys, for the next hour or so, just walk the piece through, and iron out any dodgy moments. So Michaela and co, sort out your echoes; collapsers, let's get that spontaneity back that we had a few weeks ago. It's all got a little bit predictable lately. And let's meet here tomorrow at 9 o'clock, we'll do a quick warm up then we'll run the piece through. Oh, I**

know, she's left her top behind" (*pick up sweatshirt*). **"She'll be very cold out there. If you see her, tell her that I've got it and I'll bring it in tomorrow. Ok, well done guys, thanks for your hard work today. See you tomorrow"** (*walk off stage left, saying over shoulder*) **"au revoir, good bye, auf wiedersehn, ciao, sa wat dee kha, atvadas..."**.

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Performing Theory / Staging Dance History

Yvonne Hardt

I am happy I am performing my lecture in the Grand Studio of the Centre National de la Danse, because here the screen is big enough so that my projection to the end of the lecture will appear in size equal to me. Even better – and a very good and unplanned coincidence – is that the table of the panel gets very full that afternoon as Patrizia Viroli as an extra guest joins it. This crowdedness gives me a good reason to move my chair next to the table, which I had planned anyway, but now it looks less intended. I wanted to sit there so that people have a full view of me and can see my right leg crossed over my left, my hands resting in my lap or moving in highly expressive, room taking gestures. I am nervous because I have not properly rehearsed my text and in addition I will talk also about my own work. A real premier. Nonetheless, I look straight at the audience and begin with a voice yet not fully in its flow:

Let me start by giving you a three examples: The contemporary French choreographer Jérôme Bel, and three of his dancers ‘cite’ – one after each other – the canonical figure of German *Tanztheater*, Susanne Linke, in his piece “Le dernier spectacle” (1998). They each start by saying that they are Susanne Linke and then perform a very sensuous solo out of her piece “Wandlungen” (1978). The common and very plausible reading of this situation is that by repeatedly performing the same movement phrases the difference between each is extremely exposed, thus, the impossibility of re-producing movement is made visible.ⁱ This issue is at the heart of each re/construction of dance, and even if this piece is not explicitly about dance history, it can be read as an evoking of dance’s historicity. The past here becomes a playground for the present; yet a present that is highly reflective of the inescapability of the past. It belongs to the strategies with which Bel questions authorship in dance movements and the borders between tradition and contemporary dance. And both of these aspects are central when dealing with dance history on stage and can be found more explicitly addressed in the work of Eszter Salamon.

The Hungarian-French choreographer is my second example. She also works in the context of a dance development that can be called “concept dance”ⁱⁱ. In choreographies like “Giszelle”ⁱⁱⁱ (2001) or “Magyar Tancok” (2005) she works with the inclusion of different historically marked movements from different dance styles, reaching from ballet to folk dancing. While “Giszelle” consisted out of a patch-work of cited movements which become increasingly transformed by her, Salamon re/appropriated the Hungarian folk dances of her youth in “Magyar Tancok”. She integrated and transformed them into a contemporary lecture-performance. In this performances she does not only dance with members of her family folk dances, but she also conveys to the audience knowledge of the historical details, different styles, and exposes her method of inquire. In addition she re-evaluates the dances, criticizing them for their original gender bias. As the performance progresses, the borders both between lecture and dances increasingly seem to disappear, a contemporary dance audience is delighted by folk dancing, suddenly noticing the complexity of foot work, moved by the energetic excess and yet made to think both critically about dance traditions and power structures involved in dance. Here dance history is a physical and intellectual endeavour.^{iv}

In constant process are also the lecture demonstrations that frame, include or constitute Martin Nachbar’s reconstruction of “Humanos Affektos” (1967) by Dore Hoyer, one of the last figures of German *Ausdruckstanz*. And this is my third and last example. While Nachbar – a Berlin based choreographer – worked extensively with the assistant of Dore Hoyer, Waltraud Luley, to learn in detail three of the five dances that constitute the “Humanos Affektos”, he is also interested in the difference that surfaces in this process of working with the movements from somebody coming from a different and older dance tradition. He exposes the mechanism of his working. Yet, the performance also allows for imagining how the work of Dore Hoyer might have looked like. The failure of producing in detail the physical

challenges posed by the highly tense and dense movements of the “Humanos Affektos” does not exclude that in learning them, insights and revelations are granted both to the one performing and the audience.^v

While all three choreographers expose different modes of taking up historical references of dance, they share that they question the strategies involved in doing so on stage. They also expose a practice in modern and contemporary dance that always has taken and takes place in but is/was often neither acknowledge nor recognized by insisting on the individuality of movements. But more importantly these examples help illustrating a concept of history that understands it as a construction based on the needs of the present. I would even argue that these choreographers have taken up the challenge that Mark Franko has asked for: that the “past needs to be stored *in* and *as* a critical performance”.^{vi}

I start to feel uneasy in my crossed leg, and need to resist crossing it the other side. I slightly bounds my foot in a specific rhythmic pattern initiated by my toe and hope that I do not forget to do so. My talking becomes more expressive and energetic, my hands shape more clearly gestures with some tension in the fingers.

Out of the many possible choices to reflect on theory and practice for this conference, I picked history – but not as it is written but as it is performed, evoked, constructed, and reflected on stage in contemporary art contexts. However, this goes hand in hand with my interest to look also at the performative aspects of doing history in an academic context and cannot be separated from it. Looking at the performative aspects of history involves asking how specific styles of academic performances are stabilized and made appear neutral through citation, iteration and sanction. It also means seeing history as a practice that creates or imagines its objects in the process of remembering or writing history. Drawing my inspirations from the writing of Aleida and Jan Assman^{vii} to remember means to be and situate oneself in the present. And in this sense then history is as performative and adapting to time as dance, which has always been seen as epitomizing transformation.

To point this out seems to me relevant, because history and dance have often been positioned in an antagonistic relationship due to the ephemeral nature of dance and also because the body (at least in modern dance) has often been placed outside of history by granting it the status of an anthropological continuum. The theoretical implications involved in such a concept of the body have in to some degree obscured in modern dance contexts an interest in history as a tool for choreographic strategies. In contrast to other art forms, especially the visual arts, the protagonists of modern dance have been more involved in finding new movements or anatomical correct movements than working with the knowledge of the historicity and importance of context for movement development and interpretation. If there is a reference to the history or former modes of doing dance, it is often done by rejecting and doing it differently, (which establishes a very concrete historical relationship and position). Of course, there have always been artists who worked with reconstruction as a very creative task, but often not in a contemporary performance context (that is in this moment of interest to me). Others have evoked history on stage by focussing on social and racial discrimination. Yet, there has also been an influential tendency that is highly unaware of the historical and theoretical implications involved in believing in the individuality or a-historical universality of movement.^{viii}

This a-historical image of the body can be traced back to the beginnings of modern dance and it is grounded in a world view that rejected the development of the so called civilized society in favour of one that was based on an original community. The body, once freed from its deformations through society, granted the access to this alternative form of life. The body and its movements were conceptualized as an anti-intellectual force. This was important because the ills of society were linked (next to industrialization) also to the predominance of the so called book culture. Besides that this situation was quite more ambivalent, because many of the early modern dancers actually wrote extensively about their art or in the case of Rudolf Laban believed that dance needs to be understood through dance analysis, I point to this aspect, because it demonstrates that when dealing with the body and the focus on the ephemeral quality of

dance, we are never out-side of history and ideology.

I am struggling a little with the text and have the tendency to look more often down onto my page. The temptation is great just to read from the paper. But I must resist and talk as freely as possible.

I emphasize this not so much as a criticism but in order to encourage what these choreographers, which I have mentioned at the beginning, are pursuing: to us the knowledge of the historicity of dance as a tool for contemporary work. So I like to suggest that it might not only be interesting to encourage a transfer between movement analysis as a tool for enhancing dancing qualities and developing a composing mind, not only to encourage researchers and academics to work with the philosophical notions that show how dance is especially adapt to challenge static concepts of knowledge – as I think it is taking place quite successfully –, but also to see the theoretical and performative potential of doing and dealing with history: both on stage and in writing.

I need to focus on the intonation of the following phrase, emphasizing the last word and making it sound a little different, so that it lingers somewhat longer in the memory of the listeners.

Now, what follows, is a premier!

I will talk for the first time in a paper that rather qualifies as academic about my own choreographic work to illustrate how these transfers have inspired me. In the context of this conference my hesitation might actually not seem appropriate anymore, as much as it has been not appropriate in other academic fields to talk about ones art. The reason why I mention this is that I believe that social forces, which have made up for my artistic formation that insisted that an artist should not need to explain his or her art, are still active as much as the notion that an academic should stay detached from the object under scrutiny, despite the fact that for a long time now the objective form of research has been questioned. And while I think dissolving these borders is great, I also have to acknowledge that

conventions and restrictions are very inspiring sources for creative work.

So what I realized in linking text and movement on stage is that if one starts talking about theory or give the appearance of explaining, the audience is very likely to place this in the context of a lecture, as something that is not performed, even more it might see it at something that is not art. Realizing that I became interested not only in breaking this taboo of explaining dance on stage, in forms that seemed not performative at all, but more so to use this as an authentizifying tool, in order to have a set up to expose how constructed both theory and identity can be.

Re-Contextualization and Imagination

So, let me start!

On the screen appears an image of myself: It shows me in a big performance space (Sopheinsäle in Berlin). I am carrying a chair onto stage, place myself on it, cross my right leg over left while I am talking in German. I am translating for the audience, now paying even more attention to the play of my hands and the bouncing of my foot.

“Well let me use this moment to introduce myself. I am Yvonne Hardt, I am a dancer, I am choreographer and in resent years I have become dance scholar. And since I am telling you something very personal today; I would like to tell you also about my academic research, and a true matter of my heart are the historically changing concepts of choreography.”

I have edited the video excerpt in such a way that the sound disappears after these phrases, leaving only the moving image of me on the screen. I am sitting on a chair and moving as I talk. The projection will continue for about five more minutes, while I keep sitting, talking and moving my hands in expressive and very distinct gesture. Through the stillness I like to direct the emphasis to the movements and make the audience oscillate in their gaze between my image and the live me, sitting and talking, moving my hands emotionally, doubling me, yet knowing that difference is unavoidable. Nonetheless, opening the possibility that one can think that the image of me might just

say what I am saying sitting in the Centre National de la Danse.

Pointing to the screen, I say:

This is not a lecture performance!

It is a little excerpt from my piece “Jellyfish and Exuberant Love” (2005). And what you have been seeing does not explain or frame what is happening up to this point in the piece, but rather it is another private story. While it will make the basis for an analytical reflection, it is doing this in the form of a mimetic enactment of presenting history (created with a very specific model in mind). This interruption of this personal dance history lecture happens about 15 minutes into the piece, where nobody is expecting it. Up to this point I have moved extensively and repetitively, while there was also talk of a failed romance, because this piece is based on the book by Sophie Calle “Doulour Exquise”, in which she recounts over a period of 99 days her memory of the day she was left by her boy-friend. As each re-count is a little different, this book makes already a nice commentary on the transition of memory.

There are many things involved in “Jellyfish and Exuberant Love” that have nothing to do with dance history. It was not a project that started out to become an enacted form of it. Dance history rather surfaced as one of the strategies to play like Calle with the borders between private and public, fiction and reality. In order to work with Calle’s structure, the dance operates with a limited number of movements and their continuous repetition and variations. At first these movements might seem arbitrary. Eventually they become contextualized and then again re-contextualized through different modes of story telling, so that the context of the individual movements is consistently altered. For instance, while I first move with any comment, in a second round the individual movements are assigned to certain dates, in order to make the audience believe that the piece developed out of a process of recording daily positions of suffering. But there is also no possibility to stay within that love story, because of my three dance lecture interruptions in total. The most pivotal shift probably takes place, when my companion, Lea Martini, enters about half way through the piece, and it becomes obvious that each movement that was supposedly based on

personal suffering is exposed as always having belonged to a duo, and having been created in working together. The question of what is personal and what is not becomes a reoccurring theme both in the love story episode, as my companion now states that it was her story of suffering and I only used it to generate movement, as well as on the level of history as I am presenting somebody else’s research as mine.

The interest in altering or cumulatively layering the meaning of movements actually stayed on from one of my pieces that overtly drew on historically charged movements. As such pointing to the importance of context for the reading of movement belongs for me to the realm of dealing with history on stage. As the different stories of “Jellyfish and Exuberant Love” progress, this sort of re-contextualization becomes explicitly linked to the history of choreography. There takes place a slow shift from the story of sorrow to the process of making the dance and finally cumulates in the discovery that we enacted the concepts of choreography, which are described in this lecture (reaching from the emotional explorations of a Martha Graham to the conceptualized dances of a Jerome Bel).

Re/visiting my piece with the focus of how dance history is possibly dealt on stage with, I found three layers of dealing with the performing of history. First there is the role of the dance researcher. This character makes reference to how history is always performed and we may see many examples of this in this conference. Yet, of course there is little twist to it –because we wanted history to appear more emotionally and private than the love story; asking: what is the emotional “gestus” of doing history? What are the representational dimensions of supposed neutrality?

Second, there is dance history told. If there were audience members who had no knowledge up to this point of the history of choreographic concepts, there was a chance that they learnt something. The stories that we told were never really false, only streamlined and very one-dimensionally related to what we were able to include as choreographic strategies in the performance. In short: A history in the use for the present.

Finally, this integration of choreographic patterns makes up the third layer: We integrated

(or claimed to be integrating) different historical strategies to both perceive and generate movement. For instance, we showed movements that seem to derive from emotional turmoil and self exploration, we worked with chance procedures, principles of accumulation, movements reminiscent of physical theatre and last but not least the structure, talking and reflection of concept dance. It was up to the audience to make the connection as they pleased or as they could to the stories that have been told before and never mentioned or explained directly what happened on stage. There were things that were easier to discover (day 1; day 1 and 2; day 1, 2, and 3) and other more difficult.

Working with dance history became a tool for creating choreography – and simultaneously a way to point to the history of dance and its performative construction. Nonetheless, working with history is not strategically for me, I am not interested in a straight and efficient way of applying dance history, but interested in its co-construction. It is more like writing a history novel, interweaving different stories. Because there is always another interpretation left, there comes another story in, what is there left to be believed, besides the fact that everything just might be the product of imagination.

“Obscure” should be emphasized in the next phrase.

I love to obscure – and only in the sense that this makes reference to a complex world I am then pointing to something that is out-side the piece.

To summarize: I am not so much interested in evoking history but rather in revealing the performative aspects of doing research and history on the basis of choreographic strategies, which in themselves already carry theoretical premises about the history of dance. This also means to ask: how could academic presentations look like which take up theories of the performative, which have put the physical enactment in the spotlight of events and have shown that the “how” of doing things is as important as the “what”. How do formats of academic research function that take

seriously that form and content cannot be separated?

The challenge then of bringing both theory and practice together is one that can be tackled in the realm of (thinking) performance and maybe in resisting to be placed with such an attempt in a category called “alternative presentation,” in leaving space for surprises and for the audience to draw their own conclusions – as that what lectures can be about is: performance.^{ix}

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Endnotes

- ¹ See for instance Gabriele Brandstetter/Sibylle Peters (ed.) (2002) *de figura. Rhetorik – Bewegung – Gestalt*, München: Fink, S. 18.
- ² “Concept dance” is a much debated and, nonetheless, often used term to describe the work of such choreographers that have challenged since the middle of the 1990s the conventions of dance performances by exposing the mechanisms of its construction and its representational codes.
- ³ This choreography was developed in cooperation with her partner Xavier le Roy.
- ⁴ For a detailed discussion see Yvonne Hardt (2007) “Die Re/Inszenierung einer lokalen Identität. Eszter Salamon und der ungarische Volkstanz,” in Hardt, Yvonne/ Maar, Kirsten (ed.): *Tanz Metropole Provinz*, Berlin: Lit, S. 87-99.
- ⁵ For a more detailed disussion see Yvonne Hardt (2005) “Prozessuale Archive. Wie Tanzgeschichte von Tänzern geschrieben wird“ in Odenthal, Johannes (ed.) *tanz.de. zeitgenössischer Tanz in Deutschland – Strukturen im Wandel – eine neue Wissenschaft. Theater der Zeit. Arbeitsbuch 2005*, Berlin, S. 34-39.
- ⁶ Vgl. Mark Franko/Annette Richards (2000) “Actualizing Absence: The Past of Performance,” in *Acting on the Past. Historical Performance Across the Disciplines*, Hanover/ London: Wesleyan University Press, S.1.
- ⁷ See Jan Assmann: *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, 5. Aufl., München: C.H. Beck 2005, S. 48; Aleida Assmann (2006) *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlung des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*, 3. ed, München: C.H. Beck.
- ⁸ I am aware that this a very streamlined interpretation and it is also influenced by the German context, in which both re-construction and the keeping alive of older dance traditions in the performance context is less developed than in England and the United States.
- ⁹ Sybille Peters has pointed out that the German word “Vortrag”, which nowadays is translated as “lecture”, used to be translated according to older dictionaries as “performance.” See Sybille Peters (2005) “Sagen und

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Re-thinking ‘practice’ and ‘theory’ from an Italian perspective

Susanne Franco

L'inconscient d'une discipline, c'est son histoire.

(The unconscious of a discipline is its own history).

(Bordieu, 1984: 81)

The conference *Re-thinking practice and theory* was the result of joint efforts made by two of the major associations devoted to dance studies and of their collaboration with a relatively new French institution, the Centre national de la danse. Last but not least it was significantly held in Europe, and gained a great attention also thanks to the broad network where the Call for Papers circulated, encouraging a large participation of scholars of different backgrounds. As a dance scholar committed to research and methodological reflection, trained both in Italy and in the US, while reading the Call for Papers for this conference I wondered about the extent to which the linguistic and theoretical framework of its sequence of questions has been shaped by a shared perspective. More specifically, I wondered about its reception in Italy, about the ideas potentially offered to Italian researchers but also about the inhibitions, resistances and closures that it could induce. My proposal for this conference originated from these reflections and since I'm firmly convinced that dialogue is the core of meetings such as these, I have organized my paper as a sort of dialogue with the questions posed in the Call for Papers.

In the first part I try to provide detailed answers to these questions by putting the terms ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ in the Italian historical and cultural context. In the second part I develop more general reflections on the possibility to establish a cross-cultural dialogue between voices, idioms and theoretical assumptions coming from widely different traditions.

The aim of my paper is to provoke further reflection on the ways, on the occasions and on the languages which all together can help

understanding dance studies as they have developed in different contexts.

By way of these preliminary remarks I have already given a partial answer to one of the questions of the Call for Papers:

-How might the content of the form of delivering a paper be re-envisioned so as to provoke new understandings of theory and practice?

I now respond to two related questions:

-What are the various histories of these terms?

-How might we historicize practice and theory now, at the beginning of the 21st century?

The Italian history of the term ‘theory’ in relation to dance and in an educational context is very much a 20th century history. ‘Dance theory’ is the name of the subject introduced and taught at the Accademia Nazionale di Danza (National Academy of Dance) by Jia Rускаia in 1948. Rускаia, whose real name was Eugenia Borissenko, was a Russian artist and performer of Futurist shows and of a personal version of the free dance inspired by Duncan and Dalcroze in the Twenties and Thirties. The generating core of this subject was ‘orchestricografia’, namely the system of analysis and movement notation that she created in the 1930s, inspired by central European models and quite revolutionary for Italy, where modern dance was still a marginal phenomenon. Dance theory has been understood in close connection with Rускаia's pedagogical conceptions, that were themselves oriented towards a full cultural legitimization and institutionalization of dance, and a rationalization of its teaching. The creation of the Accademia Nazionale di Danza in 1948 was the outcome of an itinerary that led Rускаia to create the Regia Scuola di Danza (Royal School of Dance) in Rome in 1940,

affiliated to the Academy of Dramatic Art, and dependent on the Ministry of Education. In her intentions the Accademia had to become a center for the promotion of this art. The Accademia is to this day the only professional school of dance training in the public system of education (unlike, for instance, the many Academies of Art) to provide a theoretical and practical training to dance teachers, choreographers, and dancers. Ruskaja taught dance theory almost until her death in 1970, the year that also saw the publication of her book significantly titled *Teoria e scrittura della danza* (*Theory and Writing of Dance*). In the 1970s the dance scholar Flavia Pappacena, who took over from Ruskaja the teaching of dance theory and the curriculum planning of the Accademia, integrated and modified some key concepts underscoring the link with other disciplines taught there and led to a revision of its contents. As it was for Ruskaja, her approach to dance theory is closely connected to the participation in practical interdisciplinary workshops. In her textbooks, dance theory is defined as a historical and critical overview of the figures, steps and postures, and an aesthetic analysis of the language of (classical) dance, as a structural-anatomical analysis and a framing of the general theoretical terms, and, last but not least, as a historico-critical perspective on the construction of figures in the relationship between dancer and space. Dance theory, whose aim is giving cultural substance to the practice of the dancer, is then meant to comprehend a wide array of approaches, ranging from the structural and anatomical analysis of movement, to the dynamic, rhythmic and stylistical analysis of dance, the comparative analysis of the historical methods and styles, and the analysis of the system of notation and choreography.

Since this is still the mainstream definition of dance theory, any other use of the term theory, in the Accademia as much as in other contexts, requires a preliminary qualification, precisely for its being alien to the Italian cultural tradition in dance studies. I'm referring in particular to the use of the term 'theory' as directly connected with 'cultural theory'. Only in recent years and to a very

partial extent have dance studies (and performance studies in general) responded to cultural theory in Italy. This distance is due to cultural, linguistic and generational obstacles, and the resistance to its critical instruments on the part of the Italian scientific community. Critical theory also introduced a drastic terminological shift often seen in many fields of research as self-referential and overriding its subject matter. In this light, the development of concepts like 'theory' and 'practice' in Italy has not yet been submitted to a full historical analysis, let alone with the critical agenda suggested by the Call for Papers.

Following a traditional historical and philological approach, the most widely accepted among Italian dance scholars, to explain how the terms 'theory' and 'practice' of dance have rooted themselves in Italy, it is necessary to retrieve a substantial body of archival documents and to place it in a broad framework of historical and sociological references to cast light on their thick web of relations.

On the other hand, following a postmodern approach to the study of history informed by cultural theory, it is necessary to raise issues regarding the mechanisms of productions of these documents and the archives that hold them, their reception in history, the subjective implications that guide us in the way we select, examine and situate them in a temporal and hermeneutical framework. This way of organizing historical inquiry seems to be presupposed in two further questions of the Call for Papers:

-Do earlier notions of practice or theory continue to be utilized in different dance communities?

-How do their genealogies inflect or determine their current usage?

The attending question, and the core of my theoretical argument, is: "How do their genealogies inflect or determine our ideas about their historical reconstruction?"

Up until the early 90s dance studies in Italy entered university curricula only marginally, mostly within other disciplines such as history of music and theater and only in theater

departments. Gradually, courses have multiplied and most of them are called 'History of Dance and Mime', a designation which while disenfranchising officially dance from theater, still anchors it to mime in a questionable association aimed at the legitimization of dance in the pantheon of academically recognized disciplines, and so indirectly still to theater studies. Other courses are designated as 'Methodology of dance criticism', 'Twentieth-century choreography', but 'Dance theory' does not appear.

The only university that recently has started offering a degree in dance studies is Bologna, even though the shape of the curriculum is highly unstable because of the scarce and irregular national funding which prevents a long term planning. The courses currently offered are 'Philosophy of Dance', 'Movement Analysis', 'History of the poetics and techniques of body and dance', and others but again not 'Dance theory'.

The academic politics hasn't favored the creation of dance departments and the little impact of cultural studies in Italy has left unchanged the traditional configuration of disciplines in the humanities. In addition to that, practice has not been integrated in higher education so that it could not favor the introduction of theoretical approaches, unlike in countries such as the US. This situation has had a decisive role in the reception of 'theory' and 'practice' both individually and in their mutual relation. The answer to another question of the Call for Papers can illuminate this aspect:

-What ideological work is accomplished when [theory and practice] are developed as a dichotomy?

The hegemony of the Accademia as a center of practical and theoretical training for dancers, and the structure of academic curricula have caused 'theory' and 'practice' not to be conceived in Italy as a dyad. This is still an obstacle in envisioning the potential offered to the scholar by a practical experience of dance. On the other hand, the social construction of the dance scholar is still affected by a general difficulty in conceiving

of dance as a field of scholarly inquiry, putting the researcher in the position of answering the ineluctable question/statement: "You obviously dance, don't you?!".

While this latter predicament is still common to dance scholars elsewhere, a gap becomes evident in two further questions that Italian scholars in particular would hardly feel as addressed to them:

-How might the methodologies utilized in phenomenology, semiotics, and cultural studies assist in understanding these terms?

-How might the perspectives afforded by studies of gender, colonization, and globalization help to elucidate their meanings?

Neither of these questions has an immediate sense in the Italian context where the above-mentioned categories have not interacted with dance studies or are being configured within or alongside other existing disciplines. If phenomenology and semiotics have nourished the historicization of creative processes and of corporeal practices in theater studies, dance studies have been generally insusceptible to them, and even less to cultural studies, studies of gender, colonization, and globalization, still largely seen as pertaining to sociological concepts alien to the aesthetic domain. One should not forget that Italy has just begun to face multiculturalism and, despite a strong feminist tradition, is marked by a staunch resistance to gender issues, which explain the lack of affinity with the Anglo-American theoretical mainstream.

These reflections lead me to closely scrutinize two more questions:

-What are the culturally distinctive meanings and understandings of the terms?

-How have these meanings been translated and interpreted in moments of cross-cultural contact?

Faced with the same kind of doubts in the planning of an international conference on methodologies of dance research held at the Centre national de la danse (2003), and on the publication of the volume *Dance Discourses*

that originated from it, Marina Nordera and I decided, for example, not to call the section devoted to the construction and reception of the sexed body ‘Gender’ but ‘Feminine/Masculine’. By way of this and other terminological/theoretical choices, we tried to create a space where different epistemological and methodological traditions could be compared, with their respective principles, languages, idioms as well as their open and latent resistances to rival systems.

As the Call for Papers argues, we live in a “moment of intensified circulation of dance forms worldwide”, and if scholarly encounters aim at promoting intellectual exchange, we should try to be more self-conscious of how we are involved in different cultural, national and institutional contexts. I believe that a cross-cultural communication that leaves real room for differences can happen only in meeting places where the respective identities and linguistic and cultural traditions are taken into full consideration. Critical theory has taught us how traditional disciplines have tended to present themselves as transcendent, absolute categories and scholars as objective, neutral examiners.

So if the categories conceptualized by critical theory are taken for granted and offered, implicitly and explicitly, as obvious starting points, the paradox is that the approaches (feminist theory, gender and postcolonial studies, and so on) that have opened up new perspectives for dance studies, risk producing certain closures by becoming (for instance from an Italian perspective) hegemonic. To what extent, then, the Call for Papers may be exclusive even as it tries to be open and inclusive? To what extent, its questions construct a space of intervention where the Italian perspective becomes an anomaly? And if the Italian tradition of dance studies represents the anomaly what represents the norm?

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Practising Dance History: Reflections on the shared processes of dance historians and dance makers

Alexandra Carter

This investigation is in part a response to the ‘turn to practice’ that has captured the attention of many writers, practitioners and funders in research and education. The activity of ‘practice’ has historically been seen as a binary opposite to that of ‘writing’ with the hierarchical value which binaries entail. In the dance profession, words have been viewed with great suspicion; contrarily, in academia, practice has been a second-class activity. Recently, however, there has been an acceptance of practice as legitimate research. The particular field of interest, in Britain, has been in what kinds of practice can be recognized as research; what, therefore, constitutes ‘research’ and how does ‘practice’ theorise its research? In this paper, I want to take an alternative perspective and ask to what extent can ‘theorising’ in the writing act be likened to practice? Most specifically, how can the theorising of the historian embedded within the traditional writing act be likened to the ‘practice-act’ of choreography? The aim of the paper is to extend the arguments made by my colleague Susan Melrose (2005a; 2005b) in her exploration of the shared processes of the expert writer and expert practitioner. As she claims, ‘they could dance well together, if they could only learn to be more transparent and accountable about all of the processes involved in their different sorts of expertise’ (2005a). Nevertheless, although I will be attempting to expose shared processes, there is no attempt to dilute the highly distinctive expertise necessary for each kind of activity.

The turn to practice has, arguably, rendered the traditional writing act as something solid, conservative, almost old-fashioned. I was struck by the comments of a critic, made during a public interview with a British choreographer. He envied her the freedom of her practice, for he was bound by rules and she was not; she was creative, he could not be. He positioned himself in a subordinate role – not an unusual one in

commonsense perceptions of critics – but one which here was based on the very nature of the practice/writing divide. However, although each activity deploys different kinds of skills and they have obviously different outcomes, the aim here is to demonstrate that far more is shared than is suggested by the historical dichotomy of practice and writing. As well as pointing the way to how the expert historiographer and practitioner might ‘dance well together’ the further aims of this paper are threefold. First, to dispel some possible misconceptions about the process and act of writing about the past; second, as a result, to use these arguments as a way of encouraging students and anyone else new to the field who are apprehensive of the writing act and third, to help those of us who do engage with historiography to celebrate it as a creative, imaginative act of practice.¹

In dance, analogies between writing and practice have been well made. Stinson (1994, 2006) discusses the notion of ‘research as choreography’ and Hanstein makes a similarly neat parallel between the traditional scholarly research process and the choreographic process. We can also accept these parallels in relation to the specific act of writing history. Both historiography and dance making involve research of some kind; both involve a kind of theorizing (though I will leave others at this conference to tease that out more fully how practitioners ‘theorize’). Both give shape to material. Further connections are made by Susan Foster who reminds us not only that the historian is engaged in bodily activity but also of the difficulties the historian has in accessing and recording the ‘bodily writing’ of the past (1995:4). In summary, the historiographer theorizes about the past and the choreographer practises in the present but choreographers also theorize from the past and the historian practices in the present. At this most simple level, both activities are, therefore, theorizing and

practising. But there are more complex aspects of the historian's practice, which they also share with the artist practitioner. I will explore two key concepts which appear central to the act of dance making and apply them to the act of dance history-making. These are, creativity and one of its component processes, intuition.

Creativity is all around us. Its meaning is culture-bound and it is, as Negus and Pickering (2004: vii) argue, 'a way of according cultural value'. It is applied to business people, to advertising executives, to teachers, even to scientists. Most specifically, it is deemed central to the artistic process. It is rarely an attribute overtly applied to historians. In fact, to be described as a creative dance historian might suggest that you are not a very good one, that you are somehow 'making something up'. But of course, a historian does actually 'make things up'. The notion that historians 'make up' or construct the past has long been in circulation and debates about history as 'fact' or history as a construct are ongoing (see Hamilton 1996 for a summary). But as Geertz (1993) argues in relation to anthropological writings, historiographies are also '“something made”, “something fashioned” – the original meaning of *fictio* – not that they are false, unfactual' (1993: 15). It is in this sense that historians are, as Jenkins and others claim, 'writers of fiction' (1991:10) for they make, through turning past phenomena into narrative form, stories about the past (see Muntz in Bentley for discussion of narrative in historiography). That very different stories can be told about apparently the very same historical moment is now fully acknowledged.

The attribution of creativity might be applied to any research endeavour: framing the problems; identifying the sources; collecting and structuring material and speculating on 'answers'. Specifically, Husbands (1996: 61) argues that 'questions about the past inevitably presuppose an act of creative imagination' for so much concerning the past 'is never completely captured in the evidence left behind'. It is, however, in the notion of making-up history, that the fundamental creativity of historiography resides. To pursue this argument further, it is in

the very language that the historian uses in the writing act itself which 'makes' the history. In a detailed analysis of a piece of prose by A.J.P. Taylor, Hayden White proves his point that

Even in the simplest prose discourse, and even in one in which the object of representation is intended to be nothing but fact, the use of language itself projects a level of secondary meaning below or behind the phenomenon being "described". . . this figurative level is produced by a constructive process, poetic in nature, which prepares the reader of the text more or less subconsciously to receive *both* the description of facts and their explanation as plausible.

(White 1978:110)

Today, we know that the use of language as projecting a 'level of meaning below or behind' phenomena might be construed as problematic. However, Hamilton (1996: 21) confirms that 'our convincing *use* of the rhetorical language is what matters, compelling the reader's agreement through rhetorical skill'. 'The justification', he says, 'of an interpretation is lodged in its expression'. Munslow (1997:6) likewise argues that 'because of the central role of language in the construction of knowledge, our historical understanding is as much a product of *how* we write as well as *what* we write'. Jenkins (1991: 23) offers examples of literary style the historian might deploy. They might write 'polemically, discursively, flamboyantly, pedantically....' Mostly, they must write persuasively in order to convince their readers, for as Shakespeare says through the words of Venus to Adonis, if you 'bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear' (line 145).

This notion of the making up of history in the making up of language is of particular interest to dance historians for we are, in our writing, 'making up' the dances, the performance contexts, the choreographic motivations, to which we no longer have access – or, even if we do – giving them another life on the page. That life, speculative though it may be, exists in our use of language. It is for this reason, I argue, that we

should value the dance history texts of the past even when the descriptions therein seem misconceived or the judgements flawed. As White (1978: 118) argued, 'it is to the power of the constructive imagination of ... classic writers that we pay tribute when we honour their works as models of the historian's craft long after we have ceased to credit their learning or the specific explanations that they offered ... when a great work of historiography ... has become outdated, it is reborn into art'. Whether describing dances, or offering explanations for their significance, or writing biography, or discerning relationships between dance and culture, the dance historian has a glorious canvas on which to paint the picture of their arguments. Though new critical interpretations supersede old or unacknowledged ones, let us not abandon the old histories of dance. As we value the dances of the past for their artistic worth, let us also value, and encourage our students to value, the written texts of the past for how they present the creative dimension of the historian's art.

One of the key strands of this creative dimension is the exploitation of the intuitive moment. What is intuition? As in the good old days of feminism when theorising arose from women's experience in order to generalise from the particular, let us start with experience. I sit at my keyboard, at the very moment of writing this text, and in front of me is a conviction that I have an argument. I say in front of me, because I have not yet caught up with what that argument is. I cannot see the logical steps to it; do not even have the firm evidence. I just 'know' it. Even in the text-bound, writerly act, as it converges with the physical act of hitting the computer keys, I 'sense' something. As Stinson (1994, 2006) reflects, writing a scholarly paper is a messy act, an entry into the unknown. It is this as yet 'unknown' that we might call intuition.

There is a mass of philosophical, psychological, pedagogical and popular writing, over centuries, on this topic. Rather than enter the morass, far beyond the remit of this paper, but in order to draw parallels between processes in art-making and historiography, I consulted a text on music. Here, Swanwick (1994) argues

for the interplay of intuition and analysis in the process of musical understanding. Drawing on writings from philosophy (Kant), aesthetics (Croce) and psychology (Bruner), he offers the summary that 'intuitive knowledge is ... central to all knowledge, the medial exchange between sense and significance' (1994: 31). It is, and I cite one further characterisation from many hundreds, 'immediate insight without observation or reason' (Myers 2002: 1) – though it might also be argued that intuition is observation and reason that has simply been forgotten or, as Graeme Miller suggests, that it is 'compressed knowledge' (Miller in Bannerman *et al* 2006: 39).

Susan Melrose's work on practice as research refers consistently to what she calls 'expert intuition'. She also acknowledges that she, as a writer, 'operates consistently on the basis of ... writerly intuitions ... which seem to emerge from a nowhere of writing' (2005a). Melrose (2005c) argues that certain writers have 'developed their own theoretical insight on the basis of expert intuitions *before* they proceed to recuperate these in terms provided by conventional research ... procedures'. She cites Bourdieu's 'habitus' and Jameson's 'cognitive mapping' as examples of complex tropes arrived at not, in the first instance, through rational argument, rather more likely through 'expert writerly intuition' which is then subject to the 'structures of critical argumentation'. The historiographer writing the past is also dealing with a world beyond the immediate rational or the direct sensory experience on which they bring a 'conceptual order and a set of academic-writerly rules, to the end of identifying or producing a third entity: a theoretical account ... of practice' (Melrose 2005c). For the historiographer, the practice is that of lives led and dances danced in the past. In summary, the way historiographers theorize, in the sense of producing general arguments from specific examples, is based first on an intuitive leap between those specific examples which becomes subject to the rational argument which produces 'theory'. As it is the 'conscious skills and craft of the artmaker which make the workings of intuition significant' (Bannerman in Bannerman *et al* 2006: 19) so it is the craft of the scholar

which makes their research theoretically significant.

Despite being accepted for centuries that intuition is one of the fundamental ways human beings comprehend the world, very few professional writers formally acknowledge the intuitive in the process of their theoretical writing (Melrose 2005a). In the binaries, intuition has settled on the side of arts practice; as performance artist Richard Layzell suggests, 'I wouldn't talk about intuition to people . . . for many people in other disciplines it might cause extreme anxiety' (in Bannerman *et al* 2006: 33). It is present as a 'knowledge category' in some fields such as education but it is rarely if ever acknowledged as a significant factor in the process of theorising about performance or about performance in history. As Melrose trawled the indices of key texts on performance studies, I did the same with key texts on historiography and found little mention. Although Hayden White acknowledges that history is not a science but 'depends as much on intuition as on analytic methods' (1978: 27) and Marwick (1989: 246) notes that one of the processes involves 'vividly expresses insights', adding that these are based on 'thorough research and long reflection' (note the 'long'), neither author pursues this intriguing process.³ Similarly, examination of the introductions to a range of dance history texts revealed the articulation of rigorous research processes but not the wobbly bits, the hunches, the sudden illuminations coming from 'nowhere', that move a work forward. Because introductions to history books tend to be written last, and to summarise what has already been achieved, the early stages and the intuitive steps along the way are buried in the solidity of the outcomes of the research. Ann Daly in her preface to her book on Isadora Duncan (1995) gives an inkling of these in a description of her research process. She acknowledges being 'perplexed' by the glimpses of Duncan seen in history books and reconstructions. She raised a series of questions, none of which were answered by these sources. 'Recognising the limits of historical knowledge' . . . (she attempted) . . . 'at least to try to fantasize what it was about her dancing that drew her body in to the American imagination' (xi). 'As I

read, as I looked, as I imagined, a much more complex Duncan emerged' (xi). Although Daly goes on to extrapolate her 'three levels of enquiry' as descriptive and analytical, interpretive then critical she misses out, as do most writers, the first and continuing thread which her explanations reveal – her intuition. The lack of recognition of the intuitive in scholarly texts suggests that it not recognised as key to the historian's craft, or that it is so taken-for-granted that it is not worth mentioning. But if the intuitive is taken for granted by both philosophers on and writers of historiography, it deserves not to be.⁴

Perhaps this taken-for-granted-ness is not surprising. Despite my arguments in relation to the creativity of the research process and writing act, historical research is viewed as a grounded act. Even in dance, wherein we deal with a rich range of sources ranging from archives to dance in performance, the methodical, step-by-step, building of a picture of the past is the *modus operandi*. And yet most of us know, or intuit, that there is more to the process. The historian uses intuition not only in the formulation of problems, in knowing where to look for evidence, in putting disparate evidence together, in attending to the unexpected, but fundamentally in the moment of the writing act when the words appear as if from nowhere.

In conclusion, by exposing the 'artistic' elements of the historians' activity, the boundaries between 'practice' and writing can be blurred. Both artist-choreographer and historiographer, subject 'creative hunch to sceptical scrutiny' (Myers 2002: 2) whether in action, thought or word. As Melrose posits, both writer (and I include historiographer) and practitioner leap 'intuitively into a nowhere . . . on the basis of a sense that something might match something else, might momentarily achieve empirical fit with its other – for long enough for new insights to be developed.'

The arguments I have offered in this paper apply, of course, not just to dance or performance history but to all subjects of historical discourse. But placing history making in relation to dance making might serve to nudge

all historians into more reflective consideration of their own practice. Both historiographers and artist-practitioners, can ‘make progress in their disciplinary field(s), take creative and imaginative, intuitive leaps in order to develop their theoretical agendas’ (Melrose 2005c). Though set in apparent solidity in writing (though at the mercy, of course, of malleable interpretations by the reader) the historian is conscious of movement. Not only the movement of the dance, dancing people and times about which they write, but about the writing act itself. Supported by thorough research and the scrutiny of evidence, formed in the creativity of the language of narrative and borne all along by the intuitive steps of the historian, historiography is a moving act.

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Endnotes

1. Historiography refers to the act of writing about the past; an act which, as Jenkins (1991:6) claims, floats free from the past, or from ‘history’.
2. See White (1978) Ch. 4 ‘Historicism, History and the Imagination’ for a detailed account of complex theoretical stances on the nature of the mythological, poetic and prosaic elements of language as discourse and how this pertains to historiography.
3. A rare exception is Husbands who, writing from a pedagogical perspective, is anxious to privilege student-active learning. He cites Jan Vansima who in 1974 argued that the historian ‘guesses, ponders, backtracks, and finds sources almost by intuition . . . historians start out with a hunch, an idea’ (p. 61). These ‘hunches’ says Husbands, this intuition, is central to the way we look for and make sense of historical evidence’ (p.62). It is interesting that Vansima was writing on the lost histories of Africa, so the intuitive steps in his research might have been more necessary or privileged than in fields where evidence is more accessible.
4. A book by Roger Franz, *Two minds: intuition and analysis in the history of economic thought* (2004) explores how past economists have used intuition and pleads for its acceptance in the field. A web site outlining the recent history of the discovery of the planets is entitled ‘From intuition to discovery’ (<http://planetquest.jpl.nasa.gov/science.science.index.cfm>.) Sites can be found on the role of intuition in natural history. Nothing is readily available, however, on its role in history. The great majority of mainstream history books ignore the histories of performance. For example,

in Burke (1991), the editor mentions in his introduction of wide array of histories – but not those of performance. In Ch. 10 on the History of the Body, no mention is made of the body in performance.

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Site-Body-Relationship: Exploring Site-Specific Dance Performance through Practice-as-Research

Victoria Hunter

Workshop Report

This report describes both the practical and theoretical components of the site-specific dance workshop which took place as part of the CORD / SDHS 'Re-thinking Practice and Theory' Conference in June 2007.

Drawing upon my own PhD practice-as-research investigation into the relationship between the site and the creative process in site-specific dance performance, participants received a sharing of my research approach through dvd presentation and discussion. The workshop participants were then led through a preparatory warm-up exercise prior to exploring their own corporeal exploration of the site through guided solo and group dance improvisation.

Presentation Content:

The aim of the workshop was to interrogate the following questions both practically through the guided improvisation session and theoretically through a discussion of my own research and the participants' experiences:

- Is practice mental, physical or both?
- How can interactions with space and place inform / develop / illuminate the creative process?
- What knowledges are revealed / embedded within this particular practice?
- What is the most appropriate manner of articulating these responses – what is lost / gained through verbal translation

and

articulation?

My own PhD research investigation seeks to explore the nature of the relationship between the site and the creative process in the creation of site-specific dance performance. Site-specific dance performance in this context can

be defined as dance performance created and performed in response to a particular site and or location. My own research then involves the creation and performance of site-specific dance works in a range of locations and comprises a practice-as-research

methodology informed by spatial, performance, and phenomenological theory¹.

The investigation has followed a practice-as-research methodology aimed at revealing the choreographer's tacit knowledge when engaged in this type of work. In an attempt to explore a range of creative approaches and practices the study has produced three site-specific dance performances in three differing locations. *Beneath* (2004) was performed in the basement of the Bretton Hall mansion building and explored a disused, abandoned site. *The Library Dances* (2006) was created and performed in the Leeds central library building, a public site which remained open during both rehearsal and performance periods. The final project *Project Three* (2007) involved the creation of a durational dance installation work and explored the relationship between body and site in a neutral 'gallery-esque' site.

The practice-as-research methodology employed throughout the three projects facilitated the identification and interrogation of certain creative practices, techniques and approaches which could only have been revealed through practice itself.

These practical explorations have revealed a myriad of information regarding the site-specific choreographic process and some of the concepts revealed through the practice are listed here as:

- Site: Formal features / informal features
- Amplification and Abstraction
- Phenomenological resonances
- Present-ness
- Simultaneity

Through individual and group (optional) exploration of the Centre National de la Dances's West Atrium space we are going to draw our awareness to the formal and informal features of the siteⁱⁱ and engage in a process which I have described as amplification and abstraction referring to the type of movement responses elicited when exploring these site elements.

We are then going to explore a sense of responding to the total phenomenon of the site. In order to achieve this the body needs to remain present in the moment - alive to the interaction with the site phenomenon. Whilst engaged in this process, we may also be able to consider the simultaneous exchange between body and site - a process of the body being affected by the site whilst simultaneously affecting the site through our movement intervention.

Warm Up Task (In the studio)

- Walk around the space, feel the space through your feet.
- Feel the space through the front, side, back of the body, feel '3D' in the space.
- Send your awareness out into the space and acknowledge the entire space, encompassing the formal features, architecture, sound, light and the presence of other bodies, acknowledge their presence bodily, feel the disturbance of air caused by the flow of bodies.
- Acknowledge your attention outside and inside the body, internally through an awareness of the sensations of the space upon the body, externally through the effects of the others' energies, movements and presence in the room, become aware of the internal / external exchange between your body and the space.
- As the walking practice develops begin to find within your journey moments of 'arriving' in the space – arrive at a place and be present in the space. Become aware, present, engaged in the exchange between self and site – notice – avoid analysing / thinking / describing – take the time to be present. Follow the body's

impulse to leave and re-locate, moving through space to discover another moment of arrival.

- Begin to develop your practice now to explore a sense of exploring the space with the whole body – explore a sensation and physical process of 'capturing' the space through the body – bringing the space into the body.
- Allowing the results and the energy of this 'capturing' to travel and develop within the space of the body, allow your body to explore, respond to the energy before finally releasing the energy back into the space.
- Repeat and explore this process.
- As your practice develops become aware of your body's effect upon the space, disturbance in the kinesphere.
- Become aware of the two-way exchange between the body and site, notice the effect of the site upon the body and the body's effect upon the site.
- Respond to the total site phenomenon, encompassing the site and all the elements within the site, bodies, energies, sensations, vibrations, floor, ceiling, walls, vectors etc.
- Explore the developing reversibility between body and site – a two way simultaneous exchange co-existing with and responding to the myriad of simultaneous exchanges occurring within the same moment in time.
- As your process develops allow the body to follow its own movement course – exploring and expressive of the site experience and the site phenomenon.
- Finally, allow the practice to resolve itself and find a place of rest.

Task (In the site)

To find a space / location within the wider site to explore. Take time to arrive, be, observe corporeally, sense, perceive, intuit the space and follow the body's impulse to move. Allow the work to develop organically – aim to be present in the moment of exchange . Engage with the whole site – acknowledging the

presence of others if required – include the other in your own practice if desired. Allow movement responses to develop, try to avoid analysis or critiquing the emerging work remain present and engaged.

At the end of the exercise –take a moment to record your thoughts and reflections in your notebooks in whatever manner you feel is appropriate – draw, words, poetry etc.

Observation

The West atrium site on level one of the Centre National de la Danse was selected as the site for the improvisation task as it presented the participants with a varied spatial environment in which to explore. The site was situated at the intersection of an ascending ramp and a descending staircase and contained a large ‘platform’ area affording views out to the street below in one direction and down into the building’s main foyer space below in another direction. The space was bordered by one of the centre’s glass fronted meeting rooms in one corner and a glass wall and doorway leading to a corridor containing the building’s administrative offices and further dance studios in the other. Two angular shaped leather benches were placed in front of the windows to the side of the atrium space mirroring the site’s linear design and the intersection of architectural features converging upon this point in the building.

As the group approached the space the individual participants took their time to explore the site’s design and textures through a combination of moving through and around the space and connecting with the site haptically through touch and body to surface contact with the site’s textures and physical features.

For many of the participants this form of exploration formed the basis of a ‘duet’ between dancer and site as the individual engaged in a playful process exploring the potential for moving on, around and through the site components. With each playful interaction with the site’s architectural and ‘formal’ components the dancer’s body elicited a movement response which was then explored by the dancer. Once this movement response had ‘played out’ through the dancer’s improvisation they then returned to the site-stimulus to either explore a new feature or interrogate the initial point of engagement further.

Other participants explored the site’s more ‘informal’ components responding to the atmosphere, feeling and spatial sensation elicited by the atrium site. These responses were perhaps the most illusive to capture and describe often comprising moments of fluid movement, running and turning combined with moments of stillness and reflection.

As the improvisation developed it appeared that the majority of participants encountered a shift in awareness developing from an inner sense of focus

to one which encompassed a sense of group awareness and interaction. Moments of small group duet and trio interaction began to occur developing from the dancers’ individual explorations to encompass the presence of other individuals and their movements in the space. Often fleeting in nature, these interactions involved the acknowledgement of the other moving bodies through reflecting, contrasting and echoing their movement revealing a growing sense of the participants’ awareness and perception of the wider site phenomenon.

Following the guided improvisation session the group reconvened in the studio space to discuss their experiences. For many, the workshop had provided an introduction to site-specific dance performance and had presented a range of approaches to practically exploring sites with a raised awareness of the different range of potential site components. Others had experienced a sense of total immersion in the work and discussed their experiences of feeling a sense of connection to the site and the group experienced ‘in the moment’.

Overall however, participants’ description of their experiences proved difficult to articulate satisfactorily, highlighting the problematic nature of objectifying the subjective experience and exposing the inadequacies of language as an expression of the corporeal phenomenological experience. The process of attempting to verbalise and label this uniquely personal encounter with the site served to reveal the ineffable nature of the experience. Exposing the difficulties involved when attempting to translate the experience of the ‘here and now’ into a ‘there and then’ account involving the capturing and recollection of transient moments

some of which may always remain beyond language.

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Notes

¹ Spatial Theorists include Lefebvre (1974), Lawson (2001), Tuan (1977) and Massey (2005), Performance Theorists include Kaye (2000), Preston Dunlop (2002) and McAuley (2003), Phenomenological Theorists include, Sheets-Johnstone (1979), Horton-Fraleigh (1987) and Merleau-Ponty (1958).

² The terms formal and informal are used by the author to refer to an individual's experiencing of the formal (architectural / visual) and informal (atmospheric, sensory) processes of experiencing space, for further detail see, Hunter, V 'Embodying the Site: The Here and Now in Site-Specific Dance Performance' New Theatre Quarterly volume xxi, part 4 November 2005.

Embodying history/making connections: Frederick Ashton and Martha Graham

Henrietta Bannerman

In this paper, I seek to establish a connection between two apparently contrasting personalities, the British ballet choreographer Sir Frederick Ashton and the American modern dancer and choreographer, Martha Graham. This might seem an unlikely topic to pursue since apart from a few sentences in Graham's autobiography, *Blood Memory* (1991) I have found little to suggest that Ashton and Graham were particularly interested in one another. However, there is a fair amount of concrete evidence in the form of comments by critics and writers to support my own view that some of Ashton's ballets bear strong traces of Graham's movement vocabulary. For example, David Vaughan (1977: 126) Ashton's first biographer notes Graham's influence in ballets such as *Le Baiser de la Feé* (1935), and the critic Clive Barnes goes even further in drawing parallels between the two choreographers. Commenting on the Birmingham Royal Ballet's performance of *Dante Sonata*, Barnes observes that the choreography Ashton created in 1940 for this ballet is similar to Graham's more lyrical work (2001). *Le Baiser de la Feé* and *Dante Sonata*, therefore, are crucial to my argument and are amongst the works I shall be discussing. These also include Graham's solo *Ekstasis* (1933), her group dance *Panorama* (1935) and Ashton's ballet *Perséphone* (1961).

As well as similarities in movement vocabulary, there are other characteristics which I propose unite Frederick Ashton and Martha Graham. Here I cite Margot Fonteyn, the renowned British ballerina and Ashton's favourite muse who also danced for Graham. Towards the end of her career, she accepted the challenge of exchanging her customary classical ballet vocabulary for modern dance when in 1975 she worked with Graham on the creation of the duet *Lucifer*. Fonteyn is on record in finding common ground between Ashton's and Graham's choreographic methods. 'They were a great deal alike' [...], she said 'in allowing one to contribute

in order to get the best for the artist' (in Tracy, 1997: 314).

Central to the argument in this paper is my experience of various schools of classical ballet and modern dance, especially the Graham technique which I studied at the Martha Graham School and at London Contemporary Dance School in the mid to late 1960s. Through this practical experience I am able to analyse the dance styles that I study and respond to them kinaesthetically. This is not a process of judging differences and similarities solely through the eye but of interrogating movement vocabularies from having embodied their stylistic principles.

Although my focus is on movement I am also concerned with its historical context, and how this context is shaped by those who describe it. Such accounts often derive from the memories of personalities who bear witness to their own or to others' histories, thereby producing a tension between personal memory and the facts of history (Thompson, 1994: 1-2). This is the case with the passage I referred to from *Blood Memory* (1991). Graham writes that Ashton and his friends saw her dance *Revolt* at the Little Theatre in New York in 1927. She recounts how he prevented his companions from leaving half way through the performance by declaring: 'She is all right. She is theatrical' (1991:125). The amusing idea that Ashton witnessed the historic moment when Graham abandoned the curves of Denishawn for the straight lines of her new hard-edged style¹ is little more than a myth. Ashton could not have been present at this groundbreaking concert because at the time he was performing at the London Coliseum with the Nemchinova-Dolin ballet (Vaughan, 1977: 21). Ashton did see Graham dance but not until 1934 when he went to New York to stage the dances for Virgil Thomson's opera *Four Saints in Three Acts*². According to Vaughan and to Ashton's second biographer, Julie Kavanagh, he was in New York between December 1933 and March 1934 and went to Graham's concerts at Broadway's Guild

Theatre (Vaughan, 1977; Kavanagh, 1996) and I shall return to these performances later in the paper.

By 1934 Ashton was no stranger to modern dance. In 1921 he had been struck by Isadora Duncan's 'enormous grace, and [...] power' when he saw her dance in London (Vaughan, 1977: 5). Duncan's performances were amongst those that most affected his development as a choreographer, so much so that in 1976 he made a ballet inspired by the Brahms waltzes he had witnessed over fifty years earlier (in Vaughan, *ibid*). In the same year that he attended Duncan's performance, Ashton also saw Loïe Fuller's company and in 1922 the modernist works of Les Ballets Suédois (Kavanagh, 1996: 46). Mary Wigman and Gertrud Bodenwieser made their first London appearances in the late 1920s and from the 1930s, there were regular performances in London by the Ballets Jooss as well as by solo dancers and small groups including Harald Kreutzberg, Leslie Burrowes and Anny Boalch³.

That Ashton understood a lot about modern dance before he saw Graham can be seen in a photograph from the short ballet *Far Beyond the Crowd* (in Vaughan, 1977:84) created for the 1933 revue *Ballyhoo*. Pearl Argyle, Ashton's first muse is supported by her partner as she presses against the floor in a forceful lunge and hinges into a dramatic backbend. The angularity of the couple's arms held at a sharply defined right-angle across twisted torsos complements the pose taken by a second couple (unidentified). The sense of spatial projection that extends across the kneeling woman's upper body as her chest opens to the audience is typically modern as is the asymmetry of the overall spatial design.

Ashton knew how to use the movement of the torso because in the mid 1920s he had discovered the nuances of épaulement from his Cecchetti-based classes with Margaret Craske (Vaughan, 1977: 8). He learnt even more about the fluency and expressivity of gesture in the upper torso from Bronislava Nijinska. He came under her tutelage when in the late 1920s he danced with the Ida Rubinstein Company. Speaking about his days with Nijinska Ashton commented, 'there was always tremendous mobility in the whole body [...] [a]nd even when you jumped you had to use épaulement, (in Kavanagh, 1997: 96).

When Ashton attended Graham's concerts in 1934 at the Guild Theatre in New York, he was well prepared, then, to respond to the dynamism and expressivity of her movement language. There is no record of what he actually saw although since Graham performed on consecutive Sundays and Ashton appears to have been free of his professional commitments⁴, he could have attended either one or both of the concerts that Graham gave in February, 1934. John Martin's reviews (1934 a and b) reveal that on February 18 Graham gave her first solo recital programme in five years at the Guild Theatre. She performed a broad range of dances including the poignant *Lamentation*, the witty and clownish *Satiric Festival Song* and the sculptural *Ekstasis* (*ibid*)⁵. There were also the first performances of two new suites of dances. The first to be shown was *Transitions* which according to Martin, was in a 'style of great distortion' (Martin 1934a). *Phantasy*, the second new set of solos was described by Martin as 'gay and full of movement' (*ibid*).

The following week (February 25), in addition to giving her solos, Graham introduced two more new dances, *Four Casual Developments* in which she performed with her all-female Group and the exuberant *Celebration* for the twelve women of her ensemble (Martin, 1934b). This is a technically demanding dance which features no less than 457 jumps in six minutes (in Bannerman, 1998: 171). Such a concentrated display of vigour and energy challenges the view that all Graham's early dances were heavy or earthbound.⁶

The visit (or visits) that Ashton made to Graham's concerts found an immediate response apparent in *Mephisto Waltz* (1934) the ballet that he created in June that same year and described by Lionel Bradley as 'a masterpiece of concentrated force and expressiveness.' Bradley's description echoes comments often made about Graham's dances (1946: 14) but more importantly, the critic P.W. Manchester directly refers to the effect that Graham had on Ashton. She states that the role of Marguerite in *Mephisto Waltz* '[...] was originally danced by [Alicia] Markova in kid boots because Ashton [returned] from America with the idea [of wanting] to do something off pointe after seeing Martha Graham [...]' (in Bradley, April 1, 1940).⁷

But, I suggest, that the power of Graham's performances instilled a deeper resonance within

Ashton's choreography and I propose that he was especially influenced by Graham's fluid upper body movement evident in dances such as *Ekstasis* (1933). In the words of the 1930s Graham dancer, Dorothy Bird, in this solo, Graham's 'rib cage turned and twisted and moved to the side away from her hips and legs. Her neck opened first on one side, then the other, and her cheek pressed against the air,' said Bird (1997: 95).

Having witnessed dances like Graham's *Lamentation* and *Ekstasis*, Ashton had been able to gain further insight into the power of movement generated from the body's centre and how it could convey so much about thoughts, feelings and sensations. This influence was apparent in *Le Baiser de la Fée*,⁸ the ballet that Ashton choreographed to Stravinsky's music in 1935 and which Vaughan suggests makes reference to Graham (1977: 124). He cites Margaret Dale's account of the Prologue in which the tumult of a tempest was represented mainly through 'the mother's [...] swaying torso' (in Vaughan, 1977: 125-126). The same image was picked out by the critic of the *Dancing Times* who wrote:

[t]here is no evidence of the tempest that is raging save in [the mother's] movements, and through these one almost hears the wind howl as she is buffeted from side to side
(anon. 1936: 500).

These remarks persuade me that the eloquence and fine tuning of Graham's torso-centred movement had indeed impressed Ashton.

Graham's choreography also appears to have influenced *Dante Sonata*, the ballet that Ashton created in 1940 as a response to the darkness and turmoil of war. The critic Clive Barnes⁹ saw *Dante Sonata* repeatedly during the 1940s and he praises the way that the 2001 restoration perfectly captured the work's 'original passionate spirit.' He goes on to wonder, how it could be that with little exposure to American modern dance, Ashton managed to produce a form of choreography, he says, 'so extraordinarily similar to Martha Graham's in her lyrical style' (2001).¹⁰

After viewing a recording of the 2001 version of *Dante Sonata*, I am not surprised that Barnes made this comparison. There are general characteristics of the ballet which align it with

Graham's style such as the way in which the dancers' bare feet allow them to work *with* rather than against the force of gravity. Moreover, the entire work is inflected by an internal energy generated from within the dancers' bodies and which courses through running, striding, reaching or falling movements. But facets of the choreography are specifically reminiscent of Graham, for example in the whiplash movements of the women's torsos which accompany low walks or triplet runs. Then there are the arms which are often flexed sharply at the wrist and held in angular, contorted shapes.

I also realised that *Dante Sonata* includes a version of the *pleadings*, a set of movements which has become a staple feature of Graham technique. Within this sequence, the spine melts into the floor as the body hollows into a contraction. The torso lifts and spirals around so that the chest and arms pull across to one side and as the contraction releases the body shifts into a sitting position. A reverse action motivated by a new contraction leads the body back into the floor. Ashton's version of the pleadings is performed by two women lying in opposition to one another and each woman has a male dancer standing behind her. The men hold the women by their arms and pull them away from the floor in a spiralling shape until they are upright. Immediately they subside back into the lying position guided by the men. With the assistance of their partners, the women dispense with the mechanism of the contraction whilst retaining the typically Graham peeling of the body away from and back into the floor.

A possible explanation as to why *Dante Sonata* is so tinged with Graham's style concerns Muriel Stuart who coincidentally, worked with both Ashton and Graham.¹¹ A former dancer with Anna Pavlova's company, by the 1930s Stuart was a teacher at the School of American Ballet and, at Lincoln Kirstein's request she went to Bennington College to find out about Graham's evolving technique (Bell-Kanner, 1998: 68). As one of the 1935 summer school students selected to dance in *Panorama*, Stuart was drilled in all aspects of Graham's work and steeped in the robust choreography for *Panorama* with its athletic leaps, fast-moving triplets and angular, emphatic arm gestures (Bryan, 1935). I have noted that similar characteristics appear throughout *Dante Sonata* but of more significance is the fact that *Panorama*

highlighted the pleadings discussed earlier. According to Jane Dudley, another of the original cast members, the pleadings were particularly strenuous in *Panorama* because the dancers had to sustain the contraction. 'We had to come up and hold [the contraction] on different counts, eight times one group, four times another group' said Dudley (1997: 45).

Stuart's association with Ashton came in 1939 when they met at Margaret Craske's London studio and she asked him to arrange a dance for her (1977: 170). Ashton readily complied and according to Vaughan this tailor-made solo was 'difficult' and contained 'a lot of very swift movement.' Vaughan states that Ashton also used 'all [...] Stuart's flair for 'plastique' (ibid.) or modern dance (ibid). Following Fonteyn's observations quoted at the beginning of this paper, I suggest that Ashton involved Stuart in the creative process encouraging her to contribute to his choreography. Within the process of exchange between dancer and choreographer, it is more than likely that Stuart transferred to Ashton elements of Graham's movement vocabulary (such as the pleadings) which the following year found their way into *Dante Sonata*.

Whilst Clive Barnes' remarks attracted me to consider *Dante Sonata* in relation to Graham's choreography, there is no critical evidence to encourage a similar comparison concerning Ashton's *Perséphone*. The first time that I thought about this work in relation to Graham's style was when I saw a film clip of Monica Mason and Christopher Newton coaching Isabel McMeekan and Natasha Oughtred from the Royal Ballet in the Friends dance from the beginning of Scene 1 (Morris and Jordan, 2004). They execute a series of staccato *retirés* and steely walks with the upper body in extreme *épaulement* to the working leg. When Mason repeatedly tells the dancers to 'twist' in the torso and emphasises the downward accent of the foot as it hits the floor, I am reminded of Graham class-work and of similar phrases we constantly practiced. These comprised percussive walking and stepping gestures where the whole foot pressed into the floor and often included *retirés* combined with a spiral around the axis of the spine.

An article which appeared about *Perséphone* in 2006 written by the Ashton scholar Geraldine Morris (2006) prompted me to reconsider the

Ashton-Graham connection in this work. On the further evidence of Morris' descriptions of various movements in the ballet (2006) and from viewing the images included in her article, I hold the view that Ashton's choreography, at least in part, had been inspired by Graham, in particular her works based on classical Greek mythology which by the 1960s were known in Britain. For, example, I was drawn to this photograph of Alexander Grant as Mercury (Crickmay, courtesy of the Theatre Museum) because I find it contains signs of Graham's dramatic dance vocabulary. The flex and thrust of the leg gestures; the arm angled sharply at elbow and wrist, and the hand held to the forehead as it grips a baton, combine in a striking pose which reminds me of various body designs I have repeatedly noted in Graham's dances.

Ashton probably rediscovered Graham's choreography when the Company made its first visit to the United Kingdom in 1954. He is bound to have been amongst the small audiences of mainly dance enthusiasts at London's Saville Theatre who saw a varied repertory including the Greek dance dramas *Errand into the maze* (1947) and *Night Journey* (1947), the lyrical *Diversion of Angels* (1948) and the last of Graham's Americana works, *Appalachian Spring* (1944). His fellow Royal Ballet choreographer John Cranko was there (Percival 1983: 116) as were a number of influential critics such as Cyril Beaumont and Richard Buckle. Cranko spoke for a number of British choreographers and dancers when he pointed out that Graham had 'invented a whole new system of establishing [the] relationship of dancers [...] to each other; [...] to a prop or object; [...] to a convention in space' (ibid). Enthusiasm for Graham's work in Britain was increased further when in 1959, the film *A Dancer's World* (1957) featuring Graham's technique and extracts from her dances was broadcast on British television and screened in small cinemas in London¹². The borrowings from Graham which I propose were included in ballets by British based choreographers such as Ashton's *Perséphone*, Cranko's *Antigone* of 1959 and Robert Helpmann's *Electra* 1963 were very useful. These contemporary approaches to ballet surely were instrumental in helping to pave the way for a more enthusiastic reception of the Graham Company when it returned to Britain in the autumn of 1963.

It would be worth pursuing research into the interrelationship between British-based choreographers and Graham's staging of Greek inspired dance dramas but I want to conclude this paper by returning to Graham's claim that Ashton found her 'theatrical'. Although there are several ways of interpreting such a remark, chief amongst them, I think, is the idea that for both Ashton and Graham there always had to be a narrative or dramatic edge within their dances. They recognised the need for dance to communicate or to reach out to the audience and provide an experience over and beyond the movement itself. Ashton believed that even so-called abstract ballets 'should have [...] a personal fount of emotion from which the choreography springs'. Without this, he continues, 'a cold complexity emerges which ceases to move an audience' (in Vaughan, 1977: 348). For her part, in the iconic film *A Dancer's World* (1957), Graham announces with conviction 'Dance is communication and the great desire is to speak clearly, beautifully and with inevitability.'

The investigation I have conducted in this paper has revealed that Ashton and Graham were similar in terms of creative process, and that they shared common views on the expressive qualities and theatrical nature of dance. Above all, I have tried to show that within the detail of Ashton's movement vocabulary, there are significant features which invite comparisons between his British style of classical ballet and Graham's American form of modern dance.

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Endnotes

¹ See de Mille, 1991, pp. 86-87 for an eye witness account of this event.

² *Four Saints in Three Acts* was staged by the producer John Houseman who was to collaborate again with Thomson the following year on Archibald MacLeish's *Panic* with a cast of twenty-five actors headed by Orson Welles. It was Graham who was put in charge of the crowd scenes for the 23-strong chorus. y (MacDonagh, 1973 p. 105). It is interesting to note, therefore, that within a year of one another Ashton and Graham were part of the same New York artistic community and contributed in similar ways to the burgeoning American dance and theatre scene. They both worked with performers untrained in their particular styles and within the context of productions that were not concerned with pure dance.

³ In 1930 at the inaugural event of the Camargo Society, Boal's *Danse-Suite* was given in programmes alongside ballets such as Ashton's *Pomona* (1930) and de Valois' *Danse Sacrée & Danse Profane* (1930) (Kane and Pritchard, 1994, pp. 35-39). Boal's work, described as 'generally representative of the Central-European School of Dance and the Laban Movement' (Kane and Pritchard, 1994, p. 39) clearly increased Ashton's exposure to this form of modern dance.

⁴ *Four Saints* opened in Hartford Connecticut on February 7 and ran there for six performances. Vaughan states that the company immediately returned to New York for a week of rehearsals before opening at the 44th Street Theatre on February 20 where they performed for two weeks (Vaughan, 1977 pp. 103 and 464). It is conceivable, therefore, that Ashton went to see Graham either on February 18 whilst he was rehearsing or on February 25 during the New York run of *Four Saints*.

⁵ For further description of these concerts and the context surrounding them see for example Bell-Kanner, 1998 pp. 48-49, Bird and Greenberg, 1997 pp. 96-98).

⁶ This work was something of a milestone in Graham's development because it was the first time that her dancers deliberately pointed their feet (Helpern, 1991, p. 12), an absolute necessity for the 457 jumps that they have to execute. Ashton is well-known for his worship of the highly arched instep and would certainly have enjoyed the display of beautifully stretched feet that dominates this energetic dance.

⁷ I am grateful to Jane Pritchard for pointing out that the role of Marguerite was danced originally in kid boots by Kyra Nijinska rather than by Alicia Markova.

⁸ Only the Bride's solo originally danced by Margot Fonteyn survives from this ballet. See Jordan and Morris (2004).

⁹ As Associate Editor for *Dance and Dancers* in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Barnes campaigned for a better understanding of American modern dance in British dance circles. The periodical ran frequent articles on the Martha Graham Company's appearances in the USA and elsewhere as well as promoting the film of *Appalachian Spring* and *A Dancer's World*. See for example *Dance and Dancers* (1958). Clytemnestra. 9 (6) pp.18-19; (1959). Episodes. 10 (7) pp. 12-13).

¹⁰ Annabel Farjeon, who was one of the original dancers in *Dante Sonata* also invokes Graham when she remembers dancing 'barefoot on the stage, [with the] choreography designed in a free, almost Martha Graham style' (1994, p. 205). Farjeon provided these memoirs at a time when she would have been familiar with Graham's work. It is unlikely that she would have recognised the Graham influences in 1940 unless Ashton (or others) had told her about them.

¹¹ For fuller accounts of Stuart's exposure to Graham's work see for example Bell-Kanner, 1998 p.68 and pp. 74-77; See also Stodelle, 1984 pp. 104-105 for Stuart's role in introducing Erick Hawkins to Graham's technique.

- ¹² See Kane in Bremser, (1991). *Fifty contemporary choreographers*. London: Routledge p. 68 and *Dance and Dancers* 10 (8) p. 3.

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The Non integrated Body of Tatsumi Hijikata's Ankoku-butoh in the 1970s

Naomi Inata

Introduction : Avant-garde dance in the 60s and a change in the 70s

Ankoku-butoh, the “dance of utter darkness,” was created at the end of the 1950s by Tatsumi Hijikata. In the 60s Hijikata tried to deconstruct the style, canon, and coherence of existing dance forms that used the body as a medium. His particular targets were modern dance and ballet, which together dominated the Japanese dance world at that time.

For example, in 《Bara-iro Dance (Rose-colored dance)》 in 1965, the theme of the obscene, especially in regard to anti-social phenomena such as perversion, homosexuality, transvestism, crime, and orgies were expressed in a violent, erotic, grotesque and ridiculous way. Hijikata's exploration of these themes was influenced by Western heretical literature such as Jean Genet, *Le Comte de Lautréamont*, Sade, and Bataille, while his methodology was affected by Dadaism, surrealism, and performance art such as Happenings. In addition, significant writers like Yukio Mishima and Tatsuhiko Shibusawa wrote influential texts about Hijikata and his works, while avant-garde artists collaborated with him. Hijikata, therefore, was firmly placed in the center of the avant-garde arts in the 60s.

Consequently Ankoku-butoh was set in the flame of “anti-Dance” and “anti-Westernized Modernization.” Audience interpretations of his dance reflected the principle crises faced by modern human beings: the philosophy of existence, the dark side of human nature in society of revolt in the 60s, etc.

In the latter half of 60s, Hijikata returned to his birth place in Tohoku, northeastern Japan, to seek the ground of Ankoku-butoh. Here, he discovered farmers' bodies severely bent by an unrelenting climate and a lifetime of agricultural labor. Tohoku, where he was born and raised before World War II, has long provided a stereotyped image of the Japanese countryside for modern intellectuals living in Tokyo. “Ganimata(bow-legs)” and a permanently bent waist were regarded as the typical

“kata(physical form)” of farmers in Tohoku. The “kata” is not a simple abstract form or movement but connotes Japanese spirituality, like the “kata” of Judo.

Hijikata talked and wrote about his memories of Tohoku. The photograph exhibition and book “Kamaitachi (Sickle Weasel)” by Eiko Hosoe show strong ties between Hijikata's body and the landscape of Tohoku. Through these writings and images, audiences recognized that Ankoku-butoh presented a body expressed by Japanese pre-modern “kata” that the Japanese people had lost in the process of modernization.

After the 90s, interpretations of this kind have begun to be rethought as essentialist. However, questions are still left. Why did Hijikata change Ankoku-butoh completely in the 60s and the 70s? Why did he return to Tohoku?

Though there are many excellent discourses on Ankoku-butoh, most writers interpret dancers' bodies, forms, movements, costume and music from the outside. On the contrary, I try to see inside their bodies, to their usually invisible core. I shall use my practical experienced eye to see and trace how a dancer manipulates his physical components: muscles, joints, sense and gravity.

Integrated body of dance and daily life

Hijikata had mastered various styles and techniques of ballet, modern dance and jazz dance by the 60s, and disposed of them to create Ankoku-butoh. Therefore, his vocabulary and grammar of movement can be called anti-dance. But, however powerfully he deconstructed existing dance styles and canons, such activity may easily lead to another rule by macho power and the reproduction of yet another hierarchy. Besides, a body cannot return to a newborn state even if dancer uses daily life movement or improvisation instead of conventional dance movement and techniques.

I would say Ankoku-butoh in the 60s was anti-dance, anti-ballet or anti-modern dance; however, the body continued to keep its conventional mechanism and habitus, the same as

before. Here, I use the phrase: "integrated body," to delineate the unifying and organizing of each part of the body to move or keep still. The "integrated body" has a clear outline and sound articulation consisting of each part: for example, the head, trunk, and limbs according to modern Western anatomy, and these parts are manipulated rationally and efficiently towards a purpose or to represent certain meanings. Thus, the most basic "integration" may be the mechanism a body uses to stand still.

I would compare this concept of the integrated body with American post-modern dance, which deconstructed ballet and modern dance in the same period. Post-modern dance deprived movement of meaning and collected fragments of abstract movement. Thus, Merce Cunningham choreographed using Chance-operation, Trisha Brown choreographed using Accumulation, etc. They also deconstructed existing dance, but the body was still the conventional "integrated body" used in Ankoku-butoh.

The image of Ankoku-butoh body

Hijikata often said: "dances around the worlds begin with standing, but Ankoku-butoh begins with the inability to stand, however much one is eager to stand." In Western dance forms such as ballet, the dancer stands straight up from legs to head as if she is oriented toward the heavens. On the contrary, an Ankoku-butoh dancer bends his knees and waist to take a low posture, as if he is oriented toward the ground. So Hijikata's words have been understood as a forming principle and reason of Ankoku-butoh as compared with Western dance. This statement has been taken as a symbol of the originality and legitimacy of Ankoku-butoh, a dance form born in Japan.

Such concepts and narratives produce three kinds of interpretations:

1) Nostalgic essentialism: Ankoku-butoh is a bodily model of Japanese ethnicity as a rice growing agriculturalist culture reaching back into history.

2) Romantic body essentialism: Ankoku-butoh comprises the recurrence of the innocent,

omnipotent body of boyhood, similar to that found in text by Mishima or Shibusawa.

3) Hijikata Tatsumi as a genius: this view considers Hijikata to have memorized a delicate physical sense in his boyhood, which was then available for his use in a later period.

For the background of those interpretations, we must consider society at the beginning of the 70s, when a trend of folklore and conservatism began after the social revolt and defeat that characterized the 60s.

Ankoku-butoh garnered enthusiastic, if limited, support amongst the avant-garde, but was virtually ignored in the Japanese dance world and in general. Hijikata might have welcomed these interpretations of his dance, because he was also a shrewd producer. He might have intended the dualisms of modern versus pre-modern, Western versus Japan, Tokyo as a center of Japan versus Tohoku as the margin of Japan, to work as nostalgic and romantic narratives to assist the audience in understanding Ankoku-butoh. Actually, it is difficult to know his real intentions, because Hijikata always used words in very idiosyncratic or poetic ways. His strategy included indulging in self-mystification.

Therefore, I will analyze Ankoku-butoh from a different viewpoint than that the conventional discourse, in order to look at "kata" from a practical perspective. From this photograph [Hijikata choreographs to his disciples for "Nagasu-kujira" in 1972] it is apparent that "kata" is not only molding a form; it also serves to constrain the mechanism of normal movement of the body.

In Japanese traditional dance and Noh-drama, the dancer bends his knees and take a posture that drops his belly. This posture is the most basic standing "kata." The Noh-drama dancer also bends his knees and inclines his upper body. Similar to the en-dore of ballet, it is necessary to produce a vocabulary and grammar of movement that suits each dance style, and to keep physical stability and control.

On the contrary, Hijikata's "kata" is not a posture that seeks effectiveness and stability. Hijikata characterized his strict lessons as a state of mind: "to drive pupils into the state of imminence," whereas these "kata" would force

the dancer to abandon his acquired mechanisms of the integrated body.

Method to make a "non integrated body"

I assume that Hijikata used the "kata" of bending knees and waist deeply for the purpose of forcing one's body not to integrate. However, DANCE in general might be considered the mechanism that disorganizes previous integrations so as to make new integrations, which are then stylized. As the photograph shows, Hijikata already mastered the "kata" and seems to stylize it, which his pupils couldn't do. Therefore, he had to continue to disorganize physical mechanisms to avoid immobilization and stylization as *avant-garde*.

Which methods did he use to achieve this goal? Hijikata used a scrapbook called "Butoh-Fu(butoh notation)" to choreograph and rehearse. Hijikata showed the scrapbooks to his dancers during rehearsals, showering them with words to help them understand his images and *matière* in terms of form, line and color. This is the process he used to choreograph his dances.

For example, in a scrapbook for "Snowslide candy" of "Twenty seven Evenings for the Four Seasons" in 1972, pictures by Willem de Kooning are clipped out and words are placed alongside. In the picture, a form and outline of a woman collapse: all physical parts are melted. We cannot separate or articulate the inside from the outside, or one body part from another. He wrote "a face is ruined by wind, legs placed together, the buttocks stick out from the front side." I assume that Hijikata associated the image of time elapsing with the image of disorganized body parts and then connected them in an impossible way, like a Hans Bellmer doll.

In a picture by Klimt, a body of a woman and the decoration that surrounds it are unified, so the outline is illegible. He wrote "harden to become loose, harden and dissolve".

For William Turner's "Light and a color (morning after storm)", Hijikata wrote "blurring (*matière*)", "this light", "a place of light", "edge of light". He captured a slight movement as *matière* and pays attention to intensity of light and outline.

Using another picture by Turner, when Hijikata created "Small parasol" in 1975, he

showed the pictures to Shozo Yoshie, a scenery designer. Yoshie noticed words in the scrapbook like "pus," "skin," "an atomic bomb." And Hijikata spoke as follows:

The sea is stormy. Pus festers, and
pus will come out. I will be itchy. I
will scratch it. Pus will fester again. I
will scratch toward the light in my
whole body.

I would analyze these words as follows: Hijikata started from the image of sea in the picture ("umi" in Japanese), which he associated with "pus (also "umi" in Japanese)"; next, he associated the itchy sense, then remembered a strong itch from his experience, and concentrated on the act of scratching in his imagination. Finally, his consciousness inside the body oriented toward the light. In this way, Hijikata lets image, memory, sense and urge connect: from hearing an image of words to a physical tactile memory, from a sight image of a picture to words one after another.

A body made through this method will have the following characteristics:

1) Hijikata used words to disorganize the kinesthetics of the body, so that he may proceed to disorganize physical sound articulation, exceed the outline of the integrated body and explode its limits.

In the words Hijikata used, and connection were done so as to the body would be disorganized, in order that it might exceed its outline and expand.

2) Physical movement, form, and *matière* continue transforming, because Hijikata lets an image make rapid progress by showering words without fixing their meaning.

3) The body is neither a substance nor a fiction. The body is generated by the exercise that connects tactile sense and urge, one after another.

The body is neither the rational body to which we are accustomed in dance style and daily life, nor a strong macho body that deconstructs them, as occurred in the 60s. I would like to name such a body: the "non integrated body". Of course it is different from a

body formed by improvised movement and convulsions. There is a certain grammar or dynamic mechanism of the physical sense inside this body.

In this way, Hijikata in the 70s created a "non integrated body" which was totally different from daily life or existing dance forms. I believe that he tried to embody this body in the work "Twenty Seven Evenings for Four Seasons" in 1972.

Hijikata deconstructed his own body and almost succeeded to show the "non integrated body" in this work. However, he didn't destroy the coherence of dance itself. The work is staged on a proscenium stage and consists of several scenes. And perhaps his pupils couldn't become "the non integrated body" yet. So the pupils engaged in group dancing according to a strict choreography comprised of many clear "kata". Furthermore, the costumes and the music suggested Tohoku was being overused.

He called this work "Tohoku Kabuki", and he told Tohoku's culture and his boyhood memories when he was interviewed by the media extensively about this work. In this way, Hijikata made a way for audiences to understand and interpret his work easily.

As a result, many audiences interpreted his work as a return to Tohoku. He created a totally different image from in his work in the 60s, incorporating such themes as delicacy, weakness, vagueness, elegance and strictness. Finally, the Japanese dance world admired him.

Conclusion

Here I analyze invisible material that an audience hardly sees on the stage. As a result I would point out:

1) Ankoku-butoh in the 60s was an anti-dance that deconstructed the style and canon of existing dance, but the "integrated body" wasn't deconstructed.

2) In the Ankoku-butoh of the 70s, the so-called return to Tohoku provided a style and coherence to the dance work. On the other hand, Hijikata's body was the "non integrated body," in which each physical part moved separately, transforming one after another.

3) Hijikata devised a method using images and words to disorganize the "integrated body" to create the "non integrated body"

4) The "non integrated body" expands beyond the body outline in space and time. The non integrated body's sense and urge are connected by a tactile sense of each part of the body, and the body leaps imagination to transform continuously, like Deleuze's "body without organs."

Actually, I think that Hijikata's challenge to dance came closer to completion in his book "Yameru Maihime(Ailing Dancer)". This ongoing challenge was put to an end by his sudden death in 1986. It will become clear what Ankoku-butoh was and what his challenge was by continuing to re-think Hijikata's dance and life from a multidirectional viewpoint.

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Some Steps Towards a Historical Epistemology of Corporeality

Hanna Järvinen

This paper introduces my relatively new research project on the historical epistemology and ontology of dance in Western Europe at the turn of the twentieth century. In this project, I deal with the notion of modernity in relation to definitions of dance. I am focusing on Western European art dance, but as always, ‘art’ can only be defined through looking at what else was said of dance and what was defined as dance, as art dance, and on what grounds. As with my previous work on the notion of genius in the same period, this work is heavily influenced by Michel Foucault. This is to say that I am fundamentally interested in how power operates in the discourse of dance. However, I wish to stress that for Foucault, discourses have very concrete effects on very real, corporeal human beings; and I wish to point out that discourse does not precede corporeality or vice versa.

Methodologically speaking, I believe that many of the questions I ask have to do with how we understand dance in general – that is, I believe them to be useful outside the specific historical situation in which I, for practical reasons, locate my research interest, and beyond the confines of art dance. I ask my materials how was dance as an art form, as a form of culture, as art, as what kind of art, art by whom and in what circumstances, under what conditions? Conversely, I am interested in what was not dance or not art dance, who was and was not an artist and an author and why?

Answering these questions requires an understanding of temporal and cultural distance between ourselves in the present and the past cultures that produced the sources that we have remaining of dance and of the bodies dancing. However, there are far more sources on corporeality than there are of specific dancers or their danced acts. These sources can assist us in making sense of the significance of dance a century ago, and, perhaps more importantly, reveal differences between then and now that may act as an inspiration for doing things differently today.

Moreover, reading dancing in conjunction with other contemporary cultural trends can reveal

the methodological importance of dance research to historical discussions on modernity and corporeality. Currently, I am particularly interested in how modernity, modernism and modernisation figured in the turn-of-the-century thinking about bodies and corporeal experience. This is because I have been wondering why so many of the people doing what we call ‘modern dance’ prior to the First World War defined this dance in ways antithetical to modernity, and particularly modernisation. Since social dancing was associated with cities and with what was seen as the speed of modern life, why did the modern dancers dance in Arcadian fields and not in factories or even parks? What was the relationship between this ‘modern’ dance and modernism as an aesthetic style? What, in the end, was modern about this modern dance?

However, today I wish to address the historicity of corporeality – that is, the idea that bodies and bodily experience are historically specific rather than universally alike. For me, corporeality signifies the actuality of bodies in the material, physical world of human beings. It is the factual, pervasive presence of bodies, of our senses, sensations, and affects, in everything we are and do. Consequently, discussion of corporeality always encounters the epistemological question of signification: how do bodies communicate and how are bodies communicated, translated into language and transferred into images moving and still? Like sensory experience, which I see as an aspect of corporeal experience, corporeality is historically and culturally conditioned and layered, and so are the modes, the strategies, and the forms of representation we use to communicate it. Indeed, this is what got me interested in dance in the first place: for a historian, discussing corporeality quickly points to how little of the past we can know, and how easily we read into past experience our own cultural assumptions concerning bodies, especially the bodies of others. So, my questions are: How can we know? What can we know? How is our knowing conditioned by cultural difference and temporal distance?

I will now give some concrete examples of the different kinds of things one needs to know in order to notice what there is of corporeality in what remains of the past. Here, I have to note that my temporal choice is not a coincidence: a century is basically the limit of living memory. We can no longer ask these people to define their experience though terms that we choose, such as corporeality – rather, we need to remain conscious of ourselves as narrators who filter from existing source materials indicators of experiences in which we are interested, today.

In 1825, the French surgeon (what we would call neurologist) Jean Pierre Flourens (1794-1867) separated motor functions from sensory perception. Basically, he claimed that movements of the muscles were anatomically different from the sensations of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. This was a crucial move for contemporary aesthetics, since it meant physical movements and positions of the body were excluded from the discourse of perception. Corporeal experience had no sense to itself and made no sense in aesthetic terms. The body became, as Jonathan Crary (1999: 82) has argued, the object of art, not its subject.

The physical body was associated with virtuosity, once a virtue, now a negative characteristic associated with charlatans and popular idols (Stafford 1999: esp. xxvi; Bernstein 1998: esp. 10-17). For example, in music, improvisation, which had been the mark of the true virtuoso, was excluded from concert practise (Lehmann & Ericsson 1998: 70-72). When the rarefied senses of the artist-genius were separated both from the common senses of the ordinary person and from the body of both, sensory perceptions of the body by the body no longer mattered to theoreticians of art.

In 1880, however, another surgeon, Charlton Bastian (1837-1915), invented the term 'kinesthesia' to refer to the affarent input to the central nervous system – that is, he invented a movement sense; and (to cut a long story short) in 1906 Charles Sherrington (1857-1952) suggested the division of sensory perception into three main types, exteroception, interoception and proprioception – the sensation of that which is outside and inside our bodies and that which deals with the relations of our different sensations, of body parts in relation to each other and of our bodies in space.

This parallels a similar change in contemporary culture, where the physical body became a site of privileged knowledge. That is, I am not suggesting that the anatomical/neurological frame of reference would, in any way, be universally true or even very accurate.¹ I am interested in it because in its interest in the motion of and perception of motion by human bodies, it parallels other contemporary phenomena and can therefore assist us in explaining how people used to make sense of their sensations and their corporealities in the past.

Thus, the medical attention is one form of contemporary interest in the body in Western Europe at the turn of the century. It parallels phenomena like the Olympic movement, the emergence of 'body culture' in the form of macrobiotic diets, nudism, or the dress reform, or motion studies conducted by people like Edward Muybridge (1830-1904) and Étienne-Jules Marey (1830-1904). In philosophy, Henri Bergson (1859-1941) in his 1896 book *Matière et mémoire* (*Matter and Memory*, Bergson 1996) attached perception to material reality. According to Bergson, since we are our bodies, the movement of our bodies is the means for us to both learn of and analyse our being. The capacity for motion defines our level of consciousness. Plants are less conscious than us because they are not as capable of movement as us. This is because capacity for movement defines our capacity for action. By this, Bergson means a specific kind of acting: action is always conscious, it is opposed to habit, and it always produces a reaction that changes our consciousness, our being. Therefore, most of the things we do are not actions in this sense – they are habitual, and although habits may be conscious, they do not change anything in our being. So, motion is crucial to Bergson, who can be seen as the precursor of phenomenology.

The body and its experience also came to focus in the arts in a novel way. In music, people like Dalcroze get interested in the body as a pedagogical means; in theatre, Delsartianism and the Alexander technique turn attention to the body of the actor; and contemporary interest in dance encompasses new forms of social dance such as the tango, new forms of dance entertainment like the Tiller Girls, and new forms of art dance like Loïe Fuller's, Maud Allan's or Isadora Duncan's performances.

How dance is written about also changes, in two distinct ways. The first is the emphasis on bodily sensations – the feel of dance – in the process of creating dance and speaking of it that many dance professionals now seem to stress. When Isadora Duncan speaks of dance originating in the solar plexus (Duncan 1996: esp. 58) she is not speaking of kinesthesia, but what she says parallels the logic of kinesthesia in that it aims to shift attention away from the visual spectacle of dance towards the experience of the dancer. This has important repercussions to how authorship is allocated and art defined in dance.

The second change is in the general interest in dance, which also parallels the medical interest in the body as a privileged site of knowledge. At the turn of the century, dance becomes political as the body becomes an indication of social concerns over women's rights, the labour force, globalisation, class, and that all-pervasive explanation for all of these – race. Dance is simultaneously spoken of as an indication of social and biological degeneration, as for example in Max Nordau's *Entartung* (*Degeneration*, 1892 Nordau 1993: 543), and as an indicator of health, particularly the health of the atavistic and uncorrupted barbarian other, as Dr. Louis Robinson argued in "The Natural History of Dancing" in *The Nineteenth Century and After* 1914, or, more famously, Havelock Ellis in *The Dance of Life* (1923, see Ellis 1933: esp. 35-36).

As a conclusion of sorts, I believe that by making visible the connections between dance and contemporary culture, particularly contemporary political thought, dance can be made meaningful outside the field of dance research. Through the kinds of source materials illustrated here and the specific insights on corporeality offered by dance research, we can ascertain historical changes in human experience that have not been given much attention in historiography. The body dancing can bring us insights into past corporeality and its profound differences to bodies of today, and perhaps also explain something of the choices and possibilities available to these different bodies.

Moreover, I see historical epistemology as a means to question the ontological assumptions of dance and our own genealogical formation as producers of knowledge (Bové 1992). As such, epistemology has important consequences to dance in practice as well as theory. These

consequences need not be negative in the sense of disqualifying existing modes of thought – rather, they can open new avenues of thinking about what is meant by and what could be done as dance. This is because epistemology, particularly when it addresses corporeal experience, leads to ontology and the nature of being. By looking at how we claim to know, we end up asking what the object of our knowledge actually is, how we define it, how our understanding is different from those of our cultural and historical others, how we are as subjects, as producers of knowledge.

If we start to read past materials with the explicit purpose of finding how we got here, or with the purpose of reconstructing the past as it really was, that is exactly what we will get: a today projected into the past. Instead, we should realise that our knowledge can stop us from questioning the objects of our knowledge. The difficult bit about historiography, as I see it, is to look at the historian's materials and *not* understand what they mean with such central notions as 'art', 'author', 'work', or 'dance'.

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Endnote

- ¹ I.e. the invention of a term (kinesthesia) for the motor functions as forms of perception actually relies on the same logic by which motor functions were excluded from the sensorium in the first place. 'Kinesthesia' still separates the body and bodily experience from the five normative senses with the difference that, instead of aligning all bodily sensations with the other and the non-aesthetic, it simply reproduces this exclusion by relegating certain proprioceptive sensations the role of the unwanted, aberrant or hallucinogenic (think, for example, of vertigo or sensations of pain and discomfort, particularly when these arise from not moving). Rarefying kinesthesia as the 'dance sense' is usually employed to create a site of privileged knowledge where dance is primarily aesthetic experience by the dancer (or, in the case of the theories of metakinesis, kinesthetic empathy and kinesthetic sympathy, a mystical connection between

the body of the dancer and that of the spectator-expert). See my discussion in Järvinen 2006.

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Re-thinking the History of Dance in the 20th Century Iran: Nationalizing

Dance to Exhibit Iranian Identity

Ida Meftahi

This paper explores how Iranian nationalism provided the ground for dance to move from private, local community and courtly spheres into the national public space.¹ As in many countries around the world during the twentieth century, nationalism was the driving force of the mass mobilization in Iran (Ansari, 2003: 14). However “Nationalism, in the sense of an ideology central to the motivation of political action rather than a distinctive ethnic identity, was conceived in the 19th century and made its emphatic entrance to the Iranian political stage during the Constitutional Revolution of 1906-1911” (Ansari, 2003: 3). The rise of nationalism impacted the era’s developing cultural, racial, and historical consciousness.

One of the major effects of nationalism on dance was its promotion in women’s physical education in the first half of the twentieth century. A chief nationalistic ambition of that era was to adjust the old-fashioned and undeveloped image of the Iranian woman to a modern, healthy and educated citizen who would be responsible for the important nation-building task of raising the children of their modern Iran. Thus dance, formerly known only as a corrupting entertainment which never had been written about, was re-introduced in the media as a suitable physical exercise for women since it was popular in the West.

Promotion of regional folk dances was another effect of nationalism on dance. Since Iran is a multi-ethnic country with a diverse range of ethnic cultures, languages and traditions, a wide range of folk dances and rituals exist in different regions of Iran. Like many other multi-ethnic countries, ethnic and national identity have been in conflict in Iran throughout the twentieth century, as many regional identities sought independence endangering the unity of the country in the eyes of Iranian nationalists. However, Iranian nationalism played dual roles in this respect: while using ethnic identities and cultures to promote the national culture, it also maintained an intense

control over the idea of separate independent ethnic cultures and identities. This is especially evident with regard to Iranian ethnic dances which many believed had been practiced in the same manner for centuries in the rural areas of Iran. Through the process of developing a national culture, ancient and diverse folk dances were researched and performed on formal stages in large cities; however, they were used to promote the sole “National Culture”, rather than ethnic identity.

This paper, however, focuses on the effect of nationalism in promotion of dance to the level of a “national art” and its consequences on creation of the dance genre (*raqs-i milli*) “national dance”.² As previously described, the early 20th century Iran was the time for rise of nationalism in Iran. Tavakoli-Targhi, a historian of twentieth century Iran, has discussed, the scope of Iranian nationalism not only included the geographical homeland but also the “national soul”, “a collective of individuals’ national identity, personality and individuality.” He has also suggested that “the repositories of this national soul were the ‘national’ literature, culture and history” (Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001: 117). Thus in that time period a new notion of nationalism in Arts began with the Iranian intelligentsia and later resulted in creation of controversial terms and genres such as “national theatre” and “national music”. Interestingly both national theatre and national music were highly influenced by Western ideas and cultures.

When Reza Shah Pahlavi’s nationalist government took power in 1925, performing arts for the first time received governmental support. The cultural policies of Reza Shah Pahlavi’s modernizing government promoted the arts and preservation of Iran’s cultural heritage. The authors of the book *Artistic Activities in the Fifty Years of Pahlavi Dynasty*, published by the ministry of culture and arts prior to the revolution, described Reza Shah Pahlavi’s cultural policies:

At the time when Iran was a nation whose men were drug addicted and whose women were superstitious, Reza Shah intended to return to Iranians, their lost spirit and identity. There was a time when the Arts benefited only some powerful people; if there was a poet he would praise the powers and the artists were minstrel labourers and pensioners of royalties and the court. Reza Shah intended to return to Iranians, their lost spirit and identity. He sought to remind Iranians of their forgotten cultural and artistic pride, to give arts and culture a national and popular aspect and to let all Iranians benefit from it. With this holy ambition, Reza Shah ordered cultural and artistic changes from the primary school level to university....

Because of his special interest in the arts, the masters of literature and science also became aware of the arts and worked in the course of promoting National Arts (Mansouri, and Shirvani, 1975:17-18).

In 1920s dance performances were also incorporated to theatrical and musical performances. These dances, however, were not traditional Iranian dances, but were mostly ballet and classical dances from countries such as Russia or East European countries. The performers were Iranian-Armenians who were trained abroad such as Madame Agabayov or dance artists who immigrated to Iran after the Russian Revolution of 1917. This was perhaps when the concept of dance as a means of artistic expression was introduced to the Iranian elites. Farrokh Safavi emphasized the important role of classical dances in changing the concept of dance in the Iranian mindset:

The most important consequence of classical dance performances was to transfer dance from "hawz" to the "stage," and encouraged the audience to remain silent on their seats and watch dance with respect (Safavi, 1960: 69).

Later Iranian movements, music and themes were incorporated to these classical dances, for instance a major performances of this kind was an "Iranian ballet" produced by Pari Agabayov or a

dance by the same artist accompanying the famous musician Ali-Akbar Shahnazi's concert in the famous Grand Hotel in Tehran in 1927. These dance performances increased to nine in 1932 by various dance artists such as Madame Cornelli, Pari Agabayov (Agababov), Madame Allahverdiyov, and the French Madame Escampie (Mansouri, and Shirvani, 1975: 233).

I argue that these performances of ballet and classical dances with Iranian content in this period are the first signs of the birth of a new dance form: Iranian classical or national dance. One motive for this naming could be that the classical dancers, who were perhaps familiar with the popular concept of "national dance" in Europe, adapted some movements from Iranian dance to their performances and re-crafted their own classical dances with Iranian movements. Another reason for assignment of the term "national" to a dance could be the "nationalistic" themes of their titles such as *Bāllih-i Beyraq-i Irān* (Iranian Flag Ballet), *Rustam va Suhrāb* (from the Iranian national epic poem *Shāhnāmāh*) and *Tāj-i Iftikhār* (the Crown of Pride) (Mansouri, and Shirvani, 1975: 231-232). The fact that most of these dance performances were accompanied by the music of influential musicians who were the primary advocates of "Iranian national music," such as Ali-Akbar Shahnazi and Ali-Naqi Vaziri, further demonstrates the nationalistic character of these dances. Also as during this period, dance as an art form resided in the background of national music and mainly national theatre, it may have received the "national" label and followed the same doctrine.

By 1941, the year that Mohammad Reza Pahlavi replaced his father as the king of Iran, more dance schools were established in Tehran. The most important of these were Madame Cornelli's Ballet School, Tehran Ballet Academy by Sarkis Djanbazian, Yelena Ballet Academy and Lazarian Ballet Academy. There are many reports of the performances of these companies and interviews with the dance teachers that indicate that most of these teachers intentionally attempted to create classical dances with Iranian themes or what many of them called "Iranian national dances." The American Nilla Cram Cook, who was the cultural attaché of the US embassy and founded the Studio for the Revival of the Classical Arts of Iran in 1945 also created many dances of

this genre using Iranian themes and movements fused with ballet. This tradition was continued when the two large governmental dance companies to present the national art form of dance was founded. National Ballet of Iran founded in 1956 had a group to perform national and folk dances, and National Folklore Organization founded in 1967 also categorized their dances to national and folk dances.

National dance: the terminology, movements and themes

It is important to recognize that the term “national dance” (*raqs-i millī*) was always used as a *category* of dance, not as the name of a particular dance, and choreographers had an important role in creating various types of “national” dances. The term distinguished these dances from folk dances, which had connotations of regional rather than national Iranian identity. In magazines, newspapers, books and even official documents from 1930 to 1979, national dance (*raqs-i millī*) appears to have been used synonymously or very closely allied to the following terms: ancient dance (*raqs-i bāstānī*), classical Iranian dance (*raqs-i kelāsik-i irānī*), Iranian ballet (*bāllah-i irānī*), characteristic dance (*raqs-i kārāktirīstīk*), and sometimes, traditional Iranian dance (*raqs-i sunnatī-i irānī*). Clearly all of these names do not imply the same meaning, but they should be interpreted as indications of possible connection and links among the terms, themes, ideas, and movements.

My research has indicated that the term “national” was applied to dances related to Iranian national identity but in slightly different ways. “Ancient dance” could be related to a notion of Iran’s glorious pre-Islamic past, which was promoted at that time as “true Iranian culture.” Dances from more recent historical periods were also claimed as national dances; these were often reconstructions from miniature paintings from the Safavid Period (1501-1736) and Qajar Period (1795-1925), whereas “ancient” pre-Islamic dances were based on descriptions or imagery from archeological sites and mythology. Traditional dances such as *mutribī*, *zarbī*, and other dances from the late Qajar period, some of which were still practiced in different settings, were sometimes also called “national” dances.

When Iranian “classical” (*kelāsik*) or “characteristic” (*kārāktirīstīk*) dance was mentioned, these terms indicated that the dance was Western influenced or was imported by practitioners of some types of Western characteristic or classical dance who combined their own classical dances with Iranian movements and themes. Indeed, the terms and concepts of the “classical” and the “characteristic” were themselves imported from the West. Finally, Iranian ballet should be interpreted as Western-style ballet with an Iranian theme.

In all of the above cases, the dances could be a combination of movements used in Iranian solo improvised dance, and often various Iranian folk dances, combined and choreographed for solo or group dances. Depending on the proficiency of the performers and choreographers, as well as their background, the movements could be more polished or influenced by ballet. In some cases like *Gurd-Āfarīd*, performed by Haydeh Ahmadzadeh, movements from *zūrkhānah* (House of Strength) were also used.³

Sometimes national dances were closer to “traditional” dances as practiced before the introduction of Western style dance. However, in many cases, national dances were based on Iranian nationalists’ favoured themes such as Iranian mythology, literature, and poetry. Stories from *Shāhnāmāh* (Book of Kings) by Firdawsī (one of the most important literary figures appealed to Iranian nationalists) were also very popular in Iranian ballet or national dances.⁴

The relationship between poetry and dance was a topic of discussion for choreographers and promoters of dance. For example, Nilla Cram Cook in her article on dance in Iran wrote:

Iranian music depends on poetry and in the entire world dance depends on music. Iranian dance has lost its national level and decreased to a cheap entertainment in café settings, because it has been away from poetry. If Iranian dance connects with Persian poetry, it will re-grow to its sacred level

(Cram Cook, 1946: 33).

Hassan Shirvani, who wrote frequently on music and theatre, in an article suggested that since poetry is the foundation and the highest art

form in Iran, Persian poetry, music and dance should be combined to lead to a pure national performing art (Shirvani, 1957: 37). Abdollah Nazemi, the founder of Pars National Ballet also believed that that the only solution to elevate the art of dance in Iran was to pay attention to national dance and national ballet. Since Iran was very rich in poetry, he said, and since Persian poetry was often a way of storytelling, it would be better to make ballets based on Iranian literature, instead of blindly copying ballet from Western countries (Shafiee: 77).

I believe that the development of Iranian national dance follows the patterns described by Hobsbawm and Ranger who have explored the idea of “invented traditions” as fundamental to the creation of national identity, where “tradition” is intentionally or unintentionally invented as a consequence of nationalism (Hobsbawm, and Terence Ranger, 1983: 6-14). In the period that Iranians were seeking to promote a new modern national identity, national dance was created as a means for this identity to evolve and to be performed in public. The creators of these dances borrowed from literary texts, historical imaginations, folk culture, and ancient symbols, and created an appropriate dance which resonated with the desire for Iranian national identity at that time. Through the process of nationalization, modernization, and Westernization in Iran, dance, which was formerly considered a low, unimportant, and even vulgar cultural practice, was elevated to the level of a national prestigious art form.

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Endnotes

- ¹ This paper is an excerpt of a longer discussion from my Master’s thesis, “An Examination of Writings on Dance in Iran from 1930 to 1979” in which I used Pahlavi era (1925-1979) articles published in Persian-language periodicals of different types, to trace dance in its social and political context before the Revolution. I then connected these scattered reports, reviews, and impressions to recent scholarship on the historical and political contexts of this time period.
- ² In this paper, the terms are being used as they were been used in the explored periodicals, and they do not reflect my own choices of terminologies.
- ³ “Zūrkhānah” is an ancient Iranian martial art form.
- ⁴ The famous Persian poet (935–1020) and the author of the *Shāhnāmāh*.

The Darkness Project – rethinking the visibility on a stage

Tomi Humalisto

In my paper I will scrutinize how my recent performance project in Helsinki in the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma and the Zodiac - Center for new Dance, called *The Darkness Project* represents rethinking the stage lighting design practice. The need for clear visibility of stage lighting is strongly influenced by the theatre conventions based on facial expression. *The Darkness Project* challenges the tradition of visual reception in a performance, replacing human vision partly with tactile and auditive experiences. First I will shortly present an overview of the project and later I will show some video samples and share some observations on how the performance resisted the hegemony of visibility.



The scenographic elements of the project in Kiasma.

Reception of the Darkness Project

The Darkness Project was initiated by me in 2004 by inviting several artists to work under the theme of darkness¹. From the beginning, I prepared myself for the possibility that *The Darkness Project* could fail totally in its relation to the audience. I recalled my experience of the film *Blue* by Derek Jarman, especially how half of the Finnish audience left the theatre before the end of film. The film is about the director himself, who is gradually losing his vision and getting prepared to die. The artistic choice to share blindness with the audience is highly logical, but the convention of watching a film assumes that, despite a poetic voice over, there must be more to see than blue light on the screen.

Compared to the film *Blue* *The Darkness Project* had a similar reception strategy. The essential goal was not to force the audience into an experimental position. I wanted them to experience their own potential for bodily awareness and I encouraged them to have a moment with themselves in the darkness. I believe that the installation form, or environmental set up of the performance helped the Finnish audience to experiment with their senses. Hans-Thies Lehmann writes about the non-

mimetic principles of post dramatic theatre and uses an expression, *shared spaces*. (Lehmann, 2006: 122) By this Lehmann means performance space which is equally shared and used by performers and visitors; the space remains open, including everyone passing by.

In the case of the Darkness Project, the audience additionally shares the role of the performers, since they cannot make a difference between who they sense in the darkness - a member of the audience or a performer. Even though *The Darkness Project* actually contained a lot to see with the eyes, I was afraid of massive frustration of the audience in moments of total darkness. Apparently this was not the case. The majority of the audience seemed to accept the darkness as an essential and enjoyable part of concept.

The convention of visibility in a performance

Lighting designers are that group of professionals who deal with conventions of visibility in almost every production. One aspect of stage lighting is to produce visibility but the more genuine motif for lighting design is a need for expression, as lighting designer Richard Palmer describes it in his book;

Illumination alone is neither design nor an art.

(Palmer, 1985: 1)

Visibility must be connected to the special ontology of the performance and lighting. From this it follows that a designer may sometimes have to sacrifice optimal visibility in order to maintain an artistic expression. Palmer calls this compromise *selective visibility* which means merely the control of what can and cannot be seen. Every lighting designer understands that sometimes what is not seen may be the most important and interesting aspect on the stage. A lighting designer's tendency to preserve shadows and reasonable lighting intensities often causes misunderstandings. If the audience, choreographer or a director does not recognize the connection of lower intensities to the content of the performance, the lighting designer is blamed for making too dark lighting. It has to be stressed here that a skillful lighting designer must recognize the moment in a performance which needs to be lit brightly.

The theatrical tradition of focusing on the faces makes the dance productions more appealing to the lighting designers. There seems to be more space for expressive lighting although contemporary dance

has conventions of its own. Often conventions of the performances become articulated on the grounds of aesthetic choices, although we should always see the performance as a unique case which forms its own aesthetics according to its artistic idea. This gives the permission for tailored solutions in the lighting design, which may be risky for the standard production procedures and reception conventions. We need to remember that an unconventional lighting design also requires an unconventional production concept. Direction, performing, set, light and sound design needs to share parallel principles.

Scenes of light and dark

The audience of the *Darkness Project* could wander around with bare feet and stay as long as needed. With the use of video monitors, cameras and infrared devices, the installation combined seen and unseen reality. Different lengths of light and dark sequences alternated during the performance according to seasonal changes of day and night. The working team used the words *day*, *dusk*, *night* and *dawn* to express intensities of light and darkness in a specific moment of the performance. Each of these four daytimes became scenes containing their own timing, auditive elements and tasks for the performers.

During the dawn, day and dusk scenes it was possible to see something. Day was lit by four black and white monitors, two LCD monitors and two video projectors. After the night scene of total darkness, even the weakest light source made a huge effect. The surprisingly efficient adaptation of the human eye made us use low intensities of light. Video projectors had to be dimmed with neutral density (ND) filters, and monitors were set into their minimum brightness.

When the day scene had all of its light sources on, each of them were turned off during the night scene. The relatively short dusk and dawn scenes were lit only by video monitors which were hanging from the ceiling.

Visibility in the darkness

Although the audience enjoyed the moments of darkness, the performance space was brightly lit by the infrared radiators. Compared to the normal theatre spotlights, infrared lights produce light which can not be seen with bare eyes. Used in surveillance systems, infrared light can produce visibility for video cameras in a total darkness. The use of this kind of technology remains hidden and the person

being observed is unaware of surveillance.

Unlike the military purposes or the surveillance on an industrial properties, the surveillance technology in *the Darkness Project* was made highly visible to the audience. They could see video streaming from inside of the space while they were waiting for their turn outside next to the entrance door. It was quite difficult to explain to them that the video image they could clearly see on the monitor was really happening in total darkness.



Teemu Määttä adjusts the video monitors by the entrance of the performance space.

Actually for the video image it did not make any difference whether it transmitted the day, dusk, night or dawn scenes. The video cameras were equipped with filters which were made them blind to any other light except infrared. This special phenomenon made it possible to produce real time “double” video projections. These projections made an impression of the light coming from a completely different direction compared to light from the video projector.

In the darkness

When the lights went off the audience found itself in a familiar situation. The experience of darkness was well known for the audience, they had only forgotten it. Many spectators told me afterwards that they remembered the countryside paths they had to walk on night time when they were child. This means that, spectators individual history and earlier experiences became recognizable to them.

In the beginning of each dark scene the audience knew that the performance space was filled with scenographic elements, performers and other spectators. First, they stopped moving. Some did not move until they could see something in the following scene. If they were close to the headphones on the wall, they started to listen the recordings of texts read by the performers. Other spectators were more curious, they slowly sneaked around the space,

protecting themselves with hands. They did not seem to mind if they touched somebody. Neither did they know whether the person they encountered in the dark was a performer or a spectator.

The three male performers did not stop their actions in the dark scenes. Two of them followed the tasks which were given to them through the LCD monitors on the wall. The third performer had only one task; he had to sleep on a tatami floor during the whole performance. The spectators were informed that they could place themselves next to the sleeping performer and sleep with him. Surprisingly, some people dared to do this. In one moment the sleeper was covered with many people. A reason to this reaction by the spectators might be the passivity of the performer. He was like a huge “teddy bear” who could not reject or judge the person touching him.



Masi Eskolin sleeps on a floor for three hours.

The two active performers used the whole space freely. They followed their tasks unless something interactive happened with the audience. In a moment of encounter the performers had to be ready to play with the audience. If the person pulled back, it was a sign to the performers to continue with what they were doing. Normally, the moments of interaction were short - mostly touching and holding hands. Sometimes a performer took impulses from the audience and started to move next to them. An interesting aspect of the interaction was that the active performers were naked, but the audience seemed to accept an accidentally touching their naked bodies as a natural thing. The reactions were gender related though; the male audience members were more easily embarrassed when compared to the women.

Summary

The Darkness Project as a multi-sensory event explored the questions of seeing, visibility, and their

limits. Facing darkness means asking a difficult question, how can we relate to something that we do not see? According to the audience response, the darkness itself seemed to be the most unique and thrilling experience. Spectators told me that they wanted to wait for another dark scene to appear. Is this due to the fact that the total darkness is an increasingly rare phenomenon in our urban life? Or is it because the *Darkness project* initiated a corporeal dialog between the self and the other - or even, a dialog with themselves?

I would like to end my presentation with the words by Junichiro Tanizaki, a Japanese novelist, who has greatly inspired me and the whole *Darkness Project*. He compares eastern and western aesthetics and in a poetic way criticizes the increased use of lighting. For Tanizaki the darkness is not something to be conquered. It is an environment of aesthetic pleasure based on a dialog of light and shadow.

But what produces such differences in taste? In my opinion it is this: we Orientals tend to seek our satisfactions in whatever surroundings we happen to find ourselves, to content ourselves with things as they are; and so darkness causes us no discontent, we resign ourselves to it as inevitable. If light is scarce then light is scarce; we will immerse ourselves in the darkness and there discover its own particular beauty. But the progressive Westerner is determined always to better his lot. From candle to oil lamp, oil lamp to gaslight, gaslight to electric light—his quest for a brighter light never ceases, he spares no pains to eradicate even the minutest shadow.

(Tanizaki, 1977)

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Endnote

¹ The working group of the Darkness Project 2004-07 in the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma and the Zodiac - Center for new Dance included: lighting designer and a project leader, *Tomi Humalisto*, director *Masi Eskolin*, producer *Isabel González*, video designer *Teemu Määttänen*, sound designers *Juha Storm* and *Mikael Eriksson*, dancers *Panu Varstala* and *Virpi Juntti*, actor *Tuukka Vasama* and performer *Janne Pellinen*.

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Liaison hydrogène : immersion au cœur d'un double processus Conférence dansée / forme alternative

Corinne Kremer-Hein et Sosana Marcelino

Cette conférence dansée s'appuie sur différents supports (vidéos, photographies, etc.) ainsi que sur des interventions dansées par Sosana Marcelino, chorégraphe. Ne figure ici que la partition écrite et jouée à deux voix par Corinne Kremer-Hein, sociologue, et Sosana Marcelino.

En 1999, je rencontre pour la première fois Susan BUIRGE à l'occasion de ses ateliers de composition et d'improvisation. Susan BUIRGE est chorégraphe et directrice du Centre de Recherche et de Composition Chorégraphiques (CRCC) à l'Abbaye de Royaumont.

En mai 2000, Susan, m'appelle pour me proposer de faire partie du premier groupe de recherche qu'elle souhaite mettre en place à Royaumont. Le temps d'un battement de cil et me voici en train de répondre par l'affirmative.

Les 2 et 3 juillet 2000, a lieu la première réunion du groupe de recherche. L'objectif de cette session de deux jours est triple : énumérer des questionnements possibles, déterminer les méthodes de travail et de fonctionnement.

En introduction, Susan BUIRGE présente le cadre général de la recherche en mettant le point sur les relations entre théorie et pratique.

Au départ, le groupe est constitué de onze chorégraphes interprètes. En 2003, nous ne serons plus que sept à franchir la ligne d'arrivée. Nous avons tous un point commun ; celui d'avoir suivi les ateliers de composition et d'improvisation de Susan. Ah j'oubliais, nous avons un autre point commun : nous sommes tous des apprentis chercheurs !

Comment et autour de quoi travailler ? Après de nombreux échanges, nous décidons de travailler sur l'élaboration d'outils de transposition chorégraphique à partir d'un processus identifié. Nous choisissons cet axe pour deux raisons. 1/ C'est qu'ayant baignés dans l'univers BUIRGIEN, nous avons tous entendu parlé de cette notion de processus. 2/ C'est qu'il nous paraît logique de combiner théorie scientifique et pratique chorégraphique.

Dès lors, je pense à une multitude de sujets : l'eau, les orages, la psychomotricité, le langage, les abeilles... Tout m'intéresse. Comment choisir ?

Les 16, 17 et 18 novembre 2000, le groupe de recherche se réunit pendant trois jours. Les objectifs

de cette session : formaliser les objectifs du groupe et énumérer des domaines de recherche possibles.

Nous avons des difficultés à bien cerner le mot « recherche » et ses implications dans le travail. Nous avons le sentiment de basculer dans un domaine qui nous est totalement étranger : la recherche en danse faite par des pratiquants. Dès lors, comment se former à la recherche ? Pour répondre à cette interrogation, nous envisageons deux axes : 1/ Observer comment sont menées des recherches dans d'autres domaines. 2/ Identifier individuellement des processus à partir desquels nous aimerions travailler.

Dans cet esprit, nous décidons d'inviter des intervenants extérieurs qui viendront exposer leurs propres travaux de recherche. Nous accueillerons trois chercheurs en 2001 et 2002.

En conclusion de ces trois jours de cogitation intense et dans une ambiance des plus studieuse, le groupe de recherche aboutit à une 1^{ère} liste de vingt-trois domaines de recherche possibles, tous aussi vastes les uns que les autres.

L'eau, l'orage, la marche et les abeilles continuent de danser dans ma tête, comme une valse à trois temps. Je n'arrive pas à me décider et je commence sérieusement à avoir le tournis. Fixer un point pour ne plus tourbillonner. Voilà, la direction à suivre !

Pour avancer dans nos travaux, nous décidons de travailler individuellement sur la définition du mot processus.

Le 28 novembre 2000, le groupe de recherche se réunit pour faire le point sur la

notion de processus. L'objectif est de créer une définition commune.

Pour préparer ce travail, je suis allée consulter différents dictionnaires et encyclopédies à la médiathèque de Nancy. Ce que je retiens de toutes ces définitions, c'est l'idée que le processus renferme sa propre loi intérieure. Que son déroulement s'opère par relations successives, par étapes. Qu'il est sa propre conséquence et que son résultat correspond à une unité.

Cette définition du mot processus me renvoie aussitôt à la danse, et plus précisément à ma danse. Comment je la pratique ? Comment je la compose ? Je peux l'appréhender comme le résultat d'un processus chorégraphique.

Les questions qui me viennent à l'esprit sont les suivantes : le processus suit son propre cours, il évolue par lui-même mais comment en faire une interprétation qui ne soit pas erronée ? Est-ce que l'analyse d'un processus peut engendrer le besoin d'en analyser un autre ? Qu'en est-il de ma responsabilité face au domaine que je vais choisir ? A quelle échelle vais-je regarder les choses ? Avec une loupe ou à distance ? Autrement dit, est-ce que je vais observer la montagne ou le granit qui la compose à partir de 1000 mètres d'altitude, par temps de pluie, au printemps, entre 14h et 17h12 ?

Face à tant d'interrogations, le groupe décide de réaliser une bibliographie collective à partir d'exemples de recherches effectuées dans d'autres domaines scientifiques.

Appliquée et consciencieuse, je ferai l'acquisition de deux de ces treize ouvrages : « la théorie du chaos » de James Gleick et « l'eau et les rêves » de Gaston Bachelard. Dans quelle aventure me suis-je lancée ?

Le 10 décembre 2000, le groupe de recherche termine l'année en beauté ! Chaque membre définit son domaine et son sujet de recherche.

J'hésite désormais entre deux sujets possibles : l'eau et la psychomotricité... Entre les deux mon cœur balance... Finalement je décide de faire le grand saut. Mon domaine de recherche sera donc l'hydrologie et mon sujet portera sur le cycle de l'eau.

Du 31 janvier au 9 février 2001, le groupe de recherche se réunit pendant dix jours. L'objectif de cette session est double : explorer

son domaine de recherche et produire une synthèse.

C'est notre premier rendez-vous de l'année 2001. Un an déjà que nous jouons les apprentis sorciers, sans résultat probant pour le moment.

Nous consacrons nos matinées à la danse avec Susan et nos après-midi, à notre travail de recherche.

Philippe SOULIER, archéologue, rejoint le groupe de recherche en tant que conseiller scientifique. Sa présence fait suite à une proposition de Susan. Sa mission est de guider le groupe dans les étapes de la recherche.

Concrètement, je plonge mon nez dans les livres. Je constitue une première bibliographie sur mon sujet. La littérature spécialisée est un véritable casse tête ! Et quand enfin j'ai l'impression de comprendre quelque chose, je me demande aussitôt si je ne suis pas en train de faire un contresens. Mon choix s'est porté sur l'eau à cause de sa dimension concrète. C'est un élément que je peux voir, sentir, goûter, écouter... Mais quand il s'agit de le comprendre, cela devient très complexe. C'est un peu comme une montagne à escalader mais sans les bons souliers...

Ma question de départ est la suivante : Comment fonctionne le cycle de l'eau ? Ce qui m'intéresse avant tout, c'est de comprendre comment l'eau se transforme en différents états : liquide, gazeux, solide.

A ce moment là, je fais un parallèle avec mon propre travail chorégraphique qui s'articule, lui aussi, autour de différents états.

Quand la porte est grande ouverte à la découverte, le choix d'un sujet est difficile car il faut nécessairement renoncer à en ouvrir d'autres. La question est toujours la même : Comment savoir si l'on a fait le bon choix ?

En ayant choisi le cycle de l'eau, j'ai cru avoir fait un pas dans les limites à donner à la recherche pour vite me rendre compte que cela était nettement insuffisant et qu'il fallait restreindre davantage le champ. J'ai donc resserré ma focal sur la formation des nuages.

Du 1^{er} au 3 juin et du 28 au 30 sept 2001, le groupe de recherche progresse dans la connaissance de ses domaines. L'objectif est d'aboutir à une présentation orale de son sujet. Après chaque exposé, Philippe SOULIER s'amusera à nous torturer en nous demandant de

résumer en quelques mots ce que nous venons de présenter...

Mes notes sont de plus en plus nombreuses et mes références bibliographiques augmentent. Je découvre des éléments importants qui interviennent dans la formation des nuages et les définit, comme par exemple les différentes couches de l'atmosphère.

Pour approfondir la compréhension de ce mécanisme, je me concentre autour de 4 grands axes :

1. les mouvements d'ascension des masses d'air,
2. le refroidissement de l'air,
3. la condensation,
4. la croissance du nuage.

Je prends conscience que du cycle de l'eau à la formation des nuages, du rapport de l'eau à l'air et au soleil, tout est lié... Que faire de ce constat ?

Je me noie dans les détails. J'ai du mal à hiérarchiser les informations. Qu'est-ce qui est important ? Qu'est-ce qui ne l'est pas ?

La documentation que je consulte devient de plus en plus spécialisée : climatologie, météorologie, chimie, hydrographie, hydrologie, hydrogéologie etc. J'ai l'impression que mon travail va dans tous les sens. Comment structurer ma recherche ? Comment fixer les limites ? C'est la catastrophe !

En septembre 2001, comme par magie, le site internet du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) fait le point sur la liaison hydrogène. C'est une révélation : la liaison hydrogène ! La liaison hydrogène !

Je me rends compte que j'ai eu besoin de passer par l'infiniment grand (la formation des nuages) pour aller vers l'infiniment petit (les molécules). Je ne suis plus dans les nuages ! J'opère un deuxième recentrage. Mon sujet est désormais : la liaison hydrogène à l'état moléculaire.

Du 1^{er} au 6 novembre 2001, le groupe de recherche se réunit pendant cinq jours. L'objectif de cette session est d'entrer dans la phase de schématisation du sujet. Cette étape qui consiste à revisiter la matière accumulée d'une manière dynamique et à l'aide d'éléments essentiels, doit permettre l'appropriation du processus.

Je m'aperçois que je suis de plus en plus chargée lorsque je me rends à Paris : feuilles

blanches, cahiers de notes, livres, agenda, règle, compas, gomme, équerre, doliprane...

Je travaille à partir de mots clés. Je passerai ainsi de trente-quatre à neuf mots clés : fusion, liquide, solidification, solide, sublimation, gaz, condensation, évaporation, liquéfaction.

Je me concentre sur les aspects fondamentaux de la liaison hydrogène : la pression atmosphérique, le sens de circulation entre les changements d'état, la température, la relation d'espace entre les molécules... J'en fais des familles.

Je réaliserai en tout trois grands types de schéma qui se déclineront, eux-mêmes, en une multitude de sous schémas. Et je ne compte pas tous ceux qui ont fini à la poubelle !

Du 22 au 25 mars 2002, le groupe de recherche se réunit pendant 4 jours. Les objectifs de cette session : faire un état des lieux des travaux et continuer à schématiser le processus.

Je me consacre à l'élaboration de ma 1^{ère} catégorie de schémas relatifs au cycle de l'eau. Cela me permet d'intégrer un certain nombre d'éléments : à quelle altitude se forme le cirrocumulus, comment la pluie se transforme en cristaux de neige ? Cependant, je ne parviens pas à entrer toutes les données dans un schéma ! Par exemple, je ne sais pas comment intégrer l'espace, les angles exacts du 'solide', etc.

Je plonge alors dans une production frénétique de schémas, tous aussi insatisfaisants les uns que les autres.

Le 2 juin 2002, le groupe de recherche se réunit pour faire le point sur ses schématisations. J'apporte mes nouveaux schémas qui concernent le fonctionnement des matières entre elles. Par matière, j'entends l'eau à l'état liquide, solide, gazeux, abordé à l'échelle moléculaire.

Je crée deux grandes catégories de schémas que je construis en parallèle :

1. Première catégorie de schéma : les schémas « triangle GLS (gazeux, liquide, solide) ». Pour réaliser ce type de schémas, on se base sur la structure géométrique de la molécule qui est, elle-même, triangulaire. A chaque angle du triangle, figure une matière qui s'est transformée. Cette représentation a l'avantage de pouvoir organiser un espace scénique.

2. Seconde catégorie de schéma : les schémas « paramètres ». Cette famille de schémas intègre l'ensemble des éléments qui figureront dans la chorégraphie. C'est la vue d'ensemble du processus. Y figurent les matières GLS (Gazeux, liquide, solide) ; les paramètres de la transformation (la pression atmosphérique, la température, la liaison hydrogène et le noyau de condensation) ; le sens des circulations ; etc.

Je multiplie les schémas et je me demande bien quand est ce que je vais arriver à un vrai schéma...

Du 19 au 24 juillet 2002, le groupe de recherche se réunit pendant six jours. L'objectif de cette session est de passer à un 1^{er} travail pratique de transfert. Autrement dit, nous passons de la théorie à la pratique. C'est un grand jour !

Chacun prépare une improvisation pour un petit groupe et gère l'ensemble de la séance. Je travaille avec trois danseuses et suis moi-même choisie par ces trois danseuses pour travailler sur leurs processus.

Je décide d'explorer physiquement les trois états de l'eau : liquide, solide, gazeux. Les consignes sont les suivantes :

1. Pour l'exploration de l'état liquide, à partir des mots clés : rouler, tourner, glisser ; explorer la liberté de mouvement d'une articulation. Ne jamais aller jusqu'à l'extension. Utiliser le moins de force possible ; le mouvement est non volontaire. A tester à différentes vitesses.
2. Pour l'exploration de l'état solide : fixer l'attention sur une partie du corps qui devient le centre ; lui donner deux directions opposées pour rentrer dans l'allongement, l'étalement. A tester à différentes vitesses. La difficulté de l'état solide réside dans le fait qu'il ne correspond pas à un verrouillage du corps (contraction) mais à une dilatation du corps (étalement).
3. Pour l'exploration de l'état gazeux : se déplacer en faisant des courses et mettre des accents sous forme de points. C'est l'accent qui entraîne la course. Pour

obtenir la plus juste résonance dans le corps et respecter le fait que les molécules n'aient pas de liens entre elles, l'état gazeux nécessiterait de travailler en apesanteur, suspendu dans les airs.

L'improvisation permet d'entrer dans les matières et de les expérimenter de façon organique. D'une manière sensible et profonde. Enfin la recherche prend corps ! Je me réjouis de ce passage vers la pratique. Je retrouve mes marques et le plaisir du mouvement. En un mot, je suis rassurée.

Le 30 septembre 2002, le groupe de recherche se réunit pour faire le point sur les travaux pratique réalisés. Ce temps me permet de pointer un certain nombre d'éléments à prendre en compte pour la suite du travail, par exemple :

- La possibilité d'associer différents états dans une même proposition. Le bas du corps peut être solide tandis que le haut peut être liquide.
- Le besoin de définir la vitesse d'exécution : très rapide / rapide / « normal » / lent / très lent.
- La nécessité d'adopter un seul point de vue et de le tester. Travailler soit la matière, soit la structure. La structure correspond au processus de transformation.

Pour cheminer vers la structure, j'ai besoin de creuser les schémas de la catégorie « Triangle GLS ». D'ores et déjà, mes matières sont identifiées et travaillées en improvisation. Il me reste à rendre visible le processus de transformation. Comment passer d'un état liquide à un état solide ? Décidément, la démarche semble générer plus de questions que de réponses !

Du 7 au 11 novembre 2002, le groupe de recherche se réunit pendant cinq jours. Les objectifs de cette session : procéder à une présentation orale de son sujet et poursuivre le travail pratique de transfert.

Je liste les éléments que j'ai décidé de faire apparaître dans la chorégraphie :

1. la liaison hydrogène,
2. le noyau de condensation,
3. les atomes et l'espace,
4. la transformation.

Ces éléments soulèvent un certain nombre de questions auxquels je vais devoir répondre. J'ai trois danseurs pour tout faire. Est-ce qu'un corps représente une molécule ou plusieurs ? Est-ce qu'un corps est porteur d'une unité ? Est-ce qu'un corps correspond à une molécule ou à un paramètre comme la température par exemple ? Autrement dit, est-ce qu'un corps peut être à la fois un état et ce qui le transforme ? Est-ce que je vais transposer la température par un changement d'espace ? Que va voir le public ? Des matières ou des paramètres ? Est-ce que la transformation s'opère par pallier ou directement ? Lorsque les molécules se rapprochent, est-ce que cela se traduit par une proximité spatiale entre les danseurs ou bien par rapport à un état à l'intérieur du danseur ?

Que de choix à opérer ! Je prends alors la décision de cheminer à partir de ma propre compréhension du processus. Je ne vais tout de même pas étudier toute ma vie ! Le dernier schéma de cette période me permet de passer à l'exploration de la structure.

Le 8 janvier et du 1 au 7 mars 2003, le groupe de recherche se réunit pendant huit jours. L'objectif de cette session est double : faire le point sur les travaux pratiques réalisés et aller vers la transposition chorégraphique.

Le temps passe vite et nous devons finaliser notre recherche. C'est la dernière ligne droite.

Les improvisations avec les danseuses me permettent d'explorer la matière et de garder un certain nombre d'éléments :

1. Les boucles concernant les états liquides, solides, gazeux pour chaque danseuse. Au départ, elles ont une boucle liquide qu'elles réalisent en solo. Lorsque la boucle liquide devient solide, elles effectuent la même boucle mais dans un état de corps différent. Ceci afin, de rester fidèle au déroulement du processus. Il est en effet nécessaire de conserver la mémoire de la boucle liquide dans l'état solide par exemple. Ces boucles se déclinent en duo et en déplacement.
2. Les courses comme départ du processus. C'est la course qui permet la capture du noyau de condensation. Cet élément est placé à l'extérieur de l'espace scénique. Par conséquent, les courses s'effectuent

en dehors du triangle GLS (gazeux, liquide, solide).

3. Les marches haut/bas comme paramètres de la transformation. La marche représente la température. Elle est rapide lorsque la température est élevée et lente lorsque la température est basse. Il en est de même pour la marche haut/bas qui symbolise la pression atmosphérique élevée ou faible.

Je me sens encore très éloignée de ce qui pourrait ressembler à de la chorégraphie. En même temps, je suis bien consciente que rajouter des choses serait une pure fantaisie. Du coup, je m'interroge sur c'est quoi la danse, c'est quoi ma danse ?

Du 5 au 11 mai 2003, le groupe de recherche se réunit pendant une semaine à l'Abbaye de Royaumont. Susan BUIRGE propose de travailler la transposition sur la base d'une grille chorégraphique.

Je confectionnerai en tout vingt grilles avant d'arriver à la version finale. Techniquement, je les construis en deux temps :

1/ Je choisis des verbes qui qualifient les transformations d'un état à un autre.

Par exemple, lorsque la matière liquide devient solide, le groupe de verbes qui caractérise cette transformation est : combiner, ouvrir, aligner. Combiner, parce qu'il y a capture du noyau de condensation. Ouvrir, parce qu'il est nécessaire d'ouvrir pour aligner. Aligner, parce que les liaisons hydrogènes s'étalent. A l'inverse, lorsque de l'état solide, elle devient liquide, le groupe de verbes qui indique cette transformation est : aligner, fermer, combiner. Aligner, parce que les liaisons hydrogènes s'étalent. Fermer, parce qu'il est nécessaire de refermer l'espace pour aller vers combiner. Combiner, parce qu'il y a capture du noyau de condensation.

Si je lis la première ligne de cette grille qui définit la transformation de l'état gazeux à l'état liquide : disperser (entendre gazeux), transformation de disperser en un pallier sur un rythme lent, transformation de disperser combiner en deux paliers sur un rythme lent, transformation de combiner en deux paliers sur un rythme lent pour arriver à combiner (entendre liquide).

2/ Je définis la structure en tirant au sort un certain nombre d'éléments. Ce dispositif me permet de répondre aux questions suivantes :

- 1- Qui ? le nom des danseuses.
- 2- Où ? les places : 1, 2, 3.
- 3- Quelle matière ? Liquide, solide, gazeux.
- 4- Par quel médiateur se fait la transformation ? Liaisons hydrogènes, température, pression atmosphérique, molécules.
- 5- Quels sont les déplacements ? Déplacements en ligne droite ou en ligne courbe, directs ou indirects.
- 6- Quelle vitesse ? Temps lent, temps normal, temps rapide.
- 7- En combien d'étapes ? de une à dix étapes.

Si je lis la première ligne de cette grille qui définit la transformation de l'état gazeux à l'état liquide : 1^{ère} étape : quelle matière ? Liquide. Qui ? Sylvie. Où ? Place deux du triangle. Quelle matière ? Solide. Par quel médiateur ? La température qui baisse. Vitesse ? Rapide vers très lent. Quel déplacement ? Direct.

Le résultat ressemble à un schéma qui se lit comme un tableau à double entrée. Son intérêt est de faire le lien avec le chorégraphique et de rendre possible une vue d'ensemble du processus.

Tout au long de ce travail de transposition, de la théorie à la pratique, des questions affluent.

Comment la grille communique avec le corps ? Comment passer à une dimension chorégraphique ?

Du 16 au 22 octobre 2003, le groupe de recherche se réunit pendant une semaine à l'Abbaye de Royaumont pour répéter. Le résultat des travaux de recherche sera en effet présenté le 13 décembre 2003.

J'ai l'impression d'être plongée dans une véritable course poursuite car je suis à la fois chorégraphe de mon propre processus et danseuse dans trois autres processus. Je dois donc mémoriser de nombreux éléments très différents. Tout va très vite. Nous répétons.

Le 13 décembre 2003, sous la direction de Susan Buirge et de Philippe Soulier, le groupe de recherche, présente le résultat de ses travaux.

Le jour tant redouté est arrivé ! Chacun restitue son travail sous la forme d'une chorégraphie d'environ vingt minutes et d'un exposé. Une discussion avec le public et les grands témoins s'en suit. Les grands témoins de cette journée sont : Benoît Bardy, cognitiviste et directeur du Centre de recherche en sciences du sport à Paris-Sud XI ; Laurence LOUPPE, écrivaine, critique et historienne de la danse et Mathilde Monnier, chorégraphe et directrice du CCN de Montpellier.

Ce qui est important, au bout de ces trois ans, c'est moins le résultat, que le cheminement. Car je n'ai pas seulement travaillé sur un processus scientifique ; j'ai également appliqué une méthodologie de recherche. A ce titre, je me suis immergée dans un double processus. Double processus qui poursuit son chemin puisqu'en 2006, je reprends ma recherche et la développe avec trois danseuses. Je travaille sous forme de recherche-action avec l'apport de la voix. Aujourd'hui, ce travail continue de se développer.

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L'anacrouse gestuelle au cœur d'une écriture scénique ?

Philippe Guisgand et Laurent Pichaud

Cette conférence dansée s'appuie sur la pièce *Feignant*, du chorégraphe Laurent Pichaud, créée en 2001. J'ai vu *Feignant* en 2002 sans connaître personnellement Laurent Pichaud que j'avais juste vu sur scène dans un trio de Martine Pisani l'année précédente. Nous sommes rencontrés par hasard en octobre 2005 lors d'une table ronde sur la danse lors du festival *CitéPhilo* à Lille. Un an plus tard, nous avons décidé le principe de cette conférence. J'ai envoyé en janvier 2007 un texte sur *Feignant* à Laurent, texte auquel il a réagi avant qu'à mon tour je réponde à sa réaction. Certains principes organisateurs de cette pièce (que Laurent "mettra en corps") et les différents textes issus de nos échanges sont les matériaux de base de cette conférence dansée.

En lisant ce que j'avais écrit à propos de *Feignant*, Laurent s'est demandé si ce texte était une analyse. Je crois que c'était simplement ma réception de spectateur (après ce long temps de décantation de plusieurs années, mais que j'avais actualisé à l'aide de la vidéo).

Je me souviens avoir été assailli dès les premières minutes de la pièce par un triple trouble :

- Trouble scénographique : que faisait au fond et au centre (donc bien en évidence) ce verre opaque (dépoli) alors que d'évidence le souci de présentation semble être secondaire (tenues de ville, salle de mairie comme lieu de spectacle, éclairage minimal, pas de bande son) ?
- Trouble perceptif car cette sobriété scénographique reportait aussitôt l'intérêt sur la motricité des interprètes ; or celle-ci se résumait d'abord à une succession de trajets et de haltes, d'esquisse ou de gesticulation, de déplacements les yeux fermés. En revanche, la composition spatiale – et notamment les lignes de voyage – semblaient clairement définies (diagonales, descentes, traversées).
- Le troisième trouble était empathique car les danseurs ne semblaient pas souffrir de leur état de corps, ni de leur apparente maladresse : leur difficulté à se mouvoir leur semblait naturelle. J'en étais presque plus gêné qu'eux !

Au final, j'ai senti tout suite que ce trouble organisait un état réceptif bien sûr, mais aussi une conviction : malgré son étrange apparence, il s'agissait bien d'une danse et elle me parlait !

Les performeurs de *Feignant* apparaissent d'abord malhabiles : ils semblent gênés dans leurs déplacements, comme aux prises avec des syncinésies qu'ils ne parviennent pas à maîtriser, des injonctions toniques qui paraissent involontaires et qui mettent en évidence des corps maladroits et mal dégrossis au regard des mouvements précis et contrôlés que les danseurs produisent habituellement.

Les gestes sont entamés mais jamais résolus en mouvements qui nous sembleraient "achevés". Des corps pesants aussi : on entend le bruit des semelles, les foulées sont lourdes. On est loin des corps joyeux ou arrogants des années 80 ; ici au contraire, ils sont graves, au sens de soumis à la pesanteur. Au premier abord, *Feignant* paraît tirer vers la paresse d'un chorégraphe qui n'aurait pas su choisir ses formes.

Quelquefois, les gestes sont juste esquissés, comme si une consigne intérieure nouvelle venait contrecarrer la précédente ; à l'image d'une intention qui n'en finirait plus de tergiverser, de faire semblant d'être décidée, ferme et définitive (*feignant* encore mais dans le sens de feindre). Des corps qui n'en finissent pas de se préparer, de commencer à...

Parfois, la dépense physique s'accroît : le mouvement s'accélère, gagne en légèreté, s'autorise des suspensions, des sautillés, des jambes levées... On se dit alors que peut-être, ce qui apparaissait comme un brouillon va maintenant "aboutir" et se préciser...

Mais non ! Le geste demeure esquissé, comme un schéma de base dans lequel les danseurs s'empêtrent.

Les hypothèses jaillissent déjà :

- Est-on "en amont" du mouvement, dans l'hésitation initiale, le latent, le geste flou (comme lorsqu'on aperçoit les interprètes qui passent derrière le verre opaque en fond de scène) ?
- Est-ce la figuration de la définition de la danse selon Topor (« un combat perdu

d'avance contre la pesanteur »), au moment où on abandonne cette lutte contre la gravité ?

- Est-ce une danse métaphore d'un monde dans lequel "il faut que ça bouge" même en dépit du (bon) sens ?
- Est-on dans un "en deçà" du spectacle, dans ce que le danseur s'emploie d'habitude à cacher (questions, hésitations, peur de tomber dans le convenu ?

Je ne savais plus très bien... Une danse indécise mais qui avait aussi beaucoup de vitalité ; une danse qui trouvait l'énergie de s'extraire du pesant (le répertoire, le classique, la nouvelle danse, la non-danse) ; une danse qui semblait partir des intentions, des envies, des pulsions du corps, un « projet de la matière » (comme dirait Odile Duboc), qui part de ce qui l'organise : la terre, le poids, l'intention. *Feignant* n'est donc pour moi synonyme ni de paresse ni de faire semblant ; *Feignant* organise et rend visible une forme de danse inattendue, sans air de famille avec une autre.

En voyant *Feignant*, j'ai tout de suite pensé à ce que Hubert Godard nomme le pré-mouvement, c'est-à-dire l'organisation psychocorporelle qui fonde notre relation à la verticalité (Godard, 1990: 19). Hubert Godard a élaboré une « lecture du corps » qui facilite l'intégration du mouvement dansé et complète le travail technique habituel et l'entraînement du danseur.

Par la force des choses, cette motricité sous-jacente n'est jamais présentée sur scène ; c'est le côté secret de la danse, la cuisine interne, la face intérieure d'un gant qu'on aurait retourné. Pourtant, elle fait partie du vécu du danseur, de ses essais, de ses prises de risque, de ses doutes. Et *Feignant*, pour moi, présentait (ou figurait plutôt) cet inaperçu, cette anacrouse gestuelle.

Le pré-mouvement est difficilement décelable par des yeux néophytes ; mais *Feignant* m'en est apparu comme une métaphore intéressante : elle nous centre sur ces états préliminaires et expose ce qui se joue dans cette anticipation posturale (Topin, 2001: 102).

La pièce m'est aussi apparu comme une réflexion sur ce qu'il était possible de montrer aujourd'hui : chez le danseur (bien ?) éduqué, le geste s'esquisse, se précise, il est choisi ou rejeté... mais à huis clôt, dans l'atelier du chorégraphe. Qu'un danseur se mette dans cet état passe encore, mais qu'il veuille le montrer... ça devient inquiétant ! Car si la perception rend

le spectateur poreux à l'état du danseur, on court le risque d'une contamination par cette danse de "fou" (désordonnée, anarchique, insensée – au sens propre, c'est-à-dire n'allant nulle part).

Cette appréhension naturelle (à laquelle au départ je n'ai pas échappé) montre qu'une danse *contemporaine* – qui s'est pourtant construite sur la recherche de qualité avant même la production d'une morphologie – a toujours du mal, sinon à se mettre en place, du moins à être reçue. Là encore la similitude entre l'enseignement de Godard et cette lecture possible de la pièce est frappante : la kinésiologie n'est pas prescriptive d'un mouvement parfait. Au contraire, elle cherche à faire prendre conscience au danseur de son propre fonctionnement. C'est pareil avec *Feignant* où chacun est invité à reconstruire pour lui-même ses propres repères esthétiques en matière de danse. Pour expliquer sa méthode, Godard écrit encore : « Il s'agira bien d'aller à la découverte de sa différence, de son "autre polaire" » (Godard, 1990: 20) ; une phrase qui résonne aussi sur le plan de la perception du spectateur, qui travaille à faire sens, et qui au sein de cette exploration de lui-même – mais éclairé par le geste d'un autre – découvre une part de lui insoupçonnée.

En méditant sur *Feignant*, j'ai repensé à cette phrase de Bergson qui écrit :

Je passe mes diverses affections en revue : il me semble que chacune d'elle contient à sa manière une invitation à agir, avec, en même temps, l'autorisation d'attendre et même de ne rien faire. Je regarde de plus près : je découvre des mouvements commencés mais non exécutés, l'indication d'une décision plus ou moins utile, mais non pas la contrainte qui exclut le choix (Bergson, 1990: 12).

Il y a là aussi comme la situation d'un pré-mouvement : vide encore du mouvement lui-même mais déjà plein de son intention, de sa charge poétique...

D'autres directions sont sûrement possibles :

- Laurent veut-il nous faire partager le quotidien des interprètes ? Exposer un autre pan de la danse qui serait celui de son élaboration ?
- Veut-il *juste* nous donner à voir des danseurs « s'imaginant en train de danser »¹.

- Est-ce par désarroi ou contre le formalisme qui a finit par prévaloir jusqu'au milieu des années 90 que son projet est né ?
- *Feignant* est-il un *autre* projet de corps dansant ?

Pour ma part, *Feignant* fait d'une théorie périphérique à la danse sa condition, en même temps que son propos, le matériau en même temps que le sujet de la danse.

La pièce ouvre aussi le champ de la recherche en danse en montrant comment s'instaure une double circulation entre la danse et sa pensée : de la danse dans la théorie et de la théorie dans la danse (car je n'oublie pas que la kinésiologie est elle-même la formalisation d'une pratique).

Je dois également dire que *Feignant* ne sert pas d'exemple à un discours théorique pré-établi. Au contraire, cette pièce fait partie des œuvres qui m'ont servi de rappel à la théorie et qui m'ont incité à questionner mon rapport esthétique à la danse au sein d'un paysage chorégraphique très mouvementé. C'est pourquoi j'ai tenu à en parler aujourd'hui.

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Notes

- ¹ Dossier de presse de *Feignant*.

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No Fists in the Air: Anna Sokolow and the Cold War

Hannah J. Kosstrin

Against the climate of fear perpetuated by the United States government in the 1950s, choreographer Anna Sokolow was an outspoken artist for the Socialist cause, yet she was able to escape national ridicule and blacklisting for her actions. Although she was active during the 1930s with waves of other Socialist American artists interested in Marxism and the Communist experiment in Russia, Sokolow escaped the accusatory net of McCarthyism during the 1950s “Red Scare.” There are multiple paths of investigation for addressing the question of why Sokolow was not blacklisted or under U.S. government House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) scrutiny, but this paper focuses on Sokolow’s dance work as a point of praxis and as a point of departure. While Sokolow did not believe in making overtly propagandistic work, she did not separate art from politics. Sokolow exemplifies the modernist dichotomy between embodiment and representation (Morris 18-19), incorporating a radical, embodied real-ness in her work instead of a fabricated representation of dour situations. Sokolow’s work bridges this dichotomy, with a shift in focus: in the 1930s, her work focused on leftist political themes while steeped in the technical forms of modernism, and in the 1950s her work focused on non-narrative form while retaining layers of human emotion and meaning. There is also a jazz presence in Sokolow’s dances, which may have reinforced her work as “American” instead of Communist. It is the metaphor in Sokolow’s work, her search for truth on the level of humanity, and her emphasis on form and strong technique that shaded Sokolow from extensive investigation.

An examination of Sokolow’s work and actions in the 1950s must partner a discussion of the same in the 1930s. The leftist themes in Sokolow’s 1930s work exposed issues of poverty, homelessness, and other ills of Depression society, but they did not outwardly reflect Communist Party politics, offer solutions, or teach lessons. *Case History No. —* (1937) showed impoverished criminal life through

characterized portraits (Warren 80 and Jackson 175), and *Strange American Funeral* (1934), a piece that coupled movement with poetry, portrayed a steel worker who fell into molten metal (Prickett 58 and Warren 64). While Sokolow considered *Strange American Funeral* a propaganda piece for the workers’ cause (Warren 66), she transmitted the message through structured choreography: “The work was characterized by strong linear formations and potent motifs. In one section a dancer was held aloft as a grim funeral cortege slowly crossed the stage” (Warren 65). According to Sokolow biographer Larry Warren, “she was claimed by the left as one of their own and began to be characterized in the radical press [as such]” (Warren 66-67). This recognition relates Sokolow to radical artists who were later investigated by HUAC in the 1940s and 1950s.

Ellen Graff identifies a dichotomy between two groups of modern dancers working in the 1930s: leftist revolutionary dancers involved with the Workers (New) Dance League and the New Dance Group, many of whose *agitprop* work focused on an explicit, propagandized message rather than on technical or compositional form; and “bourgeois” modernist dancers, including Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, and Hanya Holm, who made work metaphorically reflecting society through the bodies of professionally trained dancers and structured choreography (9-10). Susan Manning defines this dichotomy as one between leftists and humanists, where “leftist dancers associated the necessity to connect dance directly with political activism, while humanist dancers viewed the connection between dance and politics in more indirect terms” (*Ecstasy* 265). The leftist dancers presented work at union rallies, Communist Party pageants, and working-class dance concerts, and the “bourgeois,” or humanist, dancers performed for concert dance audiences. The humanist dancers developed techniques based on specific movement principles, which became the structure through which they

metaphorically reflected the world around them. The leftist choreographers created a form engaging technique and politics, one “appropriate to the expression of the workers’ struggle. Technique was viewed as a means to an end and not considered as an end in itself” (Prickett 55). While the “bourgeois,” humanist choreographers trained professional dancers, the leftist choreographers looked to make dance accessible to all (Manning, *Ecstasy* 267, 269), with varying levels of technical training.

Sokolow embodied both sides of this split. She was a leader among the leftist revolutionaries, as a founder of the Workers Dance League. She was active with the New Dance Group, and was the director of her own leftist group, the Dance Unit. She directly brought real situations into her choreography. She also danced in Martha Graham’s company for five years, a tenure that overlapped with her dance activism. Sokolow stressed high technical training for her dancers, including ballet (Heisey 77), and as a Neighborhood Playhouse composition student of Louis Horst, stressed in her own work his structural choreographic values. In response to a 1969 *TDR* interview question about using untrained dancers in her work, Sokolow said, “Doesn’t interest me. Craft. I’m a great admirer of craftsmanship and technique” (Morris and Morris 101). While her work was strongly Socialist, her stress on the technical values she shared with the humanists differentiated her from the bulk of the leftist dancers, and perhaps later protected her from investigation.

Like other 1930s humanist modern dancers, Sokolow used her technique as a structural vehicle of meaning, but like the leftists, her technique was not an end in itself. She sought truth in her work, and unlike the humanists—Humphrey’s metaphor of a group made up of individuals as societal utopia and Graham’s narratives—Sokolow’s truth was embodied in the form rather than represented outside of it. In the 1930s, her issues were based in leftist politics and social action. In the 1950s, Sokolow shifted her focus to a truth based on characters’ emotions and inner motivations. She did not rely on a narrative structure, but on an emotional structure based on characters’ behavior (Warren 153 and Jowitt 42). Sokolow

did not change the core of her work from the 1930s-1950s, but the vehicle by which she portrayed it.

Technical Essay, a film of a Sokolow technique class, exemplifies her emphasis on professional dance technique. The film, which displays a full class from center exercises to combinations across the floor, shows a preponderance of movement ideas from the Graham and Humphrey-Weidman techniques, including contractions, spirals, and side and back falls, along with other movement principles Sokolow seemed to favor due to their prevalence. Common movements include an active use of the torso, including a high arch with the arms in a V; turns with the arms out straight to the sides, with palms facing the floor; and quick, whipping turns around the back initiated by a spiral, at times with the elbow piercing into the spiraling force. Side falls come from a jump or an oppositional pull from a leg; back falls come from jumps in *attitude*. Hops interrupt runs in partners, connected shoulder-to-shoulder; springing hops grow into a flurry of leaps; here and there a couple drops their torsos forward, rebounds, and continues to run; couples separate and individual dancers scurry and *saut de chat* through an intricate grid; and *assembles* punctuate the ends of running passes. The dancers actively use their arms in relation to their backs, in a Labanotation “body hold” relationship.

Sokolow’s dancers appear highly trained, with expressive, weighted torsos and the ability to clearly articulate through their spines. The dancers appear strong through their centers, but rarely raise their legs above a ninety-degree angle. They have strong feet that can quickly jump, brush, and land while stretched and pointed. The dancers have an intense, complacent focus that has a shade of the Africanist-influenced hot/cool focus that Brenda Dixon Gottschild identifies as one of the elements present in American jazz forms, with hot energy underneath a cool composure.

I interviewed dancer/choreographers John Giffin and Vera Blaine, who both danced in Sokolow’s work and took class with her in the late 1960s (Giffin at Julliard, Blaine at Ohio State and in New York). Both dancer/choreographers recalled similar

experiences of Sokolow teaching and living with an intense passion, of bringing exacting demands into the studio, teaching movement explicitly (Blaine), and demanding full commitment to the movement and process while performing with intensity. They spoke of Sokolow not explicitly bringing politics into the studio process, but noting that Sokolow's leftist views were present beneath the surface, due to the performance choices they made, the questions Sokolow probed, and the world Sokolow presented to them.

Unlike Sokolow's contemporary Edith Segal, a member of the Communist Party who was later subpoenaed in the 1950s (Graff 159 and Manning, *Modern* 181) and wove yards of red fabric into her large-scale 1930s Communist pageants (Prickett 51), Sokolow neither based her work on explicit propaganda, nor was an official Party member:

I was never a member, you see. What I felt, I felt very personally. It had nothing to do with a doctrine. I must say I believed in what the party could do. In principle, yes. Of course, later, it became shockingly disillusioning. But even then I never, for example, finished a dance with a fist up in the air, or took a red flag out and waved it.... Even then I tried to show people the truth, then let them make up their own minds. (Sokolow in Murphy and Rhodes, *Gifts* quoted in Warren 125)

Sokolow's name did not appear in a preliminary search I conducted of declassified HUAC hearings, where dancers who were Communist Party members, such as Bella Lewitzky and Jerome Robbins, did emerge. Segal utilized modernist structural methods of choreographing (Graff 45-47), but she was a Party member and taught at Socialist summer camps (Manning *Modern* 68). It is most likely also because Sokolow was not a Party member in addition to her movement aesthetic that she was not extensively investigated. Warren attests to this as well, suggesting that Sokolow "had inadvertently made herself less interesting to the witch-hunters" (124). Also unlike many of her leftist contemporaries, who "presented political

and social problems and potential solutions" (Prickett 50), Sokolow presented truth, a realism of life as it was, in her work (Giffin). She is known for leaving her choreography open-ended and finishing with a question (Rhodes and Murphy, *Choreographer*) instead of a solution, and "she [did] not wish to teach a lesson in her dances, only to present her point of view, her emotional reaction towards the immediacy of everyday living" (Heisey 77).

Between the late 1930s and early 1950s, Sokolow spent substantial portions of each year teaching abroad, first in Mexico and later (into the 1950s) in Israel, building the modern dance scenes there. During her time in the U.S., in the late 1930s, Sokolow, like many leftist and humanist modern dancers alike, choreographed in reaction to the Spanish Civil War. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Sokolow joined other American Jewish choreographers in making work reacting to World War II and the Holocaust. In the early-mid 1950s, Sokolow shifted the focus in her work to American urban alienation.

In the 1950s, writes Gay Morris,

A modernist dance was authentic to the degree that it embodied rather than imitated or represented experience.... Communication was crucial, but it was communication through [non-narrative] abstracted corporeal movement, not through literary, that is, representational means. (18-19)

While Sokolow's avant-garde contemporaries in the 1950s abstracted communication out of their formalist work, Sokolow communicated non-narrative ideas of loneliness, isolation, and despair through psychological characterization and emotional portraits. Her dancers brought embodied experience to the stage.

The thematic change in Sokolow's work in the early 1950s is representative of a general shift in modern dance during that time from narrative and political work to objective work (Morris xiii), in reaction to the Cold War and the ensuing climate of fear. By the time Sokolow premiered *Lyric Suite* in 1954, the piece widely considered her first successful work as a mature choreographer and highly praised as such by

Louis Horst (Warren 147 and Rosenberg), Joseph McCarthy was censured (Halberstam 53), the majority of the HUAC witch hunts began to subside, prominent avant-garde choreographers Merce Cunningham and Alwin Nikolais were concentrating on objective work, Martha Graham's narratives focused on the heroines of Greek mythology instead of on events in the world around her, and Sokolow had shifted her focus to making work within a larger, abstracted narrative about urban loneliness and isolation.

According to historian and journalist David Halberstam, "...the McCarthy era had so changed the political climate that there was little sympathy or understanding for youthful and careless Depression-era politics" (330). Manning also notes in this shift how the 1930s leftist dance was "remembered as a youthful enthusiasm that faded as dancers matured and accepted the rightness of the humanist ethic" (*Ecstasy* 266). Perhaps because Sokolow was praised with *Lyric Suite* as her first mature work, her 1930s activism was written off as adolescence. Not only did dancers curb political messages in their work, but many removed thematic material entirely. The political climate, coupled with dance critic Gertrude Lippincott's 1948 call for a separation of dance from political and social themes (Graff 167-8 and Morris 5-6), caused this thematic shift in avant-garde modern dance work. Sokolow, however, continued to bridge the two sides that formed, making non-narrative work within socio-political contexts. She built her viscerally humanist work on characters' emotions and experiences abstracted from a traceable narrative. *Lyric Suite* (1954) is an emotional portrait. It focuses on form as content, without being devoid of emotion. The work is modernist for its form, but does not lose the edge of humanity and communication present in Sokolow's work since the 1930s.

Jim May and Lorry May perform this duet from *Lyric Suite* (1954), "Largo desolato." There is strife here, and desperation between the dancers. They reach, they yearn; they make contact but they do not connect. The woman dives backwards over the man, wrapping the back surface of her body around the front of his torso in an indirect connection. She suffers in her isolation even though he physically supports her; later, she softens as he buries his face in her

neck. The two finally connect, gazing into each other's eyes as they exit over runs and small punctuated leaps, connected at the shoulders through their outstretched arms. Giffin performed the duet from *Lyric Suite* at Julliard in the late 1960s, coached by Sokolow. He said he

felt it was very much about a man and a woman who go through a lot of turmoil, but yet finally find a way to be together.... Anna never told us what we were doing. She never said, this means this. She just wanted us to be fully committed to what we were doing.... It wasn't ever framed in political terms.

Lyric Suite presents an environment of loneliness implicitly through the bodies of the dancers with professional technical training, through movements that closely reflect those in Sokolow's technical demonstration. "Adagio appassionato," the quartet of women that marks the final section of *Lyric Suite*, begins with an adagio of long extensions and *arabesques*, with labored tilts into *attitudes*. Towards the end, the dancers *rand de jamb* into a *plie* undercurve, moving through sideways triplets with their arms extended to the side but their palms facing forward in vulnerability as they change positions in space. Sokolow leaves the ending open as the dancers gradually disappear into the darkness, hanging questions on the last screech of the score's strings.

The jazz presence in *Lyric Suite*, from the experimental score to the irony and dissonance in the movement, lends Sokolow an additional compositional layer. Additionally, Morris writes, "Her theme made its effect through accumulation, one segment added to another to reinforce a point, rather than through a series of causal events" (Morris 102). This idea of movement accumulation to "reinforce a point" is also an element of jazz, in furthering intensity through repetition (Welsh-Asante 150). It was through this implicit manner of structuring her work in the 1950s, and in allowing dissonance through unanswered questions, that Sokolow perhaps avoided HUAC spotlighting.

Sokolow's work was social critique, with politics embedded in the form. While Sokolow never ended a dance with a fist in the air, she

never ended one in defeat, either. Giffin pointed out that even at the end of works such as *Rooms* (1955), Sokolow's signature work about urban loneliness and isolation, when the stage is strewn with lifeless dancers' bodies, one will rise: "everybody's kind of down on the floor, as if totally dead or... destroyed by... unseen forces... but then all of a sudden someone will stand up like a shot... as if to say well, I'm not dead.... I still exist. So in some ways she was saying that for some, there is hope."

While the implicit politics in Sokolow's work may not have been a proverbial red flag of government exposure, she did not completely evade the net of suspicion. Sokolow reportedly received a visit from a government investigator in the early 1950s, but refused an interview before a consult with her lawyer, and then refused to speak at all (Warren 124). It is unclear whether Sokolow was identified for her own leftist work, which included a 1934 trip to Moscow, or for her association with artists and intellectuals in liberal circles, many of whom were writers, a prime target group of the HUAC (Blaine). The brother of her 1930s partner, Alex North, was editor of the Communist newspaper *New Masses* (Warren 38-39). Perhaps this personal association, regardless of her own work, drew attention to her. She was most likely not subpoenaed to a HUAC hearing because she was not a Communist Party member, and it appears that she was not named by anyone who was. The Dance Panel, set up in the 1950s under President Eisenhower's initiative to export American artists, did not choose to present her abroad, a choice that seems to relate more to a 1958 decision that her work was inaccessible to non-American audiences than relating to any suspicion from earlier in the decade (Prevots 62).

The question of why Sokolow was not blacklisted fades in importance, for me, in light of examining what her work *was*. Sokolow's work cuts through modern dance trends between the 1930s-1950s, sharing characteristics with more than one group of prominent dance aesthetics. She shifted her focus from embodied social protest to suggested metaphor through strong form, yet she did not deny propaganda in her work. In a 1991 American Dance Festival interview, Sokolow stated, in reference to her

late 1930s Spanish Civil War work, "Instead of being involved with political things, I was deeply interested in the humanity" (Rosenberg). This humanity is apparent in both her work and in her teaching, and many of Sokolow's "politics" came through in her actions, and in the way she imparted knowledge to students and audiences. While there is further research to be done in terms of Sokolow's relationship to leftist politics, her work may have offered her a type of shield in that it did not appear overtly Communist enough in theme to draw her overwhelming government attention.

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Scottish Cultural Policy and the Performance of Nationhood

Ashley Smith

There is an important relationship between artistic practice and policy. Policy, especially in a European context, is key to practice and performance because it has a material affect on funding, a subject vitally important to arts practitioners. However, this paper engages with dance on a national level in terms of Scotland's subsidised dance sector in general, rather than in terms of individual dances, dancers or choreographers. It engages with the notion of practice as performance, in terms of conceiving national cultural policy as practice and engaging with the idea of nation as performer/actor.

Defining Cultural Policy

National strategies are articulated through policy directives that shape how arts and research councils distribute government funding to practitioners.

Cultural *policy* refers to the institutional supports that channel both aesthetic creativity and collective ways of life – a bridge between the two registers. Cultural policy is embodied in systematic, regulatory guides to action that are adopted by organizations to achieve their goals. In short, it is bureaucratic rather than creative or organic: organizations solicit, train, distribute, finance, describe and reject actors and activities that go under the signs of artists or artwork, through the implementation of policies (Miller & Yúdice, 2002, 1, italics in original).

Scottish cultural policy is aspirational, in identity terms. It seeks to place Scotland in the context of other successful small European countries and set Scottish cultural products apart from English ones whilst maintaining a close relationship with British institutions. Scottish cultural policy incorporates elements of cultural diplomacy in that it aims to use artistic exports to build international goodwill.

This diplomatic effort is incorporated into a greater cultural policy project.

Cultural policies have a symbolic role to play in the construction of cultural citizens. The job that cultural policies are employed to do, of supporting the production of symbolic objects – cultural products and cultural practice – often slides into a display of state power through the display of these objects. Raymond Williams suggested that this work represented a taken-for-granted cultural policy itself whose work is the inscription of state power through the display of national heritage and the arts (Williams, 1984).

This display is intended for three different audiences. The first audience is the internal one; the national community is flagged (Billig, 1995) by national cultural display, which helps create the imagined community of the nation. The second audience is an external one. The nation speaks through cultural display of itself to other nations. The third group could be internal, but is primarily conceived of as external, individuals from other nations for whom the distinct pleasures of place are flagged and made available for consumption by the tourist.

The second audience, a nation observing another nation, can broadly be conceived of as the task of cultural diplomacy. The rationale of cultural diplomacy uses cultural products in export as symbolic representations of the nation. It is often conceived of as a 'soft' tool of foreign policy, using cultural exchange to keep channels of communication and negotiation open.

This is in opposition to what researchers at the think tank DEMOS call the "harder stuff of laws and treaties, bilateral negotiations, multilateral structures and military capability" (Bound et al., 2007, 11). Such a practice is seen as a significant growth area for cultural policy in the UK. In a recent report, the DEMOS team advocate a stronger focus on British cultural diplomacy, because they think "[m]any of the challenges we face, such as

climate change, terrorism and managing migration, cannot be solved by military might or unilateral policy innovations. Cultural diplomacy has a critical role to play” (Bound et al., 2007, 13).

Defining Culture

I’d like to borrow Ajun Appadurai’s definition of culture, which focuses on the notion of difference:

The most valuable feature of the concept of culture is the concept of difference, a contrastive rather than a substantive property of certain things... culture is not usefully regarded as a substance but is better regarded as a dimension of phenomena, a dimension that attends to situated and embodied difference... I propose, however, that we restrict the term *culture* as a marked term to the subset of these differences that has been mobilized to articulate the boundary of difference. As a boundary-maintenance question, culture then becomes a matter of group identity as constituted by some differences among others (Appadurai, 1997, italics in original).

This conception of culture as boundary maintaining is especially relevant in terms of the creation and preservation of a national group identity. Those objects selected by cultural policy as worthy of support therefore are demonstrative of national identity because they mark out the difference from nation to nation as well as the diversity of groups within a nation.

Nation as Practitioner

The early 21st century marks a critical moment in terms of Scotland’s socio-political history. Scotland is part of the United Kingdom, but after the New Labour victory in the 1997 elections some power was devolved to a separate Scottish parliament. Prior to this, Scotland had been governed from London for almost 300 years. In fact this year, 2007, marked the 300th anniversary of the union of the parliaments. Quite a lot of power was devolved to the parliament in Edinburgh, but

the key powers, for the purposes of this paper, were over cultural policy, which includes the cultural industries and the arts as well as other things like built heritage, libraries and sport. Although, many powers, such as those pertaining to foreign affairs, defence and national security, are still reserved to the British Parliament in Westminster.

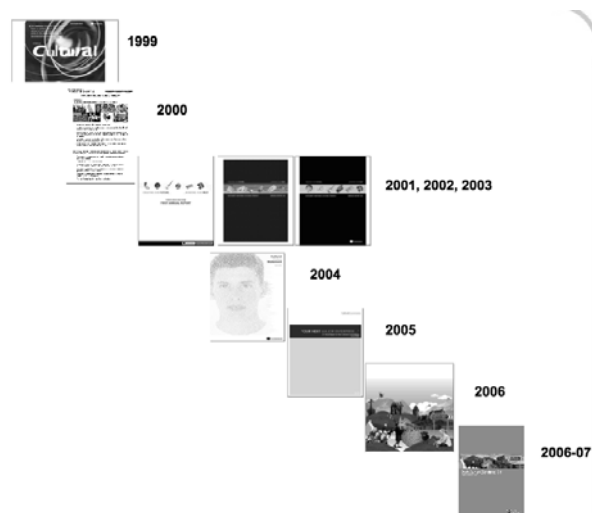
2007 also featured national elections, which the SNP (Scottish National Party – which is the nationalist party in Scotland) won for the first time in Scottish history. This victory raises the potential of full Scottish independence and changes the tenor of the discussion around the larger question of Scottish identity. As a devolved issue, cultural policy presents key opportunities for the nation of Scotland to actively perform national symbolism and the markers of the national imagined community (Anderson, 1991) for both internal and an external audiences.

Joyce McMillan—a columnist for the *Scotsman* newspaper—pointed to this in terms of national performing arts companies: “For better or worse, threats to national arts companies are bound up with questions of national status and prestige” (McMillan, 2000). This quote comes from February 2000 when the parliament was less than a year old.

Policy as Practice, Practice, Practice

Cultural policy, in terms of cultural diplomacy, automatically places the nation into an international context. For all three audiences the issue lies in tying cultural products and cultural practice to domestic and foreign politics. For the audiences conceived of as internal, this has to do with the day-to-day governing and overall quality of life under a national government. For all audiences, this has to do with the maintenance of symbolic boundaries around the national category, constructing who is inside and who is outside these boundaries, bringing us back to Appadurai’s conception of culture as difference.

Scottish Cultural Policy Publications 1999-2007



Ray Rist, an academic with a great deal of experience working in policymaking, points out that policymaking is a process.

It is a process that evolves through cycles, with each cycle more or less bounded, more or less constrained by time, funds, political support and other events. It is also a process that circles back on itself, iterates the same decision issues time and time again, and often does not come to closure (Rist, 2003, 621).

As is clear from the illustration above, the repetitive nature and lack of ultimate outcomes of policymaking is a good description of the story of Scottish cultural policy development. To date it has been through two cycles, the first running from 1999-2003 (Scottish Executive, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003) and the second running from 2004-present (Scottish Executive, 2004, Cultural Commission, 2005, Scottish Executive, 2006b, 2006a). The final document is a draft policy paper, the *Draft Culture (Scotland) Bill*, which at time of writing has yet to be debated or ratified.

We can interrogate the national cultural policy documents from the Scottish Executive as another declaration and description of national identity. One impact of Scotland's devolved parliament and a new Scottish cultural policy is an effort on the part of the Executive to change perceived national

identities and identifiers. Cultural work is representational, yes, but it is also imaginative – it can change representations. Imaginative work is crucially important to this new national government because it is in process, both being and becoming.

The Scottish Parliament has been sitting now for eight years, and during that time the underdog factor has worn off. The slow, dull work of governing, taxing and reaching consensus has necessarily taken the sheen off of a glamorous ideal government. Its potential has been nailed down into the actual and the practical.

But, eight years is not a very long time in terms of a government. The Scottish government is still changing fast and becoming itself in its own terms. And in a democracy one of the ways the imagined becomes the real is through citizen participation. Governments can try and spin public opinion but at their core they are responsible to the citizens, their internal audience. Of course, the members of internal audience already have their own versions of what it means to be Scottish and they may judge the success of the policy's version of what it means to be Scottish by both the cultural products that it makes possible through funding, and recently through consultation on policy. For instance, the final document pictured on this slide is the Executive's Draft Cultural Policy, which was tendered for consultation from December 2006- March 2007.

Policy as Practice

As in all policy making, prior to implementation outcomes are only intended. We can read these policies for what they tell us about the goals of governments and where government priorities lie. Certainly one of the goals of the Scottish Government, not just in cultural policy, but overall is to raise Scotland's international profile. One big rationale for this is economic; that a positive international image will attract both internal and external investors as well as tourists.

2004 the Executive launched a long-term 'international image' strategy, which is a result of the perceived international image of

‘traditional Scotland’ (tartan, misty mountains, bagpipes etc.) and the “initiative’s main goal is to raise awareness of modern Scotland” (Scottish Executive, 2006c, 1). A recent progress report states: “We need to let people know about our rich history and heritage and our vibrant cities, world class universities, dynamic businesses and thriving arts and culture” (Scottish Executive, 2006c, 1, bold text in original).

National Body of Work

This project brings us back to dance. The following excerpt from a 2003 *Ballet Magazine* review of the national dance company Scottish Ballet, is an example of how the project of aspirational identity building and international goodwill is carried out:

Scotland is busily regenerating its strong national identity with a new Parliament Building as an icon to prove it. Much has been written about how much this is going to cost but the building will have become the architectural centrepiece of a new Scottish heritage, long after the initial price has been forgotten. It is absolutely appropriate that this revitalised national identity should incorporate a reborn Scottish Ballet that sits perfectly in the strong cultural face of Scotland (Watts, 2003).

Certainly, such statements invite critical investigation. It makes the national dance company into a display object which proves, in the same way that investing in high concept architecture proves, that Scotland has the cultural markers of ‘vibrancy’ ‘cosmopolitanism’ or ‘modernity’. Scottish Ballet’s recent success becomes a stand-in for Executive’s success, as the national company can be used as a symbolic stand-in for the Executive as a whole. The skill and quality of the ballet company projected to an external audience may then stand in for the nation itself.

National Body Of Work

The stakes for the Executive are especially high in terms of Scottish Ballet for two reasons: firstly Scottish Ballet is the national dance company—the only national dance company, whereas there are several orchestras with national status. Secondly, the Executive is now the direct funder of the national companies, whereas in the past all arts funding was funnelled through the arts council and into the national companies. Now, the government has direct financial responsibility for Scottish Ballet and all the national performing companies.

Right now Scottish dance has a lot of potential, but limited international exposure. In 2005, Scottish Ballet was invited to the Edinburgh International Festival. This moment was very significant in the company’s history as it marked a point of acceptance. The quality of the company was considered high enough to be invited to participate in a festival they had been absent from for 20 years. It has become a high water mark in the mythology of the company. Since their return, the company have been invited back in 2006 and 2007.

But the blessing of the International Festival may also be a curse. Other than this local festival Scottish Ballet have not had the opportunity to perform for an international audience. Funding has not been forthcoming to send Scottish Ballet abroad to other international festivals or for an international tour. More than politicians, members of the dance community in Scotland point to Scottish Ballet’s representative potential. This quote is from one of my interview participants:

[I]t will be noted, and it will, that Scottish Ballet will be invited to major international festivals, to perform in major international cities, and you know all of that kind of thing. And that is an extremely credible calling card for a country that has got nothing else. Because Scotland under devolution is not a sovereign nation, so the arts are one of the few things that are capable of moving outside Scotland’s borders but remain within the control of the Executive. [...] So, actually Scotland

can make a very big impression with its arts. (John Stalker)

Audience Of Other Nations

Since the recent elections, the Scottish Executive has new leadership, which has reorganized ministerial posts. Cultural policy had previously been overseen by a Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport, but it is now covered by the Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture. This new arrangement seems to indicate the SNP's intentions with regards to arts and culture. Such a position is tied to a point made by Mary Brennan, another interview participant, about the rationale for cultural policy.

So you know, there's this notion of 'oh, we'll prove ourselves on the world stage'. And what do grown-up countries have that defines them? Well, they should have a cultural calling card, they should have cultural ambassadors. I mean, if a country like Moldova can have a national opera company and a national ballet company, regardless of its standards, then surely this is something that we should have as a nation. (Mary Brennan)

However, passing the cultural calling card round is more complicated. For any Scottish dance company or performer to tour internationally, political will may need to exist, not just in Edinburgh but also in London. That is the location of both the foreign office and the head office of the British Council.

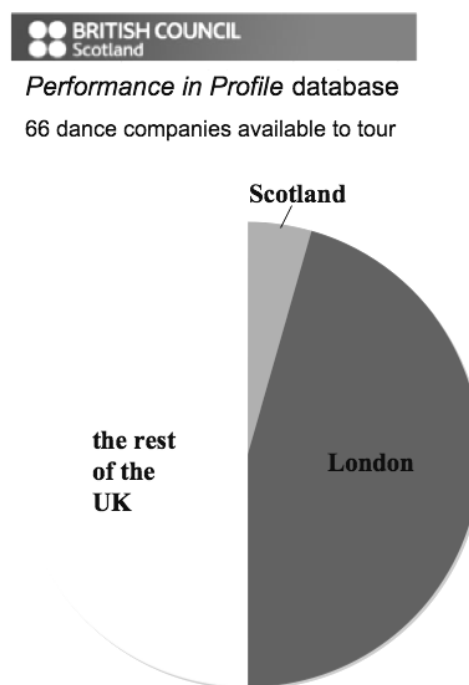
British Council

Scotland's cultural policy operates within some of the wider policy institutions like National Lottery and British Council, which support all of the United Kingdom. This is a feature of the intimacy of shared government, shared histories and geographical proximity. The lottery siphons some of its profits into funding arts and culture. The British Council, amongst other things, funds British artists' and companies' international profile through the import and export of performing arts

companies and visual artists. They fund both arts tours abroad as well as international artists'/companies' visits to Britain.

The British Council's goal is to promote Britain overall, not necessarily Scotland individually. According to a recent *New Statesman* article, the Foreign Office and the British Council's countries and regions of strategic priority, "fit together extremely neatly" (Brooks, 2007). For example, both the British Council and the Foreign Office are currently focussing on China and the Middle East.

In addition, the British Council's arts exports have tended to focus on companies in England, especially those in London, over companies elsewhere in the UK (see chart below). This problem lingers still. For instance, the British Council *Performance in Profile* database, which gives details of British companies able to tour internationally, highlights 66 British dance companies looking for international touring opportunities. Of these 66 only 3 are Scottish—one each from the large, medium and small-scale size categories—whereas a full 30 have contact details in London.



Source (British Council, 2007a)

One final weakness in terms of dance: The British Council does have an outpost in Edinburgh, but Dance and Drama is a shared portfolio. In the past this has shown a much greater focus on drama over dance. For instance, all examples of its current work given by the British Council Scotland's website are with touring theatre, none are with dance companies (British Council, 2007b).

For Scotland, because foreign policy is a reserved matter, the category of official diplomacy is still significantly within the remit of the Westminster Parliament, whereas the project of cultural diplomacy may be more within Scotland's grasp. Such is the difficulty for Scotland when trying to formally undertake cultural diplomacy efforts. It can get caught between foreign affairs (which are not devolved) and cultural policy (which is devolved). Informally, if it finds the money and the will the Scottish Executive could use its performing arts instrumentally to articulate an identity position for diplomats, governments and politicians to stand behind.

Conclusion

If the goal of policy is to create potential, then innovative projects are the point at which the policy rhetoric and the political will meet. Policy is only a tool for making possibilities - the actual art, the good ideas and the projects are still made by individuals. Like any tool, in the end it is what you do with it that counts.

The case of Scottish cultural policy since devolution presents some unique and fascinating aspects. In many ways Scottish cultural policy and cultural diplomacy is still finding its way. Currently, dance is playing a fairly small role in this, but ambitions and the quality of the professional dance community in Scotland may offer scope for growth in the part that it plays.

I've argued that national cultural policy can be conceived of a cultural practice, a performance of nationhood by the nation as the practitioner. In this way the performing arts themselves, funded by the government, become icons of the national body of work performed for an audience of other nations.

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Endnote

This work represents one aspect of my doctoral research, which is primarily concerned with questions about Scottish cultural identity and cultural policy, taking the subsidised arts sector, especially the dance community in Scotland as its primary example. This paper excerpts a chapter of a larger doctoral thesis.

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Photographs and Dancing Bodies: Alvin Ailey's 1967 US State Department Sponsored Tour of Africa

Clare Croft

On June 6, 1966, the Associated Press sent a horrifying photograph across the wire. James Meredith, the civil rights activist who had been the first African-American student at the University of Mississippi four years earlier, screamed in pain as he dragged himself across Highway 51 in Hernando, Mississippi, clutching his side where he had just been shot during a voting rights march. In the photograph, Meredith's right arm stretches out before him; a scream of anguish opens his mouth wide, causing the veins of his neck to pulse. His legs dangle behind him. The photo became yet another visual icon of the civil rights movement in the American South in the fifties and sixties, making the front page of *The New York Times* the next day (Reed, 1966: 1).

The picture circulated again in 1967 when its photographer Jack Thornell received the Pulitzer Prize (Associated Press, 2006). The award and Meredith's prominence within the civil rights movement catapulted the photo onto the world stage at least twice, including bringing it to the attention of Left-leaning journalists around the world, among them several newspapers in newly independent African nations where American race relations received particular scrutiny. U.S. Foreign Service officers in Africa in the 1960s believed that Soviet Communists distributed photos, like that of Meredith, widely among African journalists. (Harper, 1999: 3). At the same time that African newspaper readers saw the image of Meredith, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre toured nine African nations under the auspices of the U.S. State Department. In 1967, the primarily African-American company represented the U.S. in performances in the countries then known as Ethiopia, the Malagasy Republic, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Congo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Senegal (Prevots, 1998: 100).

On most of those programs, Alvin Ailey's masterpiece *Revelations* appeared, including the

solo "I Wanna Be Ready," which is most often associated with Dudley Williams, the dancer who would perform the solo for many decades. The solo's title comes from the song that accompanies it, which, like all of *Revelations*, is an African-American spiritual that Ailey might have remembered from his rural Texas childhood. "I Wanna Be Ready" begins in a soft bluish light, the dancer alone center stage, dressed in thin white cotton pants and shirt. Curled in a ball, face down, the dancer's hand stretches before him and, as the opening chords sound, his elbow draws first his arm, then his torso upward. Suddenly, his torso contracts, his hand goes limp, and he falls to the ground. He repeats the same motion again, his torso contractions so precise that they appear to begin from one tiny spot in his abdomen, as though a bullet has pierced him there. After the second rise, he stretches onto his stomach; his arm extends to its full length, his body taut like an arrow. The extreme tension flips him onto his back and his stomach contracts as he begins to rock from side to side, his palms cupped, facing upward. Two minutes of the solo has gone by and still the dancer remains on the floor.

I find striking gestural similarities between the slow deliberance of the dancer's prostrate form and that of the injured Meredith, struggling across the rural Mississippi road. The State Department also saw similarities between Ailey's dances and the images of the civil rights movement and, through cultural diplomatic efforts like the Ailey tour, strove to control the reactions African audiences would have to either. While Cold War rhetoric and its reliance upon stark binaries sometimes leads to a historiography of polar opposites, I want to focus on these two bodies, Meredith's and Williams', not to show how they oppose each other, but to show how the power of their performances reveals a variety of multi-valenced readings, ever shifting from different vantage

points: that of the State Department and its diplomats abroad and those of the artists themselves. By emphasizing the simultaneous, competing valences of these performances, I investigate how the Ailey company's performances of *Revelations* met official political goals and also contained transgressive, alternative messages for both African audiences and the company's African-American dancers. Here I follow the theoretical map drawn by Ann Daly using Julia Kristeva. Daly imagines how female dancers might resist patriarchal structures from within, understanding "culture as a full space that encompasses transgression without necessarily co-opting it" (Daly, 2002: 307). Seeing *Revelations* on tour as inhabiting a three-dimensional, multivocal space also forces the issue of its historical context. 1967, the year of the tour, emerges as a particular moment within the civil rights movement, a time of shifting from a Ghandian-based resistance to the more militant sensibility of black power.

But first a bit of background. Cultural diplomacy thrived in the U.S. throughout the twentieth century. For the purposes of this paper two dates warrant mention. In 1954 Eisenhower established the Cultural Presentations Program to send artists abroad to promote democracy (Weigenbaum, 2001: 29). Until this point, the inclusion of art within cultural diplomacy meant the visual, not the performing arts. The State Department funded the program, but initially New York-based American National Theatre Academy (ANTA) panels composed of artists and critics selected the artist participants for the tours. In 1962, the panel system became defunct, the program then coming completely under the auspices of the State Department's Arts America program, housed within the Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (Prevots, 1998: 134). This move meant that now federal bureaucrats totally defined the arts' role in diplomacy.

While tours by musicians were the largest artistic component of cultural diplomacy, dance was always present. Jose Limon's was the first dance company sent abroad; the Mexican-American choreographer traveled to Brazil in 1954 (Prevots 1998, 51). The Ailey company was first seen by the ANTA panels as too young for the tours, but in 1962, after members of the

panel saw *Revelations* at Jacob's Pillow, the company was sent to Southeast Asia (Prevots, 1998: 96). The Ailey company was next engaged in 1966 as a last-minute substitute for Arthur Mitchell's fledgling ballet troupe, one of ten American representatives at the First World Arts Negro Festival in Dakar, Senegal (DeFrantz, 2004: 67). Ailey embarked on their solo tour of Africa in 1967 with *Revelations* on many of the programs.

Similar to the choice to send the Mexican-American Limon to South America, a superficial notion of the connection forged by race clearly factored into the State Department's choice of Ailey for the African tour. Naima Prevots first inserted dance into the scholarly conversation regarding the role of the arts within cultural diplomacy, including the argument that race factored little in the decision to send Ailey to either Southeast Asia or Africa (1998: 100). Prevots's assertion lifts Ailey, both the choreographer and company, from a place in history demarcated solely by race, rightly pointing to Ailey's artistic value. Even as early in the company's existence as 1962, it was one of the premiere dance organizations in the U.S. I, however, want to pursue a different angle, particularly since the Ailey tour to Africa happened in 1967, five years after the State Department forced ANTA to cede power over artist selection for the tours. The choice of Ailey for the tour was not racially-blind. The State Department's concern over the U.S.'s image in the world in regard to race relations during the Cold War can be well documented. In 1957, after National Guard troops forced the desegregation of Little Rock, Arkansas, schools, the United States Information Agency (USIA), the State Department's sister agency responsible for propaganda production, commissioned the first of several studies to assess international reaction to the events. This survey and another in 1961 following racial incidents in Alabama found a universally negative perception of the lives of black American citizens (Harper, 1999: 3). The importance of Africa from the U.S. point of view was further underscored in 1959 by the elevation of the African Affairs Office to the level of bureau at the USIA (Harper, 1999: 4).

These changes in the role of Africa within the State Department and USIA's assessment of

foreign policy coincided with a shift in attitude within the civil rights movement, particularly in regard to the connection between American civil rights and African countries fighting for independence. In *Race Against Empire*, Penny Von Eschen, who has also chronicled the role of jazz within cultural diplomacy, discusses how the advent of the Cold War changed the rhetoric of civil rights. In the thirties and forties, leaders from the more conservative Walter White at the NAACP to actor and activist Paul Robeson advocated for a connection across diaspora, coupling African-American and African experience. However, within a Cold War context, civil rights leaders proclaimed African Americans as Americans first, black second (Von Eschen, 1997: 146). Acknowledging the internationalist attitude of earlier decades helps explain what seems, at best, a naïve idea on the State Department's part: the assumption of connection between the Ailey dancers and the African audiences purely due to shared skin color.

Government officials had a history of trying to capitalize on race to forge connections across national boundaries. The State Department sponsored photography exhibits in Africa preceding Ailey's visit, including the 1957 "Africans in the U.S.," 1961's "Progress of the Negro in America," and 1963's "President Kennedy Calls for Equal Rights" (Harper, 1999: 3). The titles of these exhibits alone suggest an overly optimistic portrayal of African-American life and race relations, so why follow with *Revelations*, which, though it ends on a jubilant note, also contains many images, like those in "I Wanna Be Ready," of burdened, tortured dancers, wishing for another place and/or time? The State Department seems to have embraced *Revelations* for two reasons: an appeal to universality and a marked sense of Americana, two precious commodities to cultural diplomats at the time.

Thomas DeFrantz attributes part of *Revelation's* success to the iconic nature of African-American spirituals (2004: 14-16). Though the ballet's minimal set and costume design and movement may seem abstract, the songs—in voice, lyrics and, music-- mark the dance as American. The coupling of the music with the otherwise abstract production elevated

Revelations' appeal. The cast wears solid color, almost pedestrian costumes, and the choreography only hints at narrative and character development. In countless interviews, Ailey positioned *Revelations* as a dance with "universal" meanings, marketing his work for a variety of audiences. From the State Department's perspective, *Revelations* made a positive, accessible statement about African-American life.

Beyond the possibilities for *Revelations'* reception, the Ailey company offered foreign services officers a great advantage over the earlier art and photography exhibits: people. Though government officials wrote to Washington of the exhibits' success, they felt that live performers would be more dynamic (Harper, 1999: 4). Harvey Weigenbaum theorizes cultural diplomacy as most successful when conducted on the most personal, one-to-one level possible (Weigenbaum, 2001: 9). The language of the Fulbright-Hays Act, the legislation that inaugurated the Fulbright and other cultural exchange programs, also privileges personal interactions over those between institutions (Bureau, 2000). Not only do human cultural ambassadors increase the chance to arouse a sense of understanding that crosses the boundaries of nation, but they also afford the government a screen of sorts. Officials slip to the background as dancers become the U.S.'s public face onstage and off at the numerous parties and dinners held in concert with the performances. But relying on individual artists, as opposed to art objects, offers greater possibility for interactions to veer from the path hoped for by government officials. Another look at the photographed body of James Meredith and the dancing body of Ailey soloist Dudley Williams, this time from Williams' memories of traveling abroad, reveals an alternative outcome for the choreography of cultural diplomacy and the civil rights movement than that imagined by political officials.

Williams recalls his experiences in Africa and the reflective space provided by touring from a different perspective. In an interview with me in 2005, when I asked Williams how he felt about being used as a tool of State Department propaganda, he nodded and said, "Sure. We were that" (Williams, 2005). He then

recounted a story of a tour in upstate New York in the early sixties with the racially mixed Ailey company when the dancers were banned from eating together in a pizza parlor in Buffalo. After finishing the story, he looked at me and said, "There you go. We never felt that in Europe or Africa or anywhere beyond the George Washington Bridge" (Williams, 2005). Instead of making the black dancer proud to be American, touring for the State Department underlined just how bad life was in the U.S. for African Americans.

Certainly Williams was not alone in his feelings about racism as an African-American man in 1967. Earlier I discussed Von Eschen's description of shifting attitudes within the civil rights movement from pre-Cold War to Cold War rhetoric, the move from internationalism to privileging black American's American-ness over identity in diaspora. The end of the sixties marks another shift, one most prominently embodied by the founding of the Black Panthers in 1966 and the spreading idea of black power. What if we add to the internationally circulating images of African-American life a photograph from the 1968 Olympics, American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos on the medal stand, gloved fists raised in support of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, an ancillary group of the black power movement? Placed alongside the images of Meredith and the dancing Williams, how do these bodies move together?

The injury to Meredith might provide ample reasoning for a change in civil rights activists' tactics, foreshadowing a need for the militancy expressed in the 1968 photo. But how could a solo danced to an African-American spiritual where the male dancer spends considerable time on the floor be understood as an assertion of power? Might *Revelations* and "I Wanna Be Ready" truly be at odds with the pictures of the civil rights movement and the persistence of African-American rage, as the State Department had hoped they would?

Alvin Ailey created "I Wanna Be Ready" from the Horton technique exercise known as the coccyx balance (DeFrantz, 2004: 9). Horton technique, a system of dance training created by Ailey's primary teacher Lester Horton, builds extremely strong dancers with a profoundly

visible musculature. The coccyx balance fosters mobility and strength, particularly in the core of the torso. "I Wanna Be Ready" uses much of the exercise in recognizable form. By placing this strength-building exercise so conspicuously at the foundation of *Revelations*' choreography, Ailey made "I Wanna Be Ready" both the preparation for performance and the performance itself. In essence, every time a dancer performs the solo, he becomes stronger, more able. Each performance predicts the outcome of the next, laying the groundwork for it to be even better. "I Wanna Be Ready" becomes a catalyst for change from within the dancer himself.

Imagining "I Wanna Be Ready" in this way opens a new reading of its relationship to other parts of *Revelations*, particularly "Sinner Man," a male trio that can be the most technically virtuosic dance in the entire work. Three men whip off multiple pirouettes and fly through split-legged leaps with rapid ferocity, their bare chests heaving in fiery red lighting. If "I Wanna Be Ready" has strengthened the dancer's torso, then "Sinner Man" is an incarnation of all that power in an exponential form. Both "Sinner Man's" misc-en-scene and choreography-- particularly a later moment when the three dancers crawl on their elbows, pulling their bodies downstage-- propel a sense of militancy, anger, something just short of rage. "I Wanna Be Ready" here marks a moment of transition or evolution in the civil rights movement, making possible, even calling forth, the assertively powerful insistence of "Sinner Man" and the raised fists of the Olympic athletes. The two dances form more than just a symbol of change, but, as Susan Foster has argued the actual practice of dancing can do, they offer a theory, in this case a theory of race.

In this way, the lone dancer in "I Wanna Be Ready" and the three men of "Sinner Man" expose potential links with larger historical narratives of 1967. Though Ailey himself strove to sell the ballet's universal appeal, African audiences would have seen *Revelations* and dancers would have performed it within particular contexts. For the State Department, *Revelations* optimistically portrayed African-American life and the Ailey dancers served as exceptional cultural ambassadors. For Ailey

dancer Dudley Williams, the tour showed just how distant his life as a black man in the U.S. was from the experience of those living abroad. Finally, for audiences the work fell into a kaleidoscope of images of African-American life in the sixties, from the frustratingly slow progress of the civil rights movement in the American South to the burgeoning militance of black power. Expanding notions of dance as cultural diplomacy opens space for not just the dancing body imagined by government officials, but the dancing bodies that moved beyond their grasp.

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Reputation as Collective Practice: Insiders and Mediators of Dalcroze Eurhythmics

Selma Landen Odom

Reputation is “a social and collective process” by which “some producers of culture but not others” come to be remembered, according to sociologists Gladys Engel Lang and Kurt Lang.ⁱ How do practices and reputations interconnect in dance worlds and their histories? This question led me to think about the functioning of networks of artists, teachers, organizers, critics, audiences, and archivists, and to focus on those who maintain particular teaching practices.

My paper is about an unconventional center of learning, the Bildungsanstalt Jaques-Dalcroze at Hellerau, Germany, which existed only from 1910 to 1914, but had wide influence through the work of those who had been there. I’ll discuss the collective practice and social networks involved in building the early reputation of Dalcroze Eurhythmics, a method of studying music through movement developed by Swiss composer Émile Jaques-Dalcroze in Geneva around 1900, and end with a brief look at the later reputation of Dalcroze teaching.

The lecture-demonstration, with a teacher at the piano and participants moving and singing in an open space, has always been the preferred strategy for showing how improvised music and movement fuse in the Dalcroze method. In the cover photo for *La Vie Illustrée*, Dalcroze interacts with four young women demonstrators at the Paris Conservatoire in May 1907. Many young women such as Myriam Rambert, later known as Marie Rambert, became students of Dalcroze because his method quickly gained the reputation of being a new form of dancing, like Isadora Duncan’s.ⁱⁱ

Dalcroze had the opportunity to take thirty professional students and colleagues, including Rambert, to Germany in 1910, to establish a training school at Hellerau, a garden city north of Dresden. Hundreds of German and international students of all ages enrolled, thanks to the promotional skills of Wolf Dohrn, an economist and former executive director of the

Deutsche Werkbund, who raised funds and administered the school until his death in 1914.

In the workshop atmosphere of Hellerau, Dalcroze and his associates taught musicianship

through group physical activity. They explored ways of breathing, gesturing, walking, running, skipping, and jumping; making impulses travel from one part of the body to another; and working against real or imaginary resistances. Their language of “time, space, and energy” described how the moving body uses weight and effort in music—both to produce it and to respond to it. In addition to a full range of music studies, the Hellerau school offered classes in Swedish gymnastics, dance, and anatomy.

“Rhythmic gymnastics,” the movement part of Dalcroze work, had no set technique but expanded on practices such as musical conducting, marching drill, breath training, Delsartean expression, and Duncan-style dancing, which came to the forefront at the same time. Dalcroze exercises used improvised music and movement as a creative method and pedagogical tool. To enhance this artistic work, Adolphe Appia designed a rectangular studio-theatre equipped with “rhythmic spaces” made up of variable steps, platforms, and state-of-the-art diffused stage lighting. In the summers, Hellerau presented festivals that were attended by several thousand visitors and much discussed in the press. Most famous were their avant-garde productions of Gluck’s *Orpheus* in 1912 and 1913.

When World War I broke out in 1914, the people of Hellerau dispersed, many taking the Dalcroze method to conservatories and schools in their own countries. The loss of a center forced the work outward and decentralized control. Working independently, teachers elaborated the practices they already knew and invented their own, adapting to diverse environments. The practices they shared in the

utopian situation of Hellerau formed the basis for networks and linkages that nurtured them in their subsequent careers, in parts of the world where ideals and practices were different. The sudden end of the training school at Hellerau meant that Dalcroze Eurhythmics would have a complicated and far-reaching reputation.

So far, I've found surprisingly little theoretical study of how reputations are made and maintained in the performing arts. Exceptional is Cynthia Novack's *Sharing the Dance: Contact Improvisation and American Culture* (1990), which used the path-breaking work of Howard S. Becker in *Art Worlds* (1982).^{iv} Becker also inspired Gladys Engel Lang and Kurt Lang, the sociologists I quoted at the beginning. In *Etched in Memory: The Building and Survival of Artistic Reputation* (1990), they investigated networks of British and American artists who specialized in etching. I've borrowed their idea that "artistic reputation expresses the consensus about an artist's standing within some community" (6) and their framework to analyze "insiders" and "mediators" at Hellerau.

The Langs argue that "reputations are built through networks that carry word of an artist's achievement" and that two kinds of networks are in play: insider networks, which enable individuals "to gain recognition and acceptance by other artists" and mediator networks, through which artists become "renowned" and linked to the public. A further function of insider networks is "development of a collective identity and sense of shared fate" (233).

Dalcroze teachers such as Annie Beck, choreographer of *Orpheus*, and future dancers Marie Rambert and Suzanne Perrottet were among the first to pursue the training, and they were instrumental in collaborating with Dalcroze to develop the work into a set of successful teaching practices. In the Langs' terms, they were insiders who gained recognition within this new profession from its beginnings. Still in their early twenties, they became recognized as leaders by their peers, colleagues, teachers, and mentors. They brought movement skills Dalcroze himself did not have into the scene, and despite their youth he respected their musical knowledge enough to give them

significant teaching responsibility and artistic opportunities.

In thinking about how insiders actually earned recognition for their capabilities as teachers and students at Hellerau, I've also used Benjamin Brinner's work as a key source. In *Knowing Music, Making Music* (1995), Brinner uses a case study of Javanese gamelan to make a broader theory of musical competence and interaction. He sees competence as "an integrated complex of skills and knowledge" that affects musicians' decisions on "how and what to play in circumstances that can be construed socially, musically, and contextually" (1), and he argues that interaction between musicians is the way "competence is attained, assessed, and altered" (3).

Brinner's model perfectly describes how the Dalcroze method works: "A person may study and practice alone for hours on end, but certain aspects of musical practice can be absorbed and developed only through interaction with other musicians as a student, a peer, a follower or leader in an ensemble, even as a rival in a solo tradition." He explains that competence "entails not just what an individual knows, but how much he or she projects that knowledge or acts on it in the company of others, leading with authority, influencing more subtly, or following meekly or with certainty"; in other words, "musical interaction is influenced, in turn, by musicians' assessments of each other's competence" (3-4).^v

Suzanne Perrottet is a fascinating example among Dalcroze insiders. As a young teenager in Geneva, she joined in the first physical exercises in his solfège classes as well as the stagings of his gesture songs, and she took part in a much-acclaimed demonstration of the work to the national association of Swiss musicians and teachers in 1905. At sixteen she taught a special summer course for a group of men, one of whom was the Swiss stage reformer Adolphe Appia.

As one of the "Dalcroziennes" who toured European cities to give lecture-demonstrations, performing barefoot in tunics in the manner of Isadora Duncan, Perrottet learned about new currents in the arts. Dalcroze wrote letters to her about new opera productions he saw on his travels and confided in her about his ideas for future work.

She had just turned twenty-one in 1910 when she accompanied Dalcroze from Geneva to Germany. At Hellerau she was entrusted with teaching almost as many lessons per week as Dalcroze and his main associate. Though Perrottet was less than half their age, she was the other faculty member who taught piano improvisation, the subject that was central to the training. Thus she learned to teach when she was young with Dalcroze as her mentor, and she was admired and highly regarded by everyone. Perrottet embodied the work in movement, improvisation and pedagogy. Mary Wigman, her Hellerau student though she was older than Perrottet, remembered her as the idol of the Dalcroze method.

After Perrottet fell in love with dancer Rudolf Laban in 1912, she distanced herself from her Dalcroze career. Because she was still under contract to Hellerau for one more year a compromise was found. She was sent to set up a new branch school in Vienna, and thus she was able to gain yet another kind of expertise—how to run a school—before leaving completely in 1913. She built her future with Laban and never looked back, but according to her students her musicianship as pianist always shone through in her long years of dance teaching in Zurich.

Her disloyalty to Dalcroze effectively destroyed her status in what the Langs would call the “hierarchical” insider network of the Dalcroze community, in which he held top authority, yet through her lifetime she connected occasionally with certain Hellerau friends through correspondence and meetings, thus continuing to participate in what the Langs call the “lateral” networks of peers (233).

Mediator networks require “the assistance of influential intermediaries,” according to the Langs (239). In the case of Hellerau, the mediators included dedicated people who publicized, organized, raised funds, established the method in schools elsewhere, and documented activities, as well as people further removed such as journalists and musicologists, who validated the new work through writing about it. These mediators linked the Dalcroze community with the public and thus contributed to integrating Eurhythmics into education and the arts.

Certain close supporters most trusted by Dalcroze knew the core practices of the method from the inside, through first-hand experience, and became invaluable as mediators. Appia, for example, studied the work in Geneva, published articles about it, and designed several of the early productions such as *Orpheus*, thus helping to bridge the gap between the insider experiences of the studio and audiences interested in the modern stage.

The Dohrn family, particularly Wolf and his younger brother Harald, had the contacts to organize a large committee of prestigious Germans to contribute to Hellerau financially. Wolf also had the managerial skill to oversee the building of the school, recruitment of students, and relations with the press. His death in a skiing accident just six months before World War I began struck a devastating blow to the whole venture.^{vi}

Another important mediator was Prince Sergei Volkonsky, the Intendent who dismissed Diaghilev from his work in the Russian Imperial Theatre shortly before losing his own position in a court intrigue of 1901. Like Diaghilev, Volkonsky was an accomplished pianist and writer, well-traveled and knowledgeable in European art circles. He went to Dresden to meet Dalcroze in December 1910 and became an instant convert. He studied the work, began writing articles about it, organized a demonstration tour to Russia, and arranged classes in many Russian schools. Rambert participated in that tour, and late in 1912 Dalcroze recommended her to assist Nijinsky in his choreography of *Le Sacre du printemps* for Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes. Volkonsky’s boundless advocacy of the Dalcroze method continued in post-Revolutionary Russia and after he moved to France.

Prominent teachers and educational leaders from England also organized demonstration tours, publications and the introduction of Dalcroze work in progressive schools. Their efforts make yet another vivid example of how mediators with immense dedication and perseverance were pivotal in “spreading” the work. While studying at Hellerau, Percy Ingham and his wife Ethel joined forces with the family of Michael Ernest Sadler, a leading “educationist,” to produce the first book in

English to interpret the method's theory and practice. *The Eurhythmics of Jaques-Dalcroze* came out in 1912, the year Dalcroze made his first lecture-demonstration tour in England, which in turn generated huge interest and drew more teachers and young people to Germany.

The Sadler family included Michael Ernest, recently appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds, and his twenty-four year old son Michael (M.T.H.), who was embarking on a career in publishing. The Sadlers visited Hellerau in August 1912, a few days after they met the Russian abstract painter Wassily Kandinsky at Murnau. Michael Ernest Sadler was greatly impressed by Hellerau—the people, the place, and the pedagogy. After observing an improvisation class, he wrote that Dalcroze “plays magnificently and lectures with verve” and “talked as Kandinsky might about music and colour.”^{vii}

The book, which included an article and lectures by Dalcroze, essays by the Sadlers and Inghams, and some twenty photographs of Hellerau, sold out five printings of its first edition within a few months; further editions ensued. John W. Harvey, who was a new Oxford graduate and future philosophy professor at Leeds, coined the word Eurhythmics, inspired by Plato's statement that “the whole of a man's life stands in need of a right rhythm” (5).

The Sadlers provide a broad framework by suggesting the work's significance in history, education, and modern art. Their pieces open and close the book, whereas the center, through the writings of Dalcroze and the Inghams, focuses on the method itself. In the concluding essay, “The Value of Eurhythmics to Art,” M.T.H. Sadler sees a breaking down of barriers between the arts, and a growing understanding of rhythm as their common basis. Excited by his recent meeting with Kandinsky, he refers to the “parallel development” of the Blaue Reiter artists and says that Kandinsky, in his breakthrough into abstraction, is making paintings that “attempt to paint music.” He sees Kandinsky and Dalcroze “advancing side by side” (63-64).^{viii}

If Dalcroze's “Rhythm as a Factor in Education” is visionary, the Inghams in their three essays are eminently practical. Their goal is to tell what the work includes and what it is

like to do it. Percy Ingham's “The Method: Growth and Practice” divides work into the three overlapping areas of rhythmic movement, ear training, and improvisation. His essay identifies core exercises of beating time, stepping note values, responding to various tempi and rhythmic patterns, and doing the advanced exercises of plastic movement which encourage “free self-expression” (47).

Ethel Ingham, in “Lessons at Hellerau,” explains how Dalcroze would develop a “vigorous” two-bar theme into a progression of related exercises (48-54). She shares her experience of the method's variety and spontaneity, discussing in detail how solfège and improvisation are taught. Her other essay, “Life at Hellerau,” describes a typical day in the dormitory and trips to Dresden for galleries and performances.

Informative and inexpensive, *The Eurhythmics of Jaques-Dalcroze* reinforced Dalcroze's lecture-demonstrations in England. Just as the Inghams produced most of the book, they also shouldered the organization of his tour, which was hailed in the lead article of *The School Music Review* for December 1912: Dalcroze “has demonstrated to large and deeply-interested audiences the wonderful results of his teaching. It is safe to say that thousands of teachers and others interested in educational matters are now discussing what they have seen and heard.”^{ix} Ethel Driver, organist and music teacher at an Anglican school, and Edith R. Clarke, lecturer in Dance and Games at Dartford College of Physical Education, were among those who went to study at Hellerau after attending Dalcroze demonstrations.

The London School of Dalcroze Eurhythmics, soon to become the fountainhead of Dalcroze training in Great Britain, opened above a Bloomsbury furniture store in September 1913. Small, privately owned, it was very much a family enterprise, with Percy Ingham as Director while he continued to teach modern languages at Merchant Taylors' School, a prestigious boys' school in London. Ethel Driver, after completing an intensive year at Hellerau, began her role as Director of Studies, which continued from 1914 until her death in 1963. Former Hellerau teachers Annie Beck and Marie Rambert soon joined the staff, Rambert's

sojourn with the Ballets Russes as Nijinsky's assistant having ended late in 1913.

Percy Ingham and Ethel Driver developed an efficient partnership for managing the London School, with Ingham responsible for finances. He personally underwrote scholarships and subsidies to teachers' salaries, while Driver directed professional training. The London School functioned as a central bureau, arranging for teachers to work in many school settings. The British mediators succeeded in raising public awareness of Eurhythmics as a vital part of progressive education, and in England the teaching attracted many thousands of participants by the 1920s.

The subsequent reputation of Dalcroze work has many facets—too many to discuss here. Major complications resulted from the fact that some mediators and audience members hailed the experimental movement practices of Hellerau as a new form of dancing. The majority of insiders, however, went on to make careers as teachers and emphasized movement in the classroom-studio as the main experience of Eurhythmics. Their milieu was music education, and they gave performances mainly within the lecture-demonstration format. In doing so, they were strongly guided by Dalcroze as role model and mentor.

Stung by André Levinson's harsh criticism of the influence of rhythmic gymnastics in Nijinsky's *Sacre* and other productions during the 1920s in Paris, Dalcroze became adamant that the movement work of Eurhythmics should be presented only as "pedagogic demonstrations, ... to protect the method against all equivocation while affirming that it represents a preparation for art and not an art itself." He discouraged the staff of the London School from public performance of "plastic movement," writing that the movement training "is certainly not that of ballet and modern dance" and that he wished to dispel "the error of those who believe that we have choreographic pretensions."^x

Another comparison of Eurhythmics to dance as a profession is revealing: Dame Ninette de Valois remembered Marie Rambert, her counterpart in leading 20th century British ballet, as "a marvelously intelligent woman but a born amateur because she couldn't dance herself ... She'd never done it. *Dalcroze*, you see."^{xi}

Today, decades later, Dalcroze insiders still debate best practices for their movement work and the place of *plastique animée* within the teaching, yet most would agree that the identity of Eurhythmics remains distinct, as a learning process. It does not aim to become dance or performance.

Knowing the Hellerau history, I think yet another comparison of reputations is worth making. Both Perrottet and Wigman rejected their Dalcroze backgrounds in order to work with Laban and later made their separate ways in dance. Dalcroze scarcely survives in their stories, while Laban looms large, although Susan Manning corrected this distortion in Wigman's case, as did Giorgio Wolfensberger for Perrottet. Here I just want to note the much higher profile that Wigman, mainly known as dancer and choreographer, has in histories.

Perrottet developed her gifts as a teacher and did not aspire to greatness as a musician or dancer. She was grateful to Dalcroze and Laban for the opportunities she had to study music, to learn to improvise, to pursue the possibilities of movement, and to direct her personal artistry into pedagogy. Along with Wigman she was the first of many to combine elements of the two men's approaches. In the course of time, Perrottet shared her knowledge by teaching people, not a specific system. Revered by those who knew her directly, she led a remarkable yet modest life, teaching in Zurich into the early 1980s. Her reputation deserves to grow, but is unlikely to do so because the hierarchy of reputations in the arts places higher value on performance than education.

An interesting point about the Dalcroze reputation in general is that insiders learn the work from their immediate predecessors, and by now only a few who studied directly ^{xii}with Dalcroze are still active. They and the recognized master teachers from different countries lead the international Congresses held in Geneva every few years. There are various systems in place for teachers to earn qualifications. In the public context, "Dalcroze" or a generic substitute such as "Rhythmics" is used to name the teaching, though of course individual teachers actually deliver the work. So specialists usually are well known locally and in

insider circles, and few achieve great personal renown.

Looking at the careers of less-well-known Dalcroze-based teachers has directed me toward theories of the body, movement, musical knowledge, transmission, improvisation, community, gender, and creativity. Having begun with a focus on Dalcroze himself, I moved to long-term research on the teachers who worked in diverse contexts worldwide over nearly a century, to find out how they have used their particular knowledge and creativity in music education. The majority have been women acting with notable autonomy.

Dalcroze Eurhythmics is a collection of teaching and learning practices based on embodied knowledge. Trained artist-teachers, who give lessons to participants of any age or level of experience, transmit this work through group lessons. Their practice combines movement and improvisation in situations where collective activity supports the learning and creative growth of the individual. Through classroom interactions, musical and social exchanges occur, and the teaching communicates musical thinking, aesthetics, and values. The question of how Dalcroze teaching has persisted—eclectic, diverse and marginalized through most of its history—has never ceased to fascinate me. Studying its reputation seems to be a useful way to learn more.

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Endnotes

- ¹ *Etched in Memory: The Building and Survival of Artistic Reputation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990) xii. Subsequent references to this book are given in parentheses in the text.
- ² This paper draws on several of my previous articles as listed in the bibliography.
- ³ For a survey of reputation studies see Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'collective memory' to the historical sociology of mnemonic practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998) 105-41.
- ⁴ Other theories of practice, interaction, and improvisation are Henry Kingsbury, *Music, Talent, and Performance: A Conservatory Cultural System* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988); Jean Lave, "The Practice of Learning" in *Understanding Practice: Perspectives on Activity and Context*, ed. Seth Chaiklin and Jean Lave (Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press, 1993) 3-32; and Ingrid Monson, *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). Two anthologies include relevant articles: *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*, ed. Bruno Nettl with Melinda Russell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) and *Taken by Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader*, ed. Ann Cooper Albright and David Gere (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2003).

- ⁵ For the cultural background see Joan Campbell, *The German Werkbund: The Politics of Reform in the Applied Arts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978) 9-56. The original school buildings are being restored as the Festspielhaus Hellerau heritage site, where The European Center for the Arts Hellerau is now located.
- ⁶ Letter to Mary Harvey Sadler in Michael Sadleir, *Michael Ernest Sadler (Sir Michael Sadler K.C.S.I. 1861-1943: A Memoir by his Son)* (London: Constable, 1949) 242. M.T.H. Sadler later published under the name "Sadleir" to avoid being confused with his father.
- ⁷ The Sadlers became keen collectors of avant-garde art, and M.T.H. made the first English translation of Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1914), a landmark manifesto of modernism.
- ⁸ "The Eurythmics of Jaques-Dalcroze," *The School Music Review* 21 (Dec. 1912) 145. (The spelling "Eurythmics" rather than "Eurhythmics" was sometimes used.)
- ⁹ Unpublished letters to Gertrude Ingham, 23 May 1932 and 11 June 1932, in the London File, Centre International de Documentation Jaques-Dalcroze, Institut Jaques-Dalcroze, Geneva.
- ¹⁰ De Valois quoted in Julie Kavanagh, *Secret Muses: The Life of Frederick Ashton* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 176.
- ¹¹ Susan A. Manning, *Ecstasy and the Demon: Feminism and Nationalism in the Dances of Mary Wigman* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 47-73 and Giorgio J. Wolfensberger, *Suzanne Perrottet--Ein Bewegtes Leben [A Moving Life]* (Bern: Benteli Verlag, (1989) 38-121.

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The materiality of theory Print practices and the construction of meaning through Kellom Tomlinson's *The Art of Dancing explain'd* (1735)

Marie Glon

In dance books published in Europe in the course of the first half of the 18th century, a recurring image blurs the frontier between two specific spaces commonly attributed, one to the practice, the other to the theory of dancing – the dance room on the one hand, and treatises about dance on the other hand. In all three editions of Feuillet's *Chorégraphie*, one sketch symbolizes the dance room from above, viewed as a large rectangle, in the middle of which a slightly smaller rectangle represents the page from the book¹. In some other books, the correspondence between the two spaces is even more obvious, as the indications about the dance floor (“the upper end of the room”, “the right side of the room²”...) are printed in the margins of the page.

The reader had to understand that this notation did not only make specific the description of the steps and body actions (bend, rise, spring, etc.), but also the course to be taken by the dancer; it was therefore useful to remind the reader that the top of the page symbolized Presence, i.e. the side of the room where the audience is supposed to sit. However, the insistence of the authors on this diagram (which is accompanied by captions and lengthy comments and is sometimes printed twice within the same book³) goes beyond what is strictly necessary to get the notation understood: obviously, the dancing masters signing these works indulged in using the pages of the book as a means to figure out the dancing space. Tomlinson goes one step further when he proposes to see not only the book as a representation of the room, but also the dance floor as a page from some huge book on which one could dance; the reader's landmarks (the title at the top of each page, the beginning and breaking off of the lines⁴) are superimposed on the cardinal points of the dancer's space. In this manual, magnificent plates represent dancers moving on a paper-floor, on which dances are written in Feuillet notation.

Linking two fields together: the history of dance and the sociology of texts

The superposition, which is both poetical and efficient, of the space of the book with the actual dancing space is only one among several signs of the porosity between dance and writing and of the importance of print as a facet of dancing masters' reflection in the modern era. Stating this leads us, in order to tackle the theoretical production of the dancers of the time, to suggest applying to the history of dance the field of research sometimes referred to as the “sociology of texts⁵”. The latter invites us to avoid artificially separating the texts from their material form, that is to consider the meaning inferred by both the form and use of printed objects – which beget the modalities of western culture from modern times onwards. Historians such as Donald McKenzie or Roger Chartier urge us to view formats, layouts, type conventions, text breakdown, engraving techniques, and so on, as so many significant elements: the material quality of printed objects, as well as all the practices developed from them – their production, both by the authors and by all the people involved in the printing process; their circulation; the way the readers make them their own – all make up the meaning and efficiency of the texts; they induce (or at least, they are meant to produce) a specific reading. A book actually produces a specific readership and original uses⁶.

One of the most striking examples of the impact of printing techniques on the theoretical production in dance at the time is Feuillet's *Chorégraphie*. The first two editions of this work give some insight into how printing techniques determine the alterations that may be carried out on a text. Indeed, for the second edition (1701) the publisher used the very same plates that were composed for the first edition⁷ – probably for reasons of cost and time. This constraint had an obvious influence on the improvement of the work: revising a text, in this case, boils down to taking advantage of the blank spaces to make a few additions – sometimes to the detriment of the initial structure of the book⁸. Throughout the 18th century, the editions, translations, adaptations of

the *Chorégraphie* resorted to new layouts and bookmaking practices, which represent so many new reading propositions (the distinction can be made, for instance, between a translation into English whose form is clearly meant for dancing masters, from another, published in the same year, targeting a large audience⁹).

In the following pages, we will try and approach the stakes of the printed production about dance through a book that may illustrate a number of issues raised by the sociology of texts: *The Art of dancing explain'd*, by a dancing master called Kellom Tomlinson, printed for the author in London in 1735¹⁰. The author wishes to describe the steps, to take stock of the practices and the rules of the art of dancing for the benefit of whoever is learning or has learnt to dance, and who might need to revise some of the principles. Tomlinson resorts to explanations in words, but also to Feuillet notation and to illustrations.

This exciting work is regularly referred to by historians as a valuable source of information about how dance steps were executed in England in the first half of the 18th century. We are going to study it from a different angle, focusing on some elements that, at first sight, look essentially formal – but that in fact reveal the specific uses and stakes of this kind of printed object in the 18th century.

Introducing dance into the standard codes of the visual components of books

On opening *The Art of dancing explain'd*, the reader is far from finding a straightforward introduction to dance steps or notation. The book first looks like a series of “tokens” of the printed universe, tokens that appear to frame the dancing master’s text carefully.

First comes a frontispiece¹¹ showing a rather unusual character: the dancing master-cum-writer. The author is shown sitting at a table, holding a book written in French, and surrounded by sheets of paper covered with musical notes and Feuillet characters of dancing. Below the illustration is a caption: “Mr Kellom Tomlinson, AUTHOR of the Original *ART* of DANCING, Composer, Writer of *DANCES*, and their Music, for the Use and Entertainment of the Public”. One could not associate writing, reading and dance more closely. Such an illustration, which is most original in the

field of dancing¹², conjures up the standard image of writers or scholars at their desks: e.g. the portraits of Molière by Coypel, of Diderot by Van Loo or Fragonard¹³.

This image leads us to draw a parallel between the project of many dancing masters who published treatises in the 18th century and the widespread practice of craftsmen who were then publishing treatises covering all sorts of subjects. For them it was often a strategy, to achieve distinction and social rise by signing a reference book and thus establishing themselves as experts in their field of activity.

Beyond this highlighting of the character of the writer, the book asserts the art of dancing as a relevant element among what was already standard material for books, notably scientific and technical work, whose use is supposed to be methodical. The reader, going through the pages, will first find a presentation stating the contents of the two volumes, then a dedication, the list of subscribers¹⁴, a preface, a table of contents, a table of illustrations. Those numerous illustrations (also a specificity of technical and scientific treatises) reveal a carefully designed didactic approach, based on links between text and image, through numerous footnotes referring to various engraved plates.

Tomlinson is far from being the only dancing master using cross references between text and images in his manual. Rameau’s *Maître à Danser*¹⁵ uses images on which small numbers are written, as in anatomy treatises for instance: the text points at specific parts, each identified by a letter or number in the body of the illustration. This does not only give a scientific value to dance. It also enhances some aspects of the illustration, to the detriment of others. Moreover, the reader’s eye is led from one number to the next; and so a linear and methodical reading of the image is dictated.

Dance faced with the commercial realities of the world of print

Even before his eye reaches the title page, the reader comes across a strange statement certifying that Tomlinson’s work was completed in 1726. The title page underlines the fact that the text is “the ORIGINAL WORK” of the author and that it was designed as soon as 1724 (i.e. before Rameau’s *Maître à danser*, which is quite similar

to Tomlinson's manual, came out in French). This striking emphasis on the early date and originality of the work will be explained in the preface, which reveals the printed object is full of underlying stakes, putting dance right in the middle of a much larger interplay of practices and exchanges.

Indeed, Tomlinson presents the damage he claims he has endured. Some other unscrupulous writer is said to have meant to take advantage of the publicity started by Tomlinson before the publishing of his own book. Tomlinson states that he has called for subscribers in several newspapers as soon as 1726. Now, in 1728, he discovers an advertisement for Rameau's translated work, a work he had never heard of before:

«To secure my self in some Measure from the Damage I might receive by this Advertisement; I thought it necessary to publish one my self a few Days after, in Mist's Journal Jan. 27. To which I prefixed this Motto from VIRGIL, ---- Tulit alter Honores; intimating, that another Person had attempted to bear away the Honour of my Invention; and I may justly add, the Profit of it too. That this was his Intention is very plain from two Circumstances: the Addition to the Title; and the Alteration of the Form of Monsieur Rameau's Book. The title of his in the original is onely The Dancing Master; to which the ingenious Translator, or perhaps Bookseller, thought proper to add that of mine, The Art of Dancing explain'd: The French Original was published in Octavo; but the Translation was magnified to a Quarto, almost the Size of mine, and yet proposed to be sold at half the Price¹⁶».

Such bitter statements put into relief the meaning of many "formal" elements of the book and, above all, the problem of competition in the world of books, at a time when intellectual property had not yet been established and when copyright laws had only recently been passed and were not properly enforced¹⁷.

Print as a space for dialogue and debate

The competition issue highlighted by Tomlinson hints at a fundamental aspect of print: a book does not stand on its own, it is part and parcel of a larger production with which, whether explicitly or not, it is constantly interacting.

Tomlinson's work is presented as the continuation of other texts (see the use of Feuillet notation), their improvement (Tomlinson assumes that Feuillet notation requires a thorough description of dance steps) or their challenger. But this is not only about intertextuality. For instance, the importance given to the other dancing masters' and dancers' names in Tomlinson's book can be seen as a remote communication with them. It is seldom that dancing masters have the opportunity of jointly teaching or devising choreographies; however, through print (or, more seldom, handwriting), a striking feature of the 18th century is their propensity to communicate, debate, express their differences¹⁸.

Significantly, this is when a community of experts emerged, at the level of some cities (Paris, London...) but also of Europe, thanks to exchanges from one country to another. This community might have resulted from the practice of dance itself or from the activity of institutions such as the Royal Academy of Dance in France. As it was, it is through print that it got recognized. From this point of view, what happened in the dance field can be seen as part and parcel of the development of the public debate and individual assessment characterizing the 18th century and accompanying the emergence of a new market for artistic production¹⁹.

Print as the instrument of the dancing master's financial interest

The influence of the book on the dance world, from the point of view of manufacturing processes, commercial strategies and circulation, has been studied above. Conversely, the art of dancing puts its own stamp on books²⁰, bringing about new uses for the written form and print, new types of trade in this environment where dancers were far less active before. Dancing master Pemberton, who became a publisher in London in 1717, is an excellent representative of this phenomenon²¹.

As for Tomlinson, the book is clearly for him a means to promote his activity, as a dancing master who needs to find his own pupils. He boasts about his own teaching and goes so far as to indicate his prices for lessons. Concerning subscriptions, they are not only a way of raising money, but also of adding legitimacy to his undertaking, through the four pages listing subscribers – their functions are

made specific and link them to two spheres of society: on the one hand dancing masters and dancers, providing “professional backing”, and on the other hand high society, the houses where Tomlinson was a teacher, providing a “social backing”. The latter can also be found in the dedication²² and in the illustrated plates, credited to influential persons whose instructor he has been.

Tomlinson’s book is no exception: the bread-winning function of the written production of dancing masters is clearly stated. Thus Feuillet’s *Chorégraphie* is primarily a commercial undertaking. It made it possible, for instance, to subsequently publish and sell « new dances » on a regular basis, before the opening of the ball season. This also enabled the author to invite dancing masters to send him musical scores, so that he might design appropriate dances and send them the resulting choreographic scores, “at an affordable price²³”.

The book as an original educational tool for dance

The dancing masters’ main innovation in print is of course dance notation, a new printed object which brings about unheard-of practices: Tomlinson’s frontispiece highlights the dancing-master-cum-writer, but the pre-requisite of his engravings is the existence of the dancer-cum-reader. From this point of view, the history of dance practices might open up valuable new vistas to the history of reading – see the instructions to be found in the above mentioned manuals as to how to “hold the book” when deciphering dance notations, or Rameau’s *Maître à Danser* (where the caption for some images is printed in curved lines, which means that the reader’s eye is led along the same course as that of the dancer’s limbs).

Tomlinson is not content with letting the reader discover steps and tracks through notation; he also aims at being specific about appropriate deportments: we have already mentioned the plates²⁴ showing dancers moving “upon” the notation which seems to be written on the floor (the dance floor and the dancers’ course are not seen from above as they usually are in Feuillet notation: Tomlinson’s page bears a third dimension with a skyline, sometimes even a vanishing point; the notation is foreshortened to

give the illusion of depth). As in Feuillet, the musical score can be found at the top of the page. This superposition of data requires three different, even contradictory²⁵ readings (that of the musical score, that of the choreography, that of the figures – and on top of that, text can also be found: the title and the dedication of each plate). The plates of the second book are devoted to the minuet and allow the reader to see “the whole Dance at one view” – something impossible in the actual performance, where one movement succeeds the other.

Tomlinson goes further: he explains that the illustrated plates are designed to be cut out and “put into frames with glasses”; hanging on the walls, they will act as a reminder for the students. He says that they can be sold on their own – at a lower price than the complete work.

The standard shape of the book is therefore not seen as rigid: the printed object allows for new projects and presentations. The binding in particular can be disposed of; Tomlinson is considering a book that you would no longer leaf through, but that you would take to pieces as it were, in order to spread it and turn it into a kind of pattern or mirror for the scholar. Those engravings can also be used as mere “furniture” – and “very agreeable” furniture, too.

That is how an instrumental feature of what Tomlinson meant to be a masterly method can, of his own accord, become mere home decorations. It may seem paradoxical, but, for the author, those engravings, each of them bearing his name, could become advertising posters in the “rooms or closets” of high society mansions. This unexpected use of the book mainly leads us to consider that, for an 18th century man, the careful study encouraged by such a book does not necessarily preclude other types of approaches to print. Consulting such decorations would probably involve less concentration and more permeation, so to speak, through the regular contact with these images; the reader – or the dweller of the place – would end up identifying himself, more or less consciously, to the dancers represented on the images.

The underlying issue is in fact how to induce the dancer’s movement through printed words and images, encouraging experimentation with new tools. It is pointless to define the latter as “theoretical” or “practical”, to show them as

belonging specifically either to the book space or to the dance room: the dance room is liable to aspire the book, which, in Tomlinson's view, literally intrudes into it, covering its walls²⁶.

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Endnotes

- ¹ *Chorégraphie*, Paris, Brunet, 1700 and 1701, p. 33 and Paris, Dezais, 1713, p. 25. Weaver J., *Orchesography*, London, Meere, 1706, p. 34.
- ² Essex J., *For the further improvement of dancing*, London, 1710, pp. 1-2. Feuillet, *Recueil de contredances*, Paris, 1706. Rameau P., *Abreggé de la nouvelle methode*, Paris, undated.
- ³ *Recueil de contredances*, op. cit. *For the further improvement of dancing*, op. cit.
- ⁴ "Supposing the whole Floor to be the same Book, and to contain the Matter written in the Page or half Page [...]"; "the Lower End of the Page or Leaf is the Bottom of the Room, and the Title above the Presence or Upper End; the Beginning of the Lines, as you read these in *Dancing*, is the left Side, and the Breaking off of the Lines the right", *The Art of dancing explain'd*, London, 1735, pp. 20-21.
- ⁵ McKenzie D., *Bibliography and the sociology of texts*, London, British Library, 1986.
- ⁶ Chartier R., *Au bord de la falaise*, Paris, A. Michel, 1998.
- ⁷ In the first edition (1700), the text was composed with mobile characters, called types. But the *Chorégraphie* made it necessary for printers to achieve a text-image association: the composer of the pages had to leave blank spaces, where small metal plates would be inserted for images (for which, of course, there were no existing types, and that would have to be engraved). The resulting layout is well spaced-out – very different from the 1713 layout, in which the text itself was engraved: metal plates were expensive and the engraver reduced blank spaces as much as possible.
- ⁸ P. 18 and at the end of the book: the author wanted to add steps that were not included in the 1700 tables. Those steps belonged to different categories – chassés, jetés, coupés... – but could not be added to the appropriate tables. They became separate steps, put together on specific pages entitled "supplément de pas", making up a distinct part from the rest of the otherwise very methodically structured book.
- ⁹ While Weaver, in his English translation of the *Chorégraphie* (*Orchesography*, op. cit., 1706), takes up the combination between text and image exactly as it appeared in the French editions, Siris's translation, entitled *The Art of Dancing* (London, 1706), does without the text-image association within the same page: the text refers to illustrations, put together on entirely engraved plates, which requires the reader to go through the book differently – probably less fluidly but more methodically. This approach may apply to Siris's translation which

- targets a more professional readership, a public that is probably more likely to comply with such rules, whereas Weaver's readership was supposed to be wider. Thorp J., "P. Siris: an early 18th c. dancing-master", *Dance research*, X (2), 71-92, 1992, and Marsh C., *French Court Dances in England, 1706-1740*, PhD dissertation, City University of New York, 1985.
- ¹⁰ In two parts, with copper plates, 159 pp., 30x23 cm (characteristics of the copy available in the Library of Congress). See, in particular, the fac-simile edited by J.-N. Laurenti (Béziers, Société de musicologie du Languedoc, 1989).
- ¹¹ This frontispiece was obviously designed after the rest of the work (it mentions the dates 1753 and 1754). It is to be found in the copy available in the Library of Congress.
- ¹² The frontispieces in Rameau's *Maître à danser* and in Essex' *Dancing-Master: or, the Art of Dancing Explained* (London, 1728) show two characters dancing and a violinist – probably the dancing master. However, the frontispiece in Taubert's *Rechtschaffener Tanzmeister* (Leipzig, F. Landischens Erbens, 1717) shows several representations of the dancing master – on one of them he is at his desk (see Tilden Russell's paper in the present collection).
- ¹³ Though these authors are not reading, but actually writing.
- ¹⁴ Subscriptions were only emerging in France – they would indeed make the publishing of the *Encyclopédie* possible a few years later – but were already widespread in England.
- ¹⁵ Paris, J. Villette, 1725.
- ¹⁶ Tomlinson is here clearly complaining about Essex's translation (*The Dancing-Master: or, the Art of Dancing Explained*, op. cit.).
- ¹⁷ Clair C., *A History of printing in Britain*, London, Cassell, 1965.
- ¹⁸ See for instance Mrs Carol Marsh's paper in the present collection.
- ¹⁹ It is the case in the fields of Literature and Art (in France, the "Salon", which is open to everyone, favors debate about artistic production, whereas the rating of artists used to come from the confidential circles of Academies) – this new approach is also obvious in the new conception of the law and of religion. Roger Chartier studies these mechanisms and links the cultural origins of such an event as the French Revolution to them (*Les Origines culturelles de la Révolution française*, Paris, Seuil, 1990).
- ²⁰ From this point of view, dance treatises are no different from treatises written by craftsmen, who used their specific knowhow to turn their written production into tools: instruments of debate, of indictment, everyday references (patterns, aide-mémoire).
- ²¹ Goff M., "Edmund Pemberton, dancing master and publisher", *Dance Research*, XI (1), 52-81, 1993.
- ²² To Viscountess Fauconberg.
- ²³ *Pavanne des Saisons*, 1700.
- ²⁴ Engraved by Tomlinson himself.
- ²⁵ The human figures invite the reader to identify himself to them. Now, identification is exactly what dance notation precludes: it shows a disembodied dance, without any reference to any individual body or interpretation. It is made up of a combination of abstract steps. What is favored in Tomlinson's plates is the human figure rather

than the dance notation, if only because the latter is obscured by the silhouettes and their clothes.

²⁶ Ce texte est disponible en français sur demande (marie.glon@free.fr).

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Rôle de la pratique chez les théoriciens de la danse aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles

Françoise Dartois-Lapeyre

La « pratique », dont relève ce qui est utile pour une action humaine, est souvent opposée à la théorie, ensemble de notions abstraites, proche de la contemplation ; mais toute théorie étant d'émanation humaine, l'opposition n'est jamais radicale. Nous proposons d'observer l'apparition et l'utilisation de ces termes dans les traités de danse des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles pour analyser l'émergence de ces concepts dans l'histoire de la danse et interroger les conventions de représentation des premiers théoriciens et leur évolution.

C'est par la pratique et oralement que s'est longtemps transmise la tradition des danses, par des maîtres réputés, comme les 36 Italiens partis enseigner en Europe, notamment auprès d'Henri II. Mais la diffusion de l'imprimé a modifié le rapport au savoir : les traités italiens du XVI^e siècle citent les divertissements, donnent la tablature des danses, les règles pour bien danser et informent sur les usages sociaux, comme les façons de faire la révérence et de mettre la cape et l'épée dans une gaillarde (Cesare Negri, *Il Grazie d'amore*, 1602).

Dictée par les besoins de transmettre, *L'Orchésographie* de Thoinot Arbeau (1588) est conçue par un maître de 69 ans, n'ayant plus la faculté physique d'accomplir les pas « legiers » de la gaillarde et du tourdion dans toute leur perfection. « Pour plus claire » compréhension, il en fait graver les figures par Léon Palvicino, car elles servent « à l'intelligence de la parole » et « à la mémoire locale »¹, fournissant les indices d'une modélisation fondée sur la complémentarité entre texte et image.

La réflexion sur les rapports théorie pratique émerge dans les traités au XVII^e siècle. Claude-François Ménéstrier, s'il n'est ni le « plus ancien législateur du ballet » ni « le seul » à adopter une perspective historique², présente la spécificité, passée sous silence, d'être à la fois théoricien et praticien. Furetière, dans son *Dictionnaire universel*, a pu contribuer à cette occultation, car dans son article « ballet », après avoir défini le

genre, il oppose Benserade, qui « a fait plusieurs de ces sortes de ballets » à Ménéstrier, qui « en a fait un docte traité », passant sous silence ses créations lyonnaises.

Nous nous interrogerons sur ses motivations et sur la cohérence entre son discours théorique et sa pratique, car il n'a pas seulement fait l'histoire des ballets, il a contribué à leur évolution par sa pratique et à leur régulation par son traité, mais sans parvenir à conceptualiser théorie et pratique. Quand cette distinction apparaît-elle dans les traités ? Pour le savoir, après avoir étudié le rôle de la pratique dans l'émergence d'une théorie du ballet au XVII^e siècle, puis les modes de conceptualisation des liens entre théorie et pratique au siècle des Lumières, nous tenterons une relecture de leurs rapports grâce à la sociologie.

I- Rôle de la pratique dans l'émergence d'une théorie du ballet au XVII^e siècle

1- L'Idée des Spectacles en réaction à une pratique déviante

Quatre ans après la fondation par Louis XIV de l'Académie royale de danse, chargée de réagir contre les mauvaises pratiques, de « réformer » la danse des abus introduits pendant les guerres et de débattre des moyens d'élever les standards de l'art, Michel de Pure, en 1668, relate les spectacles anciens pour mettre en évidence les dérives des nouveaux et restaurer leurs lois. Car nos plaisirs comme nos sciences proviennent « de l'intelligence de nos Pères » et constituent un héritage à conserver. Les règles ont été transgressées pour « plaire à la Cour & aux Dames » et pour se décharger de la dépense en encomrant « le Théâtre de gens de qualité », soucieux de paraître : « les intelligens du métier » ont été obligés d'embrouiller « les Entrées par un grand nombre de Figures » pour cacher les défauts de seigneurs sans mémoire et sans adresse. Pour respecter ce que doit être le pas de ballet : non de « subtils mouvemens des pieds ou diverses

agitations du corps », mais tout « ce qu' un corps bien adroit et bien instruit peut avoir de geste ou d'action pour exprimer quelque chose sans parler », il faut sélectionner des danseurs aptes à appliquer la première règle : rendre le pas expressif « et plus vigoureux que celui de la Dance commune. » Que la tête, les épaules, les bras, les mains fassent entendre ce que le danseur ne dit point, puisque le ballet est « démonstration » et que le maître de danse accorde le mouvement dansé avec l'idée et la cadence de l'air. »³

Cette volonté de restauration anime encore les *Ballets anciens et modernes* de Ménéstrier (1682), résultat de la mise en ordre philosophique de sa pensée, mais aussi de son activité de pédagogue au collège de la Trinité, où il créa trois ballets.

2- La théorie selon Ménéstrier, écartelé entre sa lecture des Anciens et le cartésianisme

Certaines règles de son traité sont directement issues de son apprentissage de la danse chez les Jésuites, qui a forgé ses goûts et lui a donné l'air distingué et le corps robuste. En 1658, il explicite l'intrication entre sa démarche créative et son cheminement théorique en publiant ses *Remarques sur les Ballets* à la suite de *L'Autel de Lyon* : il recueillit « en un corps » tout ce qu'il avait remarqué de la pratique du théâtre lorsqu'il était « employé à faire de semblables représentations » et publia ses observations lorsqu'il fit danser ce ballet « dédié à Sa Majesté en son entrée à Lyon. »⁴ L'alternance entre des scènes calmes et agitées y créant une variété exemplaire, il en fit un modèle placé au début du traité des *Ballets*. Les consignes qu'il donne aux collégiens pour interpréter le rôle d'Homère en faisant des pas hésitants, dans *Le Temple de la Sagesse*⁵, alimentent sa réflexion pour la règle générale *Des Ballets* : adapter les pas et les attitudes aux personnages, fussent-ils disgracieux.

Il collecte les témoignages des ballets dansés dans toutes les cours de l'Europe et s'impose « la brieveté & la Methode » pour établir les règles, en respectant l'ordre, « âme de tous les traités dogmatiques. » Il commence par rechercher « l'origine des choses », nommer et définir les parties séparément puis montre « leur rapport avec le tout » pour les comparer à des modèles sûrs. Cela rend son projet innovant, comme de suivre « la forme de la pratique du Théâtre »⁶. En réalité,

de Pure et Saint-Hubert avaient déjà écrit sur « les parties de quantité » ; cet érudit ne l'ignorait sans doute pas, lui qui s'inspire de « tout ce qu'Aristote, Lucien, Plutarque... & quelques modernes ont écrit », mais il privilégie l'Antiquité comme cadre conceptuel de ce « spectacle sçavan »⁷.

Il prend en compte l'opposition, problématique chez Platon, entre théorie et pratique. L'homme est invité à se détourner de la perception sensible de l'agitation du monde des affaires pratiques pour accéder à ce qui est stable, saisissable par la raison, les originaux dont il ne perçoit que des copies imparfaites. La perception sensible est donc une condition de la *théoria* ou vision des Idées. Le concept d'une théorie utilisable et utile est préfiguré : l'immuable doit être découvert dans la réalité sensible. Pour Ménéstrier, cet immuable est Dieu, ce qui explique ses références au ballet d'action de grâces et à « la victime d'amour qui mourut sur la Croix » dans son *Ballet des Destinées de Lyon*⁸. Si le savant reconnaît l'utilité de la méthode cartésienne, la Révélation s'impose au Jésuite. Par sa portée éducative, le divertissement doit nous aider à gagner l'au-delà en donnant vie aux notions intellectuelles et aux « estres moraux qui ne subsistent que dans la pensée. »⁹ Le théoricien propose des remédiations expérimentées par le praticien pour que le ballet, « mystere de la Sagesse »¹⁰, oriente vers Dieu.

3- Les contradictions entre la théorie et la pratique chez Ménéstrier

L'ordre, auquel il aspire, reste un vœu pieux. De la conjonction de ses deux démarches - pratique et dogmatique - résulte un « Catalogue de tous les Ballets », sans organisation chronologique ni thématique aboutie : ses digressions et son souci d'exhaustivité vont à l'encontre de la rigueur espérée et ses descriptions sont interrompues par l'insertion d'explications. Par son imagination foisonnante et sa rédaction désordonnée, il n'échappe pas à son époque.

Conscient de vivre dans un siècle opposé aux siècles antérieurs, « ignorants », il prône l'exercice de l'esprit critique dans sa méthode ; mais son choix personnel de devenir l'ordonnateur des fêtes de Louis XIV le contraint, dans la pratique, à une « servitude volontaire. » Il se fonde dans la tradition jésuite de l'hyperbole éloquente, synonyme de

soumission au pouvoir municipal puis royal, et de la rhétorique de l'exaltation des vertus, et c'est le rôle nouveau qu'il accorde aux images, aussi bien dans sa pratique que dans sa théorie, qui fait du ballet une arme de l'absolutisme. L'image du « Lyon conduit par l'enfant-roi vêtu en Africain » dans *Les Destinées de Lyon*, et celle de Louis XIV et Mazarin placés au-dessus d'Hercule et d'Atlas, qui leur confient les destinées de la France, font entrer le monarque dans la mémoire et l'histoire comme « Soleil de la France », digne du règne céleste¹¹.

Le choix de ses sujets n'échappe pas à la contradiction entre sa recommandation - faire preuve d'originalité - et sa reprise de sujets déjà fameux : Strabon, « Suétone, Juvenal, Dion Cassius, & plusieurs autres Auteurs ont parlé de » l'Autel de Lyon¹².

Le même paradoxe est observé à propos de la forme. Il recommande une grande variété de mouvements dans ses *Remarques sur les Ballets*, mais instaure des règles de bienséance. À Lyon, il créait la surprise, diversifiait les personnages, admettait les mouvements les plus déréglés, comme « battre le pied, aller par élancemens, menacer de la teste & de la main, & jeter des regards farouches » pour rendre l'emportement. Mais dans son traité des *Ballets*, pourtant voué au divertissement, il formule, au nom des convenances, des règles strictes de mise en scène, excluant l'étrange et le monstrueux et proscrivant les objets du culte de la scène : « nous devons ce respect aux choses sacrées. »

Le théoricien élabore une hiérarchie des genres pour distinguer « un juste ballet » des ballets « libres », indignes des personnes de bonnes mœurs, de religion et de piété. Les plus ingénieux relèvent du ballet moral, lyrique et allégorique et expriment des choses profondes ; les satyriques, galants et de fantaisie sont dévalorisés¹³.

Ménestrier, qui participe au projet humaniste de « réduire en art et méthode » les savoirs, tant théoriques que pratiques, témoigne, en matière de ballet, d'« un effort inabouti pour faire converger ses expériences de praticien avec les savoirs des Anciens. »¹⁴ Sa théorie, utile à une éducation forgée sur le modèle antique, ne néglige ni l'esprit ni le corps, et sa méthode d'apprentissage de la

danse est fondée sur l'observation, car les enfants « naturellement imitent » ce qu'ils voient faire¹⁵.

4- Invention de la chorégraphie : théorisation à partir de la pratique et diffusion

En inventant l'écriture chorégraphique, Beauchamp propose une abstraction du mouvement sur le mode de l'écriture musicale et mathématique, en le décomposant en éléments simples, représentés par des signes, susceptibles de combinaisons définissant des pas. Sa diffusion par Feuillet et l'académicien Lorin, à partir de 1700, fait de Paris, le lieu où les formes de danse sont standardisées et où les bases de l'enseignement de la danse se structurent¹⁶. Les querelles d'appropriation de l'innovation par Beauchamp, Feuillet et Lorin soulignent le rôle tenu par la publication dans le processus de reconnaissance, inconcevable sans un minimum de théorisation et de filiation.

L'*Orchésographie*, étant le premier traité à « noter et figer les Pas de la Dance », Feuillet « doit obligation » à T. Arbeau, qui lui a donné les premières idées de décrire la danse. Beauchamp en est réduit à déposer une requête au Conseil du roi, sans pouvoir empêcher la diffusion de Feuillet. Lorsqu'en 1711, Gaudrau publie le *Nouveau recueil de Dance [...] de M. Pécour*, dont certaines furent dansées par le roi, la survivance du système Feuillet est assurée, ainsi que le caractère « innocent » de ce délassement.

L'écriture de la danse, qui tient compte des positions, des pas mais aussi de l'espace et de la musique permet la communication d'expériences et la circulation des danses de différents maîtres, mais la maîtrise du code reste indispensable à l'apprentissage à distance.

Le développement du mouvement académique au détriment des corporations fut propice à la théorisation et à la codification de la danse. Sa diffusion par la publication contribua à façonner les corps selon les principes de l'en-dehors et la verticalité, de la symétrie et l'harmonie, et au siècle de l'opinion publique naissante, c'est à un large « Public » que s'adresse *Le Maître à Danser*.

II- Conceptualisation du lien théorie pratique au XVIII^e siècle

1- La théorie émane souvent de maîtres de danse expérimentés

Il y a des exceptions : Jacques Bonnet, ancien Payeur des Gages au Parlement, revendique, dans son *Histoire générale de la danse*, le mérite d'avoir inventé « une histoire suivie de cet Art » depuis l'origine. C'est un progrès par rapport aux compilations, mais ayant commencé par écrire une *Histoire de la musique*, il traite la danse comme sa « cadette »¹⁷, par analogie, sans théoriser leurs relations. Son propos se veut savant et moral puisqu'en remédiant à une connaissance confuse, il réhabilite un art réprouvé par l'Église. Il ignore la pratique, car son but est de réactiver la mémoire de la danse sacrée des Anciens pour justifier sa place dans la société du XVIII^e siècle.

« Ce Traité auroit reçu plus de brillant d'une jeune plume, que de celle d'un Auteur presque octogenaire », mais les manuels sont toujours le fruit d'une longue expérience ou pratique professionnelle.

2- Finalités pédagogiques et pratiques de la démarche théorique de P. Rameau

Anticipant sur le *Traité de la nature humaine* (1740), dans lequel Hume affirme que toutes nos idées viennent de l'expérience, Pierre Rameau prétend être le premier à écrire « les règles » de l'Art de la danse en adoptant la posture du maître de ballet et non celle du savant rédigeant une dissertation historique¹⁸. La pratique de la danse étant utile pour remédier aux imperfections de la nature, pour éduquer le corps aux règles de la bienséance et pour acquérir la distinction du beau monde, il a pour but d'écrire une théorie utile à ses écoliers, une méthode tournée vers la pratique, qui indique aux personnes « honnêtes et polies » la manière de faire « les principaux pas des danses de ville. » Il se fonde sur les « sérieuses réflexions » d'une vie et « sur l'habileté des plus grands Maîtres » de l'Académie royale de danse et de musique pour « tracer » sur le papier leurs leçons, données en sa présence.

Représentatif d'un siècle, où le savant ne cherche plus des objets stables ou des idées, mais des relations observables et vérifiables, P. Rameau, grâce à son expérience méthodique, précise « la manière de poser le corps », position à partir de laquelle il peut tout faire. La pratique est indispensable aux progrès de la théorie, c'est pourquoi il adresse son Epître au duc de Rets,

excellent danseur, « qui a exécuté avec autant d'agrément que d'exactitude » ces règles, issues de la pratique. La salle du maître de ballet est le laboratoire où s'expérimentent de nouveaux pas et où se conçoit la « régularité de l'art. » Ses lois (celle de l'équilibre du corps, coordonné et hiérarchisé, dont l'harmonie s'exprime par la concordance, la symétrie et l'opposition), priment dans la mécanique du mouvement des membres¹⁹. Pour apprendre ces mouvements, il faut les comprendre (le pied est le pivot de la pirouette) et « les préceptes qui passent par les yeux » ayant toujours plus d'effet, des planches représentent le danseur.

3- Taubert et la formulation des concepts de théorie et praxi (1717)

Bien avant Carlo Blasis, Gottfried Taubert, maître de danse à Leipzig, fournit dans son titre et son cartouche gravé, la première attestation de la conceptualisation du lien établi entre ces notions pour enseigner la danse. Son ambition est d'informer « aussi bien en théorie qu'en pratique » pour expliquer l'art français de la danse car - la *Description du véritable art de la danse* de Johann Paschen l'atteste - il était à la mode et pratiqué dans cette ville par six maîtres formés à l'Académie royale de danse. Après avoir retracé l'historique des danses, et avant de relater la façon dont elles sont organisées dans diverses occasions (bals, mariage), il expose les principales bases des danses d'exercice : il traite de la « réflexion et de la connaissance théorique des danses », aussi bien galantes que théâtrales, afin de montrer ce que sont *in Praxi* les « règles de composition et l'exécution adéquate. »²⁰ Sa méthode « théorique et pratique » fournit une clé d'interprétation nouvelle, mais comporte aussi une dimension éthique, déjà prise en compte par Louis Bonin dans *Die Neueste Art*²¹, qui fait l'apologie du maître guidant le peuple vers des formes honnêtes de danse.

Sa classification ternaire, qui témoigne d'une bonne connaissance de la scène et du traité de G. Lambranzi, distingue : les danses basses ou danses de bal, « belle danse » transmise par Feuillet puis Dezais dans toute l'Europe ; les danses sérieuses, hautes et graves et enfin les danses comiques, bouffonnes et grotesques. La danse codifiée acquiert valeur de supériorité par rapport au répertoire local « vieux franconien », interprété « différemment d'un maître à l'autre. »²²

4- Louis de Cahusac prône l'utilité de la théorie dans tous les arts

Dans *La Danse ancienne et moderne*, cet homme de lettres, qui collabora à l'*Encyclopédie*, affirme que la théorie « sera toujours la boussole des arts : en montrant les points cardinaux de la route, elle l'abrège et la rend sûre. » Il désire que son traité soit utile, car il a pour vocation de corriger les abus des artistes et d'aider aux progrès de l'art.

S'inspirant de Condillac, il « s'inscrit dans une conception primitiviste de l'art »²³ et ressent la danse comme une émanation directe des passions. Il cherche à prouver « la perfection réelle » de la danse ancienne, disserte sur le caractère que doit avoir la danse théâtrale et sur « les règles générales à observer dans les actions de danse ». Dans ses livrets d'opéra, sa danse « en action », parlante et placée au rang des arts imitatifs, est conçue pour peindre par les gestes.

5- Noverre, un maître tourné vers la pratique et méfiant envers la théorie

Noverre souligne les défauts de cette approche trop théorique et déplore que les articles de l'*Encyclopédie* n'aient pas été rédigés par des artistes et Académiciens : la partie mécanique et technique appartient « de droit aux danseurs ; ils auraient éclairé le peuple dansant. » Comme la polémique épistémologique de Diderot, sa critique est aussi politique, remettant en question les hiérarchies sociales autant que les « tables chorégraphiques. » La chorégraphie est devenue un « art si compliqué, que les yeux et l'esprit s'y perdent », tant « l'algèbre des danseurs » obscurcit leur « dissertation dansante. » Le souci de précision a rendu inutilisable le système d'écriture : la perfection recherchée pour chaque signe les a tous embrouillés et cette science est devenue « inintelligible. »²⁴

« Rien de plus pernicieux qu'une méthode qui rétrécit nos idées » : pourquoi « se casser la tête » à conserver la mémoire d'une chorégraphie, puisque toute nouvelle tentative améliore la précédente ? Si Lany doit remettre cinq ans après les ballets d'un opéra, il le fera avec plus de goût sans le secours de ses notes ; sa créativité réparera « les fautes imperceptibles » alors que la chorégraphie « amortit le génie. »²⁵

Conscient des dangers d'un excès de théorie, Noverre ne rédige pas un traité, mais il adopte la forme épistolaire, plus souple, qui concilie considérations générales et observations personnelles. Si un maître ambitieux, comme Pierre Gardel, suit ses desseins théoriques sans percevoir la réalité du corps de ballet, souvent peu expérimenté et hétéroclite, ses exigences inadaptées à la réalité des figurants l'empêchent d'atteindre la perfection.

La théorie doit s'intérioriser dans le corps du danseur. La règle n'est pas une incantation extérieure, elle se concrétise par la régularité de l'exercice et se digère avant de s'extérioriser dans le mouvement proposé au public. L'en-dehors suppose une prise de conscience, mais sa pratique est aussi conditionnée par le physique du danseur.

Grâce à ses « connaissances d'anatomie », Noverre prend en compte la diversité du réel, observe les morphologies, construit une typologie qui oppose les danseurs jarretés, aux hanches étroites et en dedans, les genoux gros et serrés, aux danseurs arqués. Il réforme les vices naturels « par une application et une étude constante. » En incluant le système du corps dans sa théorie, il confère à l'erreur un statut positif et corrige la nature, souvent rebelle. La danse ne révèle plus le dessin cosmique ou divin, mais l'individu, qui n'est ni un homme machine ni un automate. Il harmonise le fonctionnement de l'ensemble de son corps, car « l'arrangement disproportionné des parties », grâce au « jeu des ressorts », aboutit à plus de « liaison dans les bras ; plus de moelleux dans les mouvements. »²⁶

L'art n'est plus le reflet de la nature mais le résultat d'une lutte. Il ne s'agit plus d'observer la règle, mais de l'adapter à chaque danseur avec comme première consigne : « Connais-toi toi-même. » La Camargo, qui « n'était ni jolie, ni grande, ni bien faite » dissimulait son manque de grâce par une technique fondée sur la rapidité, « qui ne laissait pas le temps aux spectateurs de l'anatomiser et de s'apercevoir de ses défauts de construction. »²⁷

La théorie ne vise pas à produire des clones d'un maître parfait, mais à se spécialiser dans un style approprié, comme Lany, danseur arqué le plus savant, qui a tiré de ce défaut un avantage, et Vestris, le meilleur danseur sérieux, jarreté, ce qui est insoupçonné, sauf dans l'entrechat. Cette intelligence suppose une grande culture : Mlle

Sallé vivait parmi les livres, rue Saint Honoré, comme Mlle Camargo, dont la bibliothèque était « aussi bien montée que sa cave »²⁸ ; celle de Dauberval et de Mlle Théodore, comptait 500 volumes dont l'*Encyclopédie*.

En soulevant la question du rapport entre la théorie pratique et le sens de ce qui est juste, Kant fait émerger la notion de théorie utile pour le praticien qui, tel le danseur, profite des efforts du théoricien et lui reste supérieur jusqu'à ce que la théorie ait rattrapé la pratique²⁹. A-t-il influencé Didelot, qui propose une méthode expérimentale pour apprendre à exprimer par le geste ce que dit l'écriture ? Faute de traité, les préfaces de ce dernier nous mettent sur la voie d'une théorie intéressée, d'une science agissante pour que la danse soit l'expression d'un dialogue.

Synthétisant dans son *Dictionnaire de danse* (1787), l'histoire, le vocabulaire, les principes et « préceptes » de cet art, Charles Compan souligne que Cahusac et Noverre, dans leur poétique parfaite de la danse, démontrent que, pour exceller dans cet Art, la théorie seule ne suffit pas : « il faut encore la connoissance des règles & des moyens qui servent à le développer. L'homme commun sépare la théorie du talent, & rampe avec la multitude ; l'homme de génie les réunit, & s'élève jusqu'au sublime. »

Conclusion

Les catalogues ont fait place aux écrits conceptuels, car la théorie s'avère indispensable pour enseigner et transmettre. Dans ce dessein, trois constantes s'observent chez les théoriciens : ils justifient leur traité par l'originalité de leur démarche, revendiquent le fait d'être « les premiers » à écrire sur le sujet et le font en référence aux « plus grands maîtres. » Souvent praticiens, tournés vers la génération future, ils revendiquent une théorie utile à leurs élèves. Dans les *Lettres* de Noverre émergent les prémisses du pragmatisme, conforté par les performances croissantes des danseurs.

Le modèle platonicien s'estompant, la pensée rationaliste et le développement des sciences favorisent l'apparition des concepts de théorie et de pratique. Celui de *praxi*, utilisé par Taubert, précède la *Phénoménologie* de Hegel, qui renonce à l'opposition inconditionnée des deux termes, et la *praxis*, qui les unit dans la pensée globale d'une dialectique visant à transformer le monde. Pour

Compan, l'excellence et le génie en danse supposent leur alliance.

La sociologie permet de comprendre la difficulté de parvenir, au XVIII^e siècle, à « l'effet d'objectivation », qui transforme le rapport de familiarité à la danse en connaissance savante, et les réticences des danseurs à se détacher de leurs modèles. La crainte de déplaire, la sensation que « leur talent est retenu par une chaîne pesante » (Cahusac), est à mettre en relation avec le concept d'*habitus* forgé par Pierre Bourdieu³⁰, qui pointe la marge réduite d'innovation autorisée par toute inscription dans une époque (par exemple, les différentes interprétations d'une même danse notées par Taubert).

Si la théorie permet d'apprendre le langage de la danse, un simple théoricien ne suffit pas pour l'exacte démonstration de ses principes : telle est la clarification conceptuelle apportée, en 1830, par le *Traité élémentaire théorique et pratique* de C. Blasis³¹. Au nom du principe d'utilité, il reprend les critiques de Noverre, dénonce les écrits consacrés à la poétique par les « très-bons littérateurs, mais qui n'ont jamais été danseurs » et regrette l'absence d'un « bon traité théorique, sur le mécanisme de la danse, écrit par un Dauberval, un Vestris ou quelque autre grand maître. » S'il rend hommage à Noverre pour avoir posé les principes qui doivent guider le maître de ballet et pour avoir prescrit des règles aux mimes, il mesure l'insuffisance de son observation des mécanismes, obsolète tant l'art a évolué, et propose une nouvelle approche théorico pratique, fruit de son travail assidu, de ses observations et expériences, influencée par les mathématiques et la géométrie, désormais visible dans les figures³².

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Notes

¹ *Orchésographie : Traité en forme de dialogue par lequel toutes personnes peuvent facilement apprendre et pratiquer l'honnête exercice des danses*, par T. Arbeau, 1588, rééd. Klincksieck, 1995, p. 40.

² E. Boyssse, *Le Théâtre des Jésuites*, Paris, 1880, p. 44. Les traités de Saint-Hubert (1641), de l'abbé d'Aubignac (1657) et de M. de Pure sont antérieurs aux *Représentations en musique* (1681).

³ M. de Pure, *Idée des spectacles anciens et nouveaux*, Paris, M. Brunet, 1668. Genève, Minkoff, 1972, p. 161, 249, 253, 281.

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- ⁴ Méneestrier, *L'Autel de Lyon, consacré à Louys Auguste, et placé dans le Temple de la Gloire*, Lyon, J. Molin, p. 21, 23 et 28.
- ⁵ Méneestrier, *Le Temple de la Sagesse...*, le 20 may 1663, Lyon, P. Guillemain, 1663, p. 12.
- ⁶ Méneestrier, *Des Ballets...*, *op. cit.*, p. 7 et 9.
- ⁷ Méneestrier, Avertissement de la *Méthode du blason*, Lyon, Th. Amaulry, 1689.
- ⁸ Méneestrier, *Des Ballets...*, *op. cit.*, p. 9. *Ballet des Destinées de Lyon...*, le 16 juin, Lyon, A. Molin, 1658, p. 12.
- ⁹ Méneestrier, *Des Ballets...*, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
- ¹⁰ Méneestrier, *Le Temple de la Sagesse...*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
- ¹¹ Méneestrier, *L'Autel de Lyon*, *op. cit.*, p. 13 et 37. *Quatre soleils vus en France...*, le 25 Juin 1704, 1704, p. 5.
- ¹² *Des Ballets*, *op. cit.*, Préface.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 4, 125, 147, 149, 161 et 256.
- ¹⁴ R. Mandrou, *Histoire de la pensée européenne*, t. 3, Paris, Seuil, 1973, p. 107. L. Dolza et H. Vérin, « Figurer la mécanique : l'énigme des théâtres des machines... », in *RHMC*, 51-2, avril-juin 2004, p. 24.
- ¹⁵ Méneestrier, *Des Représentations...*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
- ¹⁶ R.-A. Feuillet, *Chorégraphie ou l'Art d'écrire la Danse...*, Paris, chez l'Auteur et M. Brunet, 1700, rééd. 1713.
- ¹⁷ J. Bonnet, *Histoire générale de la danse sacrée et profane...*, Paris, d'Houry, 1723. Slatkine Reprints, Genève, 1969. Dédicace et préface.
- ¹⁸ Préface de P. Rameau, *Le Maître à danser...*, Paris, J. Villette, 1725. Broude Brothers, New York, 1967.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15, 67 et 173.
- ²⁰ G. Taubert, *Rechtschaffener Tanzmeister oder gründliche Erklärung der Französische Tantz-kunst...*, Leipzig, ben Friedrich Landischens Erben, 1717.
- ²¹ L. Bonin, *Die Neueste Arte zur galanten und theatralischen Tanz-Kunst*, Francfort, Leipzig, 1711.
- ²² Gottfried Taubert, *op. cit.*, p. 376.
- ²³ *La Danse ancienne et moderne ou Traité historique de la danse* de L. de Cahusac, Édition présentée par N. Lecomte, L. Naudeix, J.-N. Laurenti, Desjonquères, CND, 2004, p. 23, 45 et 49.
- ²⁴ J.-G. Noverre, *Lettres sur la danse et les arts imitateurs*, 1760. Librairie théâtrale, 1952, p. 229 et 231. Diderot, *Encyclopédie*, article « art ».
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 206, 233 et 234.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 198 à 200.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 200, 202 et 288.
- ²⁸ Émile Campardon, *L'Académie royale de musique au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, Berger-Levrault, 1884, p. 94.
- ²⁹ Emmanuel Kant, *Sur l'expression courante : il se peut que ce soit juste en théorie, mais en pratique cela ne vaut rien (1793)*. Traduction de J. Guillermit, J. Vrin, 7^e éd., 2000, p. 12.
- ³⁰ Cahusac, *op. cit.*, p. 41 et P. Bourdieu, *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique*, Seuil, 2000, p. 222 et *Le Sens pratique*, Éditions de Minuit, 1980, p. 91 et 94.
- ³¹ C. Blasis, *Traité de l'art de la danse*, texte établi par Flavia Pappacena, Rome, Gremese, 2007, p. 73, 76 et 85.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 74, 75 et 82. Figures d'après lui-même, par M. Casartelli.

Dancing at the Surface: Digital Media and the ‘No Place’ of Dance

Harmony Bench

Intersections between dance and media generate a multiplication of possible venues for dance: from small screens to large screens, from coffee shops to cliffs. Of these, I would like to isolate one location in particular, a site I am calling ‘no place’—in short, an evacuated scene, a blank canvas. Nominating ‘no place’ as a site for dance may seem somewhat para-doxical, but I am actually trying to be very specific, because all sites are specific and dances require specific sites in which to occur. Every setting, including ‘no place,’ entails its own protocols for imagining, creating, framing, and reading dance. Moreover, sites are not reducible to geographical or physical locales, and dances may exist in multiple sites simultaneously. In working with screendance,¹ for example, one must equally consider the location of the film shoot, the medium of film or video, the screen itself, and even the circumstances of screening. These co-existing locations easily go unnoticed, and with them media’s ability to dis-articulate bodies from the spaces in which they are embedded. This dislocation, of paramount importance for media, enables a second operation: the installation of dance in any place. It is this movement from ‘no place’ to any place that we will track through dance’s paper-based mediation in Feuillet notation and its digital mediation in choreo-graphies for the screen.

Media-based choreographies sometimes obscure the locatedness of dance altogether, siting dance with-in an anonymous blank space of ‘no place.’ Although it is perhaps most visible in digital media, ‘no place’ is not a new place synonymous with cyberspace, electronic space, screen space, or virtual space. The ‘no place’ of dance has an established history in Western dance: its foundational emptiness already appeared in the late 1600s when Feuillet cleared a space for dance on the printed page. Feuillet’s main objective was to provide a means of preserving dance, but as notators recorded the time-filled movements of dance in time-depleted print media, they also documented a commensurate understanding of space and dancing

bodies’ relationship to it. Feuillet’s planimetric dance notation system imagines the dancing body as the vertical axis of a geometric grid. This body opens out onto a vacant space in which the dance unfolds. In Feuillet, the site of dance is neutralized, a pure and unmarked space in which dance is inscribed. Imagining such an abstract, idealized space is perhaps optimal for dancing, but where space is envisioned as an empty geometry, all places become equally receptive to dance. This logic, re-instantiated in digital media, suggests that if bodies exist in no place in particular, they can easily move into any place whatever.

When screendances implant dance in ‘no place,’ they utilize darkened theaters, well-lit film studios, or computer programs to completely envelop dancers in black or white voids. As a site in screendance, ‘no place’ is emptied of spatial referents—dancers float in a field of white or a black abyss. This erasure is more profound than in Feuillet notation, which orients a dancer in a room to which the printed page corresponds, and which tracks movement across the floor. In screendance, not only are geographical markers erased, gone too are the architectural bearings derived from floors, walls, corners, or curves. Masked and whitewashed screenscapes insistently foreground dancing bodies dis-articulated from a ground and environment that support their movement. No longer contained within theater’s rectangular enclosures, dancing bodies are sited in an abstract space without dimensions or orientation. In this ‘no place,’ dancing bodies take on an inhuman mobility, which is neither limited by physical parameters, nor by physical forces such as gravity. They are rendered as free-floating images in smooth, shapeless spaces.

Some screendances portray just these bodies surrounded by a seeming nothingness. For example, in Gina Czarnecki’s experimental video *Nascent*, luminous bodies unfurl across a blackened screen. A dancer hangs from invisible wires, suspended in an endless white in Magali

Charrier's *Left or Right for Love?*. In Alex Reuben's *Line Dance*, motion-captured figures moving to Brazilian music are engulfed in black, erasing both geographical specificityⁱⁱ as well as the dancers' physical specificity. Cari Ann Shim Sham's *Are You for Real* positions a grey-bodied dancer in a white space with bright blue Post-It notes adhering to her body. Other screendances go a step further, maintaining the abstraction of 'no place,' while also placing topographically detached bodies in different settings. Examples include *Ghostcatching*, in which digital art-ist Shelley Eshkar creates shifting environments out of Bill T. Jones's movement residues and Magali Charrier's *Tra La La*, where dancers wind up in the bellies of various animated creatures in the course of their fantastical adventures. Because they are working at the level of digital images, such movement from one place to another is easily achieved. Just as Feuillet permitted physical bodies to move into emptied and abstract spaces, so too are these image-bodies free to move into new locales because they are uncoupled from their prior surroundings.

Hyperdances, or interactive dances created for computer screen, likewise posit a 'no place' for dance onscreen. Some visually represent 'no place' as a limitless black or white space, while others project dance into any number of computerized spaces, indicating a movement from 'no place' to any place. In either case, the dancers' physical ground, which disappeared altogether in the screendances mentioned above, is reconceived. The ground remains planar as in Feuillet, but is now upended, propped up vertically as a desktop image rather than a horizontal plane of movement. In thus altering the ground of dance, hyperdances explore physically impossible and occasionally absurd environments in which to locate dance.

Richard Lord's *Waterfall*, an interactive dance piece on CD-ROM, serves as a case in point. Through-out this work, dancer Emma Diamond sensuously engages water through various explorations: walking along a grassy and windy beach, feeling water pour through her fingers or drip onto her face, and splashing barefoot in puddles. In using the computer as a platform for these sensory investigations, *Waterfall* positions nature and technology

alongside one another. Water spills onto the screen, even as the electronic circuitry underneath Diamond's mediated interactions resists the moist encounters represented.

In one particular section of *Waterfall*, Diamond's luxurious and focused task-like investigations give way to conventionally recognizable dancing—water studies of a different kind. This section offers a range of wet places in which to perform modern dance choreography: on a river, below the ocean's surface, on a cresting wave, in a rainforest, on a glacier. Each of these environments is portrayed as a postcard-like still image. Lord has cleared a path for Diamond's dancing by matching the angle of his filming to those of the photographed images. Their superimposition produces fortuitous connections between the dancer and the background. Diamond actually appears to be dancing inside an ocean wave or along the surface of a glacier. Lord insinuates dance into places where dancing could not really take place. This sometimes results in anti-gravitational choreographies, where Diamond is walking on water or floating among trees. These choreographies would take on quite a different look if Diamond were actually contending with the forces of water and gravity. Confronted with neither, Diamond dances the water's movement. She maps its motion onto her own body while the oceans and rivers behind her remain still. Lord is able to simulate Diamond's presence in each location, but only because he first stopped the water's flow. That is to say, the connection portrayed between Diamond and her shifting environments exists only because it is technologically mediated.

A second dance for computer, *Triad HyperDance* also mediates contact among distant geographies. *Triad* is a Web-based, interactive documentation of the 1998 telematic performance *Triad NetDance* directed by Marikki Hakola, which featured modern dancer Molissa Fenley in New York and butoh performer Akeno in Tokyo. Fenley and Akeno were joined by video transmitted over the Internet and projected into the Kiasma museum in Helsinki, the primary performance venue. In Helsinki, the feeds from New York and Tokyo were mixed with digital media and music. Linking the cities together created a complex

and interwoven site that drew on aspects of all three. Via their Internet connection, the performers forged a temporary and contingent relationship with each city, expanding the reach of each location into the others.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Web version of *Triad* includes streamed video clips—short documentations of the distributed performance.^{iv} These are interspersed throughout interactive portions of the piece in which skyscrapers, stairways, pools of water, and parchment provide the backgrounds against which Fenley and Akeno dance. Whereas in *Waterfall*, Diamond alters her movement from scene to scene as she mimics different movement qualities of water, the dancers in *Triad* offer computer users the same selection of very short, looped movement clips from which to choose in every scene. Users then organize the fragments into choreographies of varying lengths. Akeno remains low in squats and crawls, while Fenley remains largely upright, cycling through attitudes and turns. The user further composes the scene by clicking and dragging the dancers to any place in the window. *Triad* asserts its two-dimensionality more strongly than *Waterfall*. Dancers and background are stacked in parallel planes, one in front of the other. The dancers' movement does not reflect changes in the background, they execute the same short phrases regardless. But like *Waterfall*, the dancers are projected into environments with which they remain fundamentally disconnected.

Both *Waterfall* and *Triad* render 'no place' transparent. 'No place' is radically clear, see-through, re-vealing whatever image lies behind. The dancers are cutouts sitting atop a collage of images with which they are juxtaposed, but of which they remain unaware. Particularly Fenley and Akeno could be projected against any background scene and it would not affect their dancing. They register no difference, no change from one place to the next. All places are equally leveled.

Feuillet notation and digital media share 'no place' as a springboard into any place, but as *Waterfall* and *Triad* show, there are key differences in how they move from one place to another and what they do when they arrive. Susan Leigh Foster argues that Feuillet's portrayal of dancing bodies reflects a colonial

organization of space and the bodies therein. At a representational level, Feuillet notation describes a subject that establishes himself as a center from which to govern a periphery—whether that periphery is one of limbs or land. Foster further argues that Feuillet notation "reinforce[s] a bodily experience of having a center that extends into and moves through an un-marked space" (88). This "bodily experience" mimics that of moving into foreign and unknown lands. As dancers follow notation scores, they rehearse the colonial expansion that Feuillet stages on paper.^v Within a colonial paradigm, Feuillet's blank 'no place' of dance is mapped onto the tabula rasa of foreign lands into which a dancing or colonizing body may unproblematically step.

In hyperdance, there is no longer a designated center or periphery. *Triad* flattens the differences among dancing images and digitally rendered environments. The dancers neither govern from a central place, nor oversee the landscape from an idealized external perspective. Instead, they float above the background, indifferent to successive substitutions of one place for another. In performance and on the Web, *Triad*'s intent was to enfold disparate locations into one cyber-site. Yet, differences among the sites are all but erased as they become interchangeable scenery. Furthermore, in both *Waterfall* and *Triad*, dancing bodies do not move into spaces of their own accord. Nor do they command the landscape around them.^{vi} Both hyperdances operate under the inherited assumption that dances could exist in an empty 'no place' and could thus appear in any place, but as images, bodies are deposited into spaces—a drag and drop process.

Correspondences emerge between the 'no place' that Feuillet carved out for dance and colonial expansion, a parallel that scholars have sought in digital media's repeated evacuations of space.^{vii} But the hyperdances *Waterfall* and *Triad* suggest another possible interpretation.^{viii} While both print and digital media posit an abstract, evacuated scene for dance, these spatial imaginings result in very different occupations of space. The dancing images may have a greater mobility, transported as they are from place to place, but they do not move by

choice, nor do they belong to any of the places into which they are inserted. Where the space of dance is 'no place' and the ground of dance is repositioned as a background, dance can appear in any place but belongs to none.

Even as *Waterfall* and *Triad* delight in dance's digitally reconfigured mobility, both struggle to maintain a connection with each new environment, an illusory connection which *Waterfall* especially encourages by carefully matching Diamond's movement to each background image. Lord portrays an idealized nature-as-picture, creates an empty 'no place' in which Diamond moves, and then sutures the two together. But residues of the studio in which large parts of *Waterfall* were recorded persist, disrupting the seeming ease with which Diamond inhabits each new space. She brings little remainders, or reminders, with her. Lord attempts a photographic sleight-of-hand, but inadvertently exposes the trick at the same time. Diamond's dissociation from her prior ground is incomplete and as a result, the dislocation that *Waterfall* portrays also reveals its flawed logic. *Waterfall* unintentionally challenges the very illusion of radical spatial equality that the piece purportedly maintains. It is only through the failure of the piece to achieve its own ideal that a critique of that ideal becomes legible.

As translations of dance to print and digital media, Feuillet notation and hyperdance encompass similar re-imaginings of dancing bodies. Each is compelled to transform dance according to its own media-specific protocols. In the process, these transformations or mediations reveal what might otherwise remain under-examined assumptions about how dance occupies space. With this paper, I have been particularly interested in dance's relationship to what I have called 'no place,' and how the abstract logic of its emptied spaces continues to propel dance into new sites. But erasing dance's prior instantiations and siting dance in 'no place' is not without its consequences. In developing a notation system, Feuillet inscribed colonialism in dance. In hyperdance, digital media's ability to simulate interconnectedness produces ungrounded and malleable dancers. Scholars should note the implications of digital perpetuations of 'no place' as they theorize dance onscreen, while also recognizing that 'no

place' as a site plays an important role in imagining dance throughout Western dance history.

Acknowledgements

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- 1 Screendance is the term most recently adopted to encompass what has variously been called film dance, video dance, dance for camera, and cinedance. The term is also applied to dances for computer, media installations, and other screened or projected dances. Screendances are works created specifically for the screen or monitor and not for the purpose of documenting a performance.
 - ii As a DJ in London, Reuben played Brazilian artist Virginia Rodrigues' "Negrum da Noite." This song also serves as the soundtrack to his film. See <<http://mjwproductions.com/Dance/Line%20Dance.html>>. Accessed 1 May 2007.
 - iii In some ways, *Triad* builds on issues explored in Fenley's 1996 Web-based piece *Latitudes*. This piece also interrogates a dancer's relation to space, but does so in part by studying the compositional and movement properties of sculptural objects from around the world. <<http://www.diacenter.org/fenley/title.html>>. Accessed 1 May 2007.
 - iv These video clips are RealMedia files stored outside the main Flash file that constitutes the rest of the piece. Because they are not embedded in the main Flash file, they are not always accessible.
 - v Dance theorist Susan Foster and cultural theorist Paul Carter both link Western dance with colonialism through their shared participation in imagining unmarked and flattened terrains for movement. Carter, however, reverses Foster's scenario. He suggests that the surveyor "creates the conditions for the emergence of the planar ground occupied by the dancer..." Colonialism paves the way for dance. "Logically, and perhaps historically," Carter argues, "the colonizing explorer precedes the pirouetting dancer" (291). The colonizer clears the ground for the dancer who follows. Foster, in contrast, does not propose a chronological relationship between Europe's colonial and dance practices. For Foster, the colonizer and the dancer are of a piece—each supports the other.
 - 6 In reading Nietzsche, French philosopher Alain Badiou imagines a completely different relationship between dance and ground. Whereas Foster's reading of Feuillet posits the space of dance as an unmarked plane, Badiou suggests that the ground of dance is buoyant. "In dance," he states, "the earth is thought of as if it were endowed with a constant airing. Dance involves the breath, the respiration of the earth. This is because the central question of dance is that of the relation between verticality and attraction" (58). In

Feuillet notation, a dancer moves horizontally through space, surveying while also moving through the surroundings. Baidou's dancer moves vertically, negotiating physical attraction and repulsion from the earth. However, just as dancing images in hyperdances do not have a central location from which to survey their surroundings, they also lack a ground that propels them into the air and to which they return.

vii Indeed, digital media's seeming investment in space as an empty geometry to be filled with online communities, commercial ventures, and alternate worlds makes such a reading attractive.

viii This alternate interpretation arises because, crucially, the images are not avatars. In hyperdances, the dancing images are not digital representations of computer users, nor are they determined by the performers whose images they are. As interactive figures, they are influenced or even controlled by the user without metaphorically extending the user's body or subjectivity into screen space as would an avatar.

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Vincent Sekwati Mantsoe: Trance as a Cultural Commodity

Bridget E. Cauthery

Reflecting on his fieldwork among of the Malagasy speakers of Mayotte in the western Indian Ocean, Canadian anthropologist Michael Lambek questions why the West has such a “blind spot” when it comes to the human activity of trance. Immersed in his subject’s trance practices, he questions why such a fundamental aspect of both the Malagasy culture, and many other cultures he has studied around the world, is absent from his own.¹

Lambek provides the jumping off point for my doctoral research into the West’s preoccupation with trance in ethnographic research and simultaneous disinclination to attribute or situate trance within its own dance practices. In Lambek’s own words, “the question for the West becomes one of understanding why trance has been so rigidly excluded or ignored” (1981, p 7). Querying the West’s blind spot has led me to argue that the accumulated knowledge and data about trance is a by-product of the colonialist project, and that trance itself may be perceived as an attribute or characteristic of the Other. In suggesting that trance could be recast, I explore the cultural history of trance in the West and, in particular, I examine the degree to which trance can be a meaningful construct within the cultural analysis of contemporary dance creation and performance.

When South African dancer and choreographer Vincent Sekwati Mantsoe dances – as described as the beginning of this paper – there is a certain vitality to his performance that is at once contained by his body and radiates outward. The sheer pleasure that he exudes and the precision of his movements make him a captivating performer. Reviews of his work speak of his command, his virtuosity and his clear and unwavering vision. In speaking with him one learns that he credits the jubilant life-force that audiences attribute to his performances to his ability to enter trance states. Through the vehicle of his living, breathing, dancing body, Mantsoe is able to open himself to the mysteries and healing energy of the spirit

world, becoming a vessel for their knowledge and blessings. In his view it is this rich interior life, based on traditional teachings and the pantheon of his native Zulu culture, mediated by his ability to enter altered states of consciousness, which forms the basis for his gift as a dancer.

Engaging specifically with the work of post-colonial theorist Arjun Appadurai and his theories of commodification in cultural practice (1986), this paper addresses the ways in which trance functions as a traded commodity in a globalized economy and how that trade impacts embodiment as exemplified by Mantsoe in his performance of his 2003 work *NDAA*.

Building from descriptions of the differences between artefacts and commodities, I expand on what it means to speak of decolonizing and how this applies to Mantsoe and his work. Using Appadurai, Mantsoe and the trance states he embodies are examined as items of and then specifically as items of sacred trade as conceptualized by medieval historian Patrick Geary.

Vincent Sekwati Mantsoe grew up in the townships of South Africa. As a child and young adult he participated in youth clubs, practicing street dance and imitating the moves of Michael Jackson and other pop artists from American music videos. Throughout his childhood, he woke everyday to the sound of his mother playing a drum to greet the ancestors.

In his late teens, Mantsoe began training in earnest with Johannesburg’s Moving Into Dance Mophatong Company (MIDM). Mantsoe was deeply influenced by MIDM’s signature fusion of African ritual, music and dance with Western contemporary dance forms and from this early training, continues to describe his work as “Afro-fusion” (Mantsoe, 2006).

Though Mantsoe had seen his grandmother, aunt and mother commune with the spirit world through trance states, for reasons of gender, he was not trained and therefore not permitted to enter them himself. Yet it became apparent to his family that Mantsoe had inherited a

propensity for traditional ways – that his “openness” to the spirits and to the *sangoma* or shaman ways was “strong,” (Mantsoe, personal interview, 2006). After consulting the spirits, Mantsoe’s aunt and grandmother told him that he was to play a part in the family business: through the vehicle of his dancing Mantsoe was to bring his family’s knowledge and message to the world. The spirits had advised that he was to be a healing “ambassador” and that he was to travel to distant places as a teacher and performer (Mantsoe, personal interview, 2006) and since the 1990s, Mantsoe has pursued this ordained path, working steadily at the invitation of companies, festivals and choreographers around the world.

Contextualizing Mantsoe’s *trade* in trance requires understanding trance both as an *artefact* and as a *commodity*. An artefact is something prized for its cultural significance and is very much associated with the imperialist anthropological agenda. An artefact comes to signify something that is Other – distanced by time, space, geography, language and culture, it expands the boundaries of the known world to include that which exists beyond the everyday – it is a reminder of what is achievable and conquerable. Removed from their original context, artefacts form the basis of collections. Simultaneously fixed and indeterminate, they beget identity and signify tenure. One is reminded of Claude Lévi-Strauss’ essay “New York in 1941” (1985) where, according to the author, the city of New York is like a Victorian curio cabinet filled with masterpieces of pre-Columbian, South Asian, Oceanic, Japanese and Native North American art that is simultaneously prized and forgotten, admired and undervalued.

A commodity, on the other hand, is invested with agency. Wrested from its original context or purpose, a commodity is invested with a value that is jointly created, by buyer and seller, owner and desirer. Even where the value – monetary or otherwise – is artificially inflated by scarcity, demand, or fads, the value to all stakeholders is acknowledged and, though vulnerable to manipulation, respected. Even when two disparate socio-economic systems meet and compete there is an appreciation and restoration of value through the trade of commodities.

In 2007 Mantsoe is not an object of ethnographic classification and fascination from whom trance is procured without compensation but an active agent in the transaction. In working with Western dancers, companies and festivals, Mantsoe is participating in a process that subverts and potentially *decolonizes* the traditional flow of contact and information between West and non-West wherein trance may be viewed less as an artefact and more as a traded commodity.

First coined by German political scientist Moritz Julius Bonn after World War II in *The Crumbling of Empire*, the movement to decolonize was often heralded by the acknowledgement of the immense financial strain associated with administering distant lands. Yet in many cases, decolonizing was intended to keep the former colonies still tied to the mother economy and vulnerable to foreign investment and interference – in other words, there are and were degrees of decolonization.

Decolonizing entails analyzing and exposing power relationships embedded in the representation of knowledge – who is being studied, by whom and for what purpose – and measuring those responses against imperialist principles that have pervaded academic research. In its most existential form, decolonizing is applied to the notion of subjectivity, bringing into question why one “sees” the way one does. Applied to post-coloniality, decolonizing subjectivity acknowledges that while the dynamics of oppression, trauma and resistance may manifest in similar ways for all dispossessed peoples, how one experiences the world and one’s history is always experienced in a profoundly individual way.²

Applied to Mantsoe, decolonizing functions in two ways: first, as the conventional subject of anthropological research, Mantsoe has inverted the traditional flow of knowledge by bringing himself and his use of trance to the attention of the West. Unlike the cultural fairs of the Victorian and Edwardian ages that saw the importation of indigenous peoples in staged exhibits of the “primitive” and “authentic” for a spectacle-hungry public, Mantsoe positions himself as an active and instigative agent in the exchange within the arena of high culture. Secondly, Mantsoe is engaged in decolonizing

his own subjectivity through his performances of trance – this is particularly clear in *NDAA*. In performing *NDAA*, Mantsoe questions the relationship he has with his multiple audiences – the spirits, spectators, the cosmos and his own consciousness – challenging both how he sees and is seen. In describing this piece, Mantsoe speaks of an “awakening of the self.” From the moment he enters the performance space, he begins the process towards trance. It is there inside him and also hovering on the edge of his kinesphere waiting to be summoned. His awakening begins slowly, tentatively, then gradually his movements expand as the distance between inner and outer is breached. In *NDAA*, as in Mantsoe’s habitus, the Self is neither an isolated nor bounded being. It his past, his present and his future, his ancestors, his siblings, his grandchildren not yet born. In performing *NDAA* he asks:

is there anyone here, is there something around me that I cannot see or hear? Do I exist between reality and the imaginary? Do you see me? Between us, life passes us without knowing if it ever existed, we breathe the human flesh that we do not see.

(Mantsoe, website, 2004)

In *Decolonizing Methodologies* Linda Tuhiwai Smith, a self-described “indigenous researcher” from New Zealand, looks at the collection of artefacts as an aspect of the colonialist enterprise. “The idea that collectors were actually rescuing artefacts from decay and destruction,” Tuhiwai Smith explains, “and from the indigenous peoples themselves, legitimated practices which also included commercial trade and plain and simple theft” (1999, p 61). Through her writing, it is clear that Tuhiwai Smith wishes to invest the colonized with agency. To view the anthropologists’ endeavour as one-sided and limited to their own action, is to deny the colonized their involvement – however coerced – in the colonial enterprise and in its aftermath. Like Homi Bhabha before her, Tuhiwai Smith contributes to the critical discussion of the post-colonial Where Bhabha liberates the colonized from their “inscription as Europe’s shackled Other” and recognizes that

the colonized subject can, indeed, speak for him- or herself (Bhabha, 1994), Tuhiwai Smith brings the discussion to a much more prosaic level in discussing the act and impact of trade. Here trade by definition acknowledges the existence and contribution of two sides regardless of the issue of equality or neutrality. The trade of goods – some, as Tuhiwai Smith suggests, were in fact “made to order” – imparts a story of meeting, a declaration of desire, appraisal, debate, resolution and potential exchange if all prior stages were enacted in a satisfactory manner (1999, p 61).

For Mantsoe, participating in the trade and acquisition of his cultural and bodily knowledge is part of a moral responsibility he feels is incumbent upon him. He states:

my purpose is to re-educate, to reintroduce [traditional] practices, to balance traditions with the concerns of modern times. I want to be open, I want to talk about it ... it is important for me to know who I am and where I come from. And to believe that maybe other people can learn something from that.

Mantsoe in Braun, website, 2006)

While Appadurai’s work has focused primarily on issues of modernity and globalization, his theories on the creation and circulation of commodities has particular relevance to this discussion. Building from the premise that commodities, like persons, have “social lives” (1986, p 3) Appadurai argues that, through the act of economic exchange, things acquire value where value is something that is attributed to and projected onto the things that are exchanged. By focussing on the things themselves rather than on the form and function that exchange takes allows one to acknowledge that the relationship between exchange and value is determined socially. Understanding why commodities are economically valuable and how they came to be regarded as such presents an opportunity to understand and assess the history of objects, their changes in value and their trajectories as components or in fact foci of social interaction.

Without anthropomorphizing, Appadurai contends that objects have social lives by virtue of the role they play in representing and contesting value both as objects-in-themselves and in their relation to their owners as properties or assets. If one understands trance as a commodity, as an object of trade, then through Mantsoe's work and his positioning vis a vis a globalized economy, one can appreciate how "objects circulate in different regimes of value in space and time," in "specific cultural and historical milieus" and as a result, acquire social lives (Appadurai, 1986, p 4).

In the same volume as Appadurai's introductory essay on commodities, American medieval historian Patrick Geary discusses the circulation of medieval religious relics as "sacred commodities" (1986, p 169). Like slaves, Geary begins, relics are both persons and things and so to some degree problematize contemporary theories of commodification. Historically, trafficking in humans was key to the colonialist enterprise and like slaves, relics were significant and highly valued commercial items within a specific historical era. Relics are invested with a spiritual and ineffable dimension where their acquisition or their proximity intimates closeness with a higher power. A relic is both a thing – a piece of bone or a remnant of shroud – and an idea – the presence of God, the possibility of miracles, the propinquity of divine love (1986, p 170).

Arguing that trance might be seen as a relic presents an interesting dilemma. The spiritual nature or purpose of relics seems applicable to Mantsoe's practice, yet one would be unlikely to cast Mantsoe or his trance states in this light. Practitioners of trance are often people of interest within a community, garnering respect and/or fear yet those who seek knowledge from them are drawn to them in a similar way that supplicants would be drawn to seek out or acquire a relic – to heal themselves, to feel closer to a divine power, to derive a sense of inner peace. Though relics have a diminished status in the West of the present compared to that which they attained during the medieval period, as medical anthropologist Setha M. Low argues, bodies and body parts continue to be commodified. Though divested of their spiritual connotations, body parts remain defined by their

potential to generate capital through the practice of organ harvesting and donation (Low, 1994, p 476). Yet trance is neither associated with a particular part of Mantsoe's body, nor is it to be removed or excised from him. It resides within him and is brought out in carefully constructed and choreographed performances that meet with the spirits', presenters' and ticket buyers' approval.

Trance's change in status from an artefact to a commodity coincides with a shift towards late capitalism (Jameson, 1990). Mantsoe is an active participant in a globalized economy that supports an open market for cultural exports. International co-productions that involve multiple countries and collaborators of various ethnicities and nationalities, working in shared idioms of language and form that defy geographical borders are becoming increasingly common. It is within this milieu that Mantsoe is active. Commodities in this transnational performing arts arena are not created to respond to basic needs of sustenance and survival but rather are created out of a desire for the new, the unusual and the extraordinary and within this, the authentic. Someone like Mantsoe, who embodies the traditional and the contemporary, is invested with a divine gift yet is equally at ease in the secular, technologized, multinational economy, is keenly positioned to respond to and profit from the current market – this was never as clear to me as when we sat together in an international coffee shop chain, in Toronto on an excruciatingly hot day in July (global warming?) with the air conditioning blasting, his i-pod hanging around his neck and Mantsoe telling me that he is descended from a long line of shamans and is himself a shaman. "You know, I really am a modern guy," Mantsoe explains to a reviewer in 2005, "I still believe in and am nourished by this modern world" (Braun, website, 2005).

In Mantsoe, trance is an embodied object that he simultaneously brings with him and that moves through him. When one watches Mantsoe dance, there is a sense of a rolling energy building and growing, that follows a transition from intense introspection towards release and revelation. The capacity to enter trance states – like a pilot light that never goes out – resides in his body.

In the same way that relics as both persons and things problematize contemporary theories of commodification, so too does commodifying Mantsoe and his ability to enter trance states. Trance conceived first as an artefact and then through the example of Mantsoe as a commodity is a thing; Mantsoe is the person who conveys and enacts trance. Since one cannot definitively separate trance from Mantsoe, it is both a person and a thing. Mantsoe and his family believe his spiritual vocation is corroborated through his ability to enter altered states of consciousness. Mantsoe accesses and manifests these altered states through his dancing and combined, the two modes of expression make him both a powerful performer and an effective conduit for the gods (Mantsoe, personal interview, 2006). Trance is an intangible action, a mystical concept housed in his body yet in touring around the globe he is circulating and trading in trance. His value as a dancer and trance practitioner is acknowledged equally by his own and his host cultures on either side of the residual West/non-West divide. Even when the West places a monetary value on his skills that cannot truly compensate for their inestimable value, the gods still condescend through their immortal goodness to bring knowledge to the uninitiated through the vehicle of his dancing, trancing body. Mantsoe is the thing in motion, illuminating the human and social dimensions of his existence and his own agency – the globalizing forces of traditional and contemporary, colonial and post-colonial, a human in touch with the divine, a beautiful and exuberant dancer working with the blessings of the gods at the invitation of the white man.

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Endnotes

- ¹ This paper is extracted from my PhD dissertation, *Trance as Artefact: De-Othering transformative states with reference to examples from contemporary dance in Canada*, University of Surrey, 2007.
- ² See, for example, Appleman Williams, 1985; Blant, 1987; Ngugi, 1987; Mbilinyi & Meena, 1991; Esedebe, 1994; Ross, 1998; Pérez, 1999; Rogers & Swadener, 1999; Caraway, 1999; Henry, 1998; and Chow, 2002.

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De la bascule : pour une expérience du jeu du désir

Enora Rivière

J'avais intitulé ma communication : *à quoi pense une nymphe quand elle danse ?* Aujourd'hui, je la nomme *De la bascule : pour une expérience du jeu du désir*.

La recherche que je mène questionne précisément l'expérience du danseur comme espace discursif. Aussi la tentation ou le fantasme de proposer un format à la croisée de la pratique et de la théorie autre que parler en dansant, danser en parlant, parler puis danser ou danser puis parler, fut grande mais illusoire, et ce pour deux raisons : il n'ait le caractère performatif de l'énonciation et me paraissait finalement inadéquat avec mon propos. En effet, le défi que je désire relever est celui de raconter une danse comme on conte une histoire que je vous invite à mettre en dialogue avec vos propres récits et ceux sur lesquels j'ai choisi de m'appuyer car je n'ai pas pu m'empêcher d'aller lire quelques textes. De danse, il s'agit donc de *L'après-midi d'un faune* de Vaslav Nijinski et plus précisément de la partition de danse de la petite nymphe n°3 (le numéro renvoyant à l'ordre d'apparition). Partition puisque j'ai appris la danse de *L'après-midi d'un faune* à partir de la partition écrite en système Laban¹ que Dominique Brun m'a transmise, ainsi qu'aux sept autres danseurs, dans le cadre de son projet de film intitulé *Le faune- un film ou la fabrique de l'archive*.

J'ai décidé de ne montrer ni photos, ni films, non pas que je considère que tout le monde ait vu cette danse ou doive la connaître mais que chacun de nous ait déjà probablement fabriqué dans son imaginaire des nymphes. Rappelons simplement que *L'après-midi d'un faune* de Nijinski est une pièce d'une dizaine de minutes pour huit danseurs : un faune, une grande nymphe et six petites nymphes se déployant dans un espace d'environ dix mètres de longueur sur trois mètres de profondeur, autrement dit un bandeau au sein duquel la danse se développe telle une frise, un aplat dont la face est dirigée vers le public.

En annonçant le fait de raconter la danse, je ne désire pas la décrire exhaustivement mais la questionner au sujet de sa force érotique à partir des interrogations suivantes : comment se

construire nymphe ? Quelle fabrique de quelle nymphe ? et comment le dessin de la danse convoque-t-il ce jeu de désir ?

L'énonciation de la féminité comme banalité essentielle

Quiconque, danseurs ou spectateurs, rencontre *L'après-midi d'un faune* de Nijinski éprouve une émotion esthétique très forte, de l'ordre du choc, voire du bouleversement. J'ai eu la sensation d'être profondément touchée à un endroit que j'ai d'emblée nommé « féminité » malgré ma réticence à faire usage de ce terme de par son emploi excessif concourant à sa banalisation et sa banalité. J'ai en effet souvent été prise par le doute à l'idée d'évoquer mon rapport à la féminité dans la danse, de peur de ne pas échapper aux stéréotypes, aux lieux communs, aux raccourcis de la pensée, de peur de tomber dans la mièvrerie et de coller à cette image de la danseuse naïve, de la danseuse objet de désir qui m'a longtemps obsédée, hantée et parfois gâchée mon plaisir à parler de la danse. Pourtant, dès le début de l'apprentissage de la danse, s'est imposée à moi l'urgence, la nécessité de me penser, m'envisager, m'appréhender prioritairement femme en amont de l'acte de danse. J'emploie donc le terme féminité pour rendre compte des espaces où cette danse précisément m'a bousculée : l'intimité, la sexualité, l'érotisme.

A cette résistance s'ajoutait l'étymologie du terme « nymphe » et ces divers usages dans les champs mythologique, social et anatomique ! L'origine du mot « nymphe » est en effet obscure. Il est emprunté au latin *nympha*, lui-même emprunté au grec *numphê* (signifiant « épousée, jeune fille ou jeune femme en âge d'être mariée », ou encore « belle-fille »). *Nympha* est le nom donné aux divinités de rang inférieur résidant surtout à la campagne près des sources. Le mot latin a quelques sens métaphoriques : poupée, nymphe d'un insecte ; clitoris, etc. En français, le mot est d'abord employé comme terme de mythologie grecque et romaine dans un récit du mythe de Narcisse. Par analogie, il s'est appliqué à

une fille galante, une courtisane et de nos jours à une fille gracieuse. En anatomie, nymphe ne désigne plus comme en latin, le clitoris mais les petites lèvres de la vulve. Le fait de danser une petite nymphe communément appelé « nymphette » ne faisait qu'agrandir mes soupçons !

Qu'est ce qu'une nymphe ? : la nymphe comme genre ou la machine-nymphe

A la lecture de plusieurs textes sur la représentation de la nymphe dans l'art pictural, j'ai été frappée par deux choses : la difficulté à cerner cette figure, à la circonscrire et donc à envisager sa réalité et en même temps les nombreuses corrélations entre ces descriptions et mon ressenti de la danse, malgré leurs écarts historiques et esthétiques : ces textes prennent en effet appui sur des représentations picturales de la renaissance dont le pathos s'oppose à la sobriété, la suggestivité de la danse de Nijinski. Aussi, l'enjeu n'est pas de valider le projet de Nijinski via des écrits antérieurs ou postérieurs à son œuvre mais de montrer sa force en mettant en dialogue matérialité picturale et matérialité chorégraphique.

Comment donc le geste dansé et plus précisément le travail du danseur peut-il rendre compte d'un *fantasma* au son sens étymologique, c'est à dire d'une image telle que la nymphe ?

S'il y a un expert en nymphe, c'est l'historien d'art Aby Warburg puisqu'il en fait le paradigme de la notion de *Pathosformel*, signifiant « formule de pathos ». Georges Didi-Huberman dans son livre *L'image survivante : histoire de l'art et temps des fantômes selon Aby Warburg* explique : « La notion de Pathosformel, sera élaborée en grande partie pour rendre compte de cette intensité chorégraphique qui traverse toute la peinture de la Renaissance et qui, s'agissant de grâce féminine – de vénusté –, a été résumée par Warburg, outre sa dénomination conceptuelle, sous une sorte de personnification transversale et mythique : Ninfa, la nymphe (...) Ninfa, donc, serait l'héroïne impersonnelle – car elle réunit en elle un nombre considérable d'incarnations, de personnages possibles – de la Pathosformel dansante et féminine. Ninfa est d'abord l'héroïne de ces « mouvements éphémères des chevelures et du vêtement » que la peinture renaissance voulut passionnément « fixer ». C'est l'héroïne auratique

par excellence : Warburg laisse entendre que la représentation classique de la beauté féminine prend réellement « vie » sous l'action, le souffle d'une « cause extérieure » : une étrangeté d'atmosphère ou de texture (...) Ninfa s'incarne, c'est à dire qu'elle est femme autant que déesse : Vénus terrestre et Vénus céleste, danseuse et Diane, aérienne mais essentiellement incarnée, insaisissable mais essentiellement tactile (...) »²

La nymphe : une figure dialectique ou un être bipolaire

La démultiplication des expressions bipolaires décrivant la nymphe, comme autant de tentatives d'épuisement d'une définition insaisissable, renvoie à l'échec de la circonscrire. Cette bipolarité ne relève d'aucun paradoxe ou d'aucune dichotomie mais renvoie à une coexistence d'états ou d'agencements corporels que la danse de *L'après-midi d'un faune* nous révèle dans son écriture. Comment donc dans le geste parvenons-nous à rendre compte d'une créature aussi complexe et insaisissable ?

On retrouve ce caractère a priori insaisissable dans les partitions et musicales et dansées, ainsi que dans leur corrélation, leur mise en dialogue. Si le schéma temporel est induit, imposé par la musique de Debussy, et si pendant la période d'apprentissage de la danse, nous avons calqué le geste à la musique, le rapport que j'entretiens aujourd'hui avec la musique est dialectique.

Les premiers contacts avec cette triple œuvre (triple puisqu'elle regroupe l'églogue de Mallarmé, la musique de Debussy et la danse de Nijinski) sont assez troublants de part la complexité de leurs compositions respectives. Je pressens d'emblée la grande difficulté, voire l'impossibilité à la réaliser parfaitement, c'est à dire telle qu'elle est écrite sur la partition Laban, jusqu'au moment où le dessin de la danse inscrit dans la mémoire de mon corps me permet de m'en affranchir et de jouer avec. Et c'est probablement parce que c'est une œuvre insaisissable, qui nous échappe que les corps dansants le deviennent à leur tour. L'on oscille dans l'acte de danse entre le fait que l'écriture nous échappe et celui de s'en affranchir. S'ouvre alors un véritable espace de négociation au sein duquel je réajuste sans cesse mes espaces internes afin de réaliser au plus près le dessin spatial requis par cette danse et de réduire

au maximum l'écart entre l'image que j'ai de la position et la réalisation de cette même position.

Prenons la situation suivante: je marche vers l'avant, le bassin dans la direction de mes pieds, le buste tourné d'un quart de tour vers la droite et incliné vers l'arrière, la tête dans le prolongement du buste dans une double inclinaison, à la fois sur le côté gauche et vers l'avant, les yeux cherchant des nymphes non encore visibles, mon bras droit formant un « v » dans l'alignement de mon buste dans le même aplatissement, tout en étant en contact, par les doigts de la main gauche, avec la petite nymphe me précédant, nos deux bras dirigés vers le sol, les doigts légèrement repliés vers l'intérieur de la paume de la main, nos mains se croisant et formant une couronne par le contact des doigts. Tout cela en trois ou quatre temps, et donc en deux ou trois pas puisque nous devons faire deux pas sur trois temps.

A la description de cette situation en mouvement, l'on remarque la complexité des agencements corporels de la danse de Nijinski et la nécessité de travailler dans une certaine économie de l'investissement tensionnel, de la circulation du souffle et d'envisager l'intérieur du corps comme un espace au sein duquel l'on peut déployer, ouvrir des volumes d'air insoupçonnés.

Cette danse convoque perpétuellement des réajustements dans la mesure où nous sommes face à des combinaisons inhabituelles. Si l'on devait nommer un schéma postural type dans cette danse, ce serait un agencement à la fois latéral et vertical dont l'une de ses combinaisons serait la suivante : en appui sur la jambe gauche, la jambe droite repliée en arrière, le genou droit à l'aplomb de mon bassin droit et en contact avec mon genou gauche, le bout des orteils du pied droit posés au sol et le talon droit relevé formant quasiment un angle droit avec le sol, le bassin dans la direction de mon déplacement et donc de profil par rapport au public, le buste tourné d'un quart de tour vers la droite par rapport au bassin, les bras en verticale basse de part et d'autre du buste formant un très léger arrondi de sorte que l'on puisse sentir passer de l'air sous les aisselles, les doigts solidarisés mais sans tension et le bout des doigts légèrement recroquevillés finalisant la courbe des bras ; la tête en bascule vers l'avant, c'est à dire par un mouvement de retrait du menton et de saillie du front. Pour maintenir l'immobilité d'une telle position sans tension tout en étant prête à effectuer

mon prochain déplacement, je suis en plein appui sur ma jambe gauche au point de provoquer un léger déhanchement, une saillie latérale du fessier gauche via un transfert du poids du corps sur l'avant du pied et afin de n'avoir aucun poids sur la jambe droite, celle-ci étant justement en contact avec le sol. Dans cette position, je dois pouvoir soulever ma jambe droite à n'importe quel moment sans perdre mon équilibre. Pour accepter la torsion du buste d'un quart de tour, je soulève ma cage thoracique, crée de l'espace entre mon ventre et mes côtes, puis je me concentre sur la détente de mon omoplate droite, en fait glisser la pointe vers les côtes basses afin d'ouvrir l'espace entre la clavicule et l'épaule me permettant de détendre mes épaules et de les conserver au même niveau. Quant à la question du maintien de la culbute, j'en vérifie son effectuation, j'en contrôle la position par un mouvement de bascule de la tête autour d'un axe imaginaire parallèle au sol et qui traverserait mes deux oreilles.

A travers la description de cette posture et des stratégies employées pour la réaliser et la conserver, l'on imagine très bien la potentialité de se sentir bipolaire, à la fois terrestre et aérienne par le jeu subtil d'orientations diverses des différentes parties du corps.

Si dans la peinture, la nymphe prend « vie » sous l'action d'une cause extérieure, comment dans la danse peut-on en rendre compte sans machinerie? L'espace musical ouvert par l'œuvre de Debussy pourrait être assimilée à cette « cause extérieure » non seulement en terme d'espace-temps mais aussi d'espace imaginaire, c'est à dire comme l'un des stimuli propice à la construction d'une corporéité nymphe, d'un genre nymphe, d'une machine-nymphe. Dans L'après-midi d'un faune, c'est le faune qui démarre la danse. Aussi, les quelques minutes de l'œuvre musicale précédant mon entrée, me sont très précieuses car elles me permettent, par une écoute très fine, non seulement de me plonger dans l'univers de la danse de la nymphe mais aussi de trouver un état de détente nécessaire à l'effectuation de cette danse extrêmement précise. Cet espace-temps en amont de la danse, je me l'approprie pour mettre en branle tout ce qui me sera nécessaire tout au long de la danse : j'active ma polysensorialité en portant attention dans un premier temps sur l'ouverture des pores de la peau, afin d'être

réceptive à la moindre sensation produite par la sonorité musicale, les oscillations des plis de ma robe de soie sur ma peau provoquées par l'air ambiant et l'espace interrelationnel que je construis avec les deux autres petites nymphes, par le contact des doigts, avant d'entrer dans l'espace de représentation. Je me laisse donc traverser par toutes ses sensations qui s'offrent à moi ou que je provoque par une attention particulière que je porte au contexte qui m'entoure, par le travail des chiasmes sensoriels. J'opte pour un regard périphérique, ou plutôt une attention sphérique au sein de laquelle va se jouer un réseau de tensions notamment érotiques.

Eros

« Avec l'entrée de Ninfa, écrit Didi-Huberman, le tumulte de la mort violente ouvre avec une voie serpentine à la chorégraphie du désir. La nymphe érotise la lutte, révèle les liens inconscients de l'agressivité et de la pulsion sexuelle. Ninfa donc, érotise - car Eros est cruel - le combat des êtres les uns avec les autres. Puis elle finit par réunir tout cela dans son propre corps : elle devient elle-même débat, lutte intime de soi à soi, nœud indémêlable du conflit et du désir, antithèse faite empreinte. Le paradigme agonistique et le paradigme chorégraphique ne font plus qu'un : c'est le paradigme dionysiaque qui, désormais, impose la figure de la nymphe comme ménade, qu'elle soit païenne ou chrétienne. »³

J'ose alors la question : qu'est ce qui dans la danse m'érotise ? Il y a dans la danse de *L'après midi d'un faune* trois groupes : le faune, la grande nymphe et les 6 petites nymphes qui évoluent chacun dans un espace délimité, les petites nymphes se situant dans la profondeur entre le faune et la grande nymphe. La pièce se compose pour l'essentiel de marches, d'une succession de transferts de poids et donc d'une série de va-et-vient. Si le faune et la grande nymphe restent dans l'espace de représentation dès leur première apparition, les petites nymphes, quant à elles ne cessent d'aller et venir, faisait des apparitions de plus en plus courtes, comme autant de parties de jeux faites dans la complicité et teintées d'espièglerie. Les petites nymphes ne s'offrent pas, elles jouent de leurs désirs et de celui des autres, en provoquant le faune et en protégeant la

grande nymphe et donc en créant une triangulation du désir.

Ce jeu du désir se construit pour moi autour de deux gestes qui seraient de l'ordre de la bascule comme métaphore de cette bipolarité inhérente à la nymphe : la marche ou la démarche chaloupée et la culbute de la tête.

Il y a en effet dans cette démarche, via la temporalité qui lui est impartie, la nécessité d'osciller le bassin, les hanches de droite à gauche, d'y trouver une certaine mobilité. Et c'est cette mobilité du bassin comme zone de transmission des pressions, comme zone de dialogue, d'échanges de tensions entre le haut et la bas du corps, qui me permet de trouver à la fois une certaine légèreté dans la danse mais aussi une certaine puissance, toutes deux productives de sensualité, d'une charge érotique.

De même pour le mouvement de culbute de la tête : le retrait du menton et la saillie du front modifient le niveau de mon regard. Pour autant, je dois garder mon regard à l'horizontale. Celui-ci ne se projette donc pas selon un trajet direct mais selon un trajet courbe, par le bas produisant une certaine tension, une assurance de l'ordre d'une agressivité enjouée.

A travers ces quelques lignes, j'ai tenté de raconter une danse en rendant compte très succinctement du travail du danseur sur la question du jeu du désir dans cette danse mais aussi de souligner le désir comme fondement de tout acte dansé et la potentialité de l'espace discursif propre au danseur quant à la perception des œuvres chorégraphiques.

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Notes

¹ Elaborée par les deux chercheuses Ann Hutchinson et Claudia Jeschke.

² Didi-Huberman, Georges. « L'image survivante : histoire de l'art et temps des fantômes selon Aby Warburg », Les Editions de Minuit, Paris, 2002, p. 256-258.

³ Id, p. 265-266.

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What does it take to Bend the Lines?

Jill Nunes Jensen

Years before the idea of a university dance program would be realized Alonzo King formed a company to circumvent many of the existing protocols recognized as part of ballet in the United States. When he began “Lines, A Dance Company” in 1982, King intended to create a community of dancers who could work cooperatively to explore ideas through movement, a task many still feel is beyond the scope of ballet. Critics who have reviewed the company over the years forthrightly acknowledge the work as “often indecipherable” (Dunning 2007).¹ In my dissertation on LINES² I attribute this lack of prolificness to the fact that the words and concepts most appropriately epitomizing their performances are uncommon in the historiography of the discipline.

The repertoire that King has created for LINES is unique in its bifurcated attention to tradition and renovation. His choreography does not dismiss classical ballet practices; instead he cites those formative principles as “truths” or theories in need of further investigation. For this reason, ballerinas usually wear *pointe* shoes, *pas de deux* between male and female partners are prevalent, and the dancers’ classical ballet training is obvious. With an aesthetic that literally teeters (and by this I mean that the dancers frequently find balance “off” of their centers) between unconventionality and the customs that were seeded just a few miles away, LINES has contributed to the development of a new style of ballet in the United States. Despite a continued commitment to innovatively corporealizing the ballet vocabulary, King has long-championed the practice of contemplating movement. In his opinion, there are no disconnects in the multiplicity of practices and theories that we encounter throughout our lives. Dance, philosophy, writing, geometry, spirituality, music, science, history—all of these mediums are methods for seeking information. They are not mutually exclusive in the way that contemporary society presumes, they are in dialogue and should be so conceived. Lines suggest vast networks where moments interface instead of serving as

metaphors for barriers. From this ideology, it is not surprising that King believes all disciplines must employ flexibility and encourage discourse, and with that in mind has guided his dancers to bend in ways that would be strictly off-limits in the eyes of ballet classicists. During the past 25 years he has built a repertoire that gives form to these concepts, and in 2006, spearheaded another venture meant to complicate the disparate nomenclature of practice and theory: the founding of the LINES/Dominican University of California Bachelor of Fine Arts program in Dance.

Billed as “only the second program in the United States, and the only one on the West Coast, to partner a national dance company with an academic institute” (LINES press release 2005) the concept behind the BFA had long been in King’s consciousness. In fact, as Pam Hagan, now Director of the San Francisco Dance Center where LINES has their studios remembers, in the late eighties³ when she, Robert Rosenwasser and King were deliberating over names for SFDC, King had suggested “The SF Dance Institute of Choreography” to connote the convergence of various disciplines he envisioned. As Hagan explained to me in an interview, “‘institute of choreography’ has a different sense of how it’s actually understood in this country. . . the term ‘institute’ often signifies a place of higher education.” Because Hagan knew they were launching a dance studio, a place that is quite separate from an educational institute in the American popular consciousness, she saw this as problematic. Nevertheless, it is clear that King’s suggestion to refer to the center as such was an early acknowledgment of his desire to confuse contemporary semantics, problematize internalized associations, and foreshadow the formation of the BFA.

According to a LINES press release from January 2005, the new program, although not the first in the country, is the first to place contemporary ballet at the forefront. Says Harlan Stelmach, Chair of Dominican University of California’s Department of Humanities:

Students in the LINES/Dominican University program will acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for a professional career in today's dance world, while also gaining the life-long benefits of a liberal arts education . . . The BFA in Dance reflects a need expressed by dance students from across the country for a program with a strong emphasis on ballet technique and artistry with a contemporary approach.

Total units for the four-year program range from 132-134 and are divided into "dance curriculum" and "liberal arts" courses. The former category includes, of course ballet, in addition to percussion, gyrotonic/gyrokinesis and modern dance. The latter is comprised of classes such as "Art and Society," math, rhetoric, anatomy and expository writing. Per the information on the company's website, improvisation and composition are highlighted to generate a "strong emphasis on individual responsibility and exploration."⁴ Of the ten core faculty members, eight have been or are associated with LINES Ballet. This assures that King's aesthetic and understanding of movement will remain the dominant focus. Veteran LINES dancer Marina Hotchkiss is the current director. As a student of Saint Mary's LEAP program,⁵ a Liberal Arts BA developed for current and former dancers, Hotchkiss understands how essential it is to have the capacity to think intelligently about dance. She speaks positively about the program's desire to change the way ballet dancers are trained: to facilitate introspection, to give confidence to those who seek the unconventional, to maintain ballet as the central concentration while finding ways to re-shape the form. According to Hotchkiss, there were thirty-five applicants the first year and there are currently eleven women in the inaugural class. For 2007, there are eighteen and for Fall 2007 over eighty applications have been received to date.

The audition process is not unlike those of other ballet programs, class is given and most applicants prepare solos to perform; still there is a significant dissimilarity, which is that Hotchkiss frequently asks prospective students to write about how dance has led them to "a deeper understanding of themselves." This is an atypical act for a ballet audition in that it shifts the focus away from the peripheral presentation of feet and

legs, that is very much part of being successful in the form, and invites those auditioning to portray themselves in another way. Since ballet dancers are schooled to conceal and not expose, to tuck under, hide exerted effort, break down *pointe* shoes to lessen their sound and to quiet the breath, Hotchkiss' assignment sets the stage for the unorthodox attitude that this program seeks to take from the very beginning. Moreover, because it has always been King's belief that the more mature a dancer is, and maturity is not directly correlated with age (but with the ability to conceptualize, philosophize and understand one's relationship to others) the more likely she or he is to thrive as an artist. In other words, the ability to communicate cogently is considered every bit as important as the dancer's physical capabilities.

Of course this does not mean that all of the young dancers in the program subscribe to this mentality. As much as Hotchkiss or I might like to claim that they have sought out the LINES program because it affords a more intellectual exploration of dance, a selfless investigation into theorizing their own practice, it would be foolish to deny the fact that a potential relationship with Alonzo King and his company is a big enticement. Says Hotchkiss:

Many students want to see the program as a feeder for the company, which it emphatically is not. I have to make that speech often. Alonzo has strongly expressed that our training is not job training, that this is not a program designed to help people get jobs. It is designed to help students discover themselves and the world around them through deep art practice. We are in discussion about this as a faculty, because we also want to equip our students with the best training possible for today's professional world. Almost all students coming in express the goal of dancing professionally after graduation. They may not yet have the goal that we have for them, of intense self-discovery and character development.

Within this statement, Hotchkiss makes clear that the central tenet supporting LINES also undergirds this BFA: the modern idea that process and not

product must be a ballet dancer's foremost concern.

Most of the dancers who have worked with Alonzo King claim his way of rehearsing and constructing new dances is rare. In contrast to other prominent ballet choreographers in the U.S., King does not set works in as much as he uses company members to develop ideas and patterns that can be applied through their own idiosyncratic approaches. This was made manifest in his 2007 premiere, *Long River High Sky* that paired the company with the kung-fu artistry of Shaolin monks. Two of the monks who worked with King theorized how this practice differed from their own training at the temple. "Alonzo is very humorous and very gentle" said Shi ChangQiang. To this Shi ChangJun added, "'if a monk doesn't practice, maybe as punishment he will sit in a crouch like this' . . . in the courtyard of the temple, for the length of one incense burning, maybe two . . . about an hour." After which ChangQiang reiterated "Alonzo is very gentle" to accentuate the contrasting pedagogical methodologies.⁶ In their comments the monks suggest that within King's subtly exists his ability to compel dancers to internalize ballet and experience the form from an individual place. This is a practice that not only makes LINES' style seem different-looking, but allows the dancers to see how their unconventional creation process has made manifest this type of work. The LINES/Dominican BFA is another attempt to put King's choreographic theories into practice. In light of this, a main goal of the program is to encourage dancers to view movement, or more specifically ballet technique, through a broader lens.

When it comes to the LINES BFA, Hotchkiss sees the program as a way of transitioning young dancers from placement etudes and mimicry to exploration. A trained ballet dancer, she understands the severity of the discipline, its unyielding codes of conduct and Panopticon structure.⁷ Yet, like King, it is her belief that contemporary ballet is not about replication or reconstruction, thus learning through conformity is shunned. All the same, it cannot be ignored that the dancers in this program are paradoxically seeking to embody an aesthetic that stresses individual interpretation over mimesis. The governing board has employed tactics to ameliorate the polemic of teaching King's

methods. First has been to make clear the program's direct association with King's ideas and philosophies rather than the memorization of his repertoire. To this end, former LINES dancer Gregory Dawson choreographed *Nelumbo Nucifero* for the 2007 Dominican showing, a work that unmistakably cites King's stylistic and musical choices.

Another development has been to expand the course of study into areas beyond ballet—namely improv and choreography. Building choice into the program is extremely attractive to those who want to traverse "lines" and work interdisciplinary. Instead of choosing a specialization, the dominant trend in most universities today that Hotchkiss declares to be "inauthentic" in the eyes of her students, the LINES BFA incorporates multiple approaches to the discipline of dance while remaining dedicated to the students' desires of becoming professionals. Of course the fact that few institutes and even fewer major companies are invested in forming such partnerships has helped the LINES/Dominican BFA.

For years the prevailing assumption about ballet training and university education in the U.S. has been conceived of as an "either-or." You simply cannot do both; in fact, many young aspirants are also leaving high school to free up their daytime schedules for additional classes. This insular way of teaching produces practitioners who cannot relate to circumstances outside of ballet and in so doing, diminishes their chances of working in today's professional environment prided on multifaceted dancers. As dance scholar Susan Foster had already foreseen over ten years ago in her article "Dancing Bodies," a "Hired" Body, rather than one that could be marked and easily identified as having trained in a specific ballet or modern technique would permit the potential for greater choreographic latitude and therefore increase the dancer's chance to be hired. I call attention to this not because King is seeking to develop "hired bodies," but to historicize the movement diversity that even the most steadfast ballet technicians feel they need to internalize to work in the contemporary milieu.

Like King's company, the LINES/Dominican BFA is tethered to the discipline of ballet. Nevertheless, as this paper points out, the crucial distinction between these organizations and others

originates from his propensity for revision. A longtime proponent of working individually with dancers to bring their personalities into ballet—something often reserved for other movement idioms and excluded from this genre—King considers himself a servant and a guide. He is committed to the idea that dance is a form of communication and should be used to deal with complex philosophical thought. His choreography has sought to bend the lines that divide the techniques of ballet and modern as well as their foundational ideologies.

King is now involved in what seems to be a more complicated endeavor, the attempt to unite bodies of knowledge through an institutionalized academic program. A challenge that prompts the question: where does the line between practice and theory blur? Then again, perhaps this is not the right question to ask. Surely nebulous categorizations and clever rhetoric can make for an easy fix, but what is the practical work of re-thinking theory? How can poststructuralist literary models of intertextuality and deconstruction provide ballet students tactics that might truly alter how the form is embodied? This paper proposes that, although it is far from ideal in its formative year, such discourse has inspired the LINES/Dominican BFA program to in(form) strategies that might re-shape metaphoric lines of division as malleable, elastic and bendy. It is as if King has completely re-thought the definition of a line in order to put into practice an uninhibited ballet lexicon full of fluidity, twisting and curving. With this inclusive circular form, the practice and theory foregrounding the study of ballet could become more comprehensive, wider and less concerned with being so skinny and vertical. By situating the LINES/Dominican BFA as training ground for this idea, I do not mean to suggest that this paradigm is without flaw. It would be irresponsible and just plain silly to do so. Instead, I do hope to open up a conversation to scrutinize how degrees like the LINES/Dominican BFA might best serve the ideals it sets out to accomplish within the discipline of dance.

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Endnotes

- 1 Of course Dunning is not the only one to point out King's "unique" style of moving. Almost every review or short article that has been written about LINES calls attention to King's unconventional aesthetic by differentiating it from mainstream U.S. ballet. For more, see Karen Campbell's "Alonzo King Bends Ballet in Unique Ways" from *The Boston Globe* or Rita Felciano's "Blurring the Lines" from *Dance Magazine*.
- 2 Information about the LINES/Dominican BFA comes from the author's personal conversations and e-mail communiqués with Marina Hotchkiss throughout 2006-2007. Background on Alonzo King's LINES Ballet has been garnered during the past six years of research on King and his dancers; what began as a doctoral dissertation project (see Works Cited) will become the first book-length study of this company.
- 3 In 1989 the San Francisco Dance Center was formed.
- 4 See Works Cited for complete bibliographic information website.
- 5 Liberal Education for Artistic Professionals.
- 6 Quotes drawn from "The Shaolin Monks of Studio 5," an interview that appeared *sans* author credit as an insert in LINES' 2007 Yerba Buena Fall season program.
- 7 Here I refer to Foucault's conceptualization as developed in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.

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Le danseur de ballet en miroir

Francis Rousseaux

Pourquoi, alors que les miroirs inversent la droite et la gauche, alors qu'ils nous projettent dans le monde inhabitable que dénonçait Borges, quand ils ne nous font pas perdre la tête comme au Nain de *l'Anniversaire de l'infante* mis en nouvelle par Oscar Wilde, pourquoi donc les miroirs semblent-ils si prisés par les danseurs et les chorégraphes de ballet ?

Cette investigation nous conduira sur la piste de la répétition, de la représentation et de la création de spectacle vivant, en passant par un travail philosophique sur la notion de *singularité*.

En répétition, les danseurs de ballet voudraient trouver dans le reflet spéculaire un lieu d'exposition qui ferait d'eux-mêmes le public de leur propre corps exposé, alors qu'ils cherchent dans le miroir, dans le même temps, quelque chose de leur corps propre, afin de le réfléchir dans le cadre du projet chorégraphique.

Les danseurs et les chorégraphes occidentaux ont traditionnellement besoin de miroirs pour travailler, et rares sont les classes de ballet qui n'en sont pas équipées.

Disons tout de suite qu'il existe de nombreuses pratiques et traditions de la danse qui ne mobilisent pas de miroir. Laban lui-même a écrit : " Our body is the mirror through which we become aware of ever circling motions in the universe with the polygonal rhythms " (page 26 de *The Language of Movement. A guidebook to choreutics*).

Mais dans l'imagerie classique du ballet, le reflet du miroir n'est jamais bien loin. Et nous adoptons ici le regard décalé de l'ethnologue qui regarde la classe de ballet sans le souci de classer les spectacles vivants, un peu comme Joann Kealiinohomoku écrivant dans "Une anthropologue regarde le ballet classique comme une forme de danse ethnique" (lu dans *Danse Nomade, Regards d'anthropologues et d'artistes*,

Nouvelles de Danse, Été 1998, pp. 47-67, traduction Agnès Benoit).

Ainsi, à l'heure de la mobilisation des nouvelles technologies dans la danse contemporaine (les créateurs de performances regardent volontiers du côté de la réalité virtuelle, cherchent à tirer parti de capteurs de geste et de retour d'effort, ont tendance à utiliser des images de synthèse et des techniques vidéo, et mettent quelquefois en œuvre des systèmes interactifs d'intelligence artificielle), une investigation du côté des parquets cirés entourés de glaces réfléchissantes et de barres fixes n'est peut-être pas aussi saugrenue qu'il y paraît.

En comprenant mieux comment les danseurs et les chorégraphes utilisent traditionnellement les miroirs pendant leurs répétitions, des idées sur leurs besoins technologiques contemporains pourraient apparaître. Mais les miroirs constituent-ils une technologie parmi d'autres ?

1° De speculo

"Inventa sunt specula ut homo ipse se nosset". Ainsi s'ouvre la *Guerre des Gaules*, par une assertion de César à propos de l'invention des miroirs à des fins de (re)connaissance de soi.

Nous reviendrons sur les intuitions de César. Mais commençons modestement : à tout le moins, il n'est pas faux de dire que le regard réfléchit dans le miroir, et ouvre au regardant un accès à des vues ordinairement cachées.

Différents régimes d'usage du miroir

Tâchons d'emblée de distinguer des grands régimes d'usage des miroirs :

- A l'exception d'une seule, les vues ordinairement cachées que délivre le miroir sont accessibles par d'autres moyens, comme un mouvement des yeux, de la tête ou du corps. Dans ces cas, l'usage du miroir dispense de ce mouvement (c'est le cas des rétroviseurs, qui permettent aux conducteurs des véhicules automobiles de "jeter un œil" sur ce qui se passe derrière eux, sans avoir à se retourner). Le miroir est

alors un *instrument* améliorant l'appropriation de l'environnement visuel du conducteur.

- Une seule vue cachée est absolument conditionnée à l'usage du miroir et inaccessible au regard sans cet artifice (ou des artifices voisins, comme le couple caméra/écran), et il s'agit de la vue réflexive (spéculaire) du regardant se regardant. Nous aurons l'occasion de revenir abondamment sur cette étrangeté, qui confère au miroir un usage singulier dont le mythe de Narcisse n'épuise pas les pouvoirs. C'est le miroir *vertige*.

- Cependant le cas du regard qui se porte sur une partie du corps propre ordinairement cachée ou difficile à voir, par le truchement d'un miroir, est en quelque sorte intermédiaire, puisque cette attitude conditionne l'appréhension de cette partie du corps (au sens de Husserl), et ne peut pas se réduire à une simple appropriation visuelle. Le miroir se fait alors *prothèse*.

Lorsque les danseurs font usage d'un miroir pour contrôler les mouvements de leur corps propre ainsi que ceux, éventuellement, du corps de leurs partenaires ou du chorégraphe, il est probable qu'ils mobilisent concurremment ces différents régimes d'usage du miroir.

L'attitude du danseur face au miroir

Donnons quelques exemples des attitudes possibles des danseurs face aux miroirs, souvent combinées dans un même geste des yeux, de la tête et du corps :

- Le danseur apprend à synchroniser un déplacement complexe avec celui d'un partenaire (peut-être un rythme musical est-il perceptible en arrière-plan), le miroir est *instrument* de contrôle de l'environnement perceptuel de l'artiste. Car dans la danse, les corps se déplacent, ils sont mobiles.
- Le danseur apprend à aligner telle partie de son corps avec telle autre, le miroir est la *prothèse* qui permet de voir ensemble ces deux parties du corps propre, et de contrôler leur alignement en jouant de la musculature. Car dans la danse, les parties du corps font mouvement relatif, les corps de chair et d'os sont plastiques et élastiques.

- Si le spectateur appréhende globalement les déplacements et les mouvements des corps dansés, le danseur et le chorégraphe savent que “déplacements” et “mouvements” ne sont pas étrangers l'un à l'autre, et que la dynamique de la danse consiste à les relier. Tel mouvement du pied va conduire un déplacement du corps par contact avec le sol, tel déplacement va conduire par inertie à des mouvements d'amortissement engageant différentes parties du corps. Cependant, “déplacements” et “mouvements” ne sont pas vécus de la même manière par le danseur, qui vit *dans* sa chair la configuration interne de sa chair et *par* son corps le placement chorégraphique de son corps. C'est pourquoi sans doute le miroir est aussi *vertige* pour le danseur, qui doit se trouver alors même qu'il se donne à voir.

L'ennui avec les miroirs, c'est qu'ils ne sont pas fidèles à nos attentes. Ils nous piègent comme ils piègent les alouettes. Pour chacun de leurs régimes d'usage en effet (*instrument*, *prothèse*, *vertige*), ils nous trahissent sournoisement à la moindre occasion. Et les danseurs en font certainement les frais, eux qui mêlent innocemment dans leurs gestes tant de confiance répétée dans les reflets.

2° Miroirs aux alouettes

Les miroirs sont tout à la fois des *prothèses* invalidantes qui inversent insidieusement la gauche et la droite, des *instruments* passablement détraqués qui nous projettent dans un monde inhabitable, et des *vertiges* diaboliques qui abusent de notre confiance et menacent de nous faire perdre la tête.

Comment cela n'aurait-il pas de conséquences fâcheuses pour les danseurs ?

Les miroirs sont des prothèses invalidantes

Quand le danseur lève le bras droit, pourquoi son reflet dans le miroir lève-t-il invariablement le bras gauche ? Comment contrôler ses mouvements dans ces conditions de rupture de la latéralité ? Comment ne pas s'en trouver profondément désorienté ?

Mais au fait, pourquoi le même miroir n'inverse-t-il pas le haut et le bas ? Serait-ce une

manifestation supplémentaire de ce pouvoir magique qu'on lui prête si volontiers dans les contes féeriques ? Une investigation s'impose.

De par notre mouvement propre, nous pouvons connaître les formes volumiques d'objets qu'il nous est impossible de déplacer. Pour cela, on opère par contournement de l'objet, ce qui équivaut au fond, pour le regard, à un déplacement de l'objet. Cette opération, on s'en souvient, peut toujours être vue comme une combinaison d'isométries positives (les isométries sont des transformations qui conservent les distances, donc qui ne déforment pas l'objet transformé, et elles sont dites positives lorsqu'elles conservent aussi les sens et les orientations internes de l'objet). Au sein de cette combinaison d'isométries (essentiellement des translations et des rotations) qui nous donne accès toujours partiel à l'objet auquel s'attache notre curiosité, la rotation est essentielle pour découvrir les parties cachées et aboutir à une connaissance finalement adéquate (Husserl parlerait ici de *donations par esquisses* pour indiquer que les perceptions visuelles de l'objet sont toujours parcellaires, et de *constitution par remplissement* pour signifier la synthèse que nous en faisons pour parvenir à une représentation unifiée).

Lorsque nous contournons un objet, par exemple un objet d'art dans la vitrine d'un musée qu'il est interdit de prendre en main, la rotation privilégiée se produit autour d'un axe vertical, les bipèdes que nous sommes évoluant à la surface de la terre sous attraction universelle. Je ne prétends pas ici que d'autres rotations n'ont pas cours (la position relative de nos deux yeux ne nous permet d'appréhender une profondeur de champ qu'à l'aide de repères verticaux, et il est parfois utile d'incliner la tête pour rechercher des profondeurs de champs). Mais je prétends que la rotation autour d'un axe vertical est incontestablement la rotation avec laquelle nous entretenons la plus grande affinité, dès lors que nous sommes en âge de marcher.

En face d'un miroir, il se passe alors la chose suivante : nous sommes enclins à reconnaître notre propre image *dans* le miroir, à une (petite) anomalie près; l'inversion de la latéralité. En effet, les isométries négatives comme la symétrie ne se donnent pas dans la nature en dehors de l'artifice "plan miroir", et

elle restent comme une provocation au bon sens. D'où la fascination narcissique du miroir, qui peut sidérer (le fameux "stade du miroir" bien identifié par Freud). Mais il convient de se ressaisir : faisant sens à toute force avec les moyens connus, nous convoquons nos transformations fétiches et forçons notre compréhension de l'image appréhendée grâce à l'expérience de pensée d'une rotation d'axe vertical. Cette image que je vois, c'est un double de mon visage qui me fait face comme dans un face-à-face, et je pourrais "occuper la place qu'il occupe" en faisant demi-tour sur mes talons et en me reculant d'un pas. C'est à ce prix que nous nous reconnaissons dans les miroirs.

Ce faisant, nous essayons de réduire par la pensée une symétrie plane (isométrie négative) à une rotation (isométrie positive), ce qui est géométriquement impossible, à moins de s'accommoder de l'illusion et de prétendre qu'il y a "inversion de la droite et de la gauche". Pourquoi cette prétendue inversion est-elle le corrélat tout désigné de la (productive) confusion géométrique ?

Parce que l'image que nous découvrons "dans le miroir" vertical est quasi-symétrique par rapport à un plan perpendiculaire vertical médian, tout comme les visages que nous voyons dans la rue, et que dans ce cas particulier, *l'image géométrique* de la symétrie plane est similaire à l'image géométrique d'une rotation d'axe vertical de 180°. Mais en réalité, ce n'est pas l'image géométrique qui nous intéresse dans le reflet de notre visage (par ailleurs pas si symétrique qu'il ne paraît au premier regard), mais bien plutôt le fait qu'il s'agisse de *notre* visage, qui cligne des yeux et grimace quand je grimace, qui touche son oreille quand je touche mon oreille. C'est alors là qu'il faut bien invoquer une mystérieuse inversion de la latéralité.

Je crois même que c'est parce que les miroirs sont capables d'inverser la latéralité (et nous en savons plus désormais sur la supercherie à laquelle ils nous acculent) qu'on est enclin à leur prêter volontiers le pouvoir d'inverser également le temps vécu, cette autre référence intérieure. Dans *Le portrait de Dorian Gray* d'Oscar Wilde, c'est même l'image peinte, le fameux portrait de jeunesse relégué dans le grenier, qui vieillit en lieu et place du modèle, et

qui ne doit jamais être vue de celui-ci, sous peine que le hiatus change de sens. Quant à Borges, qui aimait à lire la nuit les quartiers de lune pour s'orienter dans le temps du cycle lunaire, il regrettait que les miroirs le désorientent jusque dans cette activité d'interprétation.

Et on pourra remarquer encore que la verticale est une référence extérieure, déterminée par la gravitation universelle et ressentie au moyen de l'oreille interne, alors que la latéralité gauche-droite est une référence purement interne du corps humain, liée à un repère propre. Ainsi, l'opposition je/univers se cristallise-t-elle dans le regard narcissique au travers du miroir, lorsqu'il faut sacrifier l'ordre du *je* à l'ordre du monde.

Les miroirs sont des instruments détraqués

Ainsi l'image de son visage dans le miroir exige un déplacement *virtuel* pour être reconnue, et l'est du même coup au mépris de la géométrie, ce qui ne manque pas d'avoir des conséquences préjudiciables pour le danseur, qui doit sacrifier la latéralité de ses mouvements et se constituer prisonnier du monde des reflets.

Au moins pourrait-on espérer que l'usage des miroirs permette le contrôle efficace des déplacements *réels* des danseurs ... Mais il n'en est rien, comme nous allons voir.

Le problème vient cette fois du fait que la donation par esquisses ne fonctionne pas à travers un miroir. L'image spéculaire est en effet toujours définitivement réduite à une esquisse, en ce sens précis qu'elle ne peut jamais se donner comme esquisse *de quelque chose*. En effet, lorsque le regard change d'incidence pour explorer les dimensions cachées de l'espace spéculaire, c'est certes une nouvelle image qui se livre, mais qui ne se prête pas aux synthèses adéquates qu'on a l'habitude de pratiquer. Seuls les coiffeurs parviennent apparemment à pratiquer quelques synthèses actives, encore ne faut-il jamais trop les distraire. Quant aux jeunes filles qui se maquillent dans les trains, il faudrait davantage louer leurs efforts, car cette activité requiert sans doute beaucoup de talent.

Et multiplier les miroirs ne règle pas le problème : les jeux de miroirs restent miroirs, multiplient-ils les reflets à l'infini, et le Palais des glaces un endroit hasardeux. Borges prédit, lui, que même les sons finiront par être écrasés par les miroirs, ces objets honnis. Il déplore

aussi la froideur de leur reflet, qui n'a pas de mémoire (nous reviendrons sur ce point). Le mieux serait d'ailleurs de relire son magnifique *Los espejos* : ici, c'est au sacrifice de l'immanence que conduit le miroir, à laquelle seul un homme préparé par une foi transcendante pourrait consentir.

Et là encore, je crois que l'écrasement des dimensions d'espace dans le reflet spéculaire laisse à espérer des pouvoirs magiques du miroir : en tout cas la Reine dans le *Blanche-Neige* de Grimm en est bien persuadée, qui demande à son miroir de faire converger tout le royaume dans la seule focale de sa question fatidique "Miroir, miroir magique, dis-moi qui est la plus belle ?". Et le miroir de répondre : "O reine, tu es très belle, mais, derrière les sept collines, dans le bois auprès des nains, Blanche-Neige est mille fois plus belle que toi."

Les miroirs sont des vertiges menaçants

Les miroirs sont des formes, qui comme toutes les formes "cachent ce qu'elles ne montrent pas" (Sylviane Agacinski). Cela signifie que le regard ne les traverse pas, et que les miroirs ne sont pas transparents, quoi qu'on dise lorsqu'on use de la formule "à travers le miroir" (Ingmar Bergman), ou qu'on se laisse aller aux invitations féeriques de Lewis Carroll ([3] pages 218-223).

Dans le cas du rétroviseur, les constructeurs de véhicules choisissent la taille, la position et la concavité de l'instrument pour optimiser ces contraintes, mais dans le cas du regard spéculaire, le phénomène peut prendre un tour sidérant, voire menaçant. Souvent pour le pire, quelquefois pour le meilleur : on se souvient du *Vilain petit canard* d'Andersen, "Et il pencha la tête sur la surface de l'eau, attendant la mort ... mais que vit-il dans l'eau claire ? Il vit sous lui sa propre image, mais qui n'était plus celle d'un oiseau gris tout gauche, laid et vilain. Il était lui-même un cygne. Peu importe qu'on soit né dans la cour des canards, si l'on est sorti d'un œuf de cygne ...".

Dans le registre du pire, Oscar Wilde a écrit un conte cruel, *L'Anniversaire de l'infante* (qui a inspiré *Le Nain*, un Opéra d'Alexandre Zemlinski), illustrant parfaitement *l'effet de dislocation* du miroir. Le Nain est un personnage qui n'a aucune capacité à la conceptualisation,

n'ayant jamais été initié à la vie intellectuelle : il a été trouvé sur des rivages lointains et offert à l'infante d'Espagne, dont c'est l'anniversaire. Le Nain est laid et difforme, mais il l'ignore : il se déploie singulièrement et à son insu, et il ne sait faire que cela. Le Nain mourrait de se reconnaître, il se disloquerait de s'exposer à lui-même. Tout savoir de sa singularité serait immédiatement dé-singularisante, qui désagrégerait sa personne, *l'atomiserait* comme l'on dit parfois. L'infante s'en amuse, et apprécie le cadeau d'anniversaire. Mais elle a bientôt l'idée cruelle de lui présenter un miroir, au moment où le Nain, épris de sa jeune propriétaire, décide de mobiliser toute sa conviction pour séduire l'infante d'Espagne, incapable qu'il est d'une quelconque évaluation rationnelle de son entreprise. Il sera littéralement disloqué par la reconnaissance de son image dans le miroir : impossible pour lui d'échouer *dans ses fins* (un concept qui lui est définitivement étranger) sans échouer *sa propre personne*. La situation s'imposait pour le Nain, en ce sens qu'elle se donnait sur le mode immédiat de la prescription impérieuse : l'infante devait l'aimer autant qu'il l'aimait. Nulle place ici pour la description de la situation, réduction inconcevable pour une singularité se déployant dans l'authenticité. Et sans description, pas de planification, pas de rationalisation, pas de réussite ou de succès, pas de regret ni de remords, pas davantage de prédiction ou d'explication possible. En particulier, pas d'évaluation des chances d'aboutir à la séduction de l'infante, compte tenu d'un contexte humain rédhitoire pour le Nain, socialement condamné à la déréliction. C'est alors que le miroir joue de son effet de dislocation, causant la chute irrémédiable du Nain, et sa mort.

Mais il arrive aussi que le miroir produise des *effets de collusion*, comme dans le cas des juges de Suzanne dans la scène biblique du *Livre de Daniel* (Daniel 13). Daniel est un enfant hébreu exilé à la cour de Nabuchodonosor, peu après la prise de Jérusalem par les Babyloniens en l'an 587 avant notre ère. Suzanne est la femme d'un notable estimé de Babylone, dont la maison abritait quelquefois les procès jugés par les deux vieillards qu'on avait cette année-là désignés comme guides du peuple. Suzanne, femme d'une grande beauté, aimait à se

promener dans le jardin aux heures chaudes durant lesquelles tout le monde s'était retiré. Les deux vieillards se prirent à désirer Suzanne et, esclaves tourmentés de leur passion, se mirent à épier chaque jour ses promenades. Ils désirèrent Suzanne, mais ne le savent pas encore, et leur crainte de Dieu empêche toute velléité de ce désir de dévaler en convoitise opérante. Voici le passage du *Livre de Daniel* qui nous présente la scène de la collusion des vieillards : "Un jour, s'étant quittés sur ces mots "Rentrions chez nous, c'est l'heure du déjeuner", et chacun s'en étant allé de son côté, chacun aussi revint sur ses pas et ils se retrouvèrent face à face. Forcés alors de s'expliquer, ils s'avouèrent leur passion et convinrent de chercher le moment où ils pourraient surprendre Suzanne seule". C'est en effet après s'être reconnus guettant Suzanne, alors qu'ils feignaient tous deux de s'en retourner pour déjeuner, que la situation s'est imposée à eux sous la forme de la convoitise. En cette reconnaissance mutuelle d'une situation commune réside exactement l'effet de collusion du miroir. Honteux mais forcés de s'avouer mutuellement leur semblable dessein, ils convinrent de guetter ensemble l'occasion de surprendre Suzanne. C'est donc incidemment que les deux vieillards n'en feront plus qu'un, au point de parler *d'une seule voix* lors du procès de Suzanne qui aura bientôt lieu. Et il faudra tout le talent inspiré de Daniel pour les *confondre* (le juge *impartial tranche* les différends après avoir *confondu* les coupables, et l'ange inspirateur de Daniel lui fera apparaître en songe les vieillards *tranchés par le milieu*).

Ainsi, les miroirs provoquent la dé-singularisation. Et qui n'est pas armé pour se réfugier à son avantage dans le concept et la catégorie peut s'en trouver vertigineusement affecté, par effet de dislocation ou de collusion. Le vilain petit canard a cette chance qu'il se découvre appartenir à la catégorie des cygnes, mais le Nain refuse d'accepter son appartenance au genre des prétendants indignes de l'infante, et les vieillards convoitant Suzanne n'ont pas la présence d'esprit de discerner l'instant où ils tombent sous la catégorie de ceux qui devraient d'abord prier pour leur salut et en appeler vivement à Dieu, toutes affaires cessantes.

Dans certains cas, le miroir disloquera un éprouvé singulier incapable de traverser

l'épreuve de l'évaluation rationnelle. Dans d'autres, il ouvrira à la révélation d'un désir prêt à se reconnaître et à opérer dans le champ descriptif de la planification. Le miroir, pour le meilleur ou pour le pire, révoque l'exclusive de l'éprouvé prescriptif, et convoque l'aventure descriptive.

3° Le miroir et la répétition

Comment les responsables d'inversions étranges et de vertiges quelquefois fatals, comment les complices de l'institution d'un espace chroniquement inhabitable, en conflit avec l'espace chorégraphique, comment donc les miroirs se trouvent-ils tolérés et même désirés par les danseurs de ballet ?

Miroir et réflexion

Si les miroirs sont tellement traîtres et dangereux, comment expliquer qu'ils soient si utiles aux danseurs de ballet désireux de répéter leurs mouvements, leurs déplacements et leurs chorégraphies ? En y regardant de près, on découvre que c'est seulement la *fonction de réflexion* qui est suspectée ici. Encore convient-il de rappeler que cette fonction a bien entendu sa productivité, et que la suspicion ne concerne que les modalités de son fonctionnement, même si ces modalités peuvent avoir des conséquences extrêmement profondes.

Précisons ce que nous entendons par "fonction de réflexion" du miroir, et voyons à quoi nous l'opposons.

La réflexion, c'est pour nous l'ouverture du vécu au symbole et au concept, qui passe toujours par la description. L'attitude réflexive est ainsi condition de possibilité de la prédiction et de l'explication, des projets et des plans, des succès et des échecs, mais aussi des satisfactions rationnelles, et de l'apprentissage du danseur.

En effet, le singulier d'une situation qui s'impose et qui s'éprouve immédiatement comme prescriptive joute toujours sa réduction descriptive, qui n'épuise jamais l'éprouvé mais lui ouvre un avenir et une médiation intersubjective. C'est cela la fonction de réflexion par le miroir, une dé-singularisation sur laquelle nous reviendrons, et qui est essentielle à la danse. Nous serions même tentés d'avancer que la *danse de ballet* est le nom qu'on

donne aux spectacles vivants qui sont traditionnellement répétés face au miroir.

Danser consisterait alors à appréhender son corps, se mouvant et se déplaçant dans un environnement chorégraphique, par le truchement d'un regard doté du pouvoir fantasmagorique que lui confère le reflet spéculaire.

Il faudrait comprendre comment la réflexion est indispensable au travail de répétition, ce qui n'est pas tâche facile. Nous avons dit que les miroirs cachent ce qu'ils ne montrent pas, mais il faut dire aussi qu'ils montrent ce qu'ils ne cachent pas. Le travail d'appréhension et de contrôle de l'environnement chorégraphique par le biais du miroir permet de sélectionner et de concentrer l'attention, et par là d'engrammer le geste. Car les miroirs n'ont pas de mémoire, et seul le corps en a, qui élabore des gestes toujours plus lisibles en intentionnalité, de moins en moins marqués par la succession des présents instantanés qui le compose encore lorsqu'on commence à répéter.

Mais si le reflet dans le miroir relève de la *réflexion*, il relève aussi, et à la fois, de *l'exposition*. Les deux attitudes induites sont en tension permanente et irréductible. Pour bien comprendre cela, il nous faut revenir à la notion de *singularité*, telle que nous la comprenons.

Singularité et exposition

Dans son exorde à la *Guerre des Gaules* Jules César, reconnaissant le rôle novateur du miroir comme condition de possibilité de l'introspection, pressentait peut-être que l'invention spéculaire touche à l'essence du singulier.

Remarquons en effet que le singulier ne manquerait pas de se dé-singulariser en se donnant comme tel : le singulier ne pourrait demeurer dans le savoir de sa propre singularité sans la trahir, et toute réflexion du singulier sur sa singularité l'annihilerait aussitôt. Le singulier présent à lui-même en signifierait ainsi la fin immédiate, et la donation d'une singularité sur le mode de la reconnaissance signifie sa dé-singularisation par catégorisation.

Posons donc qu'une singularité ne saurait se connaître immédiatement. Par conséquent, elle ne peut que procéder *en singularisation*, elle est procès de déploiement. Mais surtout, la

singularisation est *ex-position* à, aux sens où l'on s'expose à *quelque chose*. On s'expose à un devenir ou à un risque : les deux sens n'en font qu'un, car quand le premier sens pointe sur l'altérité et la diversité, le second pointe sur le caractère aporétique d'un geste qui, parce qu'il n'est pas position mais *ex-position* (hors de), est par nature public et violent (viol de l'intimité, du latin *intimus* signifiant l'intérieur, le privé), et évoque l'adversité, la controverse et la polémique.

Paradoxalement, l'activité de déploiement d'une singularité est ainsi caractérisée par la distraction, la dissipation et le divertissement, au sens pascalien. Mais toujours dans l'*ex-position*.

Nous sommes là devant une difficulté : le danseur de spectacle vivant ne s'expose véritablement au public que le jour de la création du spectacle et les jours de représentation. Comment donc peut-il travailler sa chorégraphie, si l'exposition lui fait défaut alors même qu'il doit s'y préparer pour la représentation ?

Pour tenter de répondre à cette question, il convient d'enquêter sur la *pratique de la répétition*, qui doit être aussi, paradoxalement, *préparation à l'exposition*.

Répétitions, création et représentations

S'il est vrai qu'un spectacle peut être donné plusieurs fois de suite après sa création, cette reproduction là n'a rien à voir avec la répétition du spectacle.

Afin de pouvoir se produire devant les spectateurs, les danseurs s'investissent en effet dans un processus d'élaboration destiné à garantir la possibilité d'une présentation publique du spectacle qui soit à la fois efficace et reproductible.

A la différence du spectacle donné à voir au public, les répétitions constituent des étapes de travail préparatoires, *privées*. La *répétition* se distingue ici de la *représentation*, et "répéter le spectacle" se distingue de "se produire en public".

Sans discuter ici la question subtile de la répétition et de son rapport à la différence (sur ce sujet passionnant, mieux vaut en effet se reporter au maître ouvrage de Gilles Deleuze [4]), on remarquera immédiatement un phénomène étrange : alors que la répétition est supposée ouvrir à la représentation par

déploiement progressif, le passage du privé — qui caractérise la répétition, au public — qui caractérise la représentation, a nécessairement lieu *en rupture*.

Ainsi, et même en admettant que la répétition possède ce pouvoir étrange de condenser en différence capitalisable par progrès réfléchi (on l'a dit, l'approfondissement de ce point nécessiterait évidemment à lui seul un travail considérable), la question de la répétition, dans le domaine du spectacle vivant, reste hantée par la rupture privée-public, qui ne peut en aucun cas être lissée par une quelconque solution de continuité.

Peut-on se voir comme on serait vu ? Peut-on *être son propre public* ? En travaillant devant un miroir pendant les répétitions, les danseurs cherchent certes à contrôler leurs mouvements, à synchroniser leurs déplacements et à éprouver le vertige de la perception spéculaire. Toutes choses qui relèvent de la réflexion, et qui supposent de traverser les multiples pièges tendus par le cristal réfléchissant.

Mais ces menaces du reflet ne sont pas de même nature que celles qu'ils préfigurent par ailleurs, terribles et imprévisibles dans leurs modalités, celles du public qu'il faudra affronter bientôt. Ainsi surtout les danseurs cherchent-ils à lisser le hiatus qui sépare toujours la répétition de la représentation, en étant spectateurs d'eux-mêmes par le truchement du miroir.

A ce titre, les miroirs annoncent déjà l'exposition au public. Ils *simulent* le public.

Plus précisément, disons que le propre regard du danseur simulerait celui du public, ce qui conférerait à la danse un statut spécial dans le champ de l'intersubjectivité.

Reste que la danse contemporaine s'échine précisément à nier cette hypothèse, et à exhiber d'autres modes d'apprentissage du corps propre, qui conduiraient à reléguer les miroirs loin des studios de répétition. Ceux des spectacles de danse ainsi conçus et répétés qui résistent au choc abrupt de la publication démontrent que quelque chose du regard du public était présent dès l'origine chez les danseurs; et cela aussi, il faudrait pouvoir le penser.

Fichte, dans son introduction au *Fondement du droit naturel selon les principes de la doctrine de la science*, cherche à répondre à la question "Comment une science philosophique

réelle se distingue d'une simple philosophie de formules ?". Sa première assertion est alors "Le caractère de la rationalité consiste en ce que l'être agissant et l'être agi sont un et même; et par cette description la raison comme telle est circonscrite de façon exhaustive".

La danse comme spectacle vivant cherche à décliner la rationalité de Fichte dans le champ du mouvement, en chair et en os, des corps humains : corps propres et corps dansés. Et le miroir est un élément central de l'étrange organologie associée, en tant qu'il permet de constituer de la mémoire par engramme corporel, sans jamais lui-même rien retenir.

4° Dispositions

Pendant la période de répétition, les danseurs sollicitent les miroirs de deux manières contradictoires, à travers deux attitudes en tension irréductible.

D'une part, ils voudraient trouver dans le reflet un lieu d'exposition, qui ferait d'eux-mêmes le public de leur propre corps exposé (le miroir comme *ancree*). Cette attitude est nécessaire au déploiement en singularité du geste chorégraphique, et permet que quelque chose du public soit présent dès l'origine privée du travail. D'autre part, ils voudraient trouver dans le miroir quelque chose de leur corps propre, afin de le réfléchir dans le cadre d'un projet chorégraphique (le miroir comme *point de vue extérieur*).

Ces deux regards sont en fait juxtaposés et concurrents, la tension donnant lieu à des conflits d'attitude, et présentant des risques pour le danseur. Mais leur présence compétitive à travers le miroir est aussi une formidable tension productive, sans doute essentielle à la danse, au centre de la nécessaire disposition des danseurs.

Il semble d'ailleurs qu'on retrouve chacune de ces deux tendances, techniquement affirmées en oppositions à l'autre, dans des pratiques de danse qui ne sont pas des danses de ballet. Par exemple dans la mouvance "Fictive body" (voir Eugenio Barba et Nicola Savarese dans *L'énergie qui danse*, Lectourne Bouffonneries, 1995), le danseur cherche à être *lui-même* en même temps qu'un *autre*.

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Introduction to the Paris Panel honoring Ivor Guest

Judith Chazin-Bennahum



We are here to honor, to unabashedly sing the praises of our dear friend Ivor Guest. I suspect that he never turned anyone away who wished to ask him about ballet, and all of us here certainly felt his nourishing and delightful affection for whatever our research entailed. But he also knew when we were on the wrong track and did not hesitate to warn us. It is fitting that this encomium takes place in Paris where his love affair with ballet truly began. So, we are not only celebrating Ivor, but we are also cheering beauteous Paris and its glorious Opera where many of us have spent our research lives investigating. Let me tell you a bit about Ivor's smashing work on ballet, on women in the ballet and on Paris.

Ivor Guest's biography as a dance historian begins with a love of sports, where at his school Lancing, he won the Open High Jump and the Opening Fast Bowler in the cricket team. His

ball room achievements, according to his memoir *Adventures of a Ballet Historian*,¹ were mostly in his dreams, along with the childhood aspiration of being a Hollywood film director. And unlike many of his colleagues, he did not see Pavlova or the Ballets Russes, and was therefore not thunderstruck by their extraordinary charisma. However, when he was in his teens, his great-aunt took him to see the Sadler's Wells where apparently Fonteyn and Helpmann danced in *Apparitions*. (1936)

In the last two years at Lancing, he became enamoured of history through the "romantic rise and fall of Napoleon." But soon, he was intrigued by the enigmatic figure of Napoleon III and he read many volumes on the emperor's rather unstartling career. But to Ivor, books and travelogues on the 2nd Empire Paris fed his hungry imagination, while listening to many Belle Epoch composers including Offenbach. When he visited Paris it was as though he had lived there for years.

During his five years as a young soldier during WW II, he had a dream about a ballerina on stage alone; it haunted him for many days, foretelling his adoration of "bunheads" for a very long time. Ivor became Chairman of the Royal Academy of Dancing for years. While in Brighton he was able to attend performances of the Anglo-Polish ballet company, with modest productions and not very talented dancers. But the experience shook him and then, when back in London, he became an enthusiast for Margot Fonteyn and Beryl Grey.

Ivor began devouring all the books he could find on ballet and, when he read an article in the *Dancing Times* by Lillian Moore, he wrote to her and discovered a life long friend. Lillian was also a ballet teacher at Performing Arts who was the first to introduce me to the New York Public Library Dance Collection where she hoped I would spend my extra hours reading and working in the same focused area where Gege Oswald became the first Dance Curator for the New York Public Library at 42nd St. Lillian and Ivor both loved the virtual detective chase of

"who would bring to life through words, the history and "romance" of ballets past in accurate and balanced detail."²

Ivor came to Paris and discovered the enchanting circular reading room that houses the Bibliothèque's Collection. In the late 19th c. it was supposed to be the "retiring" room of the Emperor Napoleon III. Receptions were held there after hours and many famous ballet figures appeared and ignited even more of Ivor's search for the history of the Paris Opera's ballets, and at this point in 1946, especially the stories associated with Arthur Saint-Leon's *Coppelia*. It was his historical encounter with the long standing Italian dancer at the Paris Opera, Carlotta Zambelli, that gave him the inspiration of a very special nature, as she represented a living link with the past that Ivor's imagination was striving to create.³

I think the operative word here is imagination, as Ivor wove together eloquent tapestries from a variety of sources that came together only as he could have envisioned it. Ivor reiterates often, "My paramount objective was to achieve a detailed reconstruction of the past—to bring it to life for the reader. My imagination was so stirred that no detail was too unimportant not to be fitted into the mosaic I wanted to create."⁴ It is no accident that Ivor was greatly responsible for creating the Theatre Museum in London. Stories abound in Ivor's books, the ballets' gripping tales of magic and love, as well as those juicy back stage intrigues. He told us in his book on the Enlightenment, that During M. de Vismes's Directorship of the Opéra, La Guimard requested a new costume for a ballet she was to appear in; when de Vismes refused, she was horrified, insulted and aggressively sent him back the old costume cut up in tiny little pieces.

Even the law firm where the young Ivor clerked and worked, was a bastion of ancient history, having been established as early as 1767. How could he have had a busy successful legal career and have accomplished such a list of remarkable histories? Because, as he noted, "I am well organized, have a facility for concentration, and enjoy good health." Was it as simple as that?

Ivor dug into his fascination for Napoleon III by reading all the newspapers of the period.

These archival forays stood him in excellent stead when he worked on the ballets of the period. He realized that his goal was to absorb vast amounts of material and to present a "detailed and accurate account" of Napoleon III's visits to England. At the same time, he was reading Richard Buckle's magazine *Ballet*, and realized that his work on *Coppelia* might make a good article. It was thrilling that he had his first publication in 1946 which quickly grew into many more. Ivor commented with a bold honesty on his motivations as a willing writer on dance history: "I was very ambitious for recognition, and inwardly felt jealously antagonistic, a sign of insecurity, whenever an historical article written by anyone else appeared. It was this ambition...that drove me to produce a steady stream of articles and to become the most prolific contributor, after Buckle and Beaumont."⁵ The advice to young historians is clear, write articles, as they may one day develop into full fledged studies. Write, write, write. Essentially it was a lack of details that bothered Ivor most about the dance histories that were currently being written.

He was very conscious that every age viewed its history in a different way, but he held to the position that one must do the plodding work of research, pulling together an exhaustive familiarity with the contemporary material. For example, in his work on French 18th century ballet, he quoted from all the daily newspapers, from private journals of those who visited with dancers and observed the ballets of the period, and from those famous gossip machines, Bachaumont and Baron Grimm. In the next century, he accumulated information about life in Napoleon III's palace and its social round as well as the everyday activities of ordinary people, about the music heard at concerts, and the popular tunes to which people danced, and even down to such details as the price of cabs and the omnibus routes. Lithograph and engraving portraits fill his volumes, as do quotes from contemporary critics and writers. Ivor's passion for statistics and ledger keeping is the stuff of all our work—his genealogies of major figures, his lists of ballets, and ballets in operas, of ballet masters, and lead dancers, as well as names of composers, designers of costumes and scenery. Perhaps his histories of ballerinas, one

more captivating than the next, and his uncovering of the excitement surrounding women ballet dancers, remain his most exciting studies---for Fanny Ellsler, and Fanny Cerrito, also known as "cherry toes," for the "Divine Virginia" Zucchi, for the Victorian girl, Clara Webster, for Giuseppina Bozzacchi, and Adeline Genée, for Carlotta Zambelli, and finally for his true muse, Ann Hutchinson Guest. With these women, Guest plumbs the very nature of historiography in his life-long and sweeping investigations of the evolution of theatre dance. As he perspicaciously noted in his book *Adventures of a Ballet Historian*, the facts that he unearthed have provided the basis for writers seeking to interpret the field in new ways.⁶

And this brings us to our major inquiries, our rethinking of the nature of history and the Paris Opera, as well as performance in both London and Paris.

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Endnotes

¹ *Adventures of a Ballet Historian*. New York: Dance Horizons, 1982. All the following notes are derived from

this memoir.

² p. 4

³ p. 8

⁴ p. 17

⁵ p. 15

⁶ p. 17

Complicating the Idea of French National Identity

Lynn Garafola

In the work of Ivor Guest, the Paris Opéra occupies a privileged position in defining French ballet. Founded in 1669 as the Académie Royale de Musique, it has survived revolutions and world wars, innumerable changes in régime and periodic changes in name. At virtually any moment in its history, it has claimed a lion's share of the French cultural budget and used performance to celebrate events of high political import. It has produced a long list of works that figure in ballet's "apostolic succession" (to borrow Lincoln Kirstein's phrase) and presented them with splendor, opulence, and artists of international distinction. The Opéra is quite simply, as Guest writes in his history of the Paris Opéra, an "institution of the State" and an "official expression of French culture."¹

I would like to complicate the idea of Frenchness by raising the issue of physical embodiment. How can one justify calling the Opéra an official expression of French culture, when so many of the company's artistic directors and leading dancers have been foreign born and trained? In the twentieth century alone, the list of principal ballet masters includes a Belgian (Joseph Hansen), an Italian (Nicola Guerra), three Russians (Ivan Clustine, Serge Lifar, and Rudolf Nureyev), and even two Americans (John Taras and Rosella Hightower). The phenomenon is even more striking when it comes to the nineteenth-century étoiles or star dancers hired by the Opéra often for long periods. Beginning with Marie Taglioni in the 1820s and ending with Olga Spessivtzeva in the 1920s, the overwhelming majority of the company's ballerinas came from someplace else: Austria (Fanny Elssler), Russia (Nadezhda Bogdanova), Spain (Rosita Mauri), but above all Italy: Carlotta Grisi, Flora Fabbri, Sofia Fuoco, Carolina Rosati, Claudina Cucchi, Caterina Beretta, Amalia Ferraris, Rita Sangalli, Carlotta Zambelli; the list goes on and on. Italian ballerinas wove

their art into the tapestry of nineteenth-century French ballet, starring in virtually every significant dance work created at the Paris Opéra during the 100 years that followed the inception of the Romantic ballet. What does it mean that the first Sylphide (Taglioni) and Giselle (Grisi) were Italian or that the Opéra's first twentieth-century Giselle (Spessivtzeva) was Russian? In other words, how can one reconcile the idea of Frenchness with the fact that its leading exponents were often foreign?

Does physical embodiment alter in any way the notion of national identity? Does it expand it? Or is it immaterial? In an art whose history is riddled with multi-generational dynasties that toured like gypsies, is identity only a problem because of the Opéra's function as an expression of institutionalized nationalism?

What about the fact that the technique embodied by these Italians, most of whom had trained at La Scala, was in many respects antithetical to the training of the French school? The latter emphasized grace, lightness, elegance, and line, whereas the Italians thrilled audiences with their virtiginous turns, bold jumps, speed, and bravura pointework. Clearly, French audiences liked what the Italians were doing. Otherwise, the Opéra would not have engaged them so consistently and set them at the apex of the company's hierarchy. Why did the Opéra's school, from which the vast majority of the company's dancers emerged, fail to alter its teaching methods? Why did it refuse to assimilate and adapt the new Italian pedagogy, as occurred in Russia in the late Imperial period? Why did it fail to offer the kind of training that produced first-rate dancers?

I wonder, too, about the ordinary dancers whose forgotten, unsung lives made up the everyday chronicle of the Opéra. Nathalie Lecomte has filled in some of the gaps. In an article about early eighteenth-century dancers

(about to be published in an SDHS volume edited by Lynn Matluck Brooks), she reveals the family connections and pay disparities between men and women that existed at the Opéra during its salad days. I wonder, too, about what prompted the six-week strike that began in October 1919. Was it the derisory salaries, as little as 275 francs a month for a dancer in the second quadrille? Was it the hopelessness of never getting out of the corps? Or competition with foreign dancers, including members of the Opéra's short-lived, much criticized eurhythmics section? Was it about job security at a time of economic uncertainty? Were rumors circulating that the hatchet was about to fall? That twenty-five dancers would soon lose their jobs? What price modernization to bring the Opéra into the twentieth century?

I also wonder about the idea of a French national repertory in the absence of a performance tradition beyond living memory. Why is it that ballets that began life at the nineteenth-century Opéra survived into the twentieth only through descendents of versions staged in St. Petersburg and Copenhagen? *La Sylphide*, for instance, has come down to us thanks to August Bournonville's staging of the mid-1830s, lovingly preserved by the Royal Danish Ballet. Marius Petipa, during his nearly sixty-year tenure at the Russian Imperial Ballet, played a crucial role in passing on works of the late Romantic and early post-Romantic tradition, all of which the Opéra allowed to go out of repertory. His 1884 rescension of *Giselle* became the source of all subsequent versions of the ballet, including the 1924 Paris Opéra staging by the Imperial Ballet's former chief régisseur, while his revivals of *Paquita* and *Le Corsaire* extended the life of those ballets. How can one reconcile an ideology of institutional continuity with the practice of choreographic erasure? Is anything gained from the absence of a performance tradition? Can there be a national repertory without the existence of a performance tradition? Can reconstructions, such as Pierre Lacotte's highly problematic version of *La Sylphide*, constitute such a tradition, and, if so, what is

its relationship as an invented tradition alluding to a lost original to descendents of originals such as Petipa's *Giselle* or Bournonville's *La Sylphide*? Can we say that a ballet exists if all that survives is its music or its libretto? If so, then it means that the choreography of a ballet will always be invented anew. Is the original choreography, unlike the original music or libretto, merely incidental to the identity of a ballet?

I wonder, too, about the equating of French ballet solely with the Paris Opéra. What gives it the authority to speak for all of French ballet? Can this be justified given that for most of its history the Opéra was only one of a number of Paris theaters presenting ballet performances? What about the fact that performances outside the Opéra were often more creatively stimulating than those inside, and often a source of the innovative practices subsequently adopted by the Opéra? The Romantic ballet, for instance, absorbed elements of melodrama and spectacle from the popular French stage of the late 1820s, as well as innovative choreographic practices, both in the sophisticated use of pointework and the development of an all-female corps, circulating in Vienna in that same decade. Turning to the closing decades of the nineteenth century, I would like to complicate the notion of decadence as this applies to ballet outside Russia. For instance, although ballet at the Opéra was in the doldrums, ballet elsewhere in Paris was flourishing. Theaters such as the Gaîté-Lyrique had their own troupes of dancers, as did music halls such as the Folies-Bergère. In the 1880s the Eden Theater was built to accommodate Manzotti's huge ballet spectacles, which brought the latest developments of Italian ballet, both in terms of dramaturgy and technique, to the very heart of Paris. What was the relationship of the Opéra to all this activity? Not much! Again, the contrast with the Russians is telling. Petipa and his superiors did not approve of much of what they saw on periodic visits to Paris and other Western ballet centers. However, they did not ignore it. Rather they sought to adapt its innovative practices to the aesthetic of the Russian

Agrand ballet: one result of this assimilationist approach was *The Sleeping Beauty*, which was actually called a ballet-féerie. In fact, a reason for the decline of ballet at the Paris Opéra might well be that the Opéra simply ignored what was taking place on its own doorstep. It had lost touch with its time and rendered itself irrelevant, existing in a kind of imaginative void. It would be interesting to speculate how embracing alternative histories of canonical moments of the ballet past might alter the vision of French ballet.

Finally, I wonder about the idea of France that Guest seems to embrace. Is it the France of the political state--Jacobin, Republican, Bourbon, Bonapartist, Gaullist, German, whatever--that controls the budget and uses the Opéra to display its power? Is it a cultural idea cleansed of politics, timeless and "imperishable,"² untouched by conflicts about national identity and cultural ownership? How is the national idea woven into the overarching ideology and day-to-day practice of the Opéra? Ultimately, which France does the Opéra represent?

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Endnotes

- ¹ Ivor Guest, *Le Ballet de l'Opéra de Paris*, rev. ed. (Paris: Flammarion, 2001), pp. 24/28.
- ² Ibid., p. 184. Discussing Serge Lifar's 1942 *Les Animaux modèles*, produced at the height of the German occupation, Guest writes: "Entièrement français par l'esprit, ce ballet apportait un encouragement très nécessaire et rappelait que la culture française est impérissable."

Tribute to Ivor Guest

Jane Pritchard

It is a great privilege to be asked to contribute to the celebration of the work of dance historian Ivor Guest. From the outset it should be acknowledged that his work, which would have been a full time career for most people, was simply a fruitful hobby. I would like to stress that in spite of other commitments Guest has always been generous in giving time to dance scholars at all levels. Guest has recalled how his predecessor Cyril Beaumont was similarly generous when he was starting out. Let us hope that we who have benefited from Ivor's guidance will feel similarly inclined to be generous in support of the next generations. I have also admired the way that Guest always encourages researchers particularly if their interests overlap with his own. He is always open-minded and welcomes the challenges that new information provides. He is fascinated by images with which he is unfamiliar and appears to enjoy it when someone picks up on a reference, or personality, that he has found neither time nor inclination for follow further. He is aware just how much work still needs to be undertaken on dance in the nineteenth century.

Guest is always honest about what he is doing. His works always have clear parameters. Nevertheless one still meets researchers who feel that there is nothing more to be said or researched on nineteenth-century dance because Guest has covered so much. That is always their mistake not his. Most researchers working on aspects of dance between the French Revolution and the 1914-18 War will turn to his books to check references and learn more. Ivor Guest's works are wonderful initial guides. In fact I would compare Ivor Guest to a cartographer mapping out unknown territory. He has marked out a path of information about dance through the Nineteenth Century back to the Eighteenth. True there were some landmarks to guide him such as the peaks of the Romantic Ballet and the oasis of *Coppélia*, but we can now see a clear route through the previously uncharted land. That path could well be called the 'Paris Opera Way'. Along side it there remain blank

space for others to fill in. There are indeed other researcher/cartographers focusing on various parts of the map such as Italy, Germany and Denmark and growing interest in this century of dance which remains one of the most challenging for historians to tackle. It is poorly and very selectively documented in most general reference books and complicated by the Nineteenth Century being a period of rapid urbanisation which brought a proliferation of theatres, many of which were short-lived and now forgotten. Guest's research focused primarily on aspect of the Paris Opera whether in the rue Peletier or as the Palais Garnier and there is a danger that he has documented this so well that dance in other theatres, opera houses or popular venues, is overlooked.

I will acknowledge that I am one of those who began by following in Ivor Guest's footsteps. I have not travelled back so far in time but I have wandered further into the forests of the dance that was being performed in Britain and in popular theatres at the end of the nineteenth century. My initial interest was captured by the acquisition of Guest's monograph on *The Empire Ballet* from which I became intrigued by the choreographers working in the popular theatre dance arena in the second half of the Nineteenth Century. I wanted to know much more about the productions and the composers and designers with whom the choreographers collaborated and I quickly realised the challenges of being fascinated by artists who led peripatetic careers. Looking at productions in one theatre is far more straight-forward than tracking career details of artists who are constantly on the move. To understand dance in the nineteenth century it is necessary to unearth and restore figures who are in Lynn Garafola's terms 'ghost choreographers'.¹ Garafola coined the term in relation to women choreographers but gender is immaterial in my 'ghosts'. Both male and female choreographer, together with the composers who wrote the scores of their ballets, needed to be materialised.

Although Ivor Guest was less passionate in his writings about the latter part of the century, footnotes in his books signpost the locations of

crucial archives including three important collections at the Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra in Paris. These relate to the work of choreographers Henri Justamant and Joseph Hansen and the composer Leopold Wenzel. Before referring to these collections I just want to flag up the fact that Guest is very much a man of his times holding (probably unwittingly) some prejudices of the twentieth century. Firstly where ballet is concerned he is a bit of a snob – one of many writers, dance historians and musicologists who frown on popular work believing ballet belongs in the opera house rather than the popular arena – it is after all high art. I find it amusing that this view persists so strongly while there are constant cries to make dance more popular and accessible. In the late Nineteenth Century more people were watching and enjoying theatrical dance than at any other time – but it is often said there was no dance. Guest, of course, recognises there was dance in popular theatre but appears to regard it as inferior to opera house activity. When writing about Virginia Zucchi, possibly his favourite ballerina, and her involvement in the ballets in the pantomime *Robinson Crusoe* at Drury Lane, London in December 1894 he wonders 'whether she understood the popular nature of an English pantomime'.² I am convinced she knew exactly what she was becoming involved with as many of her Italian contemporaries and colleagues had also appeared in such British Christmas entertainments. Similarly at times Guest writes that the corps de ballet at London's Alhambra was not as good as the corps de ballet in Paris. Clearly he means us to understand the corps de ballet at the Palais Garnier but he forgets that the Alhambra's corps de ballet appears to be superior to many in the popular theatres of Paris and that those Parisian corps de ballets clearly regularly drew on English dancers.

Guest's prejudices and passionate belief that what was happening at the Paris Opera was always the best also reveal themselves in his comments about Henri Justamant (choreographer of the ballets in Gounod's *Faust* in 1869) who he dismisses for serving as *maître de ballet* at the Opera for only one season. Heretically I would like to suggest that perhaps Justamant preferred mounting popular ballets and that he chose to choreograph the ballets in *féeries* rather than in operas.

Without necessarily claiming Justamant (1815-1890) was one of the greatest choreographers of the nineteenth century, surely to have an insight into his choreography gives richer context to understand ballet production of the period and it is encouraging that in recent years dancers and scholars including Jean Guizerix and Claudia Jeschke have begun to investigate Justamant's contribution. This 'ghost choreographer', after only making it into one significant dance dictionary in the Twentieth Century, has also acquired an entry in Wikipedia! Investigation into his choreography is possible in the Twenty-first Century because of the survival of much of his extensive archive of choreographic scores.³ These were auctioned after his death and are now scattered between several of archives. There are, for example, thirty-five at the Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra and twenty at the Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library. Justamant's early choreography was created for the Grand Theatres of Marseilles, Bordeaux and Lyons (1843-60). He was ballet master at the Théâtre royal de la Monnaie, Brussels 1861-64, and from the mid-1860s Justamant worked primarily at popular Parisian theatres including the Porte Saint-Martin, the Varieties, Renaissance, Folies-bergère, Châtelet, Gaîté and Eden-théâtre, but also in Berlin and London. His most important and influential creations were the ballets in Offenbach's *Le Voyage dans la lune* at the Théâtre de la Gaîté in 1875 which was restaged internationally leading to a host of 'snow ballets' surviving today in the Land of Snow in *The Nutcracker*.

While Justamant had his notation and additional information on each of his productions is bound in volumes (sometimes including reviews, costume and property design and production notes) Joseph Hansen's notes are either in exercise books or on loose sheets of paper. Whether or not his archive came to the Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra in a disorganised state certainly some of the material is misidentified and material on one ballet may be found filed under as many as four different titles! While Justamant is consistent in the detail in which he records his ballets the Hansen archive is very much more random with the most completely documented ballets being those for opera-ballets. This was presumably as they often had to be

restaged after many months' absence from the stage and often after only a few performances. Again it is encouraging to find scholars beginning to look at Hansen's work. Knud Arne Jürgensen has published Hansen's notes on a staging of the ballets for *Aïda*.

Whilst the work of Justamant and Hansen is beginning to arouse interest it must be remembered that there are other archives that shed light on popular ballet. The final archive which I shall briefly mention is that of the Italian born music director Léopold Wenzel (1847-1925). In 1883 Wenzel acquired French citizenship and the following year Wenzel wrote the music for *La Cour d'amour*, the first new ballet at the Eden-théâtre as opposed to ballo grande imported from Italy, and his first full-scale operetta *La Chevalier Mignon* for the Théâtre des Bouffes-Parisiens. The Eden-théâtre was a purpose-built 'dance house' for an Italian company, located over the road from the Palais Garnier, which Guest touches on in connection with the career of Zucchi. Wenzel was a key figure in trying to keep the Eden alive when the trend for ballo-grande was evaporating in Paris and his archive not only reveals artistic but also administrative details about the organisation. Having failed to revitalise the Eden Wenzel was employed in London as the Music Director at the Empire and his archive also reveals much about the creations of ballets in London. Wenzel provides a valuable link between ballet in popular theatres in Paris and London reminding us that the two were not worlds apart. Just as an aside, as a result of his employment at the Empire he also conducted the orchestra for the first royal command film performance watched by Queen Victoria in 1897.

In referring to just a few collections to which Ivor Guest has led me I am certainly not criticising him for not having the time to delve into them. Rather I sincerely thank him for pointing me in the direction of material I consider fascinating, material that requires considerable further research. In criticising Guest I am simply alerting researchers never to follow a leader blindly. All guidebooks have to be updated to reflect the society using them and Guest himself has revised some of his earlier books and added information in more recent books. There are also guidebooks to many other areas still to be written for there are still blank spaces on the map. Nevertheless, the

field of dance history is richer for Ivor Guest's contribution and it a privilege for us to join him in the task of documenting nineteenth century dance.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Lynn Garafola 'Where are ballet's women choreographers?', *Legacies of Twentieth Century Dance* Middletown: Wesleyan, 2005 p.216.
- ² Ivor Guest *The Divine Virginia A Biography of Virginia Zucchi* New York: Marcel Dekker, 1977 p.155.
- ³ EM. Paul, L. Huard et Guillemin Catalogue de livres anciens et modernes, et des manuscrits originaux des ballets et divertissements de M. Henri Justamant Vente du 15 mai 1893 (Hotel Drouot), Paris 1893. (A copy of this catalogue is held at the Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra, Paris, a photocopy of which is in the Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library.

Celebrating Ivor Guest in Paris

Marian Smith

Ivor Guest's work is so much a part of the landscape, and has so deeply informed our view of ballet history, that literally we cannot imagine ballet history without it. The impact of Ivor Guest's work is impossible for me to grasp fully, because quite simply it is so pervasive and so wide-ranging. What's more, though I am familiar with his many volumes pertaining to ballet — his biographies of Fanny Cerrito, Adeline Genée, Carlotta Grisi, Fanny Elssler, Jules Perrot, Virginia Zucchi, his invaluable histories of ballet at the Paris Opéra, and in England, his beautifully wrought translations of the dance writings of Gautier and the letters of St-Leon. Yet I have not read his longest book, the history of the Radcliffe Trust, a volume which is not about ballet at all, but the existence of which serves as a reminder of the astonishing breadth of this scholar, and testimony, as if any were needed -- that he possesses in spades, [to our great benefit] not only extraordinary and graceful facility that belies the hard and time-consuming work of ferreting out information from a variety of secondary and primary sources, scores, iconography, production notes and all the rest -- and fashioning a coherent, compelling narrative out of it -- but of that most important quality, curiosity.

It is also clear that Ivor's deep knowledge and the richness of his studies of ballet -- for which he has carried out extensive archival research (and in archives that I know too well do not always yield up their secrets easily) -- has led him to take on a multitude of topics. Thus one may follow many threads in his research, as one chooses. The place of the ballerina. The place of the MALE dancer, a lesser studied topic. The rise of character dance in ballet and the reasons for its popularity. Vying schools of criticism in the press. The genesis of a work -- that is the nuts and bolts of how ballets were created. Patronage. The

Jockey Club. The role of the government during the revolutionary years and beyond. The Paris Opéra as an institution. The influence of literature on ballet. And many musical topics -- something not always found in studies on dance, but something Ivor Guest has always paid close attention to -- how ballet scores were created, what they meant, their reception, the shifting aesthetic values that governed their creation, to name a few topics.

Ivor's works tell rich stories complete in themselves yet also open new topics to the scholarly imagination. In this regard, I'd like to mention two topics of particular interest to me right now, and which I have discussed with Ivor here in Paris. First -- getting to the matter of reviving 19th-century works for today's ballet stage. Ivor, of course, was the first to examine many of the scores of 19th-century Parisian ballets, and to recognize the role the music played in the drama of these works. This led him to make a major contribution to the current-day repertoire: he brought Hérold's excellent score of *La Fille Mal Gardée* to the attention of the Royal Ballet, and partook in the genesis of Ashton's production (and informing Ashton of some scenes from the old Bordeaux production, after obtaining its score — scenes which Ashton put into the ballet before its première). I am pondering what other ballets may be suitable for present-day restaging, and what disjunctions between 19th and 21st-century stage exigencies would present particular challenges. Well-informed reconstructions of 19th-century ballet are rare indeed, though I am hoping that, as in the performance practice movement in music, that the interest of dance scholars and the dance-going public will slowly creep forward from the Renaissance, through 17th and 18th centuries and into the nineteenth. I see *Le Diable à Quatre* as an especially strong candidate for historically-informed

performance. Though the music and title of this ballet have been used within the past 100 years in the staging of excerpts, I would love to see a full scale revival, making careful use of the manuscript sources -- it was a smash comedy hit in its own, with excellent music, and apparently terrific character dancing, and a charming magical element. Could this piece work on the stage today and connect with today's audiences in any of the ways it did in 1845? Ivor has mentioned to me that he finds *Le Corsaire* and *La Fille de Marbre* to be of particular interest in this regard.

Second -- I am very curious about the influence of key dance teachers on 19th-century ballet. Because of Ivor's familiarity with the long span of late 18th-19th-century history at the Opéra, he is in a position to note the carryover of the three famous baroque genres (noble, comique, grotesque) into post-1830 ballet. Did it happen? Some of the great teachers of nineteenth century, whose fame as dancers preceded the "Romantic revolution", taught the younger dancers whom we today revere more for their innovations than their furtherance of old traditions. To what extent has the celebration of the Romantic innovations allowed us to forget the continuation of more classical customs at the Opéra in the 19th century? Would it be possible, for instance, to reconstitute a genealogy of danseurs and their pupils, as a way of seeing how stylistic traditions were handed down through the generations? So many men at the Opéra in the 1830s and 1840s performed during the last official years of the three genres (noble, demi-caractère, comique), or studied with danseurs who had; how precisely did this affect transmission of style and technique, performance practice and reception? We know, for instance, that Barrez, the comic specialist, taught the Petipa brothers, and that his female students included Mlle Maria, Lola Montez, Lucile Grahn, Carlotta Grisi and Adeline Plunkett. What might be revealed by tracing a particular strain -- for example, the comique style as performed by Barrez and Elie -- through the nineteenth century?ⁱ How did

the French style interact with styles of other places in Europe -- especially from the Italian peninsula, known for its strong and particular mime tradition, the athleticism of its male dancers, and the sometimes combative rivalry of its proponents with their French counterparts? For how long did the breadth of skills of the male dancer remain intact? How did low-level male performers fare behind at the scenes at the Opéra, in the atmosphere of institutionalized heterosexual male voyeurism? Did they, like some of the danseuses, hold extra jobs in order to earn a living? What connections may we find between male styles of dramatic acting and dramatic dancing? Jules Perrot's *Faust* of 1848, for example, is known to have been inspired by the actor Frédérick Lemaître's portrayal of Mephistopheles, which the dancer observed when the two of them shared the stage at the Porte Saint-Martin. How did the types of danseur's roles in Paris during this 'golden era', two of which Gautier characterized as a 'comic bass' and 'tenor', match up with those in the operas performed in Paris during the same period? For how long did ballets require distinctly different male role types, and when did the 'non-tenor' types lose so much of their stage time?

I will close this series of questions by simply expressing the fond hope that younger scholars today will dare to combine Mr. Guest's great qualities of curiosity and willingness to get hands dusty in the archives. And I offer my heartfelt thanks to Ivor, to whose works I continually turn to find answers and questions.

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Endnotes

- ⁱ We do know that Gautier saw Jean Coralli as a perfect successor to Elie; see Gautier, *La Presse*, 20 January 1851, Gautier on Dance, 225-227.

Medieval Christian Women's Theories and Practices of Sacred Dance

Jessica Van Oort

A common notion in the field of dance is that medieval European Christians thought the soul was holy and the body profane and therefore did not use the dancing body in worship. This notion of medieval Christianity as anti-dance offers a simple explanation for negative attitudes toward dance and the body that still plague much of Western society today. However, this explanation seems a bit too simple, too monolithic. It is true that certain Christian theologians wrote disparagingly about dance, and that church authorities sometimes issued bans on dancing. However, the opinions of theologians are not necessarily representative of the opinions of all medieval Christians. Writings banning dance are not the only resources available to dance scholars. Alternative voices, especially those of women, speak of dancing bodies and dancing souls in ways that are provocative and sometimes in startling contrast to the edicts against dance by male Christian authorities.

Women in medieval Europe can be considered alternative voices, as they were not an important part of male-dominated power structures. Male members of the noble class fought wars to gain, defend, and rule territory; women, by their sex, were prohibited from going out to fight. In the twelfth century, the creation of universities brought about new opportunities for learning for men; women could not attend. The medieval Christian church was an equally male-dominated structure. Only men could be ordained into the priesthood and accepted into the hierarchy of the church. Women joined Christian religious orders and some even became powerful abbesses, ruling over communities of nuns. However, since only priests (who had to be male) were allowed to bless and distribute the Eucharist, arguably the most important ritual of medieval Christianity, and since women were not usually permitted to have authority over men, women were pushed toward marginal roles in the Christian church.

Beginning in the twelfth century, however, religious change offered new possibilities. Many people, both men and women, were dissatisfied with corruption in the Christian church and desired

to live holy lives of poverty and itinerate preaching. This desire was widespread throughout Europe; Herbert Grundmann calls it a "religious movement."¹ From this movement came two new male orders of monks, the Franciscans and the Dominicans, who renounced wealth and traveled the countryside preaching. Many women who were inspired to live similarly holy lives became nuns and joined convents. Becoming a nun was not an option for all women, however, since the available spaces in convents filled up rapidly and only wealthy women were allowed to enter. Middle or lower class women needed a different option. Such women began, in the late twelfth century, to group together in communities to live holy lives, supporting themselves by manual labor. These women became known as beguines. They were not an official religious order; that is, they did not take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Unlike nuns, they were not strictly enclosed in cloisters. Beguines were known for caring for the sick, teaching children, praying for the dead and walking in funeral processions.²

Texts of four beguines

This paper examines passages that mention dance in writings by or about four beguines who lived in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: Hadewijch, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Agnes Blannbekin, and Elisabeth of Spalbeek. All four physically performed their spirituality in some way. While these women may not have called their performances "dance" they have striking similarities to what scholars name as dance today. These women's writings also contain visionary passages in which the author witnesses dance, or in which her soul dances.

Although I call them women's writings, only two of these women wrote their own books; Hadewijch in Dutch and Mechthild of Magdeburg in Low German. It is notable that these two beguines used their own local languages in a time when scholarly works were written in Latin. This made their works accessible to the communities of beguines in which they lived. Agnes Blannbekin did not write her own book; it was written in Latin

by an unnamed male monk of the Franciscan order. Ulrike Wiethaus, who translated Agnes's book into English, sees Agnes and the monk as co-authors since many of their conversations seem to be transcribed verbatim.³ Elisabeth of Spalbeek's text was also written in Latin by a male monk, Philip of Clairvaux, who observed her performances. Elisabeth does not seem to have been instrumental in the creation of the written text about her; she used physical performance to create what can be viewed as a danced text. Of course, this dance text survives only within Philip's written text.

I have read these four texts in English translation and also looked at the pertinent passages in the original languages. In this paper, the passages are grouped into those about dance (in which the author uses a word in the original language that the editor translates into English) and those about sacred physical performance (in which the author describes something that reads as dance to me but which the author did not call dance.)

Passages about dance

Probably the most common sort of dance passage in all these women's texts is an account of the dancing blessed souls in heaven. The following example is by Mechthild. It is not entirely clear whether Mechthild is describing a vision she had, or envisioning what she believes heaven will be like:

Pure loving virgins shall, moreover, follow the noble Youth, Jesus Christ, Child of the pure maiden, who is utterly filled with love, as he was at age eighteen. His Person is the most beloved of the virgins, and he is the most handsome of all. They follow him with bliss-filled tenderness into the blossoming meadow of their pure conscience. There the Youth breaks for them the flower of all virtues from which they fashion garlands that they shall wear to the eternal celebration.

When the fine meal has been enjoyed, which Jesus Christ himself shall serve, one shall look on at the most sublime dance of praise. There soul and body shall wear the garland of their virtues which they have practiced here with great holy

devotion. And they shall follow the Lamb in untold bliss; from bliss to love, from love to joy, from joy to splendor, from splendor to power, from power to the highest heights before the eyes of the heavenly Father.⁴

Several things are notable here. The entire passage is cast in the future tense. It is something that Mechthild perhaps hopes to participate in someday, but of which she is not currently a part. In this dance body and soul are united in bliss; the body is not given second place.

The dance takes place in the context of other festive activities, including fashioning garlands and a feast. The dancers follow the Lamb, which suggests that he is the dance leader. The concept of Christ as dance-leader is not foreign to Christianity; it may come from a passage in the apocryphal Acts of Saint John in which Christ leads the disciples in a ring dance.⁵ The dancers in Mechthild's text are led by Christ through a series of states that culminate in splendor and power.

Another passage, also from Mechthild, shows a slightly different version of Christ as a dancer. The passage reads rather like a drama with dialogues between the soul, also referred to as the young lady, and her lover, the young man, who is Christ. The soul wishes to meet her lover, so she dresses herself and enters the forest, where the birds are singing sweetly:

And still the young man did not come. So she sends out messengers because she is eager to dance. She sent for the faith of Abraham and the longing of the prophets and the chaste humility of our Lady, St. Mary, and all the holy virtues of our Lord Jesus Christ and all the excellence of his chosen ones. Then a splendid dance of praise takes place.

The young man finally comes and says to her: "Young lady, my chosen ones have shown off their dancing to you. Just as artfully should you now follow their lead."

She says:

"I cannot dance, Lord, unless you lead me.
If you want me to leap with abandon,
You must intone the song.
Then I shall leap into love,

From love into knowledge,
 From knowledge into enjoyment,
 And from enjoyment beyond all human
 sensations.
 There I want to remain, yet want also to
 circle higher still."⁶

The passage goes on to give the song that the young man and the soul sing as they dance together. Mechthild then tells how the soul goes to the bed of love with the young man and they give themselves to each other in mystical union.

This passage does not describe future bliss in heaven, but instead casts the relationship between Christ and the soul into the form of a dance. In the previous passage many heavenly virgins danced with Christ. In this one, although the virtues first perform a group dance of praise, there is a strong sense of male-female pairing in the couple dance between the soul and the young man.

There are clear erotic overtones in this passage. It is not surprising to find dance connected with eroticism, as the two are often linked in medieval secular love song, where dancing can be a precursor to lovemaking.⁷ Mechthild portrays Christ and the soul as a couple in love. This bridal imagery is not uncommon for a mystic of Mechthild's time. What is uncommon is how literal her eroticism seems to be. Other mystics such as Henry Suso write about the soul as a bride but then point out that their visions are not meant in a physical way. Mechthild never makes such a disclaimer.⁸ She seems, in this passage, to revel unabashedly in the joys of spiritual dance.

Agnes gives a description of a dance that is particularly interesting because it is performed by a solo female dancer, normally associated with seduction and entertainment. The solo female dancer was epitomized in medieval art by the figure of Salome dancing before Herod.⁹ In Agnes' account, however, the solo female dancer is holy:

And on the same day in church, during the Compline of the friars not far from the altar of the Blessed Virgin, the hand of the Lord came over her. And lo, a young girl appeared, with the most beautiful face and a golden crown and something that seemed to be made of delicate and long silk. And clapping her hands, with a

happy countenance she festively danced on the highest step around the altar of the Blessed Virgin. She was also bathed in a boundless light of many colors.

This virgin, however, wondered who this girl might be that danced so happily and moved so proudly. Then the girl told her, "I am your faith. The other virtues pledged themselves to humility; I alone, on the other hand, seized pride and glory for myself, because they belong to me." [. . .] Within a short while, this apparition had consoled, animated and physically strengthened this virgin who had before felt desolate, sad and physically weak.¹⁰

Wiethaus points out that by approaching the altar, Faith is entering a space usually off-limits to anyone but male priests.¹¹ Faith is dancing proudly, which might also be considered off-limits, since pride is one of the cardinal sins in Christian theology. Therefore, it is intriguing to find a proud dance given a positive connotation.

It is of particular note that, although visionary, this dance is efficacious in the physical world; Faith strengthens Agnes who had been physically weak. The effectiveness of this dance moves the female solo dancer away from the realm of entertainment and toward the less stigmatized role of the holy woman or saint who helps and heals. It is certainly true that in Christianity, saints do not usually heal through dance; as Susan Rodgers and Joanna E. Ziegler point out, Christianity does not have the well-developed role of the shaman that many non-Western religions do. However, Rodgers and Ziegler go on to say that a beguine like Elisabeth of Spalbeek displayed certain shamanistic qualities in her physical performance.¹² I add that Faith, in Agnes's vision, has shamanistic qualities as well, healing Agnes through her dance.

Passages about sacred physical performance

The following two passages do not specifically use the word "dance," but in them a woman uses her moving body to physically express her faith. The first is an account by Hadewijch of a very physical vision:

On a certain Pentecost Sunday I had a vision at dawn. Matins were being sung

in the church, and I was present. My heart and my veins and all my limbs trembled and quivered with eager desire and, as often occurred with me, such madness and fear beset my mind that it seemed to me I did not content my Beloved, and that my Beloved did not fulfill my desire, so that dying I must go mad, and going mad I must die. On that day my mind was beset so fearfully and so painfully by desirous love that all my separate limbs threatened to break, and all my separate veins were in travail. [. . .]

As my mind was thus beset with fear, I saw a great eagle flying toward me from the altar, and he said to me: "If you wish to attain oneness, make yourself ready!"

I fell on my knees and my heart beat fearfully, [. . .]

After that he came himself to me, took me entirely in his arms, and pressed me to him; and all my members felt his in full felicity, in accordance with the desire of my heart and my humanity. So I was outwardly satisfied and fully transported.¹³

This is a clearly described physical experience in which Hadewijch trembles, falls, and then feels the embrace of God. Like Mechthild's dancing soul and young man, there is a sense of the erotic here.

Another example of a physically performed vision comes from Agnes' text:

And soon a voice came to her [speaking], "Quickly move behind the altar." Yet when she came behind the altar, she immediately began to feel the most excruciating pain throughout all of her body in the extremities and the joints of the extremities of her whole flesh, so that she could not hold herself [up] and fell to the earth. [. . .] And she did not believe that the pain of death could be compared to this anguish. And although her crucifixion was most intense in body and heart, she was nonetheless filled in heart and soul with a miraculous and indescribable sweetness and bathed incessantly in an exceedingly abundant stream of devout tears.¹⁴

Agnes describes the physical experience of falling, feeling pain, and weeping. There are clear similarities with Hadewijch's account; both events took place in public, in a church or chapel on a holy day. Hadewijch's was during Matins on Pentecost, and Agnes's was on Easter. As Mary Suydam points out, these were not ecstasies happening alone in a room. They took place in public, before an audience gathered in church.¹⁵ This makes them performances. Although these two descriptions are most concerned with the experience of the performer and not that of the audience, other people in the church must have witnessed something as Agnes and Hadewijch physically manifested the divine.

For a description of what a sacred physical performance by a certain beguine looked like, I turn to Elisabeth of Spalbeek. Philip of Clairvaux, a Cistercian monk, observed her as she performed Christ's Passion during the various canonical hours of the day. Philip uses specific descriptive language and often turns to Biblical quotes to explain the meaning of Elisabeth's performance.

Then she is seen to yank the clothing in front of her breast and to fling herself to the right side with her right hand and then to the left with her left hand. At other times she bends her entire body forwards several times as if she were being dragged with violence in the way that thieves and murderers are violently pulled and tugged by other men's hands. In this way she is depicting the words of our Lord Jesus when he said to them: "You are come out, as it were to a thief, with swords and clubs to apprehend me" (Mt. 26:55). Then she stretches out her right arm and makes a fist of her hand and looks grimly, shaking her fist and making fearful gestures and signs with her eyes and hands like a person who is enraged and angry. Then immediately she hits herself upon the cheek so strongly that her entire body is thrown to the ground and the blow is so heavy that she falls in the same direction. Then she strikes herself at the back of her head between the shoulders and on the neck, and then bends down to the ground

and, in a wondrous fasion, curves her body and dashes her head on the earth.¹⁶

Elisabeth yanks, flings, bends, stretches, shakes, and strikes. This is language that I, as a dancer, recognize as movement description. Philip's description of Elisabeth's performance seems to be the other side of the coin from Agnes and Hadewijch's accounts. They tell the inward experience of the sacred performer, while Philip gives the audience's perspective. Although Philip does not call Elisabeth's performances "dance," her movement appears purposeful, rehearsed (she did these performances daily) and communicative. It draws the onlooker, Philip, into the experience of Christ's suffering and death.

Closing

I have presented passages in which the author views or participates in dance in a vision or in heaven, and passages in which the author views or participates in a sacred physical performance in this world. There appears to be some connection between the two, the visionary and the physical, the soul and the body. It is too early in this research to draw conclusions, but there are two things worth pointing out in closing.

One, a matter of contrasts. The first passages, the dances of the soul, use the word "dance" to describe what is happening. The latter passages, the performances of the body, are not called dance. Philip does not use the word once in all his descriptions of Elisabeth's actions. He calls what she is doing "a lively manner of representation."¹⁷ I believe this shows the great gap between medieval and modern dance terminology. Today, we make dances to express many things, from joy to horror to the intriguing shape of a line. In medieval texts, however, dance is associated solely with joy and festivity. There are no dances of sorrow or suffering. Therefore, I propose that when a woman like Elisabeth of Spalbeek performed the sufferings of Christ in a manner that we, today, would call dance, those who saw her had no words to describe what they were seeing.

Two, a matter of connections. The dances of the soul and the performances of the body are related; the same women who have visions of dance also perform in a dance-like manner. In comparison to other religious texts of the time, these beguines present a remarkably positive

image both of dance and of the use of the body to express spirituality. I do not think the relationship between the dances of the soul and the performances of the body is one of causality. That is too simple, and that forces at work here are complex. Instead, I think the relationship between the two may be similar to that of theory and practice in dance studies today—interrelated and variously emphasized by different people. In the case of medieval dance, the appearance of visionary, theoretical dance and actual physical performance in the same women's texts points toward a current within Christianity that did not merely deny the body, but instead used both the body and the soul to express the sacred.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Herbert Grundmann, *Religious movements of the middle ages*, trans. Steven Rowan (1935; reprint and translation, Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 1-70.
- ² Grundmann, *Religious movements*; Ernest W. McDonnell, *The beguines and beghards in medieval culture* (New York: Octagon Books, 1969); Walter Simons, *Cities of ladies: beguine communities in the medieval low countries, 1200-1565* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2001).
- ³ Ulrike Wiethaus, introduction to *Agnes Blannbekin, Viennese beguine: "Life and revelations,"* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), 8-10.
- ⁴ Mechthild of Magdeburg, *The flowing light of the Godhead*, trans. Frank Tobin (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 308; The Middle High German is found in Mechthild von Magdeburg, *Das Fliessende Licht der Gottheit*, eds. Hans Neumann and Gisela Vollman-Profe (Munich: Artemis Verlag, 1990), 286.
- ⁵ E. Louis Backman, *Religious dances in the Christian church and in popular medicine* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1952), 14, quotes the passage from the Acts of Saint John.
- ⁶ *The flowing light of the Godhead*, 59-60; *Das Fliessende Licht der Gottheit*, 28-29.
- ⁷ For example, the minnesinger (German courtly poet) Tannhäuser places a sexual encounter back-to-back with a call to the dance, and the minnesinger Neidhart tells of a girl who became pregnant through dancing. J.W. Thomas, *Tannhäuser: poet and legend* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1974), song 3, lines 80-84; Edmund Wiessner, *Die Lieder Neidharts* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1955), song 21, lines 8-12.
- ⁸ Henry Suso, *Little book of eternal wisdom and little book of truth*, trans. James M. Clark (New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d.), 44; Grace Jantzen, in *Power, gender, and Christian mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

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- Press, 1995), 133-146 finds women mystics' descriptions of erotic spirituality to be more "actual" and less allegorical than men's.
- ⁹ Torsten Hausamann, *Die tanzende Salome in der Kunst von der christlichen Frühzeit bis um 1500*, (Zürich: Verlag, 1980), especially 41-42. Hausamann discusses Salome's dance and says that before the Renaissance she was a negative image and an example of the seductiveness of women, associated as she was with the death of John the Baptist.
 - ¹⁰ Agnes Blannbekin, *Agnes Blannbekin, Viennese beguine: "Life and revelations,"* trans. Ulrike Wiethaus (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), 144-45; The original Latin is found in Agnes Blannbekin, *Leben und Offenbarungen der Wiener Begine Agnes Blannbekin (1315)*, eds. Peter Dinzelbacher and Renate Vogeler (Göppingen: Künnerle, 1994), 434, 436.
 - ¹¹ Wiethaus, "Interpretive essay," in *Agnes Blannbekin, Viennese beguine: "Life and revelations,"* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), 165.
 - ¹² Susan Rodgers and Joanna E. Ziegler, "Elisabeth of Spalbeek's trance dance of faith: a performance theory interpretation from anthropological and art historical perspectives," in *Performance and transformation: new approaches to late medieval spirituality*, ed. Mary A. Suydam and Joanna E. Ziegler (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 310-316.
 - ¹³ Hadewijch, *Hadewijch: the complete works*, trans. Mother Columba Hart (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 280-81. The Dutch is found in Hadewijch, *Het visioenenboek van Hadewijch*, ed. H. W. J. Vekeman (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt, 1980), 91, 93.
 - ¹⁴ *Life and revelations*, 143; *Leben und Offenbarungen*, 430, 432.
 - ¹⁵ Mary A. Suydam, "Visionaries in the public eye: beguine literature as performance," in *The texture of society: medieval women in the southern low countries*, ed. Ellen E. Kittell and Mary A. Suydam (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 131-152; Mary Suydam, "Beguine textuality: sacred performances," in *Performance and transformation: new approaches to late medieval spirituality*, ed. Mary A. Suydam and Joanna E. Ziegler (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 169-210.
 - ¹⁶ Margot H. King, "The Middle English *Life of Elisabeth of Spalbeek*," in *A leaf from the great tree of God*, ed. Margot H. King (Toronto: Peregrina Publishing, 1994), 251-252; The original Latin is found in *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum bibliothecae Regiae Bruxellensis*, vol. 1 (Brussels: 1886).
 - ¹⁷ *Catalogus codicum*, 363.

Choreography of the Temple?

Questions of Theory and Practice in the Performance of British Hinduism

Ann David

Nine o'clock in the evening - a hot, crowded hall in north-west London. The senses are assaulted by the blaze of colour and sound on entering the space and the extraordinary vision that meets the eyes. About three hundred women are filling the large arena, moving almost as one, to the beat of the music. They progress in concentric circles, anti-clockwise around a central shrine with rhythmical steps, hands moving naturally to clap on the three dominant beats of the pulse, as if they have moved forever in this way. Their traditional Gujarati outfits are a blaze of differing colours: full skirts to the ground and long shawls flowing as they move, and a glint of jewellery as the bodies pass by. Young and old join in this joyous celebration to the Hindu goddess, *Devi*.

(Author's fieldnotes, London 25.10.01)

This brief description of one of the nine nights of the autumn Hindu religious festival *Navratri*¹, a pan-Indian event in praise of the feminine power of the divine, provokes certain questions about the religious worship and codified movement systems of a society. How does a community draw upon dance in its expression of faith? What are the perceptions of the place of dance in religious practice? How may dance and movement forms transmit, represent or rework cultural categories of identity? Are such festival events tools for the transmission of cultural and religious beliefs and values? Are they in fact, 'performances of faith'?

This paper examines the practice of dance in the British South Asian diaspora, focussing on how the folk dance forms of *Raas* and *Garba*² in Gujarati festival celebrations and the performances and transmission of the classical style of Bharatanatyam in Tamil temples, may be viewed as 'performances of faith'. It questions the culturally distinctive meanings and understandings of practice and theory, revealing how these dance forms are a way of expressing the theory of Hindu beliefs in a practical, danced manifestation. Taking Deirdre Sklar's (2001) approach that movement, gestures and postures can express the embedded

tenets of a community's spiritual knowledge, or their faiths or beliefs, I view the body and its actions in these Hindu communities as an embodied discourse of religious knowledge – not a theoretical one, but as a praxis of beliefs. The cultural performances seen at religious festivals are a mode of exhibiting an adherence and commitment to Hinduism, revealing dance to be a significant factor in the 'doing' of religion, in the sense that 'doing is believing' (Myerhoff, 1977:223). This has been evident too in the increased attention given to the performance or doing of religion in the last decade amongst the disciplines of religious studies, anthropology, history and psychology.

Hinduism is known for its othopraxy, rather than orthodoxy and hence dance and movement practices remain an important aspect of defining how the body has 'a critical place in the social construction of reality' (Bell, 1992:95) and is an 'intimate arena for the practices of [cultural] reproduction' (Appadurai, 1996:67). Perhaps this is akin to Ruth Finnegan's description of a 'local system' of knowledge that she discovered amongst musicians in her study of English music-making, suggesting that by 'looking closely at people's actions really was a route to discovering a local system that, even to me, was quite unexpected in its complexity and richness' (1989:8). It does too, confirm, as in theories of embodiment (Csordas, 2002, Bourdieu, 1990) that through the perspective of embodiment the body and mind respond to the world as one unified principle, that is the body (and mind) are the locus for receiving and giving out of information or knowledge through movement and the senses (see Smith, 2002). In this process which is more than just a lived movement or action, the embodied self engages and communicates experience in a non-verbal way to self and others. The specific knowledge is an embodied knowledge, or as Sklar has described, 'The body does not hold experience; rather, it is experience, a process rather than an object' (2001:193).

If we consider the Gujarati Hindu community and how dance is utilised in its expression of faith, the *Navratri* festival reveals that the folk movement forms of *Garba* and *Raas* create a central and essential element in the social, cultural and religious performance of these celebrations. For the Gujaratis, *Navratri* is synonymous with the playing of these dance forms, and as Naseem Khan has emphasised, 'In East Africa, where so many British Gujaratis come from, garbas and dandias were central to their religious identity' (2004:n.p.). The Leicester Gujarati population³, mainly immigrants from East Africa, is well-known for its religious affiliations (Williams, 1984, Dwyer, 1994), and for its well-established patterns of worship that had been consciously and confidently practised in East Africa and which were then imported to the UK. In Leicester, the *Garba* and *Raas* were organised at *Navratri* festivals in the mid-1960s, even before the large exodus from East Africa. My respondents talked of the significance of the religious aspects of *Navratri* and endorsed the fact that the dances were seen as part of their Gujarati religious heritage. The *Navratri* festival is the locus for the transmission of Gujarati religious and socio-cultural practices and a powerful confirmation of caste identity. Playing the folk forms at *Navratri* constructs not only a Hindu identity, but a specific Gujarati Hindu identity.

Garba begins with the traditional three-clap step, performed in a eight-beat time cycle (*Kaherva*, as for the *Raas* steps) and travels anti-clockwise in huge concentric circles around the temporary central shrine. The music begins slowly at the outset and the movements are walked, but as the tempi increases, the dancers' steps move in a more flowing manner and gradually increase in speed. One step is made to the right on the right foot (but with the body turning to the left); then the left steps behind the right, followed by a further step on the right and on the left. The whole sequence travels to the right. The hand claps are executed on the first three beats; clapping towards the left and down for the first two, and then to the right and higher for the third. Gradually more variants are added and as the speed increases, the basic pattern changes to a step-ball-change on each foot, travelling and turning in rhythmic and patterned formations, with two claps in the sequence. Some groups move as one whole, first several feet to the

right, then back to the left, before turning again to continue anti-clockwise in a slow progression around the hall. The three-clap and two-clap forms of *Garba* are called in Gujarati, *Be tal na Garbo*, *ane trantal na Garbo*, and the style of clapping and performing half and full-turns is called *Heench*. Often at the end of the evening, a fast movement called *Ranjaniyu* is played, where three or four participants may hold hands and move together in a spontaneous response to the climax of the music, or dance solo. This is a free-style dance form using different formations and combinations of movements, and can be quite wild.

The symbiotic relationship of the *Navratri* movement forms and Gujarati religious faith is exemplified during each evening's event of the nine-day festival, in halls and large spaces set up as temporary temples. The playing of *Garba* within the sacred or ritual space begins the evening and the repetitive nature of the movements helps create the concentrated, devotional state of mind and body for the evening's religious ceremony. The prayers and *arati* (worship) around the shrine form the central item of the event, and are followed by the *Raas*, the stick dance. In this way the specific Gujarati dances construct a frame that focuses on the central sacred religious ritual. These vibrant, energetic and participatory folk dances displayed at *Navratri* are an expression of the Gujaratis' faith in their deities encapsulated by the Hindu Vaishnavite⁴ tradition – a tradition that has for hundreds of years accentuated religious faith through performance of dance, music and drama in its mode of *bhakti*, or devotion.

A similar trajectory may be found in Tamil groups in London, where the classical dance form of Bharatanatyam remains the privileged style and has become, for the Tamils a marker of ethnic and religious identity, presented in a discourse of unchanging traditionalism, and national identity. The move to validate the 'so-called' antiquity and religiosity of the current community practice of Bharatanatyam, a new, evolved form I would suggest, weighs with a heavy irony that relates to its recent past, where it was outlawed in India from temple practice in 1947. The highly contested and complex history of Bharatanatyam has been well documented by other scholars, but suffice to say here that much of what was rejected by reformers of the dance at that time when the style was

‘purified’ and ‘made respectable’ is now an integral part of *arangetrams*⁵ and other such performances (Gaston, 1996, David, 2005).

Andrée Grau’s SADiB report (South Asian Dance in Britain) discovered that for many dancers working as part of the British Asian diaspora, ‘spirituality is an integral part of the movements’ (Grau, 2002:55) and that it ‘remains undoubtedly significant for many dancers in contemporary Britain’ (ibid:70). Anne-Marie Gaston (1991:160) emphasises the point relating to the diaspora context, stating that ‘expatriate communities consistently place a greater emphasis on the religious or devotional elements of the dance’. The presence of dance classes situated within several major London Tamil temples signifies a new contemporary link of the dance with religious ritual and religious expression in the diasporic setting, and the increased importance assigned to its dissemination within religious practice. Bharatanatyam is generally recognised as a transnational and global form, yet in the Tamil temples and Tamil weekend schools, the teaching remains dominated by local modalities. The students are neither encouraged to attend international performances of South Asian dance nor are made aware of the work of well-known professional performers in London and the UK. Most syllabi are written in Tamil and the dance classes taught in Tamil, even though the second-generation students are more familiar and more at ease with English. The catchment area of these students too is the local geographical environment, and despite the influences of London as a major global city (Eade, 1997:11), it is these local factors that influence the Tamil community. The more inward-looking and somewhat wary nature of the Sri Lankan Tamils and their more recent immigration and settlement patterns are factors at work here. The global influences of, for example, Bollywood dance styles⁶, sit uneasily with the first-generation’s adherence to their traditional cultural and religious beliefs and there remains a tension between the struggle to maintain local (and Tamil) cultural traditions against these perceived eroding forces of globalisation. This ‘production of locality’ (Appadurai, 1996:180), seen in these terms, demands constant and hard work to be sustained under the pressures of diasporic living.

Some of the Tamil dance teachers interviewed presented Rukmini Devi’s famous dance school of

Kalakshetra⁷ as the epitome of authenticity, using Kalakshetra style as criteria to judge standards of Bharatanatyam performance - a way of invoking the past to interpret the present. The London Tamil temple performances of dance have not included much, if any ‘creative’ or innovative work, as a strict control is kept on the presentation of traditional, classical items. Here, the stakeholders who maintain tradition are the first-generation settlers who have become also the agents for preservation. I argue that the adherence to concepts of purity and women’s honour are a dominant aspect of the Tamils’ profound commitment to and identity with their language, culture and religion. It is one that creates a type of moral superiority, manifest in their cultural as well as social practices (Thornton and Niththyanathan, 1984, McGowan, 1993) and one that maintains a certain traditional and conventional view. These themes of purity and chastity within Tamil civilization have been held in high esteem by the Tamils throughout their history and remain influential throughout the Tamil diaspora, causing Tamils to remain united across the world in their commitment to safeguard their language and culture (Pandian, 1998). In dance practices it is shown as an aversion to such forms of movement as Bollywood or filmi dance and a retaining of a ‘pure’ form of Bharatanatyam such as that taught at Kalakshetra. It is the dance form of Bharatanatyam (rather than Bollywood) that has become a Tamil identity marker for immigrant communities because it is thought to embody the very feminine characteristics of purity, chastity, obedience, dignity, virtuousness, and middle-class respectability. These notions too indicate the inter-relatedness of the social body of society and the control of the individuals’ physical bodies, as Mary Douglas states, ‘The body communicates information for and from the social system in which it is a part’ (1975:83). The social, cultural and religious mores of the Tamils are inscribed on the bodies of their community, and in this case, particularly the female ones.

In researching and mapping the dance practices of the Gujarati and Tamil Hindu communities, dance that is commonly invisible to the general public has been brought into focus and made visible, yet as Andrew Ward points out (1997:6), it is a paradoxical situation as in writing, the dancing is divorced from the written product.

Yet to use a rational means to examine a non-verbal activity is essential if we are to inquire into the dance and movement systems of human society and to 'argue for the inherent meaningfulness of dance and for the place of dance as an essential human practice' (ibid:7). Hence, the examination of culturally distinctive meanings and understandings of practice and theory within dance expression is a valuable asset to gain deeper insights into questions of identity, ethnicity, authenticity and religious beliefs in a diasporic setting in Britain. A participatory approach too is invaluable in gaining experience and reflective insights from a movement perspective, for example in the Gujarati *Garba* folk dances, where the repetitive, circular movements created a focussed, inward, quiet attention, not necessarily so obvious from an onlooker's position. Embodied participation furthers too the paradigmatic shift in cultural approaches to dance witnessed in the last decade. The performance of British Hinduism through selected dance and movement forms displays without doubt a merging of deeply held theoretical beliefs with embodied expression.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Navratri falls at the end of the monsoon period in India, and heralds the end of the old year. It falls in the Hindu month of *Asvin* (September/October) and the nine nights of celebration are followed by a tenth, called *Dashera*. It is celebrated with particular enthusiasm and enjoyment by the Gujaratis.
- ² The *Raas* folk dance (sometimes called *Raas Dandia*, or simply *Dandia*) is played using sticks and is often associated with the mythological stories of the god Krishna with the cow-girls or *gopis*. *Garba* is traditionally a women's folk dance, although now both forms are played by both men and women.
- ³ 90% of all Hindus in Leicester, a town two hours north of London in the Midlands, are Gujarati-speaking. 30-40,000 Hindu Gujarati immigrants arrived from East Africa in the late 1960s and early 70s. Leicester has the highest proportion of Indians, and 1 in 7 of the population is Hindu.

- ⁴ Vaishnavite – devotees of God Vishnu, and the largest part numerically of mainstream Hinduism, which is divided up into several sects. 'Vaishnavism is characterised by *upasana* (ritual worship)...Vaishnavas subscribe to *ahimsa* (non-violence), vegetarianism, selfless and active altruism. Vaishnavism has brought forth an extremely rich literature both in Sanskrit and Indian vernaculars as well as artistic productions (music, dance, sculpture, architecture)' (Klostermaier, 1998:196).
- ⁵ *Arangetram* is a solo debut performance after many years of intensive training. The word *arangetram* is Tamil and means the *erru* or ascending of the *arangam* or stage, and is written of in the third century classical Tamil text, *Cilappatikaram*, where a young, twelve year old dancer is described giving her first performance before the king, (Gorringe, 2005:91)). Instead of the *arangetram* marking the commencement of a professional dancing career, as it traditionally represented, it has become the completion of the training when the young woman stops dancing to go to university or to take up a more lucrative professional career in medicine, dentistry, accountancy or in law. (See also Greenstein and Bharadvaj, 1998, and Schwartz, 2004:89). An *arangetram*, argues Gorringe, has become 'a symbol par excellence of ethnic heritage...a cultural commodity' (2005: 97-98) enabling the parents to present not only their daughter as an accomplished and marriageable young woman, but to demonstrate their status and wealth to the community at large.
- ⁶ See David, 2007 for a fuller discussion of these issues.
- ⁷ Rukmini Devi started Kalakshetra in the late 1930s at Adyar, just outside of Chennai, India.

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Site under construction: Taking 'Reading Performance' literally.

Astrid Bernkopf

The review printed in magazines and newspapers contains information on the performance it discusses. Therefore, the review can be considered as stepping in for the performance after the latter has vanished. Conventions regulating journalistic writing and the review in particular guide the reader through the text and ensure that some main points are addressed. Although reviews are used by reconstructors and historians, they do not appear to have gained a significant status as sources that capture and record dance performances.¹ In this presentation, I am going to explore the notion of *Reading Performance*, which I have already started to define in my PhD thesis by using only ballet scenarios as source materials.² Here, however, the centre of attention is the critic's review and how it may be read as representing the performance. For this investigation, I intend to take you on a journey investigating how factual the facts contained in reviews are. This will happen through a combination of elements of Critical Theory and historiography, which hopefully will illustrate my point.

Italian lecturer of semiotics Keir Elam points out that 'the written text ... is determined by its very need for stage contextualisation, and indicates throughout its allegiance to the physical conditions of performance' (2002, p. 191). This implies that the fact that a text is written to be performed influences the text's shape and appearance. Furthermore, the stage text is not equal to the literary one and has its own distinct features. The words of a play, an opera or the scenario of a ballet are, therefore, not entirely literary texts, but written performances displaying the most important features of the live performance. The critic's review, however, does not precede the performance, but directly follows and is borne out of it. Although partly a journalistic text, the review may be considered as exhibiting the features of the art form from which it originated; the performance.

The composition of the review can be understood as following a conventional pattern of textual narration. Firstly, a general statement concerning the performance, choreographer and theatre is given. At this point, the reader is informed which performance is dealt with and where it has taken place. This is usually followed by a more detailed account of the evening or production, which may focus on choreographic features, narrative, spatial patterns and interpretational skills of performers. Other features regularly mentioned in articles are costumes, stage design, the use of machinery and music. By referring to these elements the critic sets up an account of the performance that seeks to capture the main elements so that the reader can receive an impression of the performance.

Given these considerations, it seems possible to extract the elements of the performance from the subjectively written review. These facts will constitute the performance as it has been captured by the critic. However, the problem is what facts are. Historiographer Edward Carr sees facts simply as events (2001, p. 5 – 6). A fact would be that we all are here in this room. That some of us have arrived by car, whereas another fact is that others took the tube. The fact, according to Carr, receives relevance through its treatment. Hence, some facts are more important than others. For the review, this means that the critic does not present the entire performance, but selects from all events the facts that are most important to him. This selective process discards many elements and focuses only on a few. By doing so an emphasis on particular events is achieved. It can be observed that some reviews draw all attention to the soloists of one performance, whereas others prefer to go into lengthy accounts over the *corps de ballet* and hardly, if so, mention the soloists. Hence, the review does not depict the entire performance, but seeks to give an impression of it without accounting for all details.

At this point, the critic himself as the one to select comes into play. The critic perceives the

performance and may be considered as responsible for the point of view that his text assumes. He filters the events through his mind and is influenced by his socio-cultural, educational, political and religious background and origins. Terence Hawkes states in *Structuralism and Semiotics* (1992, p. 17) that 'in fact, every perceiver's *method* of perceiving can be shown to contain an inherent bias which affects what is perceived to a significant degree'. Consequently, everyone perceives according to his/her own method, which is influenced by bias. This bias causes a person to perceive a situation in a particular way as opposed to another person's perception. Thus, by viewing the performance, the critic creates his own version of it. Such understanding goes hand in hand with the view expounded by French literary critic Roland Barthes in his seminal essay *Death of the Author* (in *Image Music Text*, 1977, p. 142 – 148). Here, Barthes claims that 'the text is henceforth made and read in such a way that at all its levels the author is absent' (1977, p. 145). The reader creates the text according to Barthes, whereas the author vanishes immediately after having composed it. Such creation of the text happens in the reader's mind according to the words and clues he finds on the paper. In relation to theatre, it can be said that the performance is consumed by the audience, whereby every member of the audience becomes, as reader, the author of the performance.

The next step in the critic's work would be to write the review and transmit all information about it. However, since a review is a subjective text meant to evaluate, the words and sentences are arranged to influence the reader. Not only that the critic chooses which facts to pass on and which ones to leave out, he also manipulates his own audience through his choice of words and the use of language. Edward Carr, again, has summarised this notion of presenting facts according to a particular view as such: 'every journalist knows today that the most effective way to influence opinion is by the selection and arrangement of the appropriate facts' (2001, p. 5). With this additional problem, it appears necessary to consider not only one single review, but several. In many articles from a number of authors more facts about the performance may be found. Furthermore, it might be possible to filter out the critic's personal comment as opposed to the facts.

In order to distinguish between the influence a particular time and culture had on an individual and facts, a profound knowledge of the critics' influences and time is necessary. This would lead on to research into a particular era and its socio-cultural climate. Additionally, political influences such as censorship would have to be considered, as these may have a significant impact on what is published.

According to recent theory, this notion of being able to understand what people in distant cultures or times thought and how they lived has been critiqued. Keith Jenkins, philosopher of history, focuses on the actual work of the historian in his book *Rethinking History* (2003). He claims that '[historians] take with them certain identifiable things. First they take themselves personally: their values, positions, their ideological perspectives' (2003, p. 25). The historian reads, according to Jenkins his sources, and presents his own view of how matters could have been. This understanding is due to the recognition of the interpretational work on behalf of the historian. Furthermore, the text is presented by the historian diluted by his own influences in form of his socio-cultural, educational and religious background and views. Hence, it is not that we, as dance historians, read all about the Romantic ballet in Paris, but what we read is, according to Jenkins, what Ivor Guest presents us as Romantic ballet in Paris.³ Of course, the selective process is also here applicable and, therefore, only the most important events are dealt with by Guest.

Edward Carr has, in this sense, another explanation for this phenomenon: 'All history is 'contemporary history', declared Croce, meaning that history consists essentially in seeing the past through the eyes of the present and in the light of its problems' (2001, p. 15). Carr insists that we cannot rid ourselves of our own influences and, thus, will always be hampered by our own upbringing and views. For people having grown up in the late twentieth century, it is hard to imagine a time when it was not common use to brush ones teeth in the morning. Therefore, all our conclusions are tainted by our understanding and perception of the world, which does not correspond with the era we research anymore.

Hence, going back to Roland Barthes and *Death of the Author*, it can be said that the

researcher or historian himself creates a text when reading it. Thus, whatever the critic put into his review may be lost in interpretation by researchers. Just in as much as every spectator creates the performance when watching it, the reader of the review produces it when reading. This would result in one single article multiplying through such interpretative process on behalf of the reader.

The site of performance construction is therefore not the blank page, but the mind of the reader or scholar. Herbert Grabes terms such process theatre of the mind and states that the reader of a play synthesises the information by adding stage directions and implicit textual clues (in Scolnicov and Holland, 1991, p. 94 – 109). Furthermore, the stereotypical presentation of characters, movements and narrative situations in ballet tradition, for example, provide a stock repertoire for the reader to draw upon. The poses of the shy girl are in as much codified in ballet tradition as the seductress. Consequently, the text of the review triggers particular pre-existing notions and concepts of performance tradition that help to construct the performance from the review. Having said that, the performance remains an individual construct as opposed to that of another researcher. Through continuous reading and researching, the constructed performance changes as new information and insights are gathered. Thus, not even the constructed performance remains static.

To this end, the performance can be considered as lost, but through its various artefacts it encourages a process of constant construction. The theatre takes place in the mind of the researcher, who views the performance according to his personal mode of perception. In relation to history, Keith Jenkins states that ‘history is produced by a group of labourers called historians when they go to work; it is their job’ (2003, p. 25). I do hope that in the course of this presentation it has become clear that the theatre of the mind creates the performance. Consequently, performance is produced by scholars – critics – when they go to work; it is our job.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Michael Huxley gives a rare insight into the potential of reviews in relation to his case study *Dark Elegies* (1937). See Adshead, Janet. *Dance Analysis*, 1988, p. 141 – 160 for his text.
- ² See Bernkopf, Astrid. Narrative Variants and Theatrical Constants: Towards a Dramaturgy of Romantic Ballet. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Surrey, 2005. An extended version of this paper will be published in the forthcoming book publication *Reading a Dance or Two* by the European Association of Dance Historians.
- ³ Original by Jenkins: ‘Let us imagine that you have used one major text-book: Elton’s *England under the Tudors*. ... When the exam came along you wrote in the shadow of Elton. And when you passed, you gained an A level in English history ... But really it would be more accurate to say you have an A level in Geoffrey Elton: for what, actually, at this stage is your “reading” of the English past if not basically his reading of it?’ (2003, p. 9)

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The body of identity – Reflections on a theory of the solo in dance

Sandra Noeth

I would like to suggest a theoretical lecture that conceives the solo in contemporary dance and performance less as a product, i.e. less in its state of representation and 'œuvre', but that rather places emphasis on the process of creation and production of solo work. The hypothesis I want to strengthen here is that the solo appears as an aesthetic category that functions inside of diverse referential structures and textures¹.

I will concentrate on what may be specified as an *author's solo*, i.e. solo work where the soloist is concurrently author, choreographer and interpreter. However, my interest does not centre on the individual or personal soloist who would complete himself in his soloist, solitary work.

My reflections are more about the *figure* of an artistic soloist that I envisage in a more abstract way beyond the personality of his author, and that we can spot in European and North-American dance history since the end of 19th Century. Since then the solo has emerged as an artistic form of modernity that marked and anticipated turning points and changes not only in artistic, but also in diverse social respects.

In the solo process discussed here, the levels of theory and practice interact and point out one characteristic concerning the figure of the soloist: Between the different functions of author, choreographer and interpreter united in the figure of the soloist, the soloist's own experiences and the own corporeal, physical material are accentuated and negotiated.

Consequently, dichotomic differentiations between a private and an artistic subject or between personal and collective identity seem to me little efficient in perspective of a theoretical approach. In addition, the soloist as well as the spectator at the level of reception – or maybe more precisely at the level of participation – are always an integral part of concurrent societal history, its symbolic representations and contexts. In the process of artistic creation as well as in the situation of representation both are simultaneously representatives and co-producers of their reality, of their culture.

But, at which theoretical point can a concentration so chosen in the process of solo work be scheduled? The intention of my talk is to show that in each discussion of the sole and singular in solo work an "Other" finally always also becomes visible. I would like to elucidate this idea through dance itself and sketch two approaches that show how and to what extent the referential character of the solo orients itself concretely towards an "Other", towards alterity.

Call and response – To the permeability of solo work

Solo work in the 20th Century is characterised by different strategies and modalities of citation, repetition and echo as the American performance theorist Rebecca Schneider demonstrated in her article 'Solo, solo, solo' (Schneider, 2005) in analogy to musical strategies. These "duplicates" of the solo can be detected within the aesthetics of soloist works but also in its movement practice and composition. The absence that is implied here, or maybe the impossibility to perceive these duplicates, these citations, this "Other", marks frequently the dramaturgy of solo work by creating figures of partnership, witnessing or kinship which dialogue and diffuse with each other through a permeable membrane.

I would like to give some examples in order to evoke several levels or "reference spaces" where this referential texture becomes concrete.

Reference space: The creation and history of the soloist

Gerhard Bohner, one of the first representatives of the German dance-theatre created his solo dance evening 'Schwarz-Weiß-Zeigen. Übungen für einen Choreographen'² in 1983. This opus is part of a cycle trying to reduce the elements on stage to their most simple. In this work which Bohner realised after his estrangement from the public state theatre system and right at the beginning of the reorientation of his career towards solo work, an intense and conscious dialogue with his own

dance tradition is initiated and a renewal of dance is formulated. The idea of “showing” delineates the action of enabling somebody to show something on his own instead of using dancers and interpreters to do so. Following Susanne Schlicher, I quote Bohner who specifies:

By showing something, I remember that in my work I always managed to communicate an idea to the dancers. An idea, which they could then put into dance. In ‘Showing black-white’, I show to the public what I normally show to the dancers.

(Schlicher, 1987: 179-181)

For Bohner, his solo work represented an ongoing occasion for continued development of his vision about what dance could be and how body could be thought. He conducted his research of elementary things, of black and white. He confined himself to his basic material, which he re-worked and condensed, and created a challenge to the public, which he omitted. What is immanent in this solo, that compacts an important part of Bohner’s work, and what can only be perceived in its absence, are the oeuvre and the own bodily history of the soloist, his material, his topics, his aesthetic.

Reference space: The dance history

Pichet Klunchun also discusses his own process of working and acquirement of movement in his solo ‘I am a Demon’ (2006). By means of videos, training excerpts and language, he oscillates around and decomposes the narrative structure and the movements of the demon – one of the four main characters in traditional Thai masked dance, le “Khôn”. Klunchun has been trained in this dance tradition from his childhood on. During a conversation about this subject³, he specifies: “I am a Demon’ is not about me, but about my master. In the beginning, there is his presence. I enter in contact with him and with the “Khôn””. Based on the characters of the demon and his master, he works the fields of traditional and contemporary dance. By stamping on stage, he invokes, convokes a stronger, a clearer consciousness of the role and the function of

dance within arts and society, and he proclaims dance history as a contemporary subject.

Whether we consider the level of the opus or of dance history or the biographic experiences of the soloists, which can also construct important resonance spaces – the reference points, which intertwine the solo can and must still be differentiated in a more detailed way. To me it seems important that the body of the soloist dancer is inseparable from that of the author-choreographer and that therefore the immanent threads interweave in a peculiar fabric.

L’autre imaginaire: The production of the solo through the imagination of the audience

The moment of the performative production, when the soloist is confronted with the audience, opens up a supplementary perspective. In contact with the spectators, the process of creation of the solo faces a moment of verification, of revision. The imagination of this vis-à-vis, of this “Other”, acts like a multiple alter ego. The twin construction of the soloist – individual and societal in his social affiliation – is modified in the imagination, the cogitations, the bodies and realities of the audience. This tool of interrogating of identity pursues and actualizes the solo.

Following examples will explain my idea:

Reference space: Conventions and expectations of perception

Thus, in his solo ‘Preview’ from 2006, Romanian choreographer Manuel Pelmus questions modes of how perception and imagination are function. By creating a space that stays in the dark throughout the whole piece, he takes a radical decision for obscurity and cuts the supremacy of the view. He initiates a game with the visible and the invisible where he challenges the audiences’ expectations beyond an usual attitude of “watch and judge”. He describes his movements on stage before stating: ‘I am not here’. By means of this statement, the confidence between the soloist and the group of spectators is put into question and the latter are relegated to their own imagination. But most notably, he postulates the audience’s participation and introduces thereby a political aspect: Though starting from a single

body, symbols and models of common reception are called into question.

Reference space: Everyday life and the choreographic process

Another example for the dialogue between the soloist and his audience is the work 'Accumulation with Talking plus Water Motor' by Trisha Brown. In this solo created in 1986, the construction of the dance and furthermore the materials of choreographic work themselves are negotiated. Rhythm and rigorous phrasing open a process in which natural, personal and everyday movements give birth to the artistic gestures. The creative process reproduces and recreates itself throughout the representation, throughout the production event of the dance. Third example:

Reference space: Contemporary history and cultural identity

Similarly some solo works which situate their subject or their dramaturgical matter with concurrent history open themselves to collective experiences and values. In 1935 for example, Martha Graham formulates in 'Frontier. American Perspective' an interpretation of American cultural identity. Based on the archetype of the female American pioneer, she chooses the solo format in order to link the history of American cultural history and problems of space, frontiers and territories.

Beyond these examples, I would like to evoke other pertinent perspectives that I will not develop in detail in the framework of this talk: The relationship between fiction and reality, interculturality and the performativity of the body and of movement itself. Independently from aesthetic encasements, one thing becomes visible: The dialogical principle and the presence of an "Other" are anchored in the solo itself and are amplified in the figure of the soloist. Thereby identity and alterity represent two key concepts characterising the figure of the soloist in its twin structure.

The signification of the "Other" may theoretically also be traced by referring to the notion of the 'Visage d'autrui'⁴ by the French philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas. He considers that the encounter with the "Other" takes place

previous to philosophy and is thus fundamentally important for our comprehension of the world and of ourselves. He identifies a 'maladie d'identité' (Lévinas, 1998: 100), an illness of identity, and writes:

L'identité [...] se fait non pas par confirmation de soi, mais, signification de l'un pour l'autre, par deposition de soi, deposition qu'est l'incarnation du sujet ou la possibilité meme de donner, de bailer signifiante.

(Lévinas, 1998: 100)

The identity of the individual is marked right from the beginning by the "Other" which is inherent, and not by a dimension between "I" and "I". Lévinas presumes the encounter with the "Other" as a fundamental category of reflection and experience. This necessitates a broader definition of identity. Concerning the body, Paulette Kayser continues Emmanuel Lévinas idea:

On peut en déduire que le corps n'est jamais "mien", dans la mesure où il n'est ni mon objet, ni ma propriété et même pas mon projet parce que je ne suis pas seule au monde, parce que je réponds à l'autre, parce que la subjectivité est exposition.

(Kayser, 2007)

Whereas every concept of unity or totality would always and necessarily implicate a projection of oneself in an "Other", according to Lévinas it is only possible to admit that "Other" in attitudes of respect, of attendance and listening. This "Other", which always thinks differently, views and perceives differently, knows differently, moves differently and puts us into question in our own being different. Following Lévinas the access to the "Other" demands not an active attitude, but one with passive character.

As an echo to this theorem by Levinas introduced here briefly, we could consider the solo as an ontological category of aesthetics. This process of understanding of the "Other" would induce a rapprochement of the state of soloist creation and the state of creation of existence of the human being itself.

Within the referential structures and textures of the process of creation and production, the "Other" which always is immanent gains visibility. These referential textures are dynamic in the sense that they are not affirming given aesthetic, thematic, choreographic or corporeal, physical facts, but are contrariwise pointing out their actualisation, their reorganisation and their constant rejection.

So what does this concentration on the process of solo work and the questioning of the "Other" mean for a theoretical discussion? Which instruments do we need in order to converge this process, in order to make it tangible and describable?

In methodological consequence for a theory of the solo in dance, I suggest to insist on the multiple voices of the soloists: To follow their bodies, their movements, their writing and speaking about the solo process. The experiences, subjects and modes of working of these dancer-choreographers, working on solo as well as the questions and terms they invent in order to capture their work, are in the centre of my interest. Procedures of guided interviews and qualitative research reveal more at the construction and the context of solo work and describe more the "how" and less the "why" of solo work. Another tool is a variation of participating observation understood as a dramaturgical monitoring of the solo work. Other methodological instruments like ethnographies, observation protocols, auto descriptions by the artists or conversations may record the creation and the development of movement material and choreography. It is evident that the position of the researcher as an "Other" should not be neglected within the reflection.

During the elaboration, further materials like e.g. notes, letters, programmes or working journals may be consulted and completed by analyses of the solo performances. This seems necessary in order to avoid the risk of dealing with the solos while disregarding their historical context and conditioning of the work by timeliness.

I summarise: Seen from the angle of the "Other", the solo appears as a dynamic figure that can only be made tangible and comprehended between theory and practice,

between creation and reflection. By initially considering the solo as process, I attempt to contribute to a re-writing of the solo in dance – both on a written and an oral level. This undertaking attempts to provide an alternative to myths about the solo, which are recurring in different lectures of dance and cultural history and which over-value the singular and the individual in solo work. For example I would like to remind you of strategies of description around the cults of virtuosity and stars, the aspiration for authenticity, the question of originality and the sensibility of the first gesture as well as a Western phantasm of solitude and isolation.

Thought as call and response, as dialogue or as 'Visage d'autrui' – it is the referential textures with their permeability, their incoherences and their ruptures that seem to guide the research on a theory of the solo in dance. The category solo emerges as expression of the multiple – common and collective – where new perspectives emerge – both for the artistic experience and for theoretical research.

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Endnotes

- ¹ The reflections dealt with in this text are based on my unpublished research on a theory of the solo in dance for my PhD project.
- ² English translation: 'Showing black-white. Exercices for a choreographer.'
- ³ The conversation between the author and Pichet Klunchun took place in June 2007 in Hamburg/Germany.
- ⁴ English translation: 'face of the other'

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The paradox of techne. Perspectives on the *ballet d'action*

Sabine Huschka

In the following I will present aesthetic considerations of dance theatre of the 18th century and its reforms in order to discuss the precarious status of technique. Its precariousness is formulated intrinsically in the discourses of the 18th century and their debates over a new and appropriate form of theatricality in dance. Formative for the 18th century, the historical advent of aesthetic disputes between ballet masters and composers over how to give dance a dramatic structure and to bring movements into such, gave rise to characteristics and broader aesthetic positions towards techne as

1.) the basis stance of dance as an art form (pedagogical concerns of methods in learning techniques are part of this);
2.) – as an element of aesthetic judgements to qualify dancers stylistically; and finally 3.) – as a term of differentiation in the debates on the beauty and truth of dance. Since the *ballet d'action* does not only draw a line around itself through the appraisal, description and correct designation of techne as a structure to be embodied, it uses techne as a term of differentiation to elaborate divergent positions. Therefore I will analyze, how techne constitutes an incident for the aesthetics to shed light onto the controversial assessments of it as a craft for dancing bodies.

Questioning the basis of the art of dance

With the beginning of the 18th century and the aesthetical programme of *imitation*, the *ballet en action* constitutes a broad and effective discourse against the *figuration* of the *belle danse*, as it appears in the entrées and divertissements of the opéra ballets. The technical stance of the dance was identified as a merely mechanical basis, that blurs the natural beauty of the dancing body. Ballet masters like Jean Georges Noverre (1727–1810) and Gasparo Angiolini (1731–1803) deride the noblesse of *belle danse* for its geometrical figurations, since they represent in their eyes an artificiality of mechanical legwork.

In the 13th letter of his *Lettres sur la danse, et sur les ballets* (1760),¹ Jean Georges Noverre lays out a critique of choreography as a medium of transmission and challenges its usefulness in a

laconic to biting tone. "...convey this construction one arrives at spelling out dance, one has to make sure one isn't holding the book upside down." His critique differentiates between "traces and remains of an action", which show nothing more than "a frosty, dumb copy", and those "non-reproducible originals" whose truth and life are conserved in other ways. Noverre sets out his subsequent anti-academic stance in this dichotomy. Noverre elaborates at length on the shortcomings of the Parisian dance academy, which, according to him, was sending the art of dance to its grave, because the *academie de la danse* organized its education according to the "geometrical plan" of choreography, without being able to explain its efficacy. Noverre demanded the engagement of other teachers, who

qu'enfin il eût analysé les pas, leurs enchaînements successifs ; qu'il eût parlé des positions du corps, des attitudes, & qu'il n' eût rien omis des ce qui peut expliquer & faire entendre le jeu muet, l'expression pantomime & les sentiments variés de l'ame par les caracteres variés de la physiognomie (1967: 382)

Noverre articulated in a sharp-tongued but at the same time veiled speech his anti-academic stance. Gasparo Angiolini counters in a reply (2. Lettera, 1774) that Noverre only wants to teach and demean the academy. Pantomime dance would have been completely unknown to the constitution articles and their rules of 1661. The art of imitation that the dancers were lacking was not therefore a question of the correct or false academic education, but rather of the incorrectly constructed show and its dramaturgy. The technical basis and the material dance – as Angiolini called choreography – had meanwhile made real progress. While Noverre extracts his concept from an antagonism to technique and coldness, from which it is important to continually distance oneself, Angiolini's reform engenders a pragmatic-moderate stance, which locates the new

less in a fundamental Other than as a Supplementary.²

Techne as a criteria of aesthetic judgement

In a historical view on theatrical dance the term *techne* motivates highly divisive discourses about the aesthetic value and judgements of dancers. Out of these discourses arises the two-folded opposition between naturalness/expressiveness of the dancing body on the one and its technical, merely virtuosic stance on the other hand. “The most magnificent dancer in Europe”, writes Noverre in the revised and expanded version of the *Lettres sur les Arts Imitateurs en générale, et sur La Danse en particu-lière*,

Vestris, le fils, élève de son père ; [...] Son début dans le genre sérieux fut un triomphe ; aplomb, hardiesse, fermeté, brillant, belle formation de pas ; oreille sensible et délicate. [...]

[...] et la danse prit une route nouvelle [...]. Vestris, plein d’aisance et de facilité, de vigueur et d’adresse, de souplesse et de force, de caprice et de fantaisie, et entreprenant sans réflexions, composa, pour ainsi dire, un nouveau genre d’architecture où tous les ordres, toutes les proportions, furent confondus et exagérés; il fit disparaître les trois genres connus et distincts, il les fondit ensemble et en fit un de cet amalgame; il se forma une nouvelle manière qui eut du succès. (1807, II : 126)

The graceful countenance of Auguste Vestris steps across the gaze of others and presents itself for their appraisal. A dance style makes its entry into the cultural discourse, the description and evaluation of which represent a central moment in the formation of the aesthetic theory of dance. The governance of the body in this dance style not only gives a starting point to argue about the aesthetic worth of a concrete performance, but rather also supplies a fundamental characteristic for dealing with and assessing the art of dance.

Particularly the idiosyncrasies of the dancer finally determine the dance style. Historical reports show that these must still remain within the formulated code of the art of dance, in order to not

be in danger of simply – as Noverre writes about Vestris – producing sighs from the educated and unreflected admiration on the side of the young and thereby stylistically demolishing the aesthetic canon. Performances like those of Auguste Vestris (also known as Vestris the Younger)³, a dancer educated in the tradition of *ballet d’action* at the Paris Opera, characterized an excess of – shall we say – his own creative energy, which disturbed their specified aesthetic representational function. Nevertheless, Auguste Vestris along with Salvatore Viganò⁴ entered the stage as the new stars of *ballet d’action* and simultaneously pushed the most important aesthetic doctrines to their threshold. In the eyes of the reviewers and educated contemporaries, Vestris embodied in an almost frightening way a brilliant state of virtuosity, whose aesthetic legitimization had pushed *ballet d’action* theoretically into the background. Comparing father (Gaetan Vestris) to son Auguste in his *Manuel dramatique* Julien-Louis Geoffroy comes to the conclusion:

Vestris the Younger in fact contributed nothing to what constitutes the true merit of dance, in grace, expression, worthiness of movements, beauty of forms and attitudes; [...]. He perfected no essential part of the art, but taking advantage of his extraordinary strength, he mixed that which is true dance with tours de force, which smack of the art of the tumblers, He spurned the earth and the floor, where the true dancer practices his talent; he threw himself into the air, and the boldness of his flight captivated the spectator. [...] What was merely corruption was regarded as a wonder of the art, and this mix of jumps and steps, which confound and alter two very different arts, appeared to be a bold and sublime novelty. (1822: 301-304; op cit. Fairfax 2003: 277)

Vestris’ style of dancing stepped beyond the roles that had been established since the middle of the 18th century, which were characterized by clear dramaturgical, dance technical and finally physical differences. Discrete in their areas of representation, specific ways of movement and body structures belonged to the tragic *danse*

sérieuse, the comical *danse comique* and the tragicomic *danse demi-caractère*. In this way Noverre divided dancers into types according to such things as conspicuous anatomical qualities of the individual body types. Comparable to the physiognomic typology of Lavater (1776, II: 148), Noverre identified the movement capacity of the individual according to individual anatomical attributes and defects (among others knock knees and bow legs). The body type therefore determined the categorical role of the dancer.

The movement technical virtuosity of Vestris amalgamated the sublime and heroic characteristic style of a *danse sérieuse* (*danse noble*) with the off-key, rather more frolicsome movements of a *danse comique* as well as with the light characteristic style of the *danse demi-caractère*. He formally outstripped the normative borders of the dance categories. Vestris' technical crossing over did not in fact represent the breaking of a taboo against the aesthetic grain of dance theatre, for his artistry was recognizably rooted in the technical code of ballet. Yet he provoked an apparent discomfort over the question of what defined a dance presentation in the sense of the *ballet d'action*.

A formative ideal: Marie Sallé

Similarly to the theatre of the time, the aesthetic of dance theatre of the 18th century was more and more clearly assessed according to the performance ability of the individual dancers. The perceptive form most importantly marked its elaborate techne. In his ample descriptions of contemporary dancers, Noverre esteemed exactly those shows "free from all straining for emotional effect". He saw this dance style theoretically embodied in Marie Sallé (1707-1756), a dancer of *danse sérieuse* at the Paris Opera in the 1730s:

Mlle. Sallé, a most graceful and expressive dancer, delighted the public. [...] I was enchanted with her dancing. She was possessed of neither the brilliancy nor the technique common to dancing nowadays, but she replaced that showiness by simple and touching graces; free from affection, her features were refined, expressive and intelligent. Her voluptuous dancing dis-placed both delicacy and lightness; she did not stir the heart by

leaps and bounds. (1807, II: 103; op cit. Fairfax 2003: 90)

Sallé's dance becomes aesthetical through a especially sensitive characteristic style whose facility was not irritated by technical refinement, as the dancing style of Marie Carmago, a dancer of the *demi-sérieuse* category, was rumoured to be. Carmago stood out with elaborate step combinations and jumps that radiated facility, such as *jétés*, *battus* and *entrechats* and has gone down in history as a rival of Sallé. Marie Sallé meanwhile showed her contemporaries a *qualitative* physical form of her body and its movements, which according to Noverre left behind naïvely expressed an appearance of the graceful and inscribed itself in memory.

[...] *ses graces sont toujours présentes, & la minauderie des Danseuses de ce genre n'a pu éclipser cette noblesse & cette simplicité harmonique des mouvements tendres, volup-teux, mais toujours décents de cette aimable Danseuse.* (1967: 165)

With performances that were mostly restricted to *entrées* and *divertissements* from opera ballets such as *Les Indes galantes* (1735), *L'Europe galante* (1736) or *Les Fetes d'Hebe* (1739), Sallé represented an expressive uniqueness, as may be gleaned from an anonymously composed report in the *Mercur de France* on a premiere of her *Pygmalion* on the 14th of February 1734. With "successful poses that would please a sculptor," Salle achieved an expressive shaping of the events. (op cit. Beaumont 1934: 22)

Techne as a concept of differentiation: Dance as the art of painterly movements

Noverre esteemed Sallé because of her appearance to pantomimically present single short moments of narrative. Noverre considered her self-assured way of converting clear and meaningful moments of narrative into dance as a model of a pantomimic total conception of ballet. The serious and heroic dance, a *danse noble* belonging to tragedy, should take over the genre of that theatrical conception. And thus Noverre confirmed

qu'on ait comme ignoré jusqu'à présent que le genre le plus propre à l'expression de la Danse et est le genre tragique ; il fournit de grands Tableaux, des situations nobles & des coups de théâtre heureux ; d'ailleurs, les passions étant plus fortes & plus décidées dans les Héros que dans les Hommes ordinaires, l'imitation en devient plus facile, & l'action du Pantomime plus chaude, plus vraie & plus intelligible. (1760: 30)

Through plot driven ballets – the choreographies of which exhibited bodily actions as gestural and mimetic terrain for expression – dance theatre developed during the 18th century into a theatrical genre, in order to literally surmount the in-between position, where dance was only valid in *entrées* and *divertissements* of opulent opera productions. Dramatic material, a plotline structured in acts and scenes as well as an aesthetic of the body committed to expression formed the reformatory cornerstone of this 'theatralization'. Most importantly, this body compelled to express an *imitatio* of the passions, a body compelled to represent fire, truth and understanding signified in the eyes of composers such as Noverre – as well as his detractor Angiolini – the artistic strength of dance. A fiery, true and understandable miming canonized dance as an art form:

Il n'est pas douteux que les Ballets auront la préférence sur la Peinture, lorsque ceux qui les exécutent seront moins automates, & que ceux qui les composent seront mieux organisés.

Un beau Tableau n'est qu'une copie de la nature, un beau Ballet est la nature même, embellie tous les charmes de l'Art. (Noverre 1760: 52)

With the beginning of the 18th century the impact of the body in its movements was questioned in its impacts and residuals to imitate and communicate the actions and story of the ballet. Thereby it was about a forceful objective that Noverre conceived of:

Il faut un temps pour articuler la pensée, il n'en faut point à la

physiognomie pour la rendre avec énergie ; c'est un éclair qui part du cœur, qui brille dans les yeux, & répandant la lumière sur tous les traits annonce le bruit des passions, & laisse voir pour ainsi dire l'ame à nu. (1760: 195)

Closer to nature and livelier even than painting and more immediate in expression than poetry, the art of dance was seen as capable of communicating and making visible actions and moods immediately. The aesthetic potential lay in its sensual forcefulness, in an *evidentia* of direct viewing. The historical expression of this communicative act of immediacy was the overflowing tears of the public gushing forth emotion.

The body grew in the meantime to become the bearer of the signs of this passionate emotion. To achieve this theatrical artifice, the ballet masters took mimes – who knew how to effectively represent passion – as a model. Miming as an art of imitation, an *imitatio* conveyed in nature, became the primary aesthetic reference. Through a gestural-mimetic aesthetic of representation, plots were to be represented with great emotion. To put these objectives into concrete terms, Noverre referred back to the Roman pantomimes and the two pantomimes handed down from Roman times, Bathyllus and Pylades, in order to connect to a forgotten historical tradition of dance – as had Louis Cahusac before him.

Interestingly, the tradition of *ballet d'action* conceives of itself in contrast to all those meaningless, simply skillful "artificial steps" of court dance. Dedicated to pure presentation and figuration, this dance had – according to Noverre – "no character and no determined plot, represented no coherent and accomplished intrigue, in short, ... [did] not belong to drama." (1769: 98) This "simple dance diversion" displayed "nothing more than complexly calculated mechanical movements". (1769: 98) This skilful "cavorting about" with hands and feet, as Noverre called it, would from then on experience a leap in quality. Because all "... the exhausting attempts to jump around like a madman, or to show a soul that one does not have" (1769: 197), remained empty of expression. The goal marked an *evidential verbalis* of movement, in which the passions acted as "incitement" (1769: 200) and unfurling their

somewhat inciting force from which the choreographed actions jumped over into the eyes of the beholders.

[...]: *quels que soient les mouvements qui en résultent, ils ne peuvent manquer d'être vrais. Il faut conclure d'après cela que les préceptes stériles de l'Ecole doivent disparaître dans la Danse en action pour faire place à la nature.* (1760: 266)

This power is constituted as an absolute, which brings the body to the point where:

Tout parlera, ... chaque geste dévoilera une pensée, chaque regard annoncera un nouveau sentiment, tout sera séduisant parce que tout sera vrai & que l'imitation sera prise dans la nature. (1760: 122)

The tradition of *ballet d'action* agrees fundamentally with proposing expression as a term of differentiation from the artificial, pure technical. For it is nature itself that would speak in movements from then on. Noverre always situated the perceptive and expressive dance movement as separate from the technique, without denying the physical technical basis of ballet itself.

Les pas, l'aifance & le brillant de leur enchaînement, l'a-plomb, la fermeté, la vitesse, la légèreté, la précision, les oppositions des bras avec jambes, voilà ce que j'appelle le mécanisme de la Danse. Lorsque toutes ces parties sont pas mises en œuvre par l'esprit, lorsque le génie ne dirige pas tous ces mouvements, & que le sentiment & les expressions ne leur prêtent pas des forces capables de m'émouvoir & de m'intéresser; j'applaudis alors à l'adresse, j'admire l'homme machine, je rends justice à la force, à son agilité, mais il ne me fait aucune agitation; il ne m'attendrit pas, & ne me cause pas plus de sensation que l'arrangement des mots suivants. (1760: 27)

Noverre's dance theoretical essay can be read as an attempt to conceive of theatrical dance – in terms of aesthetic effectiveness – as a process of perception and sensation. Its craftsmanship is

situated beyond the standards of technique of movement and is mediated by another. This Other is designated by Noverre as spiritual. "For the gestures must only be the work of the soul, and the immediate inspiration of their emotions" (1769: 13), which, according to Horace's principle *ut pictura poesis*, generates in the body a visibility.

With that ballet and its theory take on a direction, which will be empathetic with media interface. In the meantime, one encounters explicit virtuosity with scepticism. Virtuoso dancers like Auguste Vestris were vexing due to the dominance of the technical know-how they exhibited, which unreservedly crossed over into all areas of dance and perceptively disturbed the topos of the "painterly movement" as a harmonious scene. Vestris' performativity transgressed thereby the aesthetics of movement of the norms of pantomime theatricality, without meanwhile opposing it entirely. Vestris' reception rather is most noticeable for those who oppose impassioned expression to the emptiness implicit in *ballet d'action*, in order to claim an aesthetic surplus.

Constituted is therefore a first binary theoretical stance between expressive fullness and formal emptiness. *Techne* becomes a craft, that has to be inclusive excluded or exclusive included, thereby demanding highly repressive practical approaches. Within this paradoxical position *techne* grows to a provocative issue in theory, i.e. for the discourses and their programmatic reflections on the aesthetics of dance.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Noverre published his *Lettres sur la danse, et sur les ballets* first 1770 in Lyon and Stuttgart, in honoration to Herzog Karl Eugen von Württemberg. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing translated these all together 15 *Lettres* together with J.J.C. Bode 1769 in German, published: Hamburg/Bremen. This version was new edited by Kurt Petermann 1977.
- ² As a student of Franz Hilverding (1710-1768), Gasparo Angiolini developed a ballet aesthetic committed to a gestural-narrative poetics, whose aims stood in opposition to Noverre in almost every way. The two composers and ballet masters were engaged in a dispute drawn out over many years, the letters of which are some of the only textual sources by Angiolini to give an idea of his conception of *ballet d'action*. In contrast to

Noverre, Angiolini did not write a text explaining his objectives. This is one of the reasons why Noverre – ambitious theorist of his ballets and author of *Lettres sur la danse, et sur les ballets* (Lyon/Stuttgart 1770) – grew as the main figure identified with *ballet d'action*. The *Lettres* have been handed down as the central writings on the reform of *ballet d'action*.

- ³ Auguste Vestris (born 1760) was honored greatly in his time. He was taught by his father Gaetan Vestris and was allowed, as Levinson (1923, S. 213) says, to hold the name of his father even as an unmarried son of him. Gaetan Vestris was seen as „Le Dieu de la Danse“, as it was written in the *Correspondance littéraire* of Grimm in Sept. 1772 (Diderot 1812, II: 316).
- ⁴ Salvatore Viganò (1769-1821) was engaged at the Vienna Opera as a dancer and composer (1793-1795; 1799-1803). In 1813 he became balletmaster and composer at the Scala in Milano, Italie. His dance style was rooted in the Noverre tradition. Explanations to his concept of Coreodramma see Woitas 2004.

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Analyser les processus de création en danse contemporaine.

Étude de cas : le processus de création de 9 de Loïc Touzé

Aurore Desprès

Il s'agit de présenter notre démarche d'analyse des processus de création en danse contemporaine, ainsi que d'avancer quelques résultats relatifs au processus de création de la pièce chorégraphique 9 de Loïc Touzé, dont la première représentation a eu lieu à Rennes en janvier 2007.

1 – Analyser les processus de création en danse contemporaine

Afin de ne pas produire en même temps la théorie et les faits, l'analyse des processus de création telle que nous l'entendons requiert la présence du chercheur lors des pratiques de création pour en recueillir des données dites « naturelles » ou échantillons prélevés à l'état brut existant en l'état indépendamment de leur exploitation pour la recherche. Pour connaître et penser les processus de création en danse, la recherche en danse dispose, dans le meilleur des cas, d'une part de données « naturelles », traces écrites ou audio-visuelles des différents acteurs du processus et d'autre part, de données dites « élicitées »¹ qui, au contraire des données « naturelles », sont des données fournies par les chorégraphes, danseurs, producteurs en réponse à des questions que posent des informateurs divers que peuvent être les journalistes, les spectateurs, les chercheurs, (interviews, entretiens, ou écrits des chorégraphes eux-mêmes s'explicitant sur leur processus).

Force est de constater que les théorisations sur les processus de la création contemporaine se construisent en grande partie à partir de données « élicitées » souvent éparses, partielles ou partiales, données exclues, dans le cadre de cette recherche-ci, dans la mesure où elles ne sont pas pour nous ici des « données » à proprement parler mais davantage des commentaires sur des données. Ce qui nous a intéressé ici est finalement un champ d'investigation peu formulé dans la recherche en danse, à savoir l'analyse des processus de création au sens scrupuleux où il s'agit de suivre des moments du déroulement en marche, d'analyser le processus

constitué par les activités des participants et leurs interactions. Dans cette visée, les méthodologies des théories de l'action apparaissent comme des outils importants. L'analyse d'un processus de création requiert donc cette condition de possibilité de la présence du chercheur au cœur des espaces-temps de la création. Il y a 20 ans environ, je demandais à un chorégraphe de notoriété de suivre durant de courtes périodes son processus, il me renvoya à l'impossibilité d'une extériorité devant un acte à ce point intime qu'il le compara alors à l'acte de faire l'amour. L'ouverture/fermeture du studio au chercheur mais aussi à des récepteurs-spectateurs du « travail en train de se faire » pendant des « temps de visibilité » peut apparaître comme des indices d'une certaine conception de l'œuvre. Il n'empêche que le caractère intime nous paraît constitutif de tout processus de création et à plus d'un titre irréductible. Dans cette considération, la présence du chercheur s'envisage comme intermittente, ce qui suppose un aspect forcément synchronique de l'analyse. Dans le cas de 9, j'ai été présente durant trois sessions de 4 jours correspondant aux périodes initiales, médianes et finales du processus. Sur cette opposition privé/public, le chercheur se tient sur une frange entre le dedans et le dehors réalisant son activité de chercheur en immersion participante. Le recueil des données « naturelles » s'est fait par un relevé de faits « glanés » simplement notés comme des fragments de parole ou de situations spatiales et temporelles - la meilleure façon de « fixer » en vue d'une analyse pointue étant évidemment l'enregistrement vidéo.

Soulignons aussi les caractéristiques majeures de cet objet de recherche que sont les processus de création chorégraphique : à savoir leur caractère profondément oral-corporel, oralité et corporéité jouant de l'ensemble de la sensorialité se caractérisant par la présence massive d'hésitations, de flottements, de bifurcations, de chevauchements, d'accidents qu'on ne saurait

gommer ou lisser. Objet complexe sur lequel on ne peut plaquer une théorie unitaire dont l'opérativité ne se limiterait qu'à certains niveaux seulement et pour lequel on ne peut que revendiquer l'éclectisme ou le syncrétisme méthodologique, c'est-à-dire le recours contrôlé à des approches différentes et complémentaires. Il ne s'agit pas de faire une théorie des processus de création mais d'élaborer des théorisations comme des élucidations conceptuelles de processus de création, de dégager les concepts à l'œuvre en choisissant possiblement des outils théoriques susceptibles de les élucider.

Dans l'ensemble touffu d'un processus de création de spectacle vivant, le cadre général de l'analyse suppose une multiplicité d'activités qui s'enchevêtrent et une multiplicité des acteurs les déployant tous possiblement. Trois postures guident ainsi l'observation et l'analyse :

(1) l'analyse d'un processus de création ne se réduit pas a priori à l'étude des seules procédures de composition du « chorégraphe » comme il est souvent le cas dans les théorisations esthétiques ou historiques sur la danse, mais se conçoit davantage comme un système en mouvement composé par une multiplicité d'activités liées à plusieurs champs (champ du contexte social, culturel et artistique, des modes de production, des modes de composition, des modes d'interprétation, des modes de transmission des acteurs entre eux, des modes de diffusion, des modes de réception). Il y va donc a priori d'une conception du « processus de création » et de « l'œuvre » élargie à toutes ces modes d'activités. L'analyse du processus peut donc s'associer avantageusement à une analyse d'œuvre.

(2) il s'agit alors de décrire donc d'interpréter ce qui construit justement un processus de création singulier à savoir les modes de définition, d'articulation ou d'enchevêtrement de ces diverses activités entre elles, leur ponctuation ou bornes spécifiques, leur valeur comme participant ou non du processus de création, comme participant de l'œuvre ou non. Il y va donc à chaque fois de conceptions et de réalisations particulières des pratiques de création générées par les artistes eux-mêmes mais aussi par l'ensemble de tous ces acteurs qui font sens sur ce que peut être le processus de création et l'œuvre, conceptions

qu'il s'agit exactement de dégager à partir des interactions des acteurs, à travers la double opération de description et de construction de quelques concepts opératoires susceptibles de rendre compte de ce processus.

(3) on conçoit aussi a priori ce système comme le plus ouvert et dynamique possible incluant un ensemble d'activités qui peuvent être activées ou partagées par les différents acteurs à égalité (Rancière). Ainsi, il y va possiblement d'une dialectique entre ces champs d'activité au point que l'on peut rendre compte de la part d'une activité réalisable par un acteur en dehors de son « rôle de base » premier, en considérant, par exemple la part créative d'un producteur ou d'un interprète. Il ne s'agit donc pas d'enserrer l'activité d'un acteur dans sa seule raison d'être-là mais de desserrer les liens qui lient une condition à une condition, de « déployer les acteurs » plutôt que de les re-dé-finir dans leur condition (Latour).

2 – Cas du processus de création de « 9 », pièce chorégraphique de Loïc Touzé.

Dans le cadre étroit de cette communication, je me bornerai à présenter des fragments de description du processus, d'une journée ou d'une séquence de travail. Ces fragments descriptifs nous permettront de dégager deux concepts générateurs susceptibles de rendre compte de ce processus de création particulier. Notons que des interactions multiples observées durant ces sessions, mon regard s'est centré principalement sur les interactions de LTouzé, focus orientant les descriptions et l'analyse.

Fragment 1. Rythmes du processus.

LTouzé m'énonce qu'à la suite de ses pièces précédentes basées sur « l'action » (*Morceau* 2003), sur le « récit » (*Love* 2005), il entendait travailler particulièrement sur le « rythme ». Ce propos artistique défini, LTouzé perçoit et active le début du processus à partir d'un entretien début 2005 entre le directeur du Théâtre National de Bretagne et lui-même sur des moyens de production. La part liée aux conditions de production apparaît l'enclencheur du processus (au contraire de *Morceau* où la part réalisatrice, danseurs-créeurs se réunissant précisément hors condition de production était initiatrice). La fin du processus de création de la

pièce 9 se perçoit par l'ensemble des acteurs jusqu'au 23 juin 2007 à Lisbonne, dernière date prévue dans le calendrier des représentations. On constate :

(1) d'une part que cette période de deux ans et demi est une période longue au regard du contexte des conditions de réalisation pour une compagnie indépendante, que cette longue durée est ni fortuite ni imposée par des conditions de production mais participe d'une temporalité impliquée par le chorégraphe lui-même en faisant volontairement se succéder des périodes d'actualisation (5 résidences de création sur les espaces des co-producteurs, 4 périodes totalisant 14 représentations publiques) et entre, des périodes de latence.

(2) que le processus à ce titre ne suit pas une progression linéaire par étapes jusqu'au résultat final d'une pièce, progression qui même dynamique fait se succéder plus traditionnellement des phases (des déclencheurs aux ébauches de matériaux chorégraphiques vers les premières écritures demeurant privées jusqu'au point de bascule de la première publication), c'est-à-dire en résumé de la production à la réception, mais que l'on voit bien davantage se concaténer dans un rapport dialectique ces différents niveaux dans les 5 espace-temps qu'ont été les résidences de Rennes (Garage Beaugard avec 3 interprètes, fin 2005, 3 semaines), de Blois (Halle aux grains, début 2006, 14 jours), de Grenoble (MC2, 4 interprètes, avril 2006, 11 jours), de Rennes (Garage Beaugard et Salle Gabily, 9 interprètes, fin 2006 et début 2007, 8 semaines). Les périodes de résidence et de représentations apparaissent comme des espaces-temps de concaténation de l'ensemble des activités du processus ; elles articulent, à chaque fois, des temps de travail avec les co-producteurs, des temps de travail avec les danseurs, des temps de travail, si je puis dire, avec les spectateurs à l'occasion de nombreux « temps de visibilité » ouverts au public sur chaque résidence ou à des collaborateurs divers.

On a donc vu se réaliser une conception du processus de création très « ouverte » et très « élargie ». Le processus de création n'est pas assimilé aux seules procédures de composition (affiliées traditionnellement à l'activité d'un chorégraphe) ; de là découle aussi une

conception élargie de « l'œuvre » à l'ensemble de ses niveaux et espaces-temps de réalisation.

Il est clair que les pratiques de création contemporaine ont déplacé et ouvert l'enjeu de la création réservé à l'auteur vers les danseurs-créateurs, vers les spectateurs-créateurs et que les modes de production ou de réception soient envisagées de plus en plus comme créatrices de l'œuvre. Il n'empêche que j'entends préciser que la notion d'auteur, et spécifiquement dans le cadre de 9, ne disparaît pas pour autant, voire bien au contraire. La diversité des activités de LTouzé montre plutôt une activité « d'auteur », titre qu'il assume sur cette pièce, sur l'ensemble des niveaux de réalisation ; il tend ainsi à co-construire avec tous les différents acteurs, en faisant en sorte que tous ces niveaux de réalisation soient tous co-constructifs de la création. En tant qu'auteur, LTouzé entend porter cette responsabilité du processus et être au sens étymologique de « auctor », « celui qui fonde, celui qui accroît », celui qui vise, dit-il, à « l'endroit d'un partage à s'augmenter ».

Fragment 2. Le 19 avril 2006. MC2 à Grenoble.

Les journées se partagent entre un entraînement le matin impulsé par un danseur ou par L.Touzé (qui plus généralement se livre à des activités administratives notamment avec les co-producteurs du lieu d'accueil) et une séance de travail avec les danseurs l'après-midi de 14h à 19h. Cet après-midi, après une semaine de travail sur cette 3^{ème} résidence, L.Touzé entame la séance par cette question partagée avec les 4 interprètes présents : « Qu'est-ce qui fait trace ? quels ont été les endroits d'intérêt ou de désintérêt ? ». Chacun énonce une bribe de phrases qui résonne pour l'ensemble dans le silence. Je vois dans ces silences la mémoire des corps et des esprits qui grouillent, des faisceaux de perceptions et d'expériences en réminiscences. Chaque énoncé s'avance déjà comme un lexique qu'ils partagent. Il y avait « l'observation des rythmes du paysage », paysage visible de l'immense baie vitrée du studio ouvrant sur les rythmes de la ville et ceux des montagnes non loin. Le fait « d'isoler un événement rythmique », de le « traduire » en mouvement, de le traduire en mots, de donner ces mots à un autre interprète qui pourra les traduire en mouvements. D'aborder ici la

question de la traduction qui sera plus tard investie par les neuf danseuses. « Qu'est-ce qu'on garde d'un rythme observé, écouté, lorsqu'on le traduit par des mouvements, par des mots ? ». Entre de larges plages de silences, s'énonce aussi le travail sur les « surfaces » lié à des espaces différents de perception (de l'espace interne du corps, de l'espace de la peau, à portée, au dehors, au-delà), des « niveaux de projection » (pour soi, pour quelqu'un, pour l'ensemble) ; s'énonce le travail sur « faire reculer le rythme », sur les notions de rythmes « naturels » ou « artificiels », d'exagérer un rythme ou de l'obscurcir, le travail sur les « actions rythmiques », avec un début et une fin, en succession ou en simultané (ex : marcher puis courir et marcher et courir en même temps) ; s'énonce des « échelles d'activités entre l'agir et le pas agir, entre le désinvestissement et le surinvestissement », etc. L.Touzé ré-énonce leur définition du rythme : « le rythme comme intervalle entre deux choses », comme « production d'écarts ». Il se dit intéressé par une « cohabitation rythmique, avec de multiples registres ». En très peu de mots, je vois apparaître les prémisses d'un vocabulaire commun, qui s'il reste encore instable, est véritablement en train de se constituer et de se réinvestir par cette séance des mémoires verbales et corporelles. A une proposition de situation faite par L.Touzé émergeant de son discours, les danseurs restent assis, en réflexion silencieuse. Alors L.Touzé continue de questionner : « Qu'est-ce qu'un unisson ? Qu'est-ce qu'être au même rythme ? ». Il parle du travail de la perception qu'il a effectué auprès de Lisa Nelson. Puis les détours de son discours l'amène à formuler une question qui fera une proposition qu'expérimenteront les danseurs : « Quels sont les rythmes auxquels on cherche à échapper ? ». Les danseurs à 4 puis un à un proposent des réponses en mouvement. L.Touzé regarde puis ensuite livre en partage ses perceptions, échanges pour l'émergence d'une autre proposition.

De façon générale, nous dirons que les modes de transmission du chorégraphe aux danseurs se résument à l'oralité avec usage occasionnel du manuscrit. Il n'y a donc aucune transmission corps à corps (de phrases, de modules chorégraphiques, d'une signature

corporelle ou d'un mode de corporéité), il n'y a ici aussi aucun usage de la vidéo. L'activité de L.Touzé se constitue pour l'essentiel par l'émission verbale de propositions de perception et d'action faites aux danseurs qui les traversant, engage L.Touzé dans une activité de réception qui relance, ensuite, d'autres possibilités de propositions. On souligne généralement une importance du « récepteur » dans l'activité du chorégraphe et dans le processus de création en général : une grande part de l'activité du chorégraphe est de se positionner comme le récepteur privilégié de toutes les situations ou cadres d'actions qu'il propose, de même pour le rôle de l'assistante, qu'en plus des spectateurs dans les « temps de visibilité », de nombreux acteurs (amis, chercheurs, chorégraphes) sont sollicités par L.Touzé pour assister et partager leur regard. En ces points, l'activité réceptrice du chorégraphe et de divers acteurs participe pour une grande à l'activité créatrice et apparaît constitutive de la création elle-même.

Il y va, lors de chaque résidence, d'un véritable travail de recherche au sens où sont formulés et expérimentés sur ce vecteur du projet qu'est le « rythme » dans le sens de « produire des écarts » et donc de composer des « paysages rythmiques » des façons d'agir, de percevoir dans les habitus des danseurs et hors de leur habitus. Il y va d'un travail de prise de conscience et de reconnaissance de certaines modalités d'agir et de percevoir, conditions de possibilité pour en inventer en chacun des danseurs de nouvelles. La part pédagogique dans le processus de création est éminemment importante au sens où L.Touzé conduit, suit, marche avec les danseurs comme un « maître ignorant » suscitant des questions « à l'infini », en contraignant l'exercice autonome des intelligences motrices. Il se fait le principal récepteur des actualisations des danseurs par une activité orale de reconnaissance des pensées en acte, faisant se succéder la pensée motrice déployée par les danseurs à la pensée en mots, dénouant et renouant le tramage de ce qui est donné : une intelligence du sensible et une sensibilité de l'intelligence. C'est cette activité de co-construction avec les danseurs de situations nouvelles de perception et d'action qui intéresse avant tout le chorégraphe et les danseurs engagés et qui a été pour l'essentiel à

l'émergence de la pièce.

Fragment 3. De l'acte et des partitions.

Lors des séances de travail, se sont constituées des textes écrits, support de traductions des mots aux actes ou inversement. Ces textes nommés « partitions » resteront des ressorts déclencheurs d'actes rythmiques pour celui qui en est l'auteur ou pour d'autres danseurs, durant toute la durée du processus. Des extraits des partitions sont présentés ici :

Partition Sauts (pour l'ensemble des danseuses) : « Sauts combinés à de l'inaction. Des sauts simples, sur place, allant vers le haut, vers le bas, vers le côté, regroupés, lents, vifs, secs, souples, des élans sans saut, des atterrissages sans envolée, des assauts en deux temps en trois temps, avec une hiérarchie (plus ou moins) d'arrêts, de poids, d'investissement. Sur une jambe, sur les deux, écrouler, fondre (...) ».

Partition Rythmes d'Ana-Sofia : « Partition cardiaque. 10 pulsations d'un cœur normal allongé sur la pelouse de central parc. 5 pulsations d'un cœur timide allongé sur la pelouse de central parc. 5 pulsations d'un cœur silencieuse et invisible sur un rocher de central parc. Crescendo de pulsations d'un cœur en train de tomber amoureux derrière un rocher du central parc. Un arrêt cardiaque de 5 temps. Un cœur prolapsé soit derrière, avant, à côté et en haut d'un rocher du central parc. ».

Partition Marlène : « Une traversée de fakir dans la diagonale et en mouvement inverse ». De l'ensemble des échanges que j'ai suivi, je me rends compte soudainement de l'absence du mot « mouvement » dans les discours et du grand nombre d'occurrences en substitution du mot « acte ». Il faut certainement être présent pendant quelques journées sur le processus de création pour noter à ce point ce profond changement dans la pratique de danse dans ce qu'elle désigne comme sa substance fondamentale : le « ça » qui se travaille ici est bien l'acte et il me semble important de prendre la pleine mesure de ce terme pour penser « 9 » mais aussi les écritures chorégraphiques contemporaines : l'unité de base pour la composition ici n'est pas le pas ou la position, comme dans le classicisme en danse, non plus le « geste » ou le « mouvement » délimité par des

accents toniques, impulsé par la modernité en danse, mais bien clairement « l'acte » ou « l'action », ce, dans le sillage de la post moderne danse américaine initiée par Ann et Lawrence Halprin notamment, mais complètement déglagée ici par LTouzé de la sphère du quotidien. Dans cette acception, l'acte a cette caractéristique de se présenter comme un phénomène situé, contingent, singulier et non-reproductible, pour lequel, la part relative à la situation, à la contingence, à la singularité, à la non-reproductibilité s'accroît du mouvement à l'acte par ces faits que son étendue est plus vaste et plus variable et que s'ouvre alors dans l'acte une combinatoire en cours de divers mouvements possibles. Il est aussi un phénomène temporel qui connaît un début qui peut-être daté avec précision dans la mesure où il procède d'une décision responsable et consciente prise par un sujet d'intervenir à tel moment et non à un autre, et une fin factuelle. Il se déroule toujours au présent et tend à intriquer, comme dans une « aventure », l'agir et le connaître (Mendel). Ainsi, c'est moins en des « improvisations » ou en une performance que se constituent les modes d'interprétation et de composition de « 9 » qu'en, ce que nous pourrions appeler ici, des « programmes d'actes ».

Fragment 4. Jeudi 4 janvier 2007.

Les séances de travail se déroulent en présence de tous les artistes du processus dans la Salle Gabily à Rennes, lieu de la première représentation publique prévue dans une semaine. LTouzé propose, depuis une semaine, une « structure », agencement dans le temps « d'actes rythmiques » vécues durant les résidences, qui s'avance finalement comme un « programme d'actes » ré-investis à chaque fois nouvellement par les danseuses. Depuis, cette structure se modifie chaque jour et se modifiera encore durant la période des représentations. Ce début d'après-midi, la structure s'énonce en des mots-clefs (Frise, Sauts, Actions rythmiques, Architecture, Lignes, Minéral, Arbres, etc) assortie de la désignation des entrées des neuf interprètes. Jusque-là, chacune portait la responsabilité d'entrer ou de sortir pour réaliser le programme des actes rythmiques, ce qui générerait de « l'écoute », du « lien » du

« rapport », de la « réactivité » entre les interprètes avec une tendance à « boucher les trous ou les écarts », influant donc sur l'ouverture de l'espace rythmique, ce que LTouzé ne veut pas. Il pose donc une structure d'entrées et de sorties afin que les interprètes « s'occupent moins de rentrer et de sortir que d'être là ». Les interprètes filent cette structure dans cette large boîte blanche qu'a réalisé le scénographe, le musicien lançant des fragments musicaux en collaboration avec LTouzé. A la suite de ce filage, LTouzé livre ses perceptions en orientant toujours sur d'autres possibles, sur l'importance de « déjouer les situations », de ne « pas écouter une dynamique », de « chercher une autonomie rythmique dans le paysage », de « produire des écarts ».

Conclusion. Deux concepts générateurs de « 9 ».

Un important concept générateur apparaît finalement sur l'ensemble du processus de création : « produire des écarts ». L'idée forte de « rythme » conçu comme production d'intervalles, d'espaces entre, de temps entre, a exercé une influence par incitation sur l'ensemble du processus. De l'ensemble des activités de LTouzé, on a pu réaliser combien ce projet artistique concerne évidemment les modes d'interprétation et de composition de la pièce mais plus largement contamine l'ensemble des champs et niveaux d'activités du processus de création, de la production à la réception. Ainsi, de penser le rythme même du processus avec ces temps de latence entre les résidences, de penser l'activité du spectateur comme ne cessant de tisser des liens et donc de penser la nécessité créatrice dans le fait de produire des écarts, de produire des écarts de produire des écarts (plutôt que des liens) dans ses interactions avec les acteurs, de générer encore des écarts rythmiques entre les corps des interprètes et aussi en chacun des corps. « Produire des écarts » intervient donc, dans une recherche de la multiplicité et de l'altérité, comme un propos artistique qui est à la fois un propos esthétique et politique.

Le concept « d'acte » apparaît également comme un concept opératoire susceptible de rendre compte des activités d'interprétation et de composition de 9, mais aussi, plus généralement, pour penser les modes d'interprétation et de

composition de nombreuses écritures contemporaines.

Au final, nous dirons que l'ensemble de ce processus de création s'envisage et se réalise comme un « procès » (Jullien) au sens où c'est moins une modélisation qui est produite, qu'un engagement sur une voie spécifique : « l'acte rythmique » d'où procède une enfilade d'activités procédant les unes des autres d'où émerge continuellement des actualisations qui ne cessent de résulter sans se résoudre.

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Notes

- ¹ L'emploi de l'anglicisme se justifie en l'absence d'équivalent en français, to elicit renvoyant à l'idée de « faire jaillir ».

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La lecture comme geste

Barbara Formis et Julie Perrin

Cette communication à deux voix était accompagnée d'un diaporama et d'une partition gestuelle dont ce texte tente de laisser quelques traces par des didascalies en italiques. Les deux conférencières, dans une mise en abyme de leur sujet, lisaient leur papier selon différentes modalités : l'une après l'autre, mais aussi en lectures simultanées à voix haute, en lectures en silence, en articulations silencieuses pendant la lecture à haute voix de l'une, en marchant, en rajustant leur position à la table, en accompagnement d'un mouvement des mains, de la tête, etc.

Exergue à l'écran et lue à voix haute :

Dans notre société, nous reconnaissons trois façons principales d'animer les paroles prononcées: la *mémorisation*, la *lecture à voix haute* (ce que j'ai fait jusqu'à présent) et la *parole spontanée*. (...) Et, si tout ce qui va suivre ne constitue qu'une unique, qu'une longue illustration de la fragilité de cette frontière entre le processus de référence et le sujet auquel il est fait référence, et si je déclare d'emblée, suis-je en train de donner une conférence ou bien de m'exhiber dans une salle de conférence ? Et est-il seulement possible de soulever directement la question sans cesser aussitôt de donner une conférence ?¹

Projection sans le son, pendant la lecture des trois premiers paragraphes, de *Produit de circonstances* *de Xavier Le Roy (1999).*

Pour une pensée de la lecture

La lecture, tout particulièrement la lecture à haute voix, nécessite une mise en scène théâtrale. Une mère lit une histoire assise à côté de son enfant avant qu'il ne s'endorme, un prêtre lit un texte de la Bible debout derrière un pupitre d'église, un professeur lit un extrait d'un texte dans un amphithéâtre. Les circonstances permettant la lecture sont basées sur un dispositif scénique bien précis, avec un échange de regards, une mise en visibilité du corps et une profération

de la voix qui en permet l'audibilité. La lecture n'est pas seulement l'expression d'une pensée mais aussi la mise en scène d'un corps. Même quand la lecture est silencieuse, la mise en scène n'est pas absente : le corps assume une certaine posture, le visage est placé à une certaine distance du texte, les expressions faciales changent, la personne s'absente d'elle-même, elle peut être observée sans qu'elle ne s'en rende compte, son immobilité lui permet une relaxation du corps qui révèle la concentration requise par son activité. Suivant une mise en scène théâtrale classique, l'acteur se comporte comme si le spectateur était absent : la bonne mise en scène fonctionne effectivement grâce à l'oubli fondamental de la place du spectateur. Diderot qualifie, on le rappelle, de « mauvais goût (...) le jeu d'un acteur qui s'adresserait au parterre » tandis que la 'bonne' théâtralité consisterait dans la prise en compte du spectateur en tant qu'absent.²

L'on peut ramener le problème de la théâtralité à la question du lien entre l'artificiel et le naturel. Ce lien peut être traité de trois manières : soit en montrant l'artifice de telle sorte qu'on puisse critiquer les formes reçues du naturel, soit en faisant valoir que toute « nature » est elle-même une construction artificielle, soit en essayant de « naturaliser » l'artifice. Cette dernière tendance est la plus expérimentée aujourd'hui. *Naturaliser l'artifice* ne signifie pas adhérer simplement à une méthode scénique « réaliste », il s'agit plutôt de mettre en place un théâtralité qui, tout en ne s'oubliant pas comme artifice, puisse faire apparaître les gestes du corps comme fondamentalement ordinaires, en rompant donc paradoxalement avec la structure même du théâtre. Par l'oubli de soi qui caractérise l'expérience de la lecture, l'on comprend donc que sa mise en scène, son encadrement dans un espace théâtral, ne peut se faire que par la naturalisation de l'artifice de l'acte lui-même. Si lire semble une activité facile et quelconque, c'est parce qu'on oublie la difficulté de son apprentissage. De manière générale, la lecture comme performance, voire la lecture comme geste chorégraphié, met en question la distinction classique entre activité et

passivité. Lire est une activité passive. Le corps est oublié, l'esprit sollicité. Mais le corps s'exprime et l'esprit reste silencieux.

On se souvient des conseils prodigués par Italo Calvino au futur lecteur de *Si par une nuit d'hiver un voyageur*. [Julie Perrin ajuste sa position sur sa chaise, s'étire.] Lire, c'est d'abord constituer un espace à soi, bâtir son nid, se préparer à y loger son corps, se donner les meilleures conditions pour son confort et sa qualité de perception : « Allonge les jambes, écrit Calvino, pose les pieds sur un coussin, sur deux coussins, sur le bras du canapé, sur les oreilles du fauteuil, sur la table à thé, sur le bureau, le piano, la mappemonde. Mais, d'abord, ôte tes chaussures si tu veux rester les pieds levés ; sinon, remets-les. [...] Règle la lumière de façon à ne pas te fatiguer la vue. Fais le tout de suite, car dès que tu seras plongé dans la lecture, il n'y aura plus moyen de te faire bouger. [...] Essaie de prévoir dès maintenant tout ce qui peut t'éviter d'interrompre ta lecture. Si tu fumes : les cigarettes, le cendrier, à portée de main. »³

La lecture ne se fait pas toute seule, elle nécessite une mise en place, un ajustement corporel précis et personnalisé. La relation entre activité et passivité dans l'acte de lecture est complexe. Si d'une part, le lecteur subit, se soumet à ce qu'impose le texte, d'autre part il agit, en produisant des enchaînements d'idées et d'images : il s'empare d'un matériau et le façonne à sa manière. Le texte prescrit sa règle et sa contrainte. En même temps, le lecteur s'insurge, divague, omet de lire quelques mots, rêve au lieu de déchiffrer. Comme l'écrivait déjà Roland Barthes dans *Le Plaisir du texte* : « La lecture ne déborde pas la structure ; elle lui est soumise : elle en a besoin, elle la respecte ; mais elle la pervertit. » La relation entre l'activité et la passivité de la lecture se voit dans la présumée distinction entre le corps et l'esprit. Comme le dit encore Barthes, « le plaisir du texte, c'est le moment où mon corps va suivre ses propres idées, car mon corps n'a pas les mêmes idées que moi ».⁴

Réveiller le corps par la lecture, telle serait la visée de la lecture comme performance : si l'on prend le lecteur pour un danseur, on peut imaginer que son corps s'éveille, s'exprime en un myriade de gestes personnels et vivants. La danse de la lecture ne peut donc que critiquer cette idée reçue selon laquelle le corps serait immobile pendant

qu'on lit. Au contraire, la lecture peut, comme chez Michel de Certeau, être comprise comme un voyage, un déplacement corporel, un cheminement dans l'espace. De Certeau l'exprime clairement : « ce jeu de productions textuelles relatives à ce que les expectations du lecteur lui font produire au cours de son progrès dans le récit est présenté, certes, avec un lourd appareil conceptuel ; mais il introduit des *danses* entre lecteurs et textes là où, *théâtre* désolant, une doctrine orthodoxe avait planté la statue de "l'œuvre" entourée de consommateurs conformes et ignorants. »⁵ [Julie Perrin articule en silence le texte lu par Barbara Formis.]

Sur la lecture, De Certeau continue : « il faudrait en retrouver les mouvements dans le corps lui-même, apparemment si docile et silencieux, qui la mime à sa manière : les retraits en toutes sortes de "cabinets" de lecture libèrent des gestes insus, des grommellements, des tics, des étalements ou rotations, des bruits insolites, enfin une orchestration sauvage du corps. »⁶ De Certeau nous rappelle que : « Lire sans prononcer à haute ou mi-voix, c'est une expérience "moderne", inconnue pendant des millénaires. Autrefois, le lecteur intériorisait le texte ; il faisait de sa voix le corps de l'autre ; il en était l'acteur. (...) Parce que le corps se retire du texte pour n'y plus engager qu'une mobilité de l'œil, la configuration géographique du texte organise de moins en moins l'activité du lecteur. »⁷

Si Georges Perec et Erwin Goffman avaient déjà parlé de cette corporisation de la lecture, l'originalité du texte de De Certeau consiste à trouver dans une telle corporisation une politique sociale nouvelle. Le projet central de *L'invention du quotidien* est d'établir les « formalités pratiques », de comprendre la logique interne aux « arts de faire ». Des gestes ordinaires comme parler, faire, marcher et lire sont compris chez de Certeau comme différentes actions soumises au même « style ». Tout particulièrement, la marche et la lecture sont structurellement indissociables. « Lire c'est pérégriner dans un système imposé »⁸ écrit De Certeau. C'est là que gît en effet l'idée de la lecture comme activité.

[Les deux conférencières changent d'appui simultanément sur leur chaise, bougent les jambes. Julie Perrin se lève et lit silencieusement en marchant.]

De Certeau comprend le lien entre la marche et la lecture par la relation du corps à l'espace : marcher est une manière de lire l'espace environnant, qu'il soit urbain ou naturel, lire est une manière de voyager. « Les lecteurs sont des voyageurs, dit de Certeau – ils circulent sur les terres d'autrui, nomades braconnant à travers les champs qu'ils n'ont pas écrits »⁹ On comprend par là que le lecteur se met en relation avec un espace social plus large que l'espace physique qui l'environne. Dans son activité solitaire et isolée, il plonge en réalité dans une autre spatialité et suit une manière d'être d'ordre général. L'organisation politique et sociale des usages du corps est à la base d'un « style », d'une manière de faire collectivement partagée. Marcher et lire ne sont pas des activités foncièrement solitaires, au contraire elles sont historiquement et culturellement modelées. Comme le disait déjà Etienne-Jules Marey, dont il faut rappeler qu'il est un grand connaisseur de la marche : « pour la marche, comme pour tous les actes de la vie, nous sommes esclaves d'une *esthétique* conventionnelle (...) nous sommes condamnées à la marche *élégante* du citoyen. Non seulement on n'oserait, mais on ne pourrait pas, dans nos rues encombrées, prendre une allure rapide, il faut suivre le mouvement général »¹⁰. Pour De Certeau, cette socialisation du corps ne saurait pas en diminuer la portée créatrice et poétique, au contraire. Ainsi « la lecture, dit Certeau, se situerait donc à la conjonction d'une stratification *sociale* (des rapports de classe) et d'opérations *poétiques* (construction du texte par son pratiquant). »¹¹ [Julie Perrin regagne sa place.]

Voilà que la lecture, comprise dans son lien avec la marche, construit un espace bien particulier. Il s'agit d'un espace qui met en échec la distinction hiérarchique entre activité et passivité là où la lecture produit un espace *d'absence*. Il s'agit de ce que De Certeau appelle une « impertinente absence », et un « exercice d'ubiquité ». « Du lecteur, écrit De Certeau : son lieu n'est pas *ici* ou *là*, l'un ou l'autre, mais ni l'un ni l'autre, à la fois dedans et dehors, perdant l'un et l'autre en les mêlant, associant des textes gisants dont il est l'éveilleur et l'hôte, mais jamais le propriétaire. Par là, il esquive aussi la loi de chaque texte en particulier, comme celle du milieu social. »¹² De Certeau dénonce le fait que la suppression de l'aspect actif de la lecture a permis

aux élites politiques et économiques de préserver leur statut de pouvoir. Son idée de la lecture comme activité se développe dans un contexte de critique de la lecture comme moyen d'instruction pédagogique ou de simple information. Pour De Certeau, il faut pouvoir retrouver le « jeu » de la lecture, l'espace qui bouge entre le texte et le corps, pour finalement incorporer une lecture comme activité véritable, ayant sa propre esthétique et sa propre politique.

Cet agencement étrange entre la dimension active et passive de la lecture n'avait pas échappé à Ludwig Wittgenstein, dont la philosophie a tant influencé De Certeau. La seconde partie de la pensée de Wittgenstein est tout particulièrement instructive à ce propos. Dans les *Investigations Philosophiques*, Wittgenstein propose ses fameux « jeux de langage », qu'on pourrait aisément rapprocher des « arts de faire » de De Certeau, ayant la même vocation corporelle et théâtrale. « Lire » fait partie pour Wittgenstein des jeux de langage, de la même manière que « décrire un objet d'après son aspect » ; « inventer une histoire » ; « faire un mot d'esprit » ; « résoudre un problème d'arithmétique pratique » et, notons le bien, « jouer du théâtre ». ¹³ L'intérêt principal des jeux de langage consiste précisément à combiner les deux aspects essentiels de la vie : d'une part, suivre une règle et l'appliquer (et donc apprendre quelque chose) et, d'autre part, garder un espace de liberté et de manœuvre. Qu'est-ce que le mouvement chorégraphique sinon cela ? A savoir, mettre en forme une partition tout en la faisant apparaître dans sa singularité corporelle ? Si, comme nous l'avons relevé au début, « naturaliser l'artifice » est la façon expérimentale de faire du théâtre aujourd'hui, c'est aussi tout simplement notre façon ordinaire de « faire ». La marche et la lecture en sont un exemple éclairant. Pour mettre un pied devant l'autre, pour comprendre et prononcer un mot après l'autre, l'on a dû passer par bien des épreuves et des échecs. Le résultat est maintenant complètement incorporé, l'artifice naturalisé.

Il y a en effet une triple relation entre la lecture, la marche et la danse. Cette relation est comprise chez Wittgenstein en termes d'*activité guidée*. La relation entre la marche et la danse est d'abord expliquée par Wittgenstein ainsi :

[A l'écran et lu à voix haute] Considérons l'expérience du fait d'être guidé et demandons-nous : en quoi consiste cette expérience quand, par exemple, notre *marche* est guidée ? Supposez le cas suivant : vous êtes sur un terrain de jeu avec les yeux bandés, et quelqu'un vous conduit par la main, tantôt à gauche, tantôt à droite ; vous devez être constamment prêts à subir une secousse de sa main, et devez également prendre garde à ne pas trébucher quand il vous donne une secousse inattendue. Ou bien : on vous conduit par la main du côté où vous ne voulez pas aller, de force – ou bien : vous êtes guidé par un partenaire, dans une *danse* : vous vous rendez aussi réceptif que possible, pour deviner son intention et obéir à la moindre pression – ou encore : vous marchez dans le sillon d'un champ en le suivant simplement.¹⁴

Danser est chez Wittgenstein comme marcher les yeux bandés conduit par quelqu'un : il faut être réceptifs, corporellement ouverts et attentifs : être guidé est un peu comme lire. Marcher, danser et lire sont pour Wittgenstein des « expériences » ayant la même inexplicable particularité. « Si j'imagine une expérience aussi particulière, écrit Wittgenstein, elle me paraît être l'expérience d'être guidée (ou de la *lecture*) Mais alors je me demande : que fais-tu ? Tu regardes chaque lettre, avec telle expression du visage, tu traces les lettres avec circonspection (etc.) Ainsi c'est ça l'expérience d'être guidé ? » et Wittgenstein, comme il le fait toujours, se rectifie, dépasse ses prémisses et répond : « Non, ce n'est pas ça ; c'est quelque chose de plus intérieur, de plus essentiel. »¹⁵

On peut comprendre que cette attention intérieure et essentielle dont parle Wittgenstein, est l'ouverture du corps, la décision corporelle de se laisser guider par un texte comme on se laisse guider par la main de quelqu'un ou par une partition chorégraphique imaginaire. Georges Perec l'avait dit admirablement dans un texte également influent pour De Certeau *Lire : esquisse socio-physiologique*. Perec y écrit : « la lecture (doit être) ramenée à ce qu'elle est d'abord : une précise activité du corps, la mise en jeu de certains muscles, diverses organisations posturales, des

décisions séquentielles, des choix temporels, tout un ensemble de stratégies insérées dans le continuum de la vie sociale, et qui font qu'on ne lit pas n'importe comment, ni n'importe quand, ni n'importe où, même si on lit n'importe quoi. »¹⁶ Voilà que le « n'importe quoi » du texte, révèle l'importance du corps. Le geste se fait danse, se laisse emporter non pas par la signification des mots, mais par leur puissance scénique.

Mais qu'en est-il alors du texte écrit qui perd toute signification et ne sert qu'à la pure et simple gesticulation ? C'est le cas des prises de parole autoritaires, de l'énonciation d'un texte purement mémorisé qui revient comme s'il était issu d'une machine. On le voit bien quand un conférencier « se laisse emporter » par le discours : en réalité, c'est son corps qui apparaît davantage. L'exagération du message littéral produit en fin de compte une performance démesurée, où n'apparaissent *que* les gestes. Ce type de performativité avait été saisie par Bruce Nauman en une installation-vidéo de 1996 intitulée *World Piece* (*Œuvre du Monde* mais aussi *Paix dans le monde*). Sur trois murs différents, cinq vidéos sont simultanément projetées sur de très grands écrans. Chaque vidéo montre un homme ou une femme qui s'exclame en une série de phrases brèves et autoritaires : « Je parle, tu écoutes » ; « Ils parlent tu écoutes » : « Tu parles, j'écoute » ; « Nous parlons et eux ils écoutent ». Parmi les personnes donnant ces conférences, il y a une actrice sourde et une traductrice pour les sourds qui utilisent le langage des signes, ce qui ajoute une gestuelle supplémentaire. Quand la parole se détache du texte, il ne reste que la voix et le geste, il ne reste que le corps agité par la profération. Le résultat est une cacophonie de jargon politique, une façon belliqueuse d'effectuer une conférence.

On comprend au fond que toute lecture se base aussi sur la réception de la lecture, que ce soit la proprioception de soi-même pendant la lecture mentale ou la perception d'autrui, de leurs gestes et de leurs corps avant même que l'on n'entende leurs discours.

Les deux conférencières boivent un verre d'eau simultanément.

La lecture représentée

Lire relève d'une posture mentale autant que corporelle. C'est la nature chorégraphique de cette

pratique qui nous intéresse ici : la dimension corporelle d'une activité que l'on ne peut réduire ni à son opération de déchiffrement, ni à une technique mentale permettant de prendre connaissance d'un texte, ni à son caractère linguistique. Lire, c'est d'abord du geste, c'est le mouvement des yeux sur un support pour en identifier les caractères inscrits. [*Barbara Formis lit un temps le texte de Julie Perrin par-dessus son épaule.*] Pour prendre connaissance d'un contenu le mouvement est en jeu et il ne se limite pas à celui des yeux. On ne peut certes pas séparer la pratique intellectuelle de la pratique corporelle qui constituent la lecture. Elles sont étroitement liées : l'action est pétrie de mots, la corporéité est traversée par le langage. Michel Bernard rappelle ainsi que le texte est avant tout « un acte corporel d'énonciation » et souligne le « noyau commun à l'acte de danser et à l'acte d'énoncer : [c'est] l'expérience du sentir comme dynamique fictionnaire qui travaille et anime dans le même instant la manière de se mouvoir et de parler ou d'écrire »¹⁷. Dans un chapitre intitulé « Danse et texte », le philosophe analyse en effet la relation que les danseurs entretiennent avec les textes comme sources de leurs créations. Il invite les chorégraphes à une lecture proprement chorégraphique, autrement dit une lecture qui ne s'en tiendrait pas seulement à la nature sémantique, esthétique, fictionnaire et pragmatique du texte – le texte étant générateur de significations, de sensations, d'images et de rhétorique. Il invite à considérer également sa « matérialité dynamique » constituée « d'éléments non plus spécifiquement linguistiques, mais assimilables à des "gestes", comme si la corporéité et le langage formaient précisément "une même ligne de variation dans le même continuum". »¹⁸ Aussi peut-on penser que la corporéité est intimement liée à la lecture, par un va-et-vient continu d'influences réciproques : est-ce la pensée qui requiert une posture ou la posture qui nourrit la pensée ? Dans un tout autre domaine, l'ergonomie se soucie bien de la posture du corps assis au travail, dont dépend la meilleure irrigation du cerveau propice à son exercice.

Sans perdre de vue cette intrication entre corporéité, langage et pensée, on s'intéresse principalement à la valeur motrice propre à l'acte de lecture. Quelle « pensée motrice »¹⁹, pour reprendre l'expression de Laban, peut fonder la

dimension corporelle de la lecture ? Autrement dit, y a-t-il une qualité et un sens du geste propre à la lecture ? Il ne s'agit donc pas d'examiner le rapport des chorégraphes au texte, mais d'ouvrir des pistes de réflexions à partir de quelques représentations de la lecture sur la scène chorégraphique. Si l'on peut faire l'hypothèse que ces représentations informent, pour une bonne part, la relation de leurs auteurs à la lecture, il s'agit davantage ici de réfléchir à la nature spectaculaire de ces « scènes de lectures ». Que vient faire la lecture sur la scène ? Que propose-t-elle au public ? En quoi intéresse-t-elle l'art chorégraphique et quels mouvements permet-elle d'amener sur le plateau ?

Cette dernière question apparaît peut-être comme une provocation, un paradoxe. On a en effet vite fait d'associer la lecture à un mouvement imperceptible, à l'immobilité. Ou de la reléguer parmi les gestes de peu d'intérêts. [*Les deux conférencières demeurent un temps le corps immobiles.*] Est-il besoin de rappeler que la danse moderne et contemporaine a pris à cœur de révéler divers gestes quotidiens, explorant tout autant leur nature motrice que symbolique ? Elle s'intéresse aussi à la dynamique des postures. Mais il faut également considérer que cette vision de la lecture comme immobilité ou oubli de son corps et de ses sensations est singulièrement limitée. Il y a bien, en la personne du lecteur, des humeurs, des émois, des respirations ...et enfin l'apparition d'une posture privilégiée. On peut déceler des habitus en matière de lecture, qui sont le fruit de pratiques historiques, culturelles et sociales dont la corporéité porte l'empreinte. La posture est le reflet de ces histoires culturelles et intimes. Stefan Bollmann, dans *Les Femmes qui lisent sont dangereuses*, rappelle ainsi les inquiétudes du 18^e siècle, qui voyait en la lecture un fléau qui déréglaient les sens et la sexualité : « Le manque total de mouvement corporel dans la lecture, joint à la diversité si violente d'idées et de sensations », ne pouvait conduire, selon un jugement asséné en 1791 par le pédagogue Karl G. Bauer, qu'à la « somnolence, l'engorgement, le ballonnement et l'occlusion des intestins qui agissent très réellement, comme on sait, sur la santé sexuelle de l'un et l'autre genre, et notamment de la gent féminine ». ²⁰ Le contenu du texte lu n'est pas seul mis en cause : c'est aussi la position physique que la lecture exige qui est dénoncée.

[Un diaporama accompagne le paragraphe suivant. Il présente des lecteurs dans la peinture occidentale, par exemple chez Bosch, Le Caravage, Chardin, Fragonard, Ingres, Matisse, Dufy...]

La lecture suppose des usages du corps dont témoignent le discours médical et moraliste ou les nombreuses représentations artistiques du lecteur. La représentation de la lecture apparaît en effet, bien avant l'art chorégraphique, dans une ample iconographie qui a construit au fil du temps une imagerie de la lecture. Les mises en scènes picturales de lecteurs depuis le Moyen Âge font apparaître un catalogue de gestes et de postures privilégiés, dont il est difficile de démêler s'ils appartiennent davantage à une histoire de la représentation ou à une histoire de cette pratique. Les conceptions de la lecture et ses représentations se nourrissent et s'influencent sans doute, chargeant le lecteur de toute une symbolique du geste, renvoyant son attitude à une histoire de ses conventions. Fritz Nies, dans une étude intitulée *Imagerie de la lecture, exploration d'un patrimoine millénaire de l'Occident*²¹, dévoile ainsi les grandes tendances de cette histoire qui continuent de hanter nos gestes présents, qu'ils soient intimes ou publiques. Il dégage les contours d'une période : au Moyen Âge par exemple, la lecture concerne principalement des textes religieux et est prise en charge par des figures d'érudits (élite cultivée, savants, religieux) ou des souverains. Il dégage finalement ce qu'il nomme des « universaux » de l'iconographie du lecteur, concernant le lieu de la lecture et sa situation (en intérieur ou en plein air, seul ou avec autrui, scènes quotidiennes ou d'instruction), le statut social du lecteur, les modèles du genre (le portrait avec livre à partir du 16^e siècle) ou encore la position physique du lecteur : on apprend par exemple qu'on lit le plus souvent en position assise, mais aussi parfois en marchant ou debout à partir du 19^e siècle ou que la lecture au lit n'entre dans les mœurs qu'en 1750. Il faut ajouter que les gestes de la lecture publique face à un auditoire diffèrent nécessairement de ceux propres à la lecture solitaire. Au-delà du relevé de la position des lecteurs, Fritz Nies souligne la nature de l'expérience sensible qui se dégage de l'iconographie. Le lien entre la lecture féminine et l'érotisme est fréquent à partir du 17^e siècle, comme en attestent les représentations de femmes

lascives ou dénudées. Plus généralement, la lecture se conjugue aux plaisirs des sens – plaisirs de la bouche ou plaisirs tactiles : le lecteur mange, boit, fume, parfois posé sur des matières moelleuse qui le sollicitent ou entouré d'êtres chers ou d'un petit animal. Tout concourt à l'éveil des sens. Selon Fritz Nies, la lecture n'est pas « un acte isolant l'individu du monde sensible environnant et par lequel le lecteur s'enferme tout entier dans l'œuvre qu'il lit. (...) Des milliers d'illustrations prouvent que, normalement, tous les sens du lecteur non seulement restent réceptifs aux impressions venues de l'extérieur, mais encore que lui-même cherche à enrichir sa lecture par des sensations stimulantes. (...) Presque toujours, on montre le lecteur dans un environnement qui affecte ses sens, comme un privilégié jouissant de l'agrément de sa situation. »²² Georges Perec soulignait déjà le lien entre la lecture et le plaisir culinaire :

Il y a une bonne dizaine d'années, écrit Perec, je dînais avec quelques amis dans un petit restaurant [...] ; à une autre table, dînait un philosophe déjà justement réputé ; il dînait seul, tout en lisant un texte ronéotypé qui était vraisemblablement une thèse. Il lisait entre chaque plat, et souvent même entre chaque bouchée, et nous nous sommes demandé, mes compagnons et moi, comment ça se mélangeait, quel goût avaient les mots et quel sens avait le fromage : une bouchée, un concept, une bouchée, un concept... Comment est-ce que ça se mâchait, un concept, comment est-ce que ça s'ingurgitait, comment ça se digérait ? Et comment pouvait-on rendre compte de l'effet de cette double nourriture, comment le décrire, comment le mesurer ?

La présence de la lecture sur la scène est sans doute empreinte de cet imaginaire occidental de la lecture, forgé au fil des siècles par ses différentes représentations littéraires ou iconographiques. La figure du danseur en lecteur met en jeu notre rapport à ces images. Si la danse est susceptible de mettre en scène l'action collective ou le temps suspendu représentés dans la peinture, l'art chorégraphique fait aussi exister le temps de la lecture à l'intérieur de l'œuvre. La lecture se laisse

alors appréhender dans une temporalité partagée avec le public. Il n'existe pas, à notre connaissance, d'étude comparable à celle de Fritz Nies pour les arts temporels : quelle imagerie du lecteur s'est inventé sur la scène théâtrale ou au cinéma²³ ? Quel rapport au temps l'acteur ou le comédien ont-ils alors présenté ?

Dans *Pour tout vous dire...* conversations chorégraphiques d'Odile Duboc, créé en 2001, la chorégraphe se met en scène, osant dire son envie encore tenace de danser. Ce solo, son quatrième à ce jour, est pour elle l'occasion de se « glisser dans des états de corps que les interprètes ont traversé dans [ses] pièces »²⁴, de savourer des danses qu'elle n'avait vécues que par procuration. Dans l'un des moments de ce solo, elle se tient assise à une table à l'avant-scène sur laquelle sont posés des livres. Cette scène est une référence au travail précédent *Le Pupille veut être tuteur*²⁵ créé à partir du texte de Peter Handke : Odile Duboc a été particulièrement touchée par la façon dont l'une des interprètes, Françoise Rognerud, laissait apparaître le poids de son corps et la lourdeur de sa main : « ça me racontait beaucoup de choses très intimes ; je suis sensible à ces mini-vertiges »²⁶. Pour le solo, des livres sont venus compléter le tableau, évoquant la lecture, bien qu'ils ne soient jamais ouverts. Quelle pensée motrice s'éveille dans ce silence de la lectrice ? La tête est penchée, entraînant le buste vers la table. Les avant-bras posés en évidence caressent la surface, suivant les mouvements du torse qui se redresse avant de succomber à un nouveau vertige vers l'avant. Buste reposant sur la table, immobilité après un transfert de poids sur sa gauche, lenteur extrême mais nourrie d'une douce musicalité faite de respirations et d'apnées. La chute soudaine du buste sur la table entraîne celle des livres au sol. Cette danse faite de peu de gestes où le bas du corps disparaît dans l'ombre contient une musicalité propre à la chorégraphe et renvoie, me semble-t-il, à son rapport à la lecture. Pour diverses créations, Odile Duboc fait référence à des livres – Bachelard, Blanchot, Ponge, Virilio... – qui l'accompagnent dans sa démarche : ils permettent d'affiner une pensée et traduisent l'atmosphère sensorielle, le paysage, l'état d'esprit recherchés pour une œuvre. Odile Duboc parle de l'implication physique dans laquelle quelques récits la mettent. Certains textes viennent nourrir sans cesse le mouvement. *Pour tout vous dire...*

est un solo autobiographique qui dit l'urgence à danser, ou encore la vie administrative d'une directrice de centre chorégraphique national. La chorégraphe reconnaît et déplore la tristesse qui se dégage de cette scène de lecture. Elle l'attribue à la forme de son visage, à l'éclairage. Ce qui l'intéresse, c'est davantage ce rapport d'intimité à soi et ce plaisir du vertige et de l'abandon.

Le public se trouve donc face à une figure de lecteur qui insiste sur le silence, la solitude d'une scène intime, l'absorption dans son activité. Il est renvoyé à cette sensation à soi et invité à partager les vertiges de la lectrice. Celle-ci semble se retirer en elle et jouir d'une musicalité du texte que le mouvement du corps traduit. L'évocation de cette lecture fait advenir une certaine lenteur sur le plateau. Dans le même temps, cet autoportrait renoue avec le genre pictural du portrait avec livre qui apparaît au 16^e siècle et continue d'appartenir au catalogue des scènes propres à ce thème. Il ne s'agit pourtant pas pour Odile Duboc d'apparaître en savante ou en intellectuelle plongée dans l'étude ni d'acquiescer un statut par le signe culturel que renverrait le livre. Au contraire, elle invite à une perception chorégraphique, c'est-à-dire ici sensorielle et musicale, de la scène de lecture.

Dans *Gauche/droite* créé par Georges Appaix en 1994, il n'y pas de lecteurs solitaires mais des scènes de lecture à plusieurs, souvent en duo. On ne s'étonnera pas de trouver des livres dans les créations de cette compagnie puisqu'elle a pour nom « La Liseuse ». Ici, le lecteur Georges Appaix peut être silencieux, assis le nez plongé dans son livre, tandis que Claudia Triozzi parle une langue inconnue au micro. Mais le lecteur lit aussi et surtout à voix haute. Les lecteurs de *Gauche/droite* donnent à entendre leur texte sans que l'on sache toujours très bien avec qui il souhaite le partager : avec les protagonistes du plateau parfois, mais le plus souvent, avec le public. Dans le film *Gauche/droite*²⁷, trois autres scènes avec livre apparaissent.

Face à face, Christian Rizzo et Marco Berrettini se renvoient leur livre et les mots qu'ils y ont déchiffrés en l'ouvrant au hasard. Lecture incongrue où le mot claque comme la couverture du livre que l'on referme précipitamment, ne construisant aucun récit, aucun discours. Juste laisser résonner les mots et leur association inattendue, en un dialogue de poètes aux réflexes moteurs aiguisés. La logique communicationnelle

a laissé place à la sonorité, à la musicalité, au rythme. Le livre peut aussi devenir un accessoire avec lequel Chiara Gallerani s'évente ou chasse un séducteur inopportun qui cherche, quant à lui, à nouer conversation à partir de ce livre, justement. « Que lis-tu là ? Dis, que lis-tu ? », demande-t-il à répétition, faisant sonner les voyelles et l'allitération en « l ». Le livre est l'occasion d'un jeu avec l'objet, mais il demeure, comme dans la scène galante picturale, un accessoire indispensable à la rencontre, bien que la femme reste ici indifférente aux assauts vocaux, à ce sautilllement de syllabes qui se transforme en chant. Enfin, un autre duo prend place où Chiara Gallerani fait lecture à Sabine Macher. Elles sont toutes deux debout, côte à côte, mais leur présence s'oppose : l'une lit en italien le récit des désirs contrariés de différents personnages. Elle impose une verticale immobile dont l'émotion portée par le texte n'est prise en charge que par la voix. Elle module les intonations pour figurer la confusion des sentiments tandis que le rythme de la lecture s'accélère. Suivant cet emballement des péripéties et de la voix, Sabine Macher, comme prise de tics et de sursauts s'agitent par saccade, de plus en plus vite. Son corps lui aussi s'embrouille. L'auditrice semble pouvoir devenir l'ombre de cette voix. La danse figure moins les troubles du désir – il n'y a là nul geste signifiant, nulle figuration, nul signe reconnaissable – qu'elle ne traduit la musicalité du texte et la complexité des relations humaines par des sursauts convulsifs. La danse préserve néanmoins sa musicalité propre, puisqu'elle s'assure des silences que la lecture ne comporte pas. On voit bien comment cette séquence repose sur les conventions d'une scène de genre tout en les détournant : l'opposition entre la fixité du lecteur et l'agitation de l'auditeur consiste en un détournement poétique et chorégraphique des gestes appartenant à la nomenclature de la lecture.

C'est à une autre scène de genre, à un autre catalogue de gestes du lecteur que s'attache Xavier Le Roy dans *Produit de circonstances* créé en 1999. Le danseur-lecteur dialogue ici avec les conventions de lecture propre à la situation de conférence où s'énonce l'exposé théorique. Renouant avec son passé de chercheur en biologie moléculaire et cellulaire, il rapproche conférence et performance et fait se rencontrer deux natures de gestes habituellement séparées. S'il introduit, ce faisant, une théorisation de sa pratique, il invite

dans le même temps à une analyse chorégraphique du geste scientifique. Le conférencier répond, dans son activité, à un ensemble de conventions gestuelles et l'on sait combien un geste inattendu ou incontrôlé pourrait brouiller l'écoute et la compréhension de l'auditoire. Aussi, on s'attendra à le voir regarder l'assistance, s'arrêter pour boire une gorgée d'eau, ajuster ses lunettes, scander des mains le rythme de son propos, faire un geste de la main pour pointer un passage important, croiser les jambes, les décroiser, changer le poids du corps, chercher une note égarée, etc. Mais on est dérangé par ses gestes incontrôlés – se racler la gorge, se gratter, grimacer... – et l'on n'apprécierait guère qu'il lise en s'allongeant, qu'il nous tourne le dos

ou qu'il projette son texte sans l'énoncer. [à l'écran]

Car le conférencier n'est pas dénué de geste ni de corps et nulle lecture silencieuse n'est comparable à celle faite en public par son auteur. En règle général, dans cette situation, la lecture se fait principalement à voix haute et s'adresse précisément à un auditoire.

Jérôme Bel a lui aussi pratiqué la conférence pour *Le dernier spectacle (une conférence)* en 2004, afin de rappeler les enjeux de la pièce du même nom et de la situer dans un champ théorique et artistique. Mais la présence de la lecture intervient à un autre niveau et plus généralement dans son œuvre. Des mots sont écrits à même le corps, sur des T-shirts, sur un tableau ou sur des cartels et donnés à lire au public. Il s'agit d'interroger le statut de l'énonciation, le langage et de le confronter à l'expérience. L'interprète peut donc devenir le support direct de la lecture pour le public et les œuvres peuvent s'apparenter à du discours. Jérôme Bel propose souvent un déchiffrement de signes – une lecture sémiotique – mais aussi une « littéralisation du dire »²⁸ ou du lire : dans *The show must go on 2*, les lettres du titre posées sur le plateau sont permutées pour produire d'autres mots que Frédéric Séguette exécute, mime. Le public est donc invité à partager sa lecture avec celle de l'interprète et à observer les relations entre les mots et l'injonction à l'action qu'ils supposent. On est ici dans un autre dispositif de lecture, où le lecteur n'est plus absorbé et solitaire, ni seul guide de la lecture : il invite le public à interpréter les mots auxquels il se confronte lui-même.

On peut donc dégager différents types de rapport au public dans les représentations de la lecture. Chaque scène de lecture donne forme à une théâtralité particulière à un mode d'adresse au public : on peut voir une relation d'exclusion par l'absorption de l'interprète dans la lecture, une relation d'injonction à lire ou encore une adresse directe que Diderot avait définie de « mauvais goût » mais qui n'est au fond qu'une manière de naturaliser l'artifice.

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(An English version of this text is also available from the authors on request : barbaraformis@free.fr or julie@gmail.com.)

Notes

- ¹ Erving Goffman, *Façons de Parler*, Paris : Minuit, 1987, p. 178.
- ² Denis Diderot, *Œuvres esthétiques*, éd. P. Vernière, Paris : Garnier, 1965, p. 792.
- ³ Italo Calvino, *Si par une nuit d'hiver un voyageur*, traduit de l'italien par Danièle Sallenave et François Wahl, Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 1981. (*Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*, Torino : Einaudi, 1979).
- ⁴ Roland Barthes, *Les Plaisirs du texte*, Paris : Seuil, 1973, p. 27.
- ⁵ Michel de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien*, I. Arts de Faire, Paris : Union Général d'Éditions, 10/18, 1980, p. 253. Nous soulignons.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 253-54.
- ⁸ *Ibid.* p. 252.
- ⁹ *Ibid.* p. 251.
- ¹⁰ Etienne Jules-Marey, *Comment on marche : des divers modes de progression, de la supériorité du mode en flexion*, par Félix Regnault, M. de Raoul, avec préface de Marey, Paris : Henri Charles-Lavauzelle, éd. Militaire, bd. Saint-Germain, 118, rue Danton, 10., 1898, p. 6.
- ¹¹ Michel de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien*, op. cit., p. 249.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 252.
- ¹³ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Investigations Philosophiques*, in *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, Paris : Gallimard, 1961, p. 125.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, § 172, p. 190.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, § 173.
- ¹⁶ In *Esprit*, Paris, n° 453, janv. 1976.
- ¹⁷ Michel Bernard, « Danse et texte », in *De la création chorégraphique*, éd. Centre national de la danse, coll. « recherches », Pantin, 2001, p. 133 et 135.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 130. Michel Bernard se réfère ici à Gille Deleuze et Félix Guattari dans *Mille Plateaux*, éd. de Minuit, Paris, 1980.
- ¹⁹ Rudolf Laban, *La Maîtrise du mouvement*, coll. « L'Art de la danse », Arles : Actes Sud, 1994, trad. Jacqueline

- Challet-Haas et Marion Bastien, (*The Mastery of Movement*, Northcote House, Plymouth, 1988), p. 39.
- ²⁰ Stefan Bollmann, *Les Femmes qui lisent sont dangereuses* (Munich 2005), préfacé par Laure Adler, Paris : Flammarion, 2006, p. 25.
- ²¹ Fritz Nies, *Imagerie de la lecture, exploration d'un patrimoine millénaire de l'Occident*, Paris : PUF, coll. « Perspectives Littéraires », 1995.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 144-145.
- ²³ Il faut mentionner néanmoins le numéro de la revue *Vertigo* intitulé « Lector in cinéma », mais qui ne consacre en réalité pas d'étude au geste du lecteur, préférant analyser la place symbolique ou narrative du livre dans le film. *Vertigo*, « Lector in cinéma », Paris : Jean-Michel Place, n° 17, janvier 1998.
- ²⁴ Entretien avec la chorégraphe, 3 juin 2005.
- ²⁵ Après avoir collaboré avec le metteur en scène Jean-Claude Berutti en 2000 pour la création *Le Pupille veut être tuteur*, Odile Duboc s'atèle en 2001 à sa propre interprétation du texte de Peter Handke.
- ²⁶ Entretien avec la chorégraphe, 3 juin 2005.
- ²⁷ Film *Gauche/Droite* réalisé par Madeleine Chiche et Bernard Misrachi, 1994, 37'.
- ²⁸ Christophe Wavelet, « L'Après-spectacle », *Mouvement*, Paris : Editions du mouvement, n° 7, février/mars 2000, p. 77.
- ²⁹ **Barbara Formis** est membre du Centre de Philosophie de l'Art (CPA) de l'université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne où elle a enseigné pendant cinq ans. Elle est responsable de séminaire extérieur au Collège International de Philosophie. Elle participe régulièrement aux conférences de *Performance Studies International (PSI)* et elle a été boursière de la Jan van Eyck Academie de Maastricht (2006). Elle est l'auteur de plusieurs articles, dont « Le pouvoir de la syntaxe », *Revue d'esthétique* (n° 44, 2004) et « Un Soi-Inachevé, pour une perception esthétique du corps en mouvement », *Alter* (n° 15, 2007).
Auteur d'un doctorat d'esthétique et études chorégraphiques, **Julie Perrin** est chercheuse au département danse de l'université Paris 8 Saint-Denis. Elle est également membre du collège pédagogique du CNDC d'Angers. En 2007, elle est boursière Fulbright et chercheuse invitée à la Tisch School of the Arts de New York University. Elle a publié *Projet de la matière – Odile Duboc : Mémoire(s) d'une œuvre chorégraphique*, éd. Centre national de la danse/les presses du Réel, Dijon, 2007.

Improvisation in dance

Lecture/Performance with Friederike Lampert

Gabriele Brandstetter

Allow me to introduce my reflections on improvisation in dance with two mental images from Walter Benjamin:

The first comes from the collection of texts entitled “One-Way Street”:

“These are days in which no one should rely unduly on his ‘competence’. Strength lies in improvisation. All the decisive blows are struck left-handed.”¹

The second mental image comes from “Berlin Childhood around 1900” where, in the section entitled “The Reading Box”, Benjamin writes about learning to read and write with the hand “which slid the letters into the groove ... My hand can still dream of this movement, but it can no longer awaken so as actually to perform it. By the same token, I can dream of the way I once learned to walk. But that doesn’t help. I now know how to walk; there is no more learning to walk.”²

Leaving aside for the moment the question of context, we may say that the first mental image concerns the control of actions: by technique (“competence”) or by doctrine. There are, however, situations that cannot be controlled either by technical or by doctrinal mastery, situations where the movement follows another path, a roundabout path, so to speak, that has to be followed not from the “right”, but from the “left”: by improvising, acting *ex improviso* – outside of the law, outside of the directives and hierarchies of a given scheme of action. This other movement – the left-handed (*gauche*?³) movement – develops a revolutionary power (“strength”) of its own. While Benjamin sees improvisation in this scenario as a policy of action, a spontaneous action which draws its surprising effect/effectiveness not from the skilful application of rules, but – on the contrary – from the break with the orderly “technique”, from the irregular, his second relation concentrates on the acquisition of this very ability. Reading, writing, and walking are human cultural techniques, “abilities” mimetically acquired, like playing music or dancing. Can one *un-learn* body techniques that are habitualized by

exercise/practice, performatively embodied and fixed in the movement memory? Can one do this regardless of whether the techniques in question are everyday movements like walking, writing, swimming⁴ or skills requiring a high degree of virtuosity – “ability” in the sense of art – as in music or dance, for example? It would be a “forgetting” that would have to regress to the stage before the codings, the discursive inscriptions.

Benjamin is experimenting here with two radical concepts of improvisation which in a sense mark both ends of a scale of possibilities. The first is the risk-oriented, revolutionary side of improvisation: the impulse to perceive and realize something aesthetically or politically new by breaking the rules, by rebelling against the poetic, social or political law. The second is a critical idea of improvisation, which sees in the improvisational movement the (utopian) opportunity of provoking a creative action beyond body techniques and semiotics by abandoning the codes and dissolving the matrix.

Both improvisation models play an important role in Modern Dance. In our “lecture/performance” Friederike Lampert and I want to present to you some of the possibilities of improvisation: in the form of discourse in my lecture; and in the form of choreography and dance in Friederike Lampert’s improvisation. In keeping with the traditional notion of improvisation we will be linking our two different kinds of presentation *without* making the rules explicit.

The text of my lecture is divided into three parts (indicated by Roman numerals), each of which in turn is divided into three points (indicated by Arab numerals), so there are nine *points* in all.

The first part deals with improvisation as movement, the discovery/invention of body techniques;

the second part presents improvisation as a compositional technique, and

the third part deals with perception, the effect of improvisation. ■

I Discovery/invention of movement

1st point: Preliminary remarks on improvisation in the history of dance

A reconstruction of the role of improvisation in the history of dance requires an archaeological approach in two dimensions. The first is an archaeology of body history, such as applies to other performing cultures and arts as well, such as song or musical performance. The second is an archaeology of writing, since in contrast to such art forms as literature or (Western) music no binding script, no general form of notation for dance has emerged. Only the media – in the “age of the technical reproducibility” of art – have made it possible to make comparisons between, say, recordings of jazz improvisations on CD and video recordings of dance performances. Although this is an important perspective, it would require a lecture of its own. The purpose of my remarks will therefore be to give a kind of systematic presentation – illustrated by examples – of improvisation as a productive factor in dance and to consider the question of its perception.

In contrast to the oral history of the poet-bards and the tradition of the “impromptu play”, we know little about forms of improvisation in music and their status in theatrical dance *before* 1900. Improvisation – as the Latin word “*improvisus*” makes clear – is a game with the unforeseen. It is the counterpart to aesthetic compositional planning, the counterpart to a precisely planned and controlled sequence of movements or actions; and it is the counterpart to a perfectly mastered, repeatable execution of prescribed body techniques.

Improvisation stands for the openness of a process, for unforeseeability, contingency.

Dance – as it has evolved from the court dancing of the Renaissance to the theatrical art of today’s professional dance – is based on a system of executing steps, step sequences, physical postures, inter-actions. These are figurations in space and time and rhythmical (organized and musically articulated) constellations of the body – complex formations, whose architecture (even if it has no notation) is precisely fixed – think of the steps and spatial patterns of a minuet, a “contre-

danse” (in his elegy “The Dance” Friedrich Schiller described the transient figures of this dance as an ephemeral pattern of poetry).

Until late in the 19th century “improvisation” in these dances – and choreographies – was *variation* (“*variatio delectat*”), in which the scope for individual creativity tended to be restricted. This applies, for example, to the virtuoso classical ballet of the 19th century: solos designed to showcase the particular technical and dramatic talents of the ballerina are seldom invented or “improvised” by the performers on an ad hoc basis. Considering the extreme physical effort and perfection of the dancers, the model of the *cadenza*, the “*fermata*” – which artificially marks the “break”, the empty space into which the inventive artistry of the singer or pianist is poured – does not seem to be the locus of a “freedom” of performance and individual variation of the “material” either. There is hardly any rearrangement of patterns or staging of spontaneity.

2nd point: Improvisation as a discovery/invention of the dance⁶

This makes the caesura that occurred about 1900 all the more dramatic. The question raised by modern dance is as simple as it is radical: Can improvisation only take place within *set* rules (e.g. of movement, spatial arrangement)? That is to say, on the principle of *variatio delectat* – the game of spontaneously deciding on steps and figures as in the tango, for example? Or can rules themselves be improvised outside of set systems? Which means spontaneously producing the *matrix* of their exploration. Should we see improvisation as “*inventio*”, the art of finding new figures and poetics of the dance? This was the credo of the so-called “Free Dance” (and Expressionist Dance) of the first half of the 20th century. With the arrival of Modern Dance an unprecedented event took place. In the name of “free movement” and improvisation the whole prevailing *system* of (theatrical) dance was toppled. The female founders of the modern free dance (who came from America) did not only break the ballet’s specific rules. With a concept of dance based on non-coded, “free”, improvisational movement Loïe Fuller, Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis called in question the whole system of movement, the code, and the aesthetic of classical dance in

general. In order to give you a vivid idea of the radical nature of this idea of an individual, authentic “movement through improvisation”, I would like to cite an apparently eccentric example which, however, brings the basic patterns of “spontaneity” and “creativity” in this improvisation concept sharply into focus. I refer to the stage appearance of the “dream dancer” Madeleine G. (Guipet), an unusual dance event that took place in Munich in 1904.⁷ The audience sees dances that caused the critics to enthuse about the “convincing truth of gesture”, “highly dramatic movement”, “graceful sweetness”⁸. The performer is not a trained dancer, but a housewife who, during her dance act is in a state of hypnosis. The organizer of the evening is the doctor and parapsychologist Albert Freiherr von Schrenck-Notzing, who is presenting “Madeleine G.” in some sort of sense as a “case study”. In his commentary he stresses that “Madeleine’s” performances represent an artistic achievement that could bear comparison with the highest theatrical and choreographic talents. The only difference is that “Madeleine” demonstrated her “art” under hypnosis, not as rehearsed choreography, but as a spontaneous movement-invention – like improvisation. The debates on hypnosis and simulation that preoccupy both drama and dance critics, and the associated discourse on hysteria, cannot be gone into here. This borderline performance, however, highlights the guiding ideas behind improvisation. A learned body movement (such as a dancing technique) is seen as a form of channelling and inhibiting the individual’s “natural” capacity for expression. Hypnosis would enable the body to move in its “capacity for creative expression”. It thus drew spontaneously, “ex improviso”, from a creative reservoir to which access was blocked by the “languages” and disciplinary structures of cultures.⁹ With the discovery of the unconscious the idea of an original expressive power of human movement – *before* there was any language and outside of all cultural regulation – took a new turn; one might even say that the body that improvised as it danced “escaped from itself”.¹⁰

3rd point: The paradox of improvisation

Is it possible to imagine (and practice) such a “dancing under the mantle of culture”? Is not something of what has already been “learned” (in

the sense of those habitualized movements mentioned by Benjamin: walking and writing) always inextinguishably and unforgettably stored in the individual body memory? And yet the idea of “improvisation” as an “authentic discovery of movement” is to free oneself from the disciplinary structures and codes “programmed” in the body – a de-regulation of the individual and general balletic *rules* in the body. The paradox is, how can improvisation break through the canon of body-experiences and the patterns of dance and movement training? And how can this impossible, fortuitous, spontaneous “finding” of *other* movements be “learned”?

Improvisation as an art of finding “new” movements, hitherto unseen in this form and not prescribed by the system, was an idea that led to multiple forms of performance and training, for it left open the question of “learning” and “unlearning”, the practicing of something that by definition is not to be “written down as a movement cue”. Thus the expressionist dancers developed models of improvising as a practical exercise in exploring movement: examples are Mary Wigman, Gret Palucca, Kurt Jooss and the tradition of the Folkwang School, and above all Steve Paxton’s developed “contact improvisation” and later forms of practice. In the interaction of two or more bodies whose movement is always generated and transformed in unforeseeable ways of weight transference, by dynamic impulses of varying strength, and by the give and take of contact pressure, a fascinating concept is developed for motivating the spontaneous “finding” of movement in a physical and material sense, i.e. without the desire for “expressive” movement.

II Improvisation as a concept of choreographic composition

4th point: Playing with chance

The improvisation model presented in the first part related to the dancer’s body movements: to the transformation of learned movement techniques to the point of breaking with the movement code so as to find other, unforeseen, unplannable movements – either as an individual “expression”, or as an art of finding that generates a new balletic science of movement. “I look for dancers who transform themselves through

dance,” says William Forsythe,¹¹ and what he means is a transformation not only of the balletic figure, the *execution* of the movement, but also of our perception of the rules on which certain movements are based. It is an improvisational study of movement (i.e. a process like that in an experiment whose course and outcome *cannot* be precisely fixed in advance),¹² in other words an emergent form of movement.

There is a quite different idea of improvisation which takes choreographic *composition* as a whole. This applies not so much to the shaping of the dancers’ individual body movements as to the progress and organization of a choreography, but it can apply to the search for new movement *themes*, so that the improvisation lies in the process of producing a dance piece. Gret Palucca, for example, worked with a concept of “technical improvisation” (such was the paradoxical term she coined for it) – as a kind of compositional collection of movement elements and motifs. Pina Bausch (and many choreographers of the dance theatre and contemporary dance who came after her) worked by setting the dancers improvisation assignments that were formulated as questions – not as questions of movement, but as questions concerning the individual’s *body history*. Dancers of both sexes, for example, were confronted with the task of translating experiences from their personal history into physical and kinetic images, answering questions like: “What is it like to do something strenuous, to adopt a physically demanding posture?”¹³ The long question scenarios are used to compose the scenes of the “piece”, so that this kind of improvisation eventually leads back to a *planned* sequence of elements that is composed dramaturgically.

This is not the case with those composition techniques which make chance into a player in the performance itself.

The aleatory techniques¹⁴ elaborated since the 1950s by avant garde composers like Meyer-Eppler, K.H. Stockhausen, Pierre Boulez or Maurizio Kagel assumed a specific form in dance through the co-operation between John Cage and Merce Cunningham. For Cunningham aleatory techniques – very much in the sense of an “ars combinatoria” – are the “art of making choreographies”. The aim is no longer a structured choreography drafted according to the laws of dance and dramaturgy. On the contrary, non-

intentionality, one of the main criteria of improvisation, becomes a feature of the composition, so that *chance* – in the form of a throw of the dice or the use of the Chinese “I Ching” – becomes the generator of the choreography, whose form changes from performance to performance, since the parameters and their combinations – positions of the dancers, direction, body configuration, duration – are determined by the dice every time – as for example in “Suite by Chance” (1953).

“Post-modern dance” takes its cue from these aleatory techniques of Cunningham’s. Here too it is a question of isolating the materiality of the balletic and choreographic elements – body, rhythm, movement directions – using chance techniques and creating surprising new combinations. “Post-modern dance” – as practiced, say, by Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, Robert Dunn or Trisha Brown – took its cue from Cunningham’s open, chance-generated improvisation concept; it also made it more intense and variegated. The technique of “structured improvisation” refers to an exciting, indeed paradoxical interplay of regulation and de-regulation. By setting tasks for the dancers involving limited rules certain movement and interaction patterns (including their possible variations) are fixed; at the same time these rules are broken again by various chance operations and transferred to new arrangements, as in Trisha Brown’s piece “Rulegame 5” (1964) – whose improvisational and playful attitude to rules and the laws of movement is contained in the title. The reflexive treatment of principles of composition is *one* aspect; another is to direct attention to the basic patterns of everyday movement – as in “Trillium” (1962), in which Trisha Brown sets herself the task of thematizing the three basic forms of movement “sitting, standing and lying down”, thus spontaneously evoking and alternating between the experience of the three spatial levels of movement.

5th point: “Democracy’s body”

Improvisation as a composition technique in dance provokes an avant garde or post-modern understanding of art and non-art; of dance art as a form of experimentation to be distinguished from traditional and institutional patterns of aesthetic representation. Features of openness in structured

improvisation include the rejection of a poetics and dramaturgy of choreography characterized by imitation and mastery; the refusal to bind dance pieces to fixed routines and their perfect repetition; and the flattening of the hierarchy of choreographer (as author) and dancers/performers, so that the chance operations enable the dancers to participate creatively (not only imitatively) in the differently constituted shape of the performance. This active and creative improvisational participation in the contingent creation of a piece, whose course is completely or largely unforeseeable, gives the performance of body and movement a dense quality. Trisha Brown explains: "There is a performance quality that appears in improvisation that did not in memorized dance as it was known up to that date. If you are improvising with a structure your senses are heightened, you are using your wits, thinking everything is working at once to find the best solution to a given problem under pressure of a viewing audience."¹⁵ The emphasis on the author (or author-choreographer) and his work has yielded to an open, non-hierarchical production technique – "democratic" being the (equally emphatic) keyword of "post-modern dancers" and their theorists.¹⁶ For the various improvisation-based concepts of contemporary dance this idea is also important – even if it focuses more strongly on the complex interrelations between the individual dancers' scope for making decisions on the one hand and the emergent group process on the other. "Dance thinkers" is what William Forsythe calls the dancers of his company, in order to emphasize their co-authorship both in his media-supported works – such as "Improvisation Technologies" – and in his current installation performances, such as "You made me a Monster" or "Human Writes".

6th point: "Poiesis of the imperfect"

Improvisation relies on that which at any moment may become different or be done differently – whether it is a small movement, a complicated equilibristic figure, or a progression in space. This opens up a potential of "newness", otherness, incommensurability. Here lies the risk and the subversive energy of the improvisational. Between the "direction" – the clearly drawn, proportionate form of a classical (or modern)

choreography – and the chaos element, which brings chance, unforeseeability and dis-order into improvised dance, there arises the "surplus", the magic, the excitement of the not-yet seen, not-yet-experienced: another time dispensation, an intensification of the entire kinaesthetic perception. The irritating thing about improvisation is coping with disorder – admittedly a constructive coping – which makes a breach of the norms productive. The perception of the dancers and choreographers, the sense of sight *and* the entire kinaesthetic sensorium undergo a kind of splitting, or rather a doubling. "Disfocus" is the term used by Dana Caspersen for this physical-mental attitude: The eyes look inward and outward at the same time. This gives rise to a hybrid pattern of precise self-perception and body-space co-ordination. These are the prerequisites for something to "happen", creating the possibility of incident, co-incidence or ac-cident. The indeterminable moments arise out of interaction, contingency (as in Xavier Le Roy's group game as a "ball" or team game) or the rule-driven exploration of the space around the body, as in the nine-point system that Amanda Miller uses for improvisation: in the mobilizing of individual limbs, joints, parts of the body, in executing the (im)possible movement to a degree which leads to a dis-équilibre almost to the point of falling. This moment of indeterminability and unforeseeability is that of the greatest risk, bearing within it the possibility of another, unfamiliar movement. The state of dis-orientation, of de-layering of the body (in the constellation with others and within itself) shows itself in the heightening and proliferation of complexity. Seen in this way, improvisation is a model for the effects of emergence. And it is a heteronomous model of poiesis. This is not to postulate a "genius" aesthetic. On the contrary, in the contemporary performance scene it is increasingly a "weak" concept of dance that draws strength from within and outside itself by means of improvisation. Jonathan Burrows gave an improvisation duo with Jan Ritsema (a non-dancer) the title: "Weak Dance, Strong Questions". The task was "to move always in a state of questioning, not a specific question, but a feeling of questions."¹⁷ This questioning and calling-in-question denotes the "cautious" or "weak" position of a kind of dancing that is not sure in advance of the mastery of its body

movements and sequences, but tends rather – by questioning, seeking, reflecting – to find itself in a state of “responsiveness” (B. Waldenfels).¹⁸ Burrows works with movements that – in the temporal progression – question *themselves*: Hand movements which are observed, broken off, frozen, discarded and resumed. The “weak” (because uncertain) moments of permanent re-orientation become strong moments of a “dense description”. It is a progression which seeks in a sense to get rid of what has been learned mechanically yet without inserting something else in the void left by these moments of hesitation. It thus recalls that (strong) question of Walter Benjamin’s as to how the ability to walk could be learned again (and hence also forgotten again).

III. Dance improvisation and the spectator

7th point: “Against interpretation”

In an interview William Forsythe relates the following anecdote. After the performance of one of his improvisation-based pieces, a man came up to him and said he had enjoyed the choreography very much: “And,” Forsythe went on, “he wanted to tell me what his interpretation of it was. He looked at me knowingly and said: ‘Seagulls!’ Of course I nodded.”¹⁹

What is the relationship between improvisation – in dance – and the spectator? What does the pleasure of watching consist in? And how is the specific, unique nature of an improvisation communicated to the audience?

Forsythe’s little anecdote illuminates important aspects of this relationship. The reaction of the spectator reveals a desire for meaning and interpretation: an act of “pattern” recognition takes place, summed up in the image (a “moving image”) of “seagulls”. At the same time Forsythe’s reaction – “of course I nodded” – makes clear that what the spectators see and how they interpret it is not determined (mimetically, for example) by a fixed code of choreography and body presentation. The spectator’s freedom to discern (or recognize) patterns, would appear to be virtually unlimited. But is it really? Yes and no. The field of associations and interpretations is defined by the receptiveness/responsiveness of the individual spectator. There is no “right” or “wrong” – or “mistaken” – in choreography and its perception; nothing that has to be understood “properly”.

Perceived “patterns” can be placed in all sorts of space-time, cultural, narrative or abstract contexts and filled with “meaning” if desired. The freedom – a freedom that is not subject to any rule of poetics – is a shared freedom for choreographer, dancers *and* audience. To this extent the phrase – borrowed from Susan Sontag: “Against interpretation” – is not quite accurate; it is not a “negation” of interpretation, as every hermeneutic effort is permitted. However, there is no such thing as *the* text, the (ur-)script (choreography) which requires an exegesis. Any reading may give pleasure (or is permitted to do so) – even a misreading. Many choreographers and dancers tend to be *against* the search for a “message”. After all, it is this dimension of everyday (movement) communication that has to be rendered porous, evaded, transformed by improvisation. Forsythe has this to say: “Interpretation is a compulsion to speak, and I am trying to overcome this. This kind of speechlessness is healthy, I believe. But at the same time we feel afraid of this speechless state.”

So where do improvisers and spectators come together?

8th point: Play of attention

What does the spectator see when he follows a dance improvisation? And does he see more, does he enjoy watching the movements more, if he knows the (implicit) rules? – i.e. the aleatory setting, the task to be performed, and the decision-making coefficients of the interaction and space-time sequence? In other words, does the spectator enjoy the improvisation more if he is an expert? A conspiring co-improviser? Here of course one has to differentiate between the aforementioned forms of improvisation. Improvisations that provide scope for individual and/or spontaneous variation (as in the tango) within a prescribed pattern of steps, body movements and interactions, may appeal differently to the attention, knowledge and connoisseurship of the audience than contact improvisation or a choreography based on structured improvisation. However, I would say that the same goes *mutatis mutandis* for the perception of improvisation: The spectator’s enjoyment (or lack of it) stands and falls with the nature of his attention. Here we might adopt Bernhard Waldenfels’s distinction between “recognition-type seeing” and “being aware by

seeing”.²⁰ The division between seeing and knowledge is one between a recognition that is semantically defined and a seeing that is defined aesthetically by the manner of its perception. While the recognizing look – in the sense of orientation, knowledge (the epistemic classification) and semanticizing – serves the *avoidance* of risk, “seeing seeing” risks a perception that might involve disorientation, lacunae, frustration (the failure to recognize patterns), and boredom. But the latter perception is *also* one that – at the risk of being overwhelmed by complexity – can open up that pleasure, that adventure that William Forsythe has proclaimed as the maxim for improvisational work: “Surprise me by surprising yourselves.”

“Let oneself be surprised”, *surprise* oneself: the *responsive* spectator of an improvisation is the one who – *not* foreseeing what paths *his* movement, the movement of his imagination, his senses, his feelings will take – is prepared to pay the kind of attention which allows him, as an observer, to become a co-improviser. Not “competence”, but a willingness to focus the mind and the senses – one could also use the old-fashioned word devotion – could be a prerequisite for the aesthetic experience of improvisation.

9th point: Vision and kinaesthetic experience

The unforeseeabilities of an improvised (group) choreography and the complexity of the moving figures may be described by Benjamin’s (and Adorno’s) concept of *constellations*: a fleeting occurrence that – in the twinkling of an eye – leaves a trace in space and time. Yet this transient moment of “unity” is in itself split – at the vision level. That split glance of the improvising dancer at himself and his surroundings – his kinesphere – is communicated to the spectator as a “disfocus”. Dispersion, attention *and* distraction, focused vision and disturbed vision, arise from the contrasting, the impeding, and the overlapping between movement and background action – and the spectator’s own movements.

Such multiplication relates not only to vision, but to all the senses, especially to (the spectator’s) sense of movement, his kinaesthetic perception. The focusing of attention as an act of co-improvisation on the part of the spectator is fed by a multi-resonance sense and cognition scenario.

One could also say that the complexity of “multi-matrix” structures in improvisation (such as polyrhythmics, the polycentricity of the body and space actions) challenges the spectator to pay “multi-focus” attention: Stress and pleasure (in a new experience) at once! William Forsythe formulates this in relation to the tempi (temporality, rhythmics, co-ordination) as follows: “A dancer whom the audience finds fascinating is always one who has several tempos in his body, not just one.” As for the spectator’s focus on improvisation, such intensifications of experience – poetic and aesthetic “rendezvous” between contingent fragments, gaps and challenges (to the senses) – have been aptly described by the dancer and choreographer Amos Hetz as “listening to the gesture”.

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Endnotes

¹ Walter Benjamin: *Selected Writings*, Volume 1, 1913-1926 edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England 2002, p. 447.

² Walter Benjamin: *Selected Writings*, Volume 3, 1935-1938, edited by Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England 2002, p. 396.

³ On “left-handed” etc.: see Roland Barthes (Cy Twombly et al.).

⁴ Franz Kafka: Text on the “unlearning of swimming”.

⁵ This printed textversion excludes paradoxically those elements of the lecture-performance, which are meant to be of improvisational nature: the dialogue with the dancer Friederike Lampert – her movements in between each section are missing, which were based on the idea of “structured improvisation”. The lively interplay “ex improviso” has unfortunately been lost in this documentation process which is now only represented by writing and not by danced movement.

⁶ Cf. Gabriele Brandstetter: “Inventur: Tanz. Performance und die Listen der Wissenschaft” in *Intellektuelle Anschauung. Figurationen von Evidenz zwischen Kunst und Wissen*, edited by Sibylle Peters and Martin Jörg Schäfer, Bielefeld: transcript 2006, pp. 295-300.

⁷ Cf. Gabriele Brandstetter: “Psychologie des Ausdrucks und Ausdruckstanz. Aspekte der Wechselwirkung am Beispiel der “Traumtänzerin Magdeleine G.”” in *Ausdruckstanz. Eine mitteleuropäische Bewegung der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (= Internationales Symposium *Ausdruckstanz*, Thurnau 1986), edited by Gunhild Oberzaucher-Schüller in collaboration with Alfred Oberzaucher and Thomas Steiert, Wilhelmshaven: Noetzel/Heinrichshofen-Bücher 1992, pp. 199-211.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Quoted in *ibid.*

¹⁰ Bernhard Waldenfels: *Sinnesschwellen. Studien zur Phänomenologie des Fremden 3*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1999.

¹¹ William Forsythe in DU, op. cit.

¹² William Forsythe: "Unsere Duette kann man nur tanzend erfinden." On the emergence of this way of finding movements cf. DU (cit.) and examples.

¹³ Raimund Hoghe/Uli Weiss: *Bandeon – für was kann Tango gut sein?* Darmstadt and Neuwied: Luchterhand 1981, p. 24.

¹⁴ Origin of concepts in Meyer Eppler, K.H. Stockhausen et al.: cf. Holger Schulze: *Das aleatorische Spiel*, Munich: Fink 2000, p. 26ff.

¹⁵ Trisha Brown: "Un Profil" (1959-1979) Improvisations et structures, in Brunel, Lise, et al. (ed): Trisha Brown. *L'atelier des Choréographes*, Paris 1987.

¹⁶ Cit. "Democracy's Body" Sally Banes, *Democracy's body: Judson Dance Theater 1962 – 1964*, Durham u.a. (Duke Univ. Press) 2002.

¹⁷ Friederike Lampert, *Tanzimprovisation: Geschichte - Theorie - Verfahren – Vermittlung*, Bielefeld: transcript 2007 p. 148.

¹⁸ Bernhard Waldenfels, op. cit. "Aufmerksamkeit".

¹⁹ "Der Tanzdenker", Interview with Wiebke Hüster in DU, Zeitschrift für Kultur 765 – "Es tanzt". Eine Freiheitsbewegung. April 2006, pp.16-18.

²⁰ Bernhard Waldenfels, *Sinnesschwellen. Studien zur Phänomenologie des Fremden 3*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1999, pp.102-106.

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A Fresh Look at *Le Corsaire*

Willa Collins

In 1814, Lord Byron published his poetic tale *The Corsair*, the story of Conrad, a rebel Greek pirate, and his war against his Turkish enemy, the Pacha of the Isle of Coron. Byron's tale captivated readers with its exoticism and intrigue, and within six years, *The Corsair* was sweeping the continent in German, Italian, French, and Polish translations. *The Corsair* also attracted the attention of several librettists and composers. The tale's content—which includes pirates singing on the beach, and dancing harem women—lends itself to theatrical treatment, particularly works with music and dance, and invites moments of spectacle. Even the three-canto structure seems theatrical, as if each canto represents an act. Indeed, Byron's depiction of a brooding hero in exotic locales not only made great reading, *The Corsair* also proved to be remarkable material for the theater for more than forty years.

Table 1 lists the theatrical adaptations of *The Corsair* between 1814 and 1856. Most of these works had relatively short life spans and disappeared from the stage before mid-century. The exceptions, of course, would be the ballets created by Giovanni Galzerani in Milan and Adolphe Adam at the Paris Opéra. Galzerani's ballet was revived throughout Italy over the course of twenty years, and altered at various points during this time, but then faded away. The *Corsaire* ballet originating from the Paris Opera, however, stands as the only surviving theatrical adaptation of Byron's poem, and one of the few nineteenth-century ballets still in the performance repertory, though greatly modified since its 1856 première.

Byron's Poem vs. *Corsaire* Ballet

Byron's poem centers on the exploits of Conrad and his corsair crew at the Pacha's palace. Medora, Conrad's wife, waits patiently at home while he is at sea. When some of Conrad's men return gravely wounded without their chief, Medora presumes her husband is dead, and dies of grief. For the Paris Opera ballet, librettist Jules-Henri de Saint-Georges

transformed the story into a tale of two lovers and their struggle to be together. Like many of his predecessors, Saint-Georges moved events around, made modifications to the original story, and added characters. The end result of this adaptation, however, is a creation that barely resembles Byron's original tale. For the ballet, Saint-Georges made Medora a central character and the ward of a rapacious merchant, who later sells her into slavery. Medora is also the object of Conrad's affections, and soon becomes the object of competition between her lover, and the Pacha, who wants her in his harem. Given the shift of emphasis—from the tale of a pirate to the story of two lovers—might a more appropriate title for the ballet have been "Conrad and Medora," "Medora and Conrad" or even just "Medora"? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to take stock of the stage presence of each character by examining the numerous surviving primary sources, especially the original *livret* and Adam's score. This further allows us assess the relative weight of mime to dance.

Le Corsaire was Adolphe Adam's last ballet, for he died 3 May 1856, less than six months after the première. I mention this because the score of *Le Corsaire* has had music added by numerous composers—including the *Pas des fleurs* (also known as the *Jardins animées*), composed by Léo Delibes for the 1867 revival at the Paris Opera; and the famous *pas de deux* written by Ricardo Drigo for Marius Petipa's 1899 production—both of which are included in the *Corsaire* productions by the Kirov Ballet and the American Ballet Theatre. Although these two companies include *Le Corsaire* in their performance repertory, the productions are distinctly different. Moreover, the content of these modern productions bears very little resemblance to the 1856 incarnation presented at the Paris Opera.

Surviving Sources

One can gain insight into the original production by examining the surviving source

materials. The music sources for *Le Corsaire* are a three-volume orchestral score and forty-four orchestral parts, at the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra, and Adam's autograph composing score at the Département de la Musique. According to the Opéra catalogue, there was a three-volume *répétiteur* or rehearsal score for *Le Corsaire*. However, when I went to examine the materials, I discovered the *répétiteur* was missing.¹ A *répétiteur* is generally comprised of pantomime music, with annotations from the libretto, and contains little or no dance music. Furthermore, the orchestral parts present contain no violin parts. I mention the violins because dancers typically rehearsed with a violinist, and the *répétiteur* was most likely scored for violin. The music sources also contain two different types of paper, which after thorough examination, enable one to distinguish between music written for the original production, and the 1867 revival.

In the absence of the *répétiteur*, I have formulated a hypothesis of what might have been presented on stage by reconciling the published *livret*, Adam's autograph, the full orchestral score used by the performers, and contemporary reviews. Due to the vastness of the score, and time restraints, I shall limit my discussion to some of the unlabeled dance music in the music sources.

Where's the *Pas*?

So, exactly how much of the music in the *Corsaire* score was for mime and how much for "pure dancing"? In her book *Ballet and Opera in the Age of Giselle*, Marian Smith has estimated that a typical Parisian ballet-pantomime during the July Monarchy devoted roughly equal time to mime and dance.² And, although *Le Corsaire* premiered during the Second Empire, Smith's findings are indeed applicable to this particular ballet. It has been argued that *Le Corsaire* was comprised primarily of mime and contained very little dancing.³ However, the sources suggest these assertions were based on titles in the score and *livret*, which may designate set pieces as "*Pas de whatever*," or some other *divertissement* term in the score heading. For example, if one applies this methodology to the performance score of *Le*

Corsaire, with the sole purpose of looking for dance music, the results conclude as follows:

Act I, *Pas de cinq*
Act I, *Bacchanale*
Act I, *Pas de Mme Rosati*

Very little music indeed! This list alone would give one the impression that there is nothing but mime in the rest of the ballet. The *livret* preface hints at *divertissements* in acts two and three, and the *livret* text contains numerous additional references to dancing. Table 2 lists all references to the activity of dance mentioned within the *livret*. If you combine the information in Table 2, with the information in the preface, the result will show dancing, not just mime, in every act. In fact, there are at least two dance sequences in each tableau. This can be verified in the score, where music more appropriate to dance can be seen in multiple places, even though it is not labeled. This combined information produces the following list of dance music:

Act I, 1st tableau
Pas de cinq
Bacchanale or *Danse des corsaires*

Act I, 2nd tableau
Pas de Mme Rosati, or *Pas des éventails*

Dance Sequences NOT Designated in the Score:

Act I, 2nd tableau, *Pas de deux*

Act II (tableau 3)
Danse des odaliques
*Pas de Gulnare**
Pas de Mme Rosati

Act III, 1st tableau (tableau 4)
*Wedding Divertissement**
*Pas de séduction**

Act III, 2nd tableau (tableau 5)
(*Danses à bord* or *Dances on deck*)
*Corsairs' Drinking Celebration**
Pas de femmes (Rosati et les coryphées)

*Not designated in the *livret* preface.

So, were these divertissements included in *Le Corsaire* when it premiered in 1856? Reviews, in fact, confirm that most of them were. The most detailed review of *Le Corsaire* comes from *Le Moniteur universel*, which provides some very insightful information about the production as a whole, as well as some of the various dance numbers throughout the ballet. Praising Adam's score for its content, music critic Pier Angelo Fiorentino conveyed the following observations to his readers:

This is a score written and orchestrated with the greatest care...The first tableau ends with a very animated and energetic bacchanal in D major. The most salient pieces and the ones applauded the most from the second tableau are the fugue, which accompanies the arrival of the slaves, the grand *Pas de Mme Rosati*, whose vigorous and abrupt introduction is treated in the slightly wild manner of the modern Italian school; the entire seduction scene, where there is a pretty clarinet solo, well played by M. Leroy; the sleep scene, the entrance of the pirates, and Medora's pantomime. From the third tableau we praise above all the march of the dervishes, in the style of Félicien David; a charming [piece in] six-eight for the entrance of the odalisques; the *pas* for Rosati in B-flat, and the scene where she recounts to the Corsair every-thing that transpired in the preceding act under the eyes of the spectator...[From the final tableau] let us not forget the corsairs' orgy, [and] a gracious *pas de femmes*, [with] an excellent duet for two flutes, perfectly executed by MM. Dorus and Altès...⁴

I do not have time to discuss all of the pieces mentioned in the review; however, the pieces I would like to concentrate on for the rest of the paper are some of the dance pieces in Act II.

A particularly interesting place in the music is the arrival of the dervishes on their way to Mecca in Act II, scene 6, which is listed in

Table 2. Their leader is an elderly man, who asks The Pacha for accommodation for himself and his fellows in the palatial gardens. The Pacha receives the men warmly into his home; however, the leader becomes nervous at the sight of the Pacha's odalisques. Amused by the dervish's embarrassment, the Pacha decides to test his virtue by showing him "all the joys of the harem," and orders his odalisques to dance in turn before the dervish. However, when Medora's turn arrives, she refuses to participate until she sees that the dervish is actually Conrad in disguise.

There are two consecutive sections in the music sources with the headings *Acte 2, No. 4* and *Acte 2, No. 4 (bis)*, with music that seems to match this particular scenario in the *livret*. *Acte 2, No. 4*, (Ex. 1), which is an independent set piece, seems to correspond to the episode where the odalisques dance before the dervish and his fellows. Adam opens this section with a measure and a half of string ostinato, and introduces a playful melody in the first violins, followed by a sequence of four-measure phrases in the wind section, ascending over a tonic pedal, (Audio Ex. 1).⁵ The repetition and sequential patterns in this music would have allowed groups of *coryphées* odalisques to dance in turn, in front of both the stage audience and the theater audience. The music also suggests that dance and drama were not separate entities, but intertwined together as one; the music is playful and coquettish in character, suggesting that not only are the women having fun, but also implies the Pacha's enjoyment as he watches the women in his harem contribute to the dervish's distress.

The following section, *Acte 2, No. 4 (bis)*, is the *pas* in B-flat mentioned in the review, (Ex. 2). The divertissement is comprised of four set pieces, in which Adam employs the same melody in the outer pieces, and transforms it accordingly to match Medora's mood after she recognizes her lover. At this point in the story, it is Medora's turn to dance in front of the dervish. Contrasted with the playfulness of the previous dance, this music has a certain demure quality about it, as if to illustrate Medora's reluctance to dance for the dervish, (Audio Ex. 2).

Acte 2, No. 4

Allegro

Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc. and Cb.

p

Ex. 1, Odalisques Dancing Before the Dervish

Picc./Fl.

2 Ob.

2 Cl.

2 Bsn.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. and Cb.

Ex. 1. con't.

Picc./Fl.

2 Ob.

2 Cl.

2 Bsn.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. and Cb.

Ex. 1., con't.

Acte 2, No. 4 (bis)

Allegro

Picc., Fl., and Ob.

Cl.

In. 1 in F

In. 2 in Bb

Trgl.

Harp

Vln. I *pizz.*

Vln. II *pizz.*

Vla. *pizz.*

Vc. and Cb. *pizz.*

Ex. 2, Medora's Refusal to Dance

Initially she refuses, but when Medora sees that the old dervish is actually Conrad in disguise, she dances with joy and wild abandonment. According to the *livret*, Medora changes her mind after “a mysterious sign from the dervish,” after which she sees that the old man is actually Conrad in disguise. But what is this “mysterious sign”? Before addressing this question, think about this: why would choreographer Joseph Mazilier bring twenty male dancers on stage, sixteen of whom danced in the *Danse des corsaires* in Act I? The men came on stage to dance, and according to the *Le Moniteur*, Medora, and the audience, recognize Conrad as he and his colleagues whirl around:

[*Le Corsaire*] cannot lay claim to irreproachable exactitude, nor to Muslim orthodoxy. So the dervishes that turn and howl—I decidedly believe that they are only whirling, because howling is not allowed in a pantomime—throw off their robes and we recognize the Corsair in the midst of his troupe.⁶

Although the *livret* mentions the dervishes' entrance, it says nothing about what they do once they are on stage. The revelation of Conrad and his colleagues disguised as dervishes, *while dancing*, would not only explain the rationale behind bringing twenty male dancers on stage, but also how Medora (and the audience) recognize Conrad. The revelation of Conrad under the guise of a dancing dervish also provides an explanation of why the second set piece (Ex. 3)—which is characteristic of a late-nineteenth century “masculine” or “bravura” variation⁷—is so strikingly different from the others, particularly in the orchestration, which uses full orchestra, with emphasis on brass and percussion, (Audio Ex. 3). The music is a waltz, and would allow the dervishes to whirl around, and for Conrad to reveal his presence to Medora and the audience. Moreover, harmonically, this piece is in the distant key of D major, whereas the previous section was in B-flat major, and the rest of the *divertissement* continues in E-flat major—a closely related key of B-flat—and returns back to B-flat major. The combination

of presenting a new set piece with full orchestra in a distant key marks a real disruption in the music.

Allegro non troppo

Ex. 3 “Dancing Dervishes”

The revelation of Conrad's identity would also account for the change in character and mood, between the first and the third set pieces of *Acte 2, No. 4, (bis)*. The first set piece in this *divertissement* is demure in character, suggesting Medora's refusal to dance, the second functions to reveal Conrad's identity, thus upon the arrival of the third piece, Medora's mood has completely transformed, as indicated in the *livret*:

But, a mysterious sign from the dervish has changed [Medora's] resolve; she has recognized her lover; joy replaces despair; intoxicated with happiness, she dances in turn, fluttering around the dervish, whose attention towards the beautiful odalisque

immensely entertains the
Pacha.⁸

Now that Medora knows the old dervish is her lover, she is only too happy to dance, and her music reflects her change in mood. In the third set piece (Ex.4), Adam returns to a formulaic instrumentation for a solo *pas*, of a solo instrument accompanied by pizzicato strings and a sustained wind or brass instrument. Adam maintains the *allegretto* tempo marking as the opening set piece that introduces Medora's "mood music"; however, for the third set piece, Adam introduces a new melody, as if to illustrate a change in Medora's mood. The uninterrupted flow of sixteenth notes in an ascending, staccato scale passage in the melody, not only gives the music an air of coquettishness, but also seems to suggest the idea that perhaps Medora feels as if she is floating on a cloud, as she flutters around her lover, (Ex. 4).

Ex. 4. Medora Flutters around Her Lover

With the return to B-flat major, Adam recalls the opening melody from the first set piece (Ex. 2) for the closing piece and coda (Ex. 5), except now it has been transformed to correspond with the change in Medora's mood from despair to elation. Thus, the trajectory of the music in *Acte 2, No. 4 (bis)* suggests that drama and dance are intertwined, creating dance sequences that also function to move the story forward.

Ex. 5. Acte 2, No. 4 (bis), Coda.

To date I have found very little physical evidence regarding Mazilier's original choreography, however the combined content of Saint-Georges' *livret* and Adam's original score of *Le Corsaire* continue to open up fruitful lines of inquiry concerning the 1856 production of the ballet. A close reading of the 1856 sources from the 1856 production reveals that *Le Corsaire* was a typical nineteenth-century ballet-pantomime, in which the dance flowed out of the action, and that dance and mime were used in tandem to tell a complicated story. It has been argued that by the mid-nineteenth century, roles for men were declining in number and quality, due to the shift in audiences' tastes.⁹ Yet, *Le Corsaire*, which included a large number of men, many in dancing roles, was one of the Opera's most successful ballets during the Second Empire. In the spirit of this conference, let us reevaluate *Le Corsaire*, and "Re-think" the historiography of nineteenth-century ballet.

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Table 2
Dancing References in livret Text of *Le Corsaire*

Act I, first tableau, scene 1: “Beautiful slave women are lying on mats and couches. Turks, Greeks, and Armenian are smoking in the middle of the square as *Egyptian dancers (almées) dance in front of them.*”

Act I, first tableau, scene 4: “Seyd Pacha is a worn-out, blasé, and powerfully rich old man. He’s coming to replenish his harem, and he looks at the slaves with the eye of a connoisseur. To attract the rich amateur, *the merchants have women from all countries dance before him...*”

[*Pas de cinq*]

Act I, first tableau, scene 4: “Conrad signals his pirates to surround Isaac, and they obey, while overwhelming the Jew with comic politeness. Meanwhile, the Corsair swears to Medora that he will take her away from the old master to whom she is being given. *He throws some gold to the young almées, and gives a sign for a joyous and animated dance between them and the corsairs. Then, leading Medora, they both join with the other dancers.*

[*Danse des corsaire*]

Act I, second tableau, scene 4: “The captives taken away from the Andrinople market and from other shores, who consist of Greek, Spanish, Italian, and Muslim women, are brought to the Corsair. The women process in front of the chief, who looks at them with indifference, as he only has eyes for his love, the charming Medora. The weeping young girls throw themselves at Conrad’s knees, and beg

him for mercy. But the pirate pushes them away and orders them to join Medora in a brilliant dance that the beautiful Greek prepares to dance for him.”

[*Pas des éventails*]

Act I, second tableau, scene 6: “It is time for Conrad’s supper. A splendidly appointed table

is brought into the room. The Corsair reappears with Medora, shows her the table, and invites her to sit down. But first, he dismisses his slaves in order to be alone with his beloved. A love scene commences between them. Medora refuses to sit next to Conrad. It is she who will serve him. Increasing her efforts around her lord, she refills his glass, presents him with sorbet, and brings in his chibouque. All this attention is intertwined with *gracious dancing* and kisses the Corsair steals from her.”

[*Pas de deux*]

Act II, scene 2: “*After this mixed tableau of dances,*¹⁰ Gulnare, Zulmea’s young rival in the Pacha’s heart, comes in. All of the odalisques prefer the charming Gulnare to the arrogant sultana; they laugh at the orders she gives them, and also make fun of the eunuch by *dancing* around him.”

[*Danse des odalisques*]

Act II, scene 3: “Far from being afraid, [Gulnare] *dances gaily* around the sultan, who is stunned by her audacity.”

[*Pas de Gulnare*]

Act II, scene 6: “[Seyd] finds it amusing to continue his test of the holy dervish’s virtue; he wants to show him all the joys of the harem. At his command, *a ballet commences. Gulnare dances with her companions* before the dervish, who becomes increasingly nervous. *Then comes Medora’s turn*, who refuses to join in this game. But, a mysterious sign from the dervish has changed her resolve; she has recognized her lover; joy replaces despair; intoxicated with happiness, *she dances in turn, fluttering around the dervish*, whose attention towards the beautiful odalisque immensely entertains the Pacha.

[*Divertissement*]

[*Pas de Mme Rosati*]

Act III, first tableau, scene 7: “Joyous music is heard; it is the wedding march. Ministers, eunuchs, and odalisques come gather around the Pacha. First, *young almas enter throwing*

*flowers*¹¹... [The great mufti] utters prayers over the bowed couple, as the *almas dance around them*.”

[*Wedding Divertissement*]

Table 2, con't

Act III, first tableau, scene 9: “...But it is no longer Gulnare hiding from the attentions of the amorous Pacha; it is Medora herself in the most seductive attire. Her scarcely hidden charms intensify Seyd’s passion. The light creature *flutters and leaps* around the transported Pacha. From time to time, she reveals her impatience at seeing the time pass so slowly.”

[*Pas de séduction*]

Act III, second tableau: “[Conrad] wants to celebrate, by a party on deck, his and Medora’s fortunate deliverance. He distributes gold to his pirates, has a barrel of rum brought to the bridge, and the joyous sailors draw full cups from the barrel. *This celebration of drinking is followed by a more gracious one. Young Greek women surround Medora, and an aerial and poetic dance replaces the corsairs’ drunken merriment.*

[*Fête bachique des corsaires*]

[*Pas de femmes*]

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Endnotes

- ¹ Catherine Massip, president of the Bibliothèque Nationale Département de la Musique, noted that this was not an unusual situation. Massip informed me that there is a strong possibility that the *répétiteur*, along with the other missing orchestral parts, are probably somewhere in the library, but misfiled. She cited as an example of performance parts for *Benvenuto Cellini* that recently surfaced after thought lost for over a century. Marian Smith, *Ballet and Opera in the Age of Giselle* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000).
- ³ Ivor Guest, *Ballet of the Second Empire* (London: Pitman; Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1974), 100; Natalie Lecomte, “*Le Corsaire*, ou les péripéties et les avatars d’un ballet-pantomime au dix-

neuvième siècle,” unpublished paper presented at the *Premier congrès international sur la recherche en danse*, 8 October 1985, 12.

« C’est une partition écrite et orchestrée avec le plus grand soin... Le premier tableau se termine par une bacchanale en *ré* très-animée et très-énergique. Les morceaux les plus saillants et les plus applaudis du deuxième tableau sont la fugue qui accompagne l’arrivée des esclaves, le grand pas de la Rosati, dont l’introduction vigoureuse et brusque est traitée à la manière un peu sauvage de la moderne école italienne ; toute la scène de séduction, où se trouve un joli solo de clarinette, fort bien joué par M. Leroy ; la scène du sommeil, l’entrée des pirates et la pantomime de Médora. Au troisième tableau, nous citerons surtout avec éloges la marche des derviches, dans le style de Félicien David ; un charmant six-huit pour l’entrée des odalisques ; le pas de la Rosati en *si bémol*, et la scène où elle raconte au Corsaire tout ce qui s’est passé dans l’acte précédent sous les yeux du spectateur. Le dernier tableau est précédé d’un entr’acte instrumenté de main de maître et d’un effet saisissant... N’oublions pas l’orgie des corsaires, un gracieux pas de femmes, un excellent duo pour deux flûtes, parfaitement exécuté par MM. Dorus et Altès... » *Le Moniteur universel*, 27 January 1856.

Pier Angelo Fiorentino wrote under his given name for *Le Constitutionnel*, and used the name A. de Rovray for *Le Moniteur universel*. See Katherine Ellis, “Théophile Gautier,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* ed. S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 9, 583-2.

- ⁵ Musical excerpts taken from Adolphe Adam, *Le Corsaire*, Richard Bonyngue and the English Chamber Orchestra. London 430 286-2, two compact discs. The divertissement proper is on disc 2, track 4, 8:50 to 14:05.

« [*Le Corsaire*] ne se pique pas d’une irréprochable exactitude ni d’une grande orthodoxie musulmane. Toujours est-il que les derviches tourneurs et hurleurs—je crois décidément qu’ils ne sont que tourneurs, car il n’est point permis de hurler dans une pantomime—jettent leur froc aux orties, et on reconnaît le Corsaire au milieu de sa troupe. » A. de Rovey, “Revue musicale,” *Le Moniteur Universel*, 27 January 1856.

- ⁷ Smith, 15-6; Roland John Wiley, *Tchaikovsky’s Ballets: Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty, Nutcracker* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 127.

« Mais un signe mystérieux du derviche a changé [la résolution de Médora] ; elle a reconnu son amant ; la joie succède au désespoir ; ivre de bonheur, elle danse à son tour, voltigeant autour du derviche, dont l’attention pour la belle odalisque divertit infiniment le pacha. » Saint-Georges, *Le Corsaire*, 18.

- ⁹ Lynn Garafola, “The Travesty Dancer in Nineteenth-Century Ballet,” *Dance Research Journal* 17/2 (1985), 35-40.

- ¹⁰ This refers to the *Danse des odalisques* divertissement.

- ¹¹ Almas are Egyptian dancers.

Table 1

Theatrical Adaptations of *The Corsair*¹

Date	Title	Genre	Number of Acts	Creator(s)	City	Theater
1814	<i>The Corsair</i>	Aqua Drama	NA	W. Reeve, C.I.M. Dibdin	London	Sadler's Wells
1826	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	Azione mimica	Five	Giovanni Galzerani	Milan	La Scala
1827	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	Azione mimica	Five	Giovanni Galzerani	Padova	Teatro Nuovo
1828	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	Azione drammatica	Four	Fabio Zener	Venice	Unknown
1830	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	Azione mimica	Five	Giovanni Galzerani	Naples	Teatro S Carlo ²
1831	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	Melodrama romantico	Two	Giacomo Ferretti Giovanni Pacini	Rome	Teatro Apollo
1832	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	Melodrama romantico	Two	Giacomo Ferretti Giovanni Pacini	Milan	La Scala
1833	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	Azione romantica	Five	Carlo Cosenza	Naples	Unknown
1835	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	Five	Giovanni Galzerani	Alessandria	Teatro Municipale
1836	<i>Der Korsar</i>	Mimisches Ballett	Five	Giovanni Galzerani	Vienna	Hoftheater

¹ I consulted the following sources in compiling this table: John Warrick, "Lord Byron" *New Grove Dictionary of Opera* ed. Stanley Sadie vol. 1 (London and New York: MacMillan, 1992), 663; Rita Zambon, "Quando il ballo anticipa l'opera: *Il Corsaro* di Giovanni Galzerani," *Creature di Prometeo: il ballo teatrale: dal divertimento al dramma: studi offerti a Aurel M. Milloss.*, ed. Giovanni Morelli (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1996), 305-13; Natalie Lecomte, "*Le Corsaire*, ou les péripéties et les avatars d'un ballet-pantomime au dix-neuvième siècle," unpublished paper presented at the *Premier congrès international sur la recherche en danse*, 8 October 1985; Markus Engelhardt, *Verdi und andere: Un giorno di regno, Ernani, Attila, Il corsaro in Mehrfachvertonungen* (Parma: Istituto nazionale di studi verdiani, 1992); Cyril Beaumont, *The Complete Book of Ballets: A Guide to the Principal Ballets of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Putnam, 1938); Ivor Guest, *Victorian Ballet-Girl: The Tragic Story of Clara Webster* (Adam and Charles Black: London, 1957), *The Romantic Ballet in England* (London: Phoenix, 1954); and *Ballet of the Second Empire* (London: Pitman; Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1974).

² A happy ending was introduced by order of the censors. See Zambon, p. 308.

Table 1 (con't.)

Theatrical Adaptations of *The Corsair*

Date	Title	Genre	Number of Acts	Creator(s)	City	Theater
1837	<i>Le Corsaire</i>	Ballet	Two	Ferdinand Albert Decombe, (<i>dit</i> Albert) Nicholas Charles Bochsa	London	King's Theatre
1837	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	Ballo serio	Six	Giovanni Galzerani	Turin	Teatro Regio
1838	<i>Der Seerauber</i>	Ballet	Three	Paul Taglioni, Gährich	Berlin	Hofopera
1838	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	Ballo serio	Six	Giovanni Galzerani	Como	Teatro della Regia Città di Como
1844	<i>Le Corsaire</i>	Ballet	Two	Ferdinand Albert Decombe, (<i>dit</i> Albert) Nicholas Charles Bochsa	London	Drury Lane
1845	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	Azione mimica	Six	Giovanni Galzerani	Florence	Teatro della Pergola
1846	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	Azione mimica	Six	Giovanni Galzerani	Rome	Teatro Apollo
1846	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	Opera	One	Luigi Arditi*	Havana	Tacón
1847	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	Dramma lirico	Four	Giacomo Sacchéro, Alessandro Nini	Turin	Teatro Carignano
1848	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	Dramma lirico	Three	Francesco Maria Piave, Giuseppe Verdi	Trieste	Teatro Grande
1849	<i>Il Corsaro</i>	Tragedia lirica	Four	Francesco Cortesi*	Florence	Teatro della Pergola
1854	<i>Der Seerauber</i>	Ballet	Three	Paul Taglioni, Gährich	Berlin	Hofopera
1856	<i>Le Corsaire</i>	Ballet-pantomime	Three	Jules Henry Vernoy de Saint-Georges, Joseph Mazilier, Adolphe Adam	Paris	Théâtre Impérial de l'Opéra

*Librettist unknown

From the written word to the dancing body:

Libretto and performance practice in Théophile Gautier¹

Elena Cervellati

In the years that stretch from the July monarchy to the Franco-Prussian war, Théophile Gautier (1811-1872), a well-known Parisian intellectual with a sumptuously prolific output, even for a century of such diffuse polygraphy as the 19th century, was a restless literary nomad whose work seamlessly crossed the boundaries of literature, the figurative arts and theatre, but who in dance seemed to find his favourite place of action. Pervaded by a sense of being the bearer of a stratified dancing body, edified and complex as every body is, but as the artificial one of ballet is in both a limpid and explicit way, he was also the active artifice of a thoughtful multiplier of meanings and codifications capable of denoting an era, thanks to his widely read and much appreciated writings. Apart from being a keen frequenter of theatres, of the back-stage and of theatre people, Gautier was indeed a professional of words who wrote *about* dance, telling the readers of his weekly *feuilletons* about the shows he had just seen, as well as *for* dance, by drafting librettos for ballet.

His being a theoretician of dance involved in the practice is highlighted by the six librettos of his that were actually staged², the "pictorial moving pictures"³, paintings with words that clearly display their nature as a porous membrane interfaced between theory and practice. The libretto is indeed an authorial creation that is situated in an area of intersection between the narrative text, the dramatic text and the technical text, a hybrid that blends descriptions, dialogues and operating instructions. It is a structured vision of what the show will be, "a pre-text that acts as a leitmotif for the organisation of the future ballet"⁴, destined to change state as it transmutes into a work of another sort. It is a sort of "hidden writing"⁵ that must be efficient and prescriptive, but that can even go so far as to be evocative and have the characteristics of *maieutica*.

Throughout the 19th century the ballet libretto maintained a form and a purpose that had already consolidated in the previous century: its role as an explanatory text distributed or sold on the occasion of the performances remains of fundamental importance. Yet at first the ballet libretto was intended as a working instrument addressed not to the public, but to those who collaborated in the creation of the spectacle. It is indeed the founding core of the ballet, so much so that its drafting, usually commissioned by the theatre management, preceded the work of the musician and the choreographer. However, it is an individual creation only up to a certain extent: "The page on which the librettist writes is never blank"⁶, as the author must keep to the methods of work, the conventions and economic resources imposed by the theatre and must measure up to the ideas and the demands of the artists involved in its creation, above all when it is a matter of important personalities, capable of demanding that the text - and therefore the spectacle - should be tailored to their own requirements.

In writing librettos, Gautier does not merely use his own expertise as a writer to portray the characters, outline the evolution in their reciprocal relations and suggest the atmosphere in which they act, but he also holds the needs of the set in due account, filling the writing with notes that are supposed to have an impact on the subsequent transposition into ballet or that capture and make specific practical needs their own.

The story provides for characters whose characteristics facilitate the presence of the dance scene, such as Giselle, who puts her own weak health severely to the test as she loves dancing above all else and, after her death, becomes part of the cruel array of dancing Wilis. It also includes moments in which the movement, at times acrobatic, is indispensable, in other words dancing feasts, such as the rustic

wedding march that, as it descends joyously along the sides of a mountain, concludes *Gemma*; dangerous leaps from a considerable height, particularly appreciated by the audience, such as the stunning and desperate leap of *La Péri* with whom the slave Leila seeks refuge on the roof of the Achmet's building; situations of confrontation, such as the fight between Massimo and Santa-Croce in *Gemma*, or the colossal tussle between guards, farmers and gypsies that enlivens *Yanko le bandit*.

Gautier, would-be painter and passionate art critic, infuses in his dance writing his own forms and nuances that belong to the visual arts, rendering almost visible, through the words, the hues of the scenes, the outcome of the "special effects" and the machinery, the glimmering and the consistency of the costumes.

The first part of each act contains some lines dedicated to the description of the place where the action is to take place. For *Giselle*, for example, Gautier gives indications that infuse the choice of the objects placed on the scene, their position in space and their colours, the quality and the direction of the lighting, and as a consequence the tone of the ambient that must be engendered on the stage:

The scene represents a forest on the banks of a pond. A damp and cool place in which reeds, canes, small bunches of wild flowers and water plants grow. White birch, poplars and weeping willows stoop down to touch the ground with their pale foliage. To the left, under a cypress tree, rises a white marble cross on which Giselle's name is engraved. The tomb seems to be enveloped by a thick vegetation of grass and meadow flowers. The blue glow of a very intense moon lights up the scenic setting with its cold and misty appearance.⁷

Gautier's familiarity with tinted smoke and lights, hatches and openings on the stage, foldable and removable skies and clouds emerges in signalling surprising changes of scene, as in *Pâquerette*, when the seedy side-alley tavern seamlessly turns into François' dreams:

A grey fog spreads over the set; the real objects disappear and three mysterious figures emerge from the floor [...]. The clouds which have gathered their dull folds upon the theatre during this scene, withdraw, scatter and fly away: the smoke-blackened walls of the inn have disappeared and our gaze, until a few moments before curtailed by squalid obstacles, penetrates an ocean of gold and blue, in a luminous immensity. – A magical landscape made up of crystal-clear waters, emerald green vegetation, zephyr mountains, displays its blue horizons, like an Eden by Bruegel.⁸

In other librettos, more simply a lively ray of moonlight is projected onto a tombstone⁹; first the spark of the lamps and then the glow of the sulphurous lamps cast light upon a dance hall¹⁰; the toing and froing of a night-watchman's lantern carves a series of significant pictures into the darkness of the scene, almost as if constructing a sequence of stills¹¹.

Some objects, important for the unfolding of the story, have to be made visible in the ballet, or else the action would lose its meaning: the magical bouquet of the *peri*¹², capable of being made to appear on the ground; the key first stolen then recovered that allows the prison where François is locked up to be opened¹³; the scented rose that keeps Gemma under the spell of Santa-Croce¹⁴.

The costumes are described with painstaking attention to detail: *peri* carries a crown of stars, a scarf made of silver organza and golden, blue and purple wings when she is in the sky¹⁵, whereas when she comes down to earth she wears a white cloak that wraps her from head to toes, allowing us to catch a glimpse of her eyes alone¹⁶; in *Pâquerette* François dresses up "in the Tyrolese manner, jacket over his shoulders, pointed hat and thick beard"¹⁷.

There are indications that help to define the sound environment. Fanfares, horns, trumpets and drums, but also pealing of the clock, gunshots or loud kisses, may hail the entrance of a character or a change of scene. At times, Gautier tries to connote the musical accompaniment, albeit with rather generic overtones: Giselle's mother paints her

daughter's tragic future "upon lugubrious music"¹⁸, the young girl flies into the arms of her beloved upon the notes of "joyful music"¹⁹ and the Wilis are preceded by "fantastic music"²⁰, after which they overwhelm the unfortunate passers-by in frantic dances along the lines of a "faster and faster musical rhythm"²¹.

Particularly interesting are the indications of movement, at times mere hints that allow the choreographer or the performers to freely fill in a space left in the narrative, at other times signals of quality, dynamism and rhythm of the dance action. Even if Gautier never indulges in the details of the classical academic techniques, the text is pervaded by a continuous swarming of moving bodies: the individual and the groups enter and leave the set, they move, handle objects, carry out gestures to express their sentiments and, even when they exchange dialogues between themselves, they let their bodies do the talking.

Before the action begins, the libretto depicts the *tableau vivant* which appears at the raising of the curtain or signals the entrance of the characters onto the as yet empty stage. *La Péri* certainly falls within the former case: indeed, at the raising of curtain, the stage is populated by odalisques

...kneeling or seated on the floor. Some adorn their long pleats with small coins and golden thread, others taint their eyelids and eyebrows with henna; some wear necklaces, yet others flutter the extremities of their veils over the stone where they burn essences [...]. The favourite, Nourmahal, gazes at herself contentedly in a sumptuous mirror held up by some slaves²².

Instead, the scene in *Pâquerette* becomes gradually populated, when

A young man, with a lively and merry air, the handsome François, exits from a humble dwelling, wearing his Sunday best, to go to the feast [...]. He is followed by the old Martin, his father [...]; a new character enters [...], father Martin's creditor. [...] In the meantime, the village awakens and stirs; pretty Pâquerette arrives [...], carrying a jug of

milk upon her head [...]. The inhabitants of the village leave their homes, gaily, all dressed up, with their bows, their flowers [...]. Soon the groups are distributed.²³

Gautier usually reserves the same attention to the finale as he dedicates to the opening, closing the libretto with a more or less glorious tableau in which the group is carefully arranged. Thus, Albert clenches some of the flowers that covered Giselle's tomb close to his breast and holds his outstretched hand to Bathilde, encircled by her own horseman, the prince and the whole party, while streams of light flood the stage in the finale of *Sacountalâ*, when swarms of celestial creatures invade the terraces of the Royal Palace and Douchmanta throws himself at the feet of his beloved girl, slips the Royal ring onto her finger and prostrates himself before her divine mother, who rises skywards.

The entrances and exits of the characters are underlined in the transition from one scene to another, but also during the action. The point at which the performer must appear or which he/she must move away from is exactly signposted, as well as when scenographies or characterising objects must be used, such as elements of the landscape (the damp herbs of the second act of *Giselle* from which the Wilis seem to be born), homes or parts of them (the small houses of the village of *Pâquerette* which the villagers come out of and enter), significant objects (the curtain made up of oriental scarves from which the slaves appear, and start their dance in *La Péri*). Instead, often the characters simply "appear", "dash across" and "enter", or, vice-versa, "exit", "withdraw" and, if they can, "fly away", with no further signalling. In any case, Gautier never fails to make them appear or disappear in a plausible and justifiable way: he seldom "forgets" them on the scene nor fails to signal their entrance, thereby showing that he knows how to visualise and follow their actions knowingly.

Even if he does not intervene in the detail of the choreographic subject matter, he does not fail to think of the movement, imagining the trajectories and the time for the movements, the dynamic relations between the couples or among the masses. He then gives instructions for the

particular dances, he describes the poses taken on by the single performers or by the group, he uses pertinent technical terminology.

In *Giselle* the moments in which the soloist “dances solo” are underlined²⁴, by pointing out that she throws herself from one flower to the next, vaulting willy-nilly, crossing the space, remaining suspended from the tree branches²⁵, such as the soloist who “seems to have wings, brushing the ground and vaulting around the Wilis”²⁶. Even the couple is described, such as when Giselle and Albert “both slip, driven by a magical power”²⁷ or when “between them starts a quick-step, aerial, frenetic”²⁸. Then the group of the grape-harvesters dances in a “noisy general delirium”²⁹, closing together³⁰ or arranging themselves around Giselle to proclaim her queen of the grape harvest³¹. The inhabitants of the village stop suddenly, distraught, when Albert is unmasked³² and, together with the nobles and the hunters, go to make up the sad picture at the centre of which lies Giselle’s lifeless body³³. The Wilis present themselves one after the other to their Sovereign and group around her: “There is Moyna, the odalisque, who performs an oriental dance step; then Zulma, the *bayadère*, who comes to develop her Indian poses; then two Frenchwomen who perform a sort of bizarre minuet; then some German ladies who dance a waltz”³⁴; all together they chase after the poor Hilarion, forced to imitate the steps that the Queen shows him, and they surround him forming a large circle; then they encircle Albert several times, pounce upon him, but are rebuffed by a mysterious force.

La Péri comprises a bolero, a giga dance, a waltz and a minuet, in other words a series of those *pas des nations* frequently used to add a touch of local colour, but it also includes a *pas de quatre* and a *pas de trois* which introduce the celebrated *pas de l'abeille*, an Egyptian-inspired dance: the protagonist places herself at the centre of the scene and performs a series of movements painstakingly described by Gautier in the passages that lead to a veiled but perceptible nudity:

She advances to the middle of the scene, she rids herself of the cloak and prepares to perform a celebrated step, which in Cairo goes by the name of the *bee step*.

The ballerina picks up a rose: the irritated insect comes buzzing out from the flower chalice and chases the imprudent girl, who tries to swat it, at times with her hands, at times with her foot. The bee is about to be caught: a handkerchief, an edge of which Leila carefully lifts makes the wings unusable. What! How on earth! It has escaped and, angrier than ever, slips into the dancer’s dress, who looks between the folds of her blouse, which she then gets rid of; the struggle continues, the bee buzzes and the girl vaults around, continually increasing the liveliness of the dance. Very soon the belt joins the blouse and Leila, dressed in a very light frock, a simple veiled skirt, continues her stunning whirls and, lost and breathless, ends up seeking refuge under Achmet’s fur, who rapt with admiration, bows lovingly towards her, covering her forehead and chest with golden coins, in the manner of the Orientals³⁵.

In *Pâquerette* explicit reference to the use of points shoes is made, here again motivated by the action and far from the meaning of almost spiritual elevation of the body that is customarily attributed to it. Indeed, *Pâquerette* “runs away in a hurry on the tips of her beautiful little feet” because she is impatient to go home to put on a jewel won at the fair³⁶ and, dressed up as a boy, she raises herself upon her toes to reach the height necessary to join the army³⁷, convincing a comically astonished marshal of her rapid growth. During the village fête it is possible to see the whole village “pirouetting, doing *cabrioles* and dancing” to represent the four seasons “with dance poses”³⁸. François “turns some *somersaults*”³⁹ to avoid his father finding him out and scolding him. A maladroit soldier gives a dance lesson to the troops and exhibits himself in a popular dance, the *monaco*, together with the hostess of the barracks⁴⁰.

The points return in *Gemma* too, when the protagonist is immersed in a dreamlike state caused by a wicked spell, and so she moves “on tiptoe, arms outstretched”⁴¹, while the “magnetic step” that is performed soon afterwards is interwoven with steps from a waltz⁴².

The characters often indicate objects and people: Hilarion points to Giselle's hut "amorously" and to that of Loys "angrily"⁴³ and the young girl, at the end of the ballet, indicates a serene future to Albert in Bathilde; the jealous Yamini hands Yanko over to the guards by pointing to him, like the wicked genies point to the King and to Sacountalâ to curse them. Also frequent is the simple suggestion of "gestures" of various kinds: "threatening"⁴⁴, "vindicative"⁴⁵, "of denial"⁴⁶, "rage"⁴⁷, "cabalistic"⁴⁸, "magical"⁴⁹ or "to ward off evil"⁵⁰. Lastly, the gaze of the characters on the stage seems truly significant: one instance of this is provided by *Giselle*, when Hilarion, who has just arrived at the village square, "looks all around himself as if he were looking for someone"⁵¹, or when Albert watches, unmoving and forlorn, a bizarre figure, in other words, Giselle transformed into a Wili, who in turn gazes at him lovingly⁵² and seems to call him toward her with her look⁵³.

Rather than a desire to influence the choreographic construction, we find once more in Gautier the desire to give a specific hue to the gestures and actions and to signal a certain quality of movement through the permutations offered by the richness of the written word. What takes place is connoted with significant adjectives and expressions. In the early scenes of *Giselle* the door to the hut opens "mysteriously"⁵⁴ Wilfrid greets "obsequiously"⁵⁵ Albert, who in turns knocks "gently"⁵⁶ on Giselle's door, who, prey to madness, dances "with ardour, with passion"⁵⁷. Subsequently, Albert comes closer to Giselle who had been transformed into a Wili "with slow steps and caution, like a child who wants to grasp a butterfly from upon a flower"⁵⁸ while she eludes him crossing the air "like a fearful dove [...], like a thin mist [...], impalpable like a cloud"⁵⁹, or moving with "the most graceful and strangest ardour"⁶⁰. The Wili dance "with impetus"⁶¹ or take on "voluptuous poses"⁶², while the peri vault and leap like a flock of birds freed into the sky. Pâquerette moves with "furtive steps", she lets herself be admired in "flirtatious poses" and launches into a "slight leap"⁶³; the creatures that appear before François in a dream advance by "making dead gestures and immobile movements"⁶⁴, while Gemma

proceeds "walking like a statue or a ghost, moving like an automata"⁶⁵.

Ultimately, Gautier, a true man of the theatre, drafts some librettos that envision events and characters suited to ballet and he succeeds, through his writing, in structuring the scenic realisation and defining some ineluctable features.

Undoubtedly, even if, as Patrice Pavis states, "the text lies *within the* representation, and not *above or beside it*"⁶⁶, the transition from the word to the body does not occur by way of a linear translation, but by way of a leap in the semantic, objective or sensorial fields. Starting from the awareness of "how dangerous any automatic assimilation between dance and language can be"⁶⁷, the word traced for a scene that must be inhabited by dance, when it is effective, paves the way to the arousal of changing images, moving forms, spaces permeated by fleeting presences, and it does so through a close bond that nonetheless does not follow a linear cause and effect relationship (even if in effect the word is the engine of spectacle). The word does not exhaust the spectacle yet, we might go so far as to say, it is the secret of the spectacle, it could even be the "threshold" of the spectacle, a glimpse into what has been or what will be. That is what Gautier's librettos are, and, in the "density of figures"⁶⁸ which at times they manage to conjure up, they are certainly situated as *avant-texte*, but also as a concentration of visions soon to become actual embodiments, in other words, to become manifest in a continually created form which can eventually only be cast away.

Translation by Henry Monaco

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Notes

¹ This paper is a re-elaboration of some issues previously analysed in Elena Cervellati, *Théophile Gautier e la danza. La rivelazione del corpo nel balletto del XIX secolo*, Bologna, CLUEB, 2007, suggested for further reading.

² These are *Giselle* (Paris, Théâtre de l'Opéra, 1841), *La Péri* (Paris, Théâtre de l'Opéra, 1843), *Pâquerette* (Paris, Théâtre de l'Opéra, 1851), *Gemma* (Paris, Théâtre de l'Opéra, 1854), *Yanko le bandit* (Paris, Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin, 1858), *Sacountalâ* (Paris, Théâtre de

- l'Opéra, 1858). I will deliberately leave out the ones left on paper in the belief that the urgency of the scene instead impressed on the others is absent, often modified only a few hours before the debut.
- ³ Stefano Massini, *La didascalia fra autore e attore*, "Prove di drammaturgia", monographic issue *Scritture nascoste*, edited by Gerardo Guccini, anno XII, n. 2, 2006, p. 20.
 - ⁴ Hélène Laplace-Claverie, *Ecrire pour la danse, ou De l'écriture des livrets de ballet*, in *Ecrire la danse*, edited by Alain Montadon, Clermont Ferrand, Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 1999, p. 183.
 - ⁵ We have taken the definition of "hidden writing" from the title of the previously cited monographic issue of the review "Prove di drammaturgia", *Scritture nascoste*, cit., edited by Gerardo Guccini.
 - ⁶ Hélène Laplace-Claverie, *Ecrire pour la danse. Les livrets de ballet de Théophile Gautier à Jean Cocteau (1870-1914)*, Paris, Honoré Champion Editeur, 2001, p. 124.
 - ⁷ *Giselle*, act II, p. 349.
 - ⁸ *Pâquerette*, act III, p. 434-435.
 - ⁹ *Giselle*, act II, scene V.
 - ¹⁰ *Gemma*, act I, scene II.
 - ¹¹ *Pâquerette*, act II.
 - ¹² Peri is a female genie of Arab-Persian mythology.
 - ¹³ *Ibidem*.
 - ¹⁴ *Gemma*, act I, scene II.
 - ¹⁵ *La Péri*, act I, scene V.
 - ¹⁶ *La Péri*, act II, scene IV.
 - ¹⁷ *Pâquerette*, act III, p. 433.
 - ¹⁸ *Giselle*, act I, scene VI, p. 330.
 - ¹⁹ *Giselle*, act I, scene X, p. 343.
 - ²⁰ *Giselle*, act II, scene II, p. 350.
 - ²¹ *Giselle*, act II, scene X, p. 357.
 - ²² *La Péri*, act I, scene I, p. 381.
 - ²³ *Pâquerette*, act I.
 - ²⁴ *Giselle*, act I, scene V, p. 338.
 - ²⁵ *Giselle*, act II, scene III.
 - ²⁶ *Giselle*, act II, scene XII, p. 360.
 - ²⁷ *Giselle*, act II, scene XII, p. 359.
 - ²⁸ *Ivi*, pp. 360-361.
 - ²⁹ *Giselle*, act I, scene V, p. 338.
 - ³⁰ *Giselle*, act I, scene VI.
 - ³¹ *Giselle*, act I, scene XI.
 - ³² *Ibidem*.
 - ³³ *Giselle*, act I, scene XII.
 - ³⁴ *Giselle*, act II, scene IV, p. 352.
 - ³⁵ *La Péri*, act II, scene IV, pp. 394-395.
 - ³⁶ *Pâquerette*, act I, p. 410.
 - ³⁷ *Pâquerette*, act II.
 - ³⁸ *Pâquerette*, act I, pp. 411-412.
 - ³⁹ *Ivi*, p. 412.
 - ⁴⁰ *Pâquerette*, act II, p. 421.
 - ⁴¹ *Gemma*, act I, set I, p. 447.
 - ⁴² *Gemma*, act I, set II, p. 448.
 - ⁴³ *Giselle*, act I, scene II, pp. 335-336.
 - ⁴⁴ *Giselle*, act I, scene IV, p. 338.
 - ⁴⁵ *La Péri*, act I, scene VII, p. 389 and *Sacountalâ*, act II, scene VI, p. 488.
 - ⁴⁶ *Pâquerette*, act II, p. 424.
 - ⁴⁷ *Ivi*, p. 426.
 - ⁴⁸ *Yanko le bandit*, act I, scene V, p. 462.
 - ⁴⁹ *Sacountalâ*, act I, scene VIII, p. 478.
 - ⁵⁰ *Sacountalâ*, act II, scene III, p. 486.
 - ⁵¹ *Giselle*, act I, scene II, p. 335.
 - ⁵² *Giselle*, act II, scene VIII.
 - ⁵³ *Giselle*, act II, scene IX.
 - ⁵⁴ *Giselle*, act I, scene II, p. 336.
 - ⁵⁵ *Giselle*, act I, scene III, p. 336.
 - ⁵⁶ *Giselle*, act I, scene IV, p. 337.
 - ⁵⁷ *Giselle*, act I, scene XII, p. 347.
 - ⁵⁸ *Giselle*, act II, scene IX, p. 355.
 - ⁵⁹ *Ivi*, p. 356.
 - ⁶⁰ *Giselle*, act II, scene XII, p. 360.
 - ⁶¹ *Giselle*, act II, scene IV, p. 352.
 - ⁶² *Giselle*, act II, scene VI, p. 355.
 - ⁶³ *Pâquerette*, act II, p. 430.
 - ⁶⁴ *Pâquerette*, act III, p. 434.
 - ⁶⁵ *Gemma*, act I, scene II, p. 448.
 - ⁶⁶ Patrice Pavis, *L'analyse des spectacles*, Paris, Editions Nathan, 1996, p. 182.
 - ⁶⁷ Roberto Fratini Serafide, *La danza e il riserbo*, "Prove di drammaturgia", monographic issue *Scritture nascoste*, cit., p. 25.
 - ⁶⁸ *Ibidem*.

Theorizing Depictions and Descriptions: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Dancing in Late Renaissance Europe (Panel Discussion)

Alessandro Arcangeli

Chloé Dalesme introduced us to some pictures that are not well known or studied. She has done so, from the start, by questioning data we should not give for granted: firstly, that we have iconographical material from this period and on our subject; secondly, that it takes a particular art form and medium rather than another. The images she discussed provide us with a painted parallel to the better-known Valois tapestries. Unlike their cousins, though, they do not give us clues for identifying specific contexts, or prove to depict given historical events. As Chloé has shown us, here we have a group of pictures representing a more generic set of dance scenes. In further contrast with the material famously examined by Frances Yates (1959), what is represented is dancing *per se*, not the multimedia event of Renaissance court festivals. This makes the identification of the exact object of the scenes and of the purpose of their representation even more relevant. I think that Chloé's presentation has done so effectively, by exploring the interface between the social practice which is represented and the various nuances of the representation itself. In the case of the final *branle*, her analysis has zoomed in that crucial question which is the overlapping and changing relationship between performance and audience, a divide which was particularly porous during the late Renaissance.

By questioning a dancing master's tale, Katherine Tucker McGinnis (paper not included in the proceedings) gives us a fruitful lesson in method. Ego-histories play an important role on today's historical scene; however, they do so not by naively colouring historical narratives with anecdotes, but rather by posing a new range of challenging questions in matters of authorship and intended audience, of style and literary genre, as well as of relationship with events which are documented beyond the texts. Everyone talks about self-fashioning today, but the implication is perhaps too often that

individuals could craft their own identity almost without any external constraint. One should never forget how much social and cultural conditions determined individual choices. After historiography has explored a variety of different narratives, the most powerful constraint of them all is back on stage in Cesare Negri's story: the political power. In Katherine's close-up reading, we can hear a Trombone with his mute on. The continuing Franco-Habsburg conflict and its reflection in the changing hands of the rule of Milan oblige a prominent dancing master to hide the experience that had been at the climax of his career. A fascinating feature of this presentation has been precisely to allow us to perceive a silence. You need all of Katherine's in-depth analysis and contextual knowledge in order to be able to see what is missing from the picture. Once we know, that silence seems deafening.

Another type of absence is at stake in Emily Winerock's contribution. This time what is not there is a dance counterpart to the notion of speculative music. Emily is not satisfied with simply not finding an equivalent to the standard tripartition of the art of music. Assuming a reasonable familiarity of Renaissance writers and performers with that medieval theoretical tradition, she looks for traces of this ghostly category in both people's writing and acts: theory and practice are present together here as the combined dimensions that may allow us to see what was not consciously and explicitly observed by Renaissance witnesses. In the end, it would be easy to say that Emily has constructed, or invented, a previously unrecorded Renaissance category! This does not mean, however, that her efforts do not produce fruitful knowledge. On the contrary, I find that her newly patented concept allows us to see known facts from a new, thought-provoking perspective. Her opening remarks on the so-called pro- versus anti-dance literature showed

us how fruitful it can be to question received historical categories and knowledge. A critical reading of key texts allegedly belonging to two opposite armies shows in fact that they shared much more of a common discourse than we would have expected.

In their selection of sources, all three papers make use of Renaissance dance treatises. (Incidentally, Katherine also brings to our attention how blurred is our knowledge of a Renaissance dancing master's job description.) On top of that, while Dalesme concentrates on images, McGinnis and Winerock also share a study of archival documentation concerning the activity of dancing masters (from Oxford to Milan, via Paris). In all three contributions social hierarchy is a powerful issue. We have heard of games of social exclusion, of tactics of self-promotion and negotiation of roles and identities on the part of the ruling elite, of dancing masters and of the public at large. Far from working as an anachronistic *art pour l'art*, dance appears increasingly to have played an influential role in such dynamics and, once again, on both sides of the theory-and-practice coin: on the one hand as a competence that was crucial to learn and embody; on the other hand as an ubiquitous metaphor that permeated the discourse once famously labelled as the "Elizabethan world picture" (Tillyard, 1943). Dance history and socio-cultural history have come a long way (from the time when each of them ignored what the other did or said) and have learned a lot from each other.

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L'iconographie de la danse et l'exemple des tableaux de bals : un autre éclairage sur la pratique et la théorie pour la Renaissance.

Chloé Dalesme

A la fin du XVI^e siècle, autour des années 1580-1590, deux tableaux de grands formats donnent à voir la cour de France et son monarque pendant un bal. Il s'agit d'une iconographie nouvelle, inédite, représentant la noblesse dans une activité quotidienne, presque banale pour l'époque. La danse n'est pourtant pas un sujet iconographique nouveau, elle se trouve représentée sur divers supports à toutes les époques, d'un point de vue positif ou négatif. Ne serait-ce que dans l'Occident chrétien, David danse devant l'Arche d'Alliance et Salomé danse pour la tête de saint Jean-Baptiste sur les chapiteaux d'églises ou dans les manuscrits dès le Moyen Âge. Dans les manuscrits encore la « Carole de Déduit » du *Roman de la Rose*, qui met en scène des vertus dansant dans un jardin. La danse se trouvait également sur des tapisseries, mais elle était souvent représentée en extérieur, comme divertissement champêtre. Il s'agit donc de tenter de comprendre pourquoi, autour de 1580, est née une nouvelle façon de représenter la danse, un grand format peint mettant en scène le roi, la cour, assistant à un bal donné en l'honneur des noces d'un favori ?

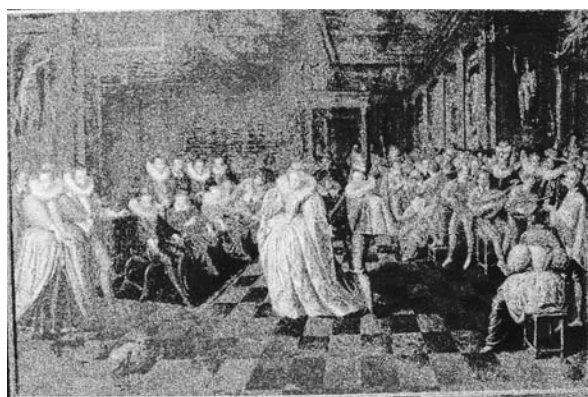
Des tableaux sans histoires.

Les tableaux représentent donc des bals à la cour de Henri III. Ce souverain, dernier de la dynastie des Valois-Angoulême, est surtout connu pour son goût de la fête ainsi que son entourage de « mignons », dont les mœurs extravagantes ont été très nettement exagérées au XIX^e siècle.

Le premier tableau, conservé à Versailles, est censé représenter un des nombreux bals donnés lors des noces du plus connu de ces favoris, Anne de Joyeuse, avec la demi-sœur de la reine Louise de Lorraine, femme de Henri III. Ces noces donnèrent d'ailleurs lieu, à la fin de l'année 1581, à un déploiement de faste sans précédent pour un mariage non royal. Des dépenses extraordinaires furent faites pour préparer les nombreux divertissements, les joutes, les bals et le premier ballet de cour, le *Balet comique de la Royne*. On appelle ce tableau le *Bal des noces du duc de Joyeuse* par convention¹. Henri III, Catherine de Médicis et la reine Louise de Lorraine sont assis à gauche du tableau et représentés d'après leurs portraits officiels. Henri de Guise et

son frère le duc de Mayenne sont debout derrière le roi.

Anne de Joyeuse est sans conteste le favori « préféré » de Henri III. On parle même de lui comme d'un « Archi-mignon ». Le roi fait très vite Amiral de France ce jeune homme de dix ans de moins que lui et en parle avec beaucoup d'amitié dans sa correspondance. Ce n'est donc pas fortuit s'il lui donne la main de la demi-sœur de la reine. Grâce à ce mariage, il fait de lui son beau-frère et élève la vicomté de Joyeuse en duché-pairie, distinction noble la plus élevée avant les princes de sang. De plus, la famille de la reine Louise est aussi, par extension, celle du duc de Guise, dont les relations avec le roi sont loin d'être excellentes. La suite des événements est d'ailleurs bien connue, le duc de Guise étant assassiné par les hommes de Henri III en décembre 1588. Il y a donc également un enjeu politique dans ce mariage qui réunit ces clans rivaux dans la fête et grâce aux liens du sang. Il y a, comme ce fut le cas pour tous les divertissements des noces de Joyeuse, un enjeu de concorde et de rétablissement du respect au souverain.



Anonyme, *Le Bal des noces du duc de Joyeuse*, Versailles, Musée du Château, Inv. MV 5636.

Le second tableau, conservé au Louvre, représente également un bal à la cour de Henri III, mais cette fois-ci sans que la tradition ne l'attache à un événement particulier. Henri III et Catherine de Médicis sont représentés, toujours d'après leurs portraits officiels, debout à gauche du tableau. La présence de la famille de Guise donnerait à penser qu'il s'agit encore de l'un des bals des noces de

Joyeuse. Cependant, ni le principal intéressé, ni son épouse ne sont présents. Longtemps, ce tableau a porté le titre de *Bal du duc d'Alençon*, mais lui non plus ne figure pas dans cette peinture. On peut dès lors envisager que le tableau ne représente pas un événement historique mais simplement un bal à la cour du dernier Valois.



Anonyme, *Bal à la cour de Henri III*, Paris, Musée du Louvre, Inv. 8730.

Ces tableaux appartenaient à François-Roger de Gaignières, précepteur de Louis XV et passionné d'histoire de France. Celui-ci leur a donné des titres conventionnels qui ont traversé les siècles, cependant ces œuvres n'ont pas été réellement étudiées auparavant, du fait même de leurs titres ainsi que de la présence de la famille royale assise à gauche du tableau Versailles et debout à gauche de celui du Louvre. Or, il faut considérer la présence de la famille de Guise et de Lorraine, dont le duc Henri de Guise, chef de la Ligue et grand opposant de Henri III. Il semble donc évident qu'une réunion de ces deux clans rivaux, dans un climat de Guerres de Religions, devait pourtant être pleine de sens.

La danse à la cour de Henri III : représentation d'une activité quotidienne et réglementée.

Dans le grand format de Versailles, les festivités semblent sur le point de commencer et le couple central se prépare donc peut-être à danser une pavane. Le pied gauche avancé du cavalier s'accorde avec le texte de l'*Orchésographie* de Thoinot Arbeau pour la description de la pavane. Il pourrait s'agir d'une autre danse de marche, telle que l'allemande, mais la pavane correspond aussi à des témoignages sur l'ordre des danses dans le bal. En effet, ce tableau présente vraisemblablement le début du bal et des sources telles que la relation du diplomate Richard Cook décrivent la pavane comme danse qui ouvre les bals de la cour en France². En général, le roi ouvre le bal, sauf en cas d'événements particulier comme la fête de la Fève ou certains mariages. L'*Orchésographie*, paru en 1589, année de la mort de Henri III, a été élaboré et mûri pendant le règne

du dernier Valois. Toutes les pratiques de cette période y sont répertoriées, décrites, des exemples musicaux sont donnés mais aussi une réflexion sur le rôle de la danse dans la société. Voici d'ailleurs une des premières choses que dit Capriol à son maître : « *J'ay prins plaisir en l'escrime & ieu de paulme, ce qui me rend bien voulu & familier des ieunes hommes. Mais i'ay deffault de la dance pour complaire aux damoiselles, desquelles il me semble depend toute la reputation d'un ieune homme à marier* »³. On peut alors mesurer l'importance que prend la danse dans la société de la Renaissance française.

Le tableau représente donc probablement une pavane accompagnée de quatre luths. Cette danse de marche, majestueuse est souvent utilisée pour des événements solennels, mais également dans les bals et les mascarades. Elle est exécutée par une succession de couple formant cortège. Si on note ici l'absence du cortège de la pavane derrière le couple, c'est parce que la scène se situe certainement dans l'imminence de la formation de ce cortège, le couple qui fait son entrée sur la gauche se préparant peut-être à rejoindre la danse.

Dans le *Bal à la cour de Henri III* du Louvre, la danse semble être un branle, une ronde dansée au son de musettes de cour et de hautbois (ou de bombardes pour l'époque). Thoinot Arbeau signale dans l'*Orchésographie* qu'il existe plusieurs types de branles (simple, double, coupé, de Poitou, des Torches, etc.) et fournit pour chacun une explication chorégraphique détaillée. En l'absence d'une caractéristique très particulière de l'un des branles (flambeau, ruade, réprimandes des Lavandières, etc.), l'on est bien incapable de dire de quel type de branle il s'agit, cependant ce n'est pas l'exacte identification de la danse qui importe en ce cas, mais plutôt la signification de cette catégorie de danse. Ces danses étaient en effet assimilées par la noblesse comme des danses paysannes, souvent dansées en extérieur lors de fêtes champêtres, ce qui expliquerait la jonchée de fleurs à terre, peut-être pour recréer une atmosphère rustique dans un intérieur de palais. D'ailleurs l'utilisation d'instruments comme les bombardes et les musettes, d'origine rurale mais assimilés par la musique savante, s'accorde bien à cette idée puisque dans les fêtes de cour, on les utilisait plutôt pour jouer en extérieur.

D'un côté, avec le *Bal des noces de Joyeuse*, on est en présence de la scène de cour, avec des instruments nobles comme le luth. Peu importe que le luth soit un instrument plutôt intime et peu adapté à une fête bruyante de la cour. L'instrument n'est pas là pour le son qu'il produit, mais bien pour le symbole de raffinement et de noblesse qu'il véhicule.

La danse représentée, la pavane noble et majestueuse, sert également le même but. Tout est donc mis en scène pour montrer une image de la cour dansant sur un langage qu'elle seule peut comprendre. En revanche, dans le *Bal à la cour de Henri III*, la ronde dansée foule une jonchée de fleur sur un parquet peu visible, au son de bombardes et de musettes de cour. Tous les éléments sont rassemblés pour opposer à une fête raffinée et réglementée de la cour protocolaire, une fête champêtre et insouciant (bien que se situant à l'intérieur d'un palais et en présence du roi). La place de la reine suffit à le démontrer. Dans le premier tableau, elle est assise aux côtés du roi, dans le second, elle danse dans la ronde, sans tenir la main du roi ou d'un prince de sang, alors que le protocole ne le permet pas.

Les deux tableaux ont sensiblement les mêmes dimensions, on peut alors penser qu'il s'agit d'une production en pendant, qui n'était certainement pas prévue au départ. En effet, il est possible d'affirmer que la réalisation du premier tableau se situe autour de 1581, tandis que le second n'a pu être peint avant 1583⁴. Les commanditaires de ces œuvres demeurent inconnus et les raisons de la commande restent mystérieuses.

Concernant la réalité de la vie à la cour, il faut savoir que le bal est un élément important dans le quotidien de Henri III. Ce souverain a en effet toujours eu, dès ses plus jeunes années, un goût très prononcé pour la danse et les mascarades. Ce goût restera constant quand il montera sur le trône de France. Il est d'ailleurs étonnant de constater qu'il ne participe pas à la danse dans les deux tableaux. Selon Nicolas Le Roux, spécialiste de Henri III, « *le bal est donné deux ou trois soirs par semaine : en 1582, il s'agit du dimanche, du mardi et du jeudi* »⁵. On sait également qu'en 1585, le roi fait publier le règlement de la cour qui stipule qu'il y avait bal le jeudi et le dimanche soir⁶. Le bal fait donc partie intégrante du quotidien de la cour de Henri III, il s'agit d'un lieu de réunion et de plaisir, rendu presque obligatoire par le roi pour ses courtisans⁷.

Il semble également que le bal possède une fonction beaucoup plus symbolique. En règle générale, tous les divertissements auxquels assistait la cour se terminaient par des bals. Le *Balet Comique de la Royne*, créé pour les noces du duc de Joyeuse et qui marque un tournant dans les arts du spectacle français, est terminé par un bal. Le bal semble donc se situer entre l'irréel du ballet de cour et la réalité de la vie à la cour. Il fonctionne comme une transition entre deux états. Évoquant les fêtes de cour en Europe, Peter Burke traduit bien cette idée d'entre-deux : « *un aspect de cette fête de cour était la*

transgression de la frontière qui séparait normalement acteurs et spectateurs »⁸, car en effet les spectateurs du ballet deviennent les acteurs du bal.

La cour est représentée dans une activité habituelle, jouissant de la musique et mise en scène dans son quotidien. On peut donc considérer ces tableaux comme les premières scènes de genre appliquées à la noblesse.

Le succès de la scène de bal.

Les peintres des scènes de bals de Henri III ne sont pas connus mais la main de cette production à destination française est de toute évidence flamande. La question de l'influence de ces tableaux sur la production de scènes de danse en Europe se pose alors. Car ces œuvres, produites autour de 1580, ne sont pas totalement isolées et il n'y a pas que la danse en présence du roi qui a été représentée à la fin du XVI^e siècle. Ces tableaux sont en effet à rapprocher d'un second ensemble, encore plus problématique car d'une qualité très inégale. Cinq tableaux – conservés à Rennes, à Blois, à Gaasbeek en Belgique, à Penshurst Place en Angleterre et dans une collection privée française – représentent une volte accompagnée par une bande de violon. Trois d'entre eux, presque identiques, ne laissent aucun doute quant à l'idée qu'ils aient été produits par un même atelier.



Anonyme. *Scène de bal*, Blois, Musée du Château, Inv. 837.3.2

Le mouvement du saut de la volte est bien reconnaissable et l'identification de la danse ne fait aucun doute. Dans tous les cas, les chevilles de la danseuse – détail hautement érotique pour l'époque – s'offrent au regard du spectateur, malgré les efforts qu'elle est censée faire pour tenir sa robe. Thoinot Arbeau « *laisse à considérer si c'est chose bien seante à une jeusne fille de faire de grands pas & ouvertures de jambes. Et si en ceste volte l'honneur & la santé y sont pas hazardez* »⁹. Le reproche d'immoralité a été fait à plusieurs reprises à cette danse, notamment par Lambert Daneau, un moraliste dont le traité contre la danse a été offert au futur

Henri IV et complètement ignoré, mais également par les seigneurs polonais contre les habitudes de Henri III, lorsqu'il a occupé le trône de Pologne.



Anonyme, *Scène de bal*, Gaasbeek, Musée du Château.

La fin du XVI^e siècle est l'époque où le succès de la volte est à son apogée avec le goût qu'ont manifesté à son sujet Henri III et Marguerite de Navarre sa sœur, ainsi que Elizabeth I^{re} en Angleterre. Le tableau conservé en à Penshurst est d'ailleurs aussi appelé la Reine Elizabeth dansant la volte avec Robert Dudley, son amant, mais cette interprétation a bien entendu été rejetée.

Avec ce second groupe de tableaux, il devient évident que la création d'une scène de genre pour la noblesse se poursuit. Ces cinq tableaux semblent cependant être des condensés de lieux communs sur la noblesse : si le luxe et la danse sont étalés, l'insouciance et l'immoralité sont sous-entendues, dissimulées derrière l'abondance des riches étoffes et la variété des personnages. Il semble qu'on ait plutôt affaire à l'idée que la bourgeoisie se fait de la noblesse. Un mélange d'admiration et de rejet, d'envie et de critique. La cour, ou plutôt l'idée de la noblesse, devient une entité, capturée dans un tableau, et dont on peut déceler les failles et les mœurs légères tout en admirant son faste.

On trouve également des scènes de bal en Italie et plus particulièrement à Venise, où les patriciens se font représenter dansant, en costume de cour ou bien masqués. Mais c'est surtout dans les anciens Pays-Bas que va circuler le thème de la scène de danse. Il existait déjà avec les scènes de genre rurales et les danses paysannes ne se comptent plus. Cependant, avec l'émergence de la classe bourgeoise, on observe un changement de destination et une évolution de la scène de danse.

Conclusion

La vie à la cour de Henri III et le rôle que la danse y jouait quotidiennement ont sans doute inspiré la volonté de réaliser ces œuvres peintes en

grand format. Un besoin nouveau de représenter ce moment particulier de la vie de cour voit le jour.

Si ces tableaux n'apportent pas d'éléments chorégraphiques nouveaux, on peut cependant les voir comme des révélateurs des textes théoriques ainsi que de la pratique de la vie de cour.

Notes

- 1 Il en existe une copie, plus petite et peinte sur cuivre, plus lumineuse aussi mais moins soignée, conservée au Louvre.
- 2 Cook Richard, D. L. Potter et P. R. Robert, « An Englishman's View of the Court of Henri III, 1584-1585 : Richard Cook's Description of the Court of France », *French History*, t. II, 1988, p. 312-344. Cité dans Monique Chatenet, *La cour de France au XVI^e siècle. Vie sociale et architecture*, Paris : Editions A. et J. Picard, 2002, p. 131-132.
- 3 Arbeau Thoinot, *Orchésographie et Traicté en forme de dialogue par lequel toutes personnes peuvent facilement apprendre et practiquer l'honneste exercice des dances*, Imprimé à Lengres par Iehan des preyz, Imprimeur & Libraire, 1589, p. 1 verso.
- 4 Cette datation a été obtenue en consultant la date à laquelle le duc de Mayenne – frère du duc de Guise – a été fait chevalier de l'ordre du Saint Esprit. Il devient chevalier en janvier 1583, comme Anne de Joyeuse. Dans le tableau de Versailles, il ne porte pas le collier de l'ordre royal alors que dans le tableau du Louvre, on le devine.
- 5 Le Roux Nicolas, *La Faveur du Roi. Mignons et courtisans au temps des derniers Valois (vers 1547-vers 1589)*, Seyssel : Champ Vallon, 2000, p. 276
- 6 L'estoile Pierre de, *Registre-journal du règne de Henri III*, tome II, p. 179.
- 7 Le Roux Nicolas, *op. cit.*, 2000, p. 276 : *Calendar of State Papers*, t. XVI, p. 392 (17 oct. 1582)
- 8 Burke Peter, « L'homme de cour » in GARIN Eugenio, *L'homme de la Renaissance*, Paris : Editions du Seuil, 1990, p. 147-178.
- 9 Arbeau Thoinot, *op. cit.*, p. 64 verso.

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Hypothesizing a *Chorea Speculativa* English Renaissance Dance in Theory and Practice

E. F. Winerock

When scholars mention dancing in works on Renaissance and early modern England, they tend to cite from a limited number of sources, generally Phillip Stubbes' antitheatrical treatise, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (1583) or Sir John Davies's poem *Orchestra Or a Poeme of Dauncing* (1596). In *The Anatomie of Abuses*, Stubbes defines dancing as "...an introduction to whoredom, a preparative to wantonness, a provocative to uncleanness, & an introit to all kind of lewdness...."ⁱ In notoriously vivid detail, Stubbes rails against activities that accompany dancing:

"For what clipping, what culling, what kissing and bussing, what smooching & slobbering one of another, what filthy groping and unclean handling is not practised every where in these dancings?"ⁱⁱ

In these passages, Stubbes presents dancing as a highly problematic activity that either involves or leads to illicit sexual encounters and general troublemaking.ⁱⁱⁱ

The *Orchestra* presents dancing rather differently. Davies describes dancing as the means by which order is imposed on chaos. The lengthy, allegorical poem uses dancing as the symbol of harmony and accord amongst planets, people, or ideas:

Dancing itself both love and harmony,
Where all agree, and all in order move;
Dancing the Art that all Arts doe approve:
The faire Character of the worlds consent,
The heavens' true figure, and the earth's ornament.^{iv}

According to Davies, the symmetrical choreography of figured dances mirrors and makes manifest the divine order of the cosmos.

Up until recently, these and a few similar passages have provided historians and literary scholars with everything they wanted to say about dancing in the early modern world. When an antidance reference was required, they cited Stubbes; when a pro-dance reference was needed, they cited Davies.

However, the selective and decontextualized quoting of these passages belies the complexity and ambiguity of their authors' views, not to mention those of the early modern society more generally. Stubbes, for example, in the Preface to *The Anatomie* states very clearly:

...concerning dancing, I would not have thee (good Reader) to think that I condemn the exercise itself altogether, for I know the wisest Sages and the Godliest Fathers and Patriarchs that ever lived, have now and then used the same, as David, Solomon, and many others: but my words do touch & concern the Abuses thereof only.^v

Phillip Stubbes might not have been an active proponent of dancing, but he was not categorically opposed to it either; rather he wanted to highlight and correct what he saw as the decline from the dancing described in the Bible to the dancing practices of his own day.

Similarly, Sir John Davies presents multiple views of dancing in his poem. After listening to a series of glowing tributes to dancing, Penelope, the heroine, reminds the dance enthusiast,

What mean the Mermaids when they dance and sing
But certain death unto the Mariner?
What tidings doe the dancing Dolphins bring
But that some dangerous storm approacheth near?^{vi}

Davies, through the voice of Penelope, indicates his awareness that dancing can be dangerous, and a harbinger of misfortune. Penelope argues that dancing reveals “vainness, frenzy, and disorder.”^{vii} In these verses Davies presents dancing as problematic and disorderly, contradicting his earlier descriptions of dancing as the embodiment of cosmic order and harmony.

Phillip Stubbes and Sir John Davies were contemporaries, both were writing about dancing in late Elizabethan England, and editions of *The Anatomie of Abuses* and *Orchestra* overlapped publication years, even if they appealed to different audiences. How do we reconcile their explanations of dancing’s significance? How do we explain the seemingly contradictory views expressed within a single author’s own works? Writings by Mark Franko and Alessandro Arcangeli, and Skiles Howard’s article, “Rival Discourses of Dancing in Early Modern England,” (published in *Studies in English Literature* in 1996) touch on some of these questions. Skiles Howard, for example, identifies five “discourses” of dancing: the patriarchal, the mercantile, the medical, the moralistic, and the sovereign discourse,^{viii} and she cites the standard passages from both Stubbes and Davies – Stubbes under the moralistic discourse, and Davies under the sovereign. Her analysis accounts for one person expressing contradictory views, as an individual can engage in different discourses. However, while Howard’s categories may be helpful for modern scholars, there is little evidence that men and women in the early modern world thought of dancing in terms of mercantile discourses. How might they have understood and selected from the multiple meanings of dance?

It is the intention of this paper (and one of the goals of my dissertation from which it is drawn) to relate the varied and sometimes contradictory interpretations of dancing in Renaissance and early modern England and Europe, incorporating them into a conceptual framework that explains how a single author, such as Sir John Davies, can simultaneously conceive of dancing as a symbolic representation of cosmic order, a visible manifestation of vanity, and a practical skill.^{ix} Where I depart from Howard’s method is that I

am interested in classifications of dance that are based on Renaissance, not modern, theories.

In *Music in the English Courtly Masque, 1604-1640*, Peter Walls defines *musica speculativa* as, “theories describing the ultimate position of music in the created universe transmitted from ancient Greek sources to the mainstream of Western European thought by Boethius in the early sixth century.”^x Humanists revived and expanded on *musica speculativa* in the Renaissance, and brought it into the university curriculum. *Musica speculativa*, the speculative, or theoretical approach to music, was commonly divided into two components – *musica mundana* (macrocosmic harmony of the spheres), and *musica humana* (harmony of the healthy human body and, metaphorically, the state). These were joined by a third category, *musica instrumentalis* (music one hears, playing of instruments), or as at it was sometimes called, *musica practica*. According to Walls, these categories were viewed, “not as separate phenomena, but as different aspects or manifestations of a universal harmony.”^{xi} The tripartite system distinguished between theoretical and practical approaches, but incorporated them into a single, comprehensive system.^{xii} Considered both a science and an art, *musica speculativa* and *musica practica* acknowledged how music could be simultaneously symbolic and concrete.

Unfortunately for dance historians, Renaissance texts do not offer a parallel classification system for dance types, what one might call a *chorea speculativa*. However, the Boethian music categories provide a useful substitute and can be adapted to create a model for analysing dance. These parallel categories I have named: *chorea mundana* for the divinely choreographed dance of the planets; *chorea humana* for the harmonious functioning of the State (order) and the body (grace), which was sometimes explained as the manifestation of virtue through movement; and *chorea practica* for the practical study and performance of dance steps and choreographies.^{xiii} (Due to time constraints, this paper can only briefly describe each classification to indicate how records fit the proposed *chorea* categories. However, I would be happy to provide more examples or further details subsequently.)

Chorea Mundana

Sir John Davies' *Orchestra*, mentioned earlier, provides the most elaborate and detailed articulation of the *chorea mundana*, developing dancing as a metaphor for, and manifestation of, the divine order of the cosmos. However, other authors also describe dancing in cosmic terms. In *The Booke Named the Governour* (1531), which contains seven chapters on dancing, Sir Thomas Elyot cites Plato as the precedent for his references to the cosmic dance:

The interpreters of Plato do think that the wonderful and incomprehensible order of the celestial bodies, I mean stars and planets, and their motions harmonical, gave to them... a semblable motion, which they called dancing or saltation....^{xiv}

Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) expresses a similar idea, "The Sun and Moon (some say) dance about the earth... they turn round, jump and trace...."^{xv} As Alan Brissenden writes in *Shakespeare and the Dance*, "Since number and pattern are essential to it, dance was seen as the means by which order came out of primal chaos."^{xvi} Whether in describing the creation of the world, or the subsequent motion of heavenly bodies within it, authors such as Davies, Elyot, and Burton considered dancing an appropriate metaphor to describe the movements of the planets, and to convey a sense of the beauty and wonder of the natural world and its order and hierarchy.

Chorea Humana

Dancing's relevance to wonder, beauty, order, and hierarchy was hardly restricted to planetary motion. The *chorea humana* category describes dancing that revealed the presence (or absence) of harmony in human affairs, which was made manifest by grace in the body and order in institutions.

For Sir Thomas Elyot, the graceful and harmonious movements of the dancer both cultivated and revealed nobility and virtue. Elyot writes:

Now because there is no pastime to be

compared to that, wherein may be found both recreation and meditation of virtue, I have among all honest pastimes, wherein is exercise of the body, noted dancing....^{xvii}

Elyot asserts that remembering dance steps is good for the memory, and dancing promotes virtues like prudence and reflection. Graceful movement reveals a noble mind, while selecting an appropriate dance and style of performance for a particular occasion reflects good judgement.

Baldesar Castiglione shared Elyot's concern with grace and good judgement on the dance floor. In *Il Cortegiano* (1528), translated into English as *The Book of the Courtier* by Sir Thomas Hoby in 1561, Castiglione stipulates that a courtier's dancing should be executed "in such fashion that he shall always appear genial and discreet, and that everything he may do or say shall be stamped with grace."^{xviii} Castiglione emphasizes repeatedly that it is crucial that a courtier demonstrate both nobility and ability on the dance floor:

when dancing in the presence of many and in a place full of people, it seems to me that he should preserve a certain dignity, albeit tempered with a lithe and airy grace of movement...^{xix}

A courtier should be graceful and dignified in his dancing, but he must also know which dances are appropriate for the context.

In public, a courtier was discouraged from attempting more complicated, technically demanding steps. Wearing a mask entitled the wearer to dance with more impunity, even if the spectators would have been able to determine the masquer's identity, but generally dancing with what Castiglione calls "*sprezzatura*" or "nonchalance" was recommended.^{xx} Dancing badly insinuated that you lacked the grace inherent in true nobility, but dancing too well implied you were a working professional from an inferior social class. Castiglione and other courtesy manual writers stressed the need to balance these two extremes to achieve a "nonchalant ease" or grace.^{xxi}

One may have noted that up to this point

the *chorea humana* has had very little to say about non-elite dancing, other than to avoid it. However, the communal dancing that marked church ales and fundraisers, rites of passage, and religious festivals can also be considered within the classification of the *chorea humana*. Popular dancing in the early modern period was generally sponsored by the Church or by civic officials, so it often reinforced social hierarchies, while strengthening a sense of community.^{xxii} Whether at court or in the churchyard, official sponsorship of dancing made it potentially a tool for social control.^{xxiii} The practice of using dance to celebrate life cycle events such as weddings and religious festivals such as Christmas occurred at all levels of society, and dancing offered opportunities for self-display to servants and aristocracy alike. However, the types of dances favoured by different ranks of society varied significantly, as did the amount of training or instruction required for mastery.

Chorea Practica

The third category, *chorea practica*, describes records of Renaissance dance in practice. There were dancing masters in Italy and France who wrote dancing manuals for elite or middling status readers. They gave choreographies for dances such as the galliard, and described how to do individual steps like kicks and turns. English archives also mention musicians who taught dancing, and refer to dancing schools at, or at least in the vicinity of, English universities and the Inns of Court, the English law schools.

From 1606 to 1636, the Oxford City Council granted John Bosseley a lease of a room at the Boccardo, the city jail at the North Gate of Oxford. This upper chamber (which was not in the jail itself, but in the same building) was known as the Dancing School.^{xxiv} Apparently John Bosseley, described as a city musician, ran a lively operation, for the 1610 City Council Minutes record the following amendment:

a Proviso shall be putt into John Bosseley's Lease...not to dance nor suffer any Dancing after ten of the

Clock in the night nor before five of the Clock in the morning.^{xxv}

That this proviso was added just four months after Bosseley had signed the 1610 lease implies that dancing at the school between 10 P.M. and 5 A.M. was a significant enough problem to warrant an amendment. Similarly, the 1612-1613 *Quarter Sessions Examinations* record evidence of late-night dancing. An apprentice encountered the city musician, Robert Cally, around four in the morning, and “desired him to teach him dance & stayed dancing one hour.”^{xxvi} Although they may not be representative, these records provide concrete evidence of dancing instruction outside of London and the court.

Case Study: Pagitt's Dance Instructions

Having briefly described the three categories, I will now offer an example as to how the proposed *chorea speculativa* may be used to analyze Renaissance dance records and events, drawing on archival material from my dissertation research.

The journal of Justin Pagitt, a student at the Middle Temple of the Inns of Court, contains the following directions in an entry from 1633:

De arte Saltandi [The Art of Dancing]

1. follow your dancing hard till you have got a habit of dancing neatly
2. Care not to dance loftily, as to carry your body sweetly & smoothly away with a graceful comportment
3. In some places hanging steps are very graceful & will give you much ease & time to breath
4. Write the marks for the steps in every dance under the notes of the tune, as the words are in songs.^{xxvii}

These instructions may be notes that Pagitt wrote down after attending a dancing class, general observations, or the recommendations of a peer on how to improve his dancing. One might assume, initially, that these notes are only concerned with the practicalities of executing dance steps properly. However, when considered in terms of the *chorea speculativa*, it becomes clearer that Pagitt's “Art of Dancing” falls under

two of the three categories. While he makes no attempt to relate dancing to cosmic harmony or the dance of the spheres, Pagitt is not only interested in such practical matters as rehearsing, style, timing, and memory aids, but he also shares the concern with grace and nobility discussed above as a central component of the *chorea humana*.

This combination of categories, of which Pagitt's notes are but one example, draws attention to an often overlooked paradox. As Sir Thomas Elyot stresses in the *The Boke Named the Governour* and Fabritio Caroso writes in *Il Ballarino* (1581), dancing was thought to be best suited to the nobility, and the nobility were supposed to take dancing lessons merely to augment their inherent grace. Yet the law student's notes indicate that he was learning tricks like hanging steps that would make him appear graceful, while his first recommendation, "follow yr dancing hard till you have got a habit of dancing neatly," indicates that sufficient effort would produce "effortless" dancing.^{xxviii} Indeed Caroso makes the bold claim that "through devotion of spirit" to one's dancing, a lower status individual could "become the equal of those created by birth."^{xxix} That all and sundry could take lessons to learn how to dance like a nobleman or noblewoman contradicted the tenet of *chorea humana* that asserted that grace was the natural and exclusive province of the nobility. From the perspective of *chorea practica*, however, dancing masters purported that with dedication, time, and energy, anyone could learn to dance well. The *chorea speculativa*, therefore highlights the contradictory views held about dancing lessons, a Renaissance version of the still current debate of nature versus nurture.

Conclusion

Considering these and other printed and archival dance sources in terms of the proposed *chorea speculativa* leads to several observations. Firstly, the views of so-called defenders and critics of dancing were quite similar. Most agreed that dancing could be appropriate or inappropriate, depending on the context. Where they disagreed was in defining specific contexts as one or the other; when did an impressive

- i Phillip Stubbes, *The anatomie of abuses: containing, a discouerie, or briefe summarie of such notable vices and imperfections, as now raigne in many countreyes of the world: but (especialllye) in a famous ilande called Ailgna* (London: John Kingston for Richard Jones, 1583), p. 98. Facsimile available from Early English Books Online (EEBO), <http://eebo.chadwyck.com>.
- ii Stubbes, *Anatomie*, p. 99.
- iii Early English spellings have been silently modernized and apostrophes have been added for possessives in the quotations.
- iv Sir John Davies, *Orchestra Or a Poeme of Dauncing* (1596), in *The Poems of Sir John Davies*, ed. Robert Krueger and Ruby Nemser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 115, stanza 96.
- v Stubbes, *Anatomie*, introduction (unpaginated).
- vi Davies, *Orchestra*, stanza 101.
- vii Davies, *Orchestra*, stanza 100.
- viii Skiles Howard, "Rival Discourses of Dancing in Early Modern England," *Studies in English Literature* 36.1 (Winter, 1996), p. 32.
- ix For the purposes of this paper I am using the terms "early modern," "Renaissance," and "Renaissance dance" loosely so as to encompass records from 1300-1650.
- x Peter Walls, *Music in the English Courtly Masque 1604-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 8.
- xi Walls, *Music*, p. 9.
- xii Claude Palisca, "Theory, theorists: 14th century," in *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 30 July 2007), <http://www.grovemusic.com>.
- xiii To mirror *musica humana* exactly, *chorea humana* would be the idea of the state as a living body that functions harmoniously like the limbs of a graceful dancer. This view of dancing is held by Sir Thomas Elyot in *The Boke Named the Governour*, among others. However, as most conduct and dancing manuals discuss dancing as revealing the inner virtues of the dancer, I have expanded the *chorea humana* definition to apply to both individuals and institutions.
- xiv Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named the Governour*, ed. H. H. S. Croft, vol. 1 (1531; New York: Burt Franklin, 1967), p. 218. However, as John Major points out in "The Moralization of the Dance in Elyot's *Governour*," (*Studies in the Renaissance* 5, 1958) this is the only instance where "Elyot shows an awareness of the deeper, metaphysical meaning of the dance" (p. 33). The rest of the work is more concerned with dance as "an exercise in virtue" (p. 33).
- xv Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (1621; New York: Tudor, 1938), p. 710.
- xvi Alan Brissenden, *Shakespeare and the Dance* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1981), p. 3.
- xvii Elyot, *Boke*, p. 239.
- xviii Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, ed. and trans. Leonard Eckstein Opdycke (*Il Cortegiano* 1528; Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2000), p. 32.
- xix Castiglione, *Courtier*, p. 82.

- xx Castiglione, *Courtier*, p. 35, p. 324, note 53.
 xxi Castiglione, *Courtier*, p. 36.
 xxii See John Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing, 1458-1750* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co Ltd, 1999).
 xxiii See Margo Todd, "Profane Pastimes and the Reformed Community: The Persistence of Popular Festivities in Early Modern Scotland," *The Journal of British Studies* 39.2 (April 2000), pp. 123-156.
 xxiv REED Oxford, pp. 397-398.
 xxv REED Oxford, p. 389.
 xxvi REED Cheshire, p. 391.
 xxvii Walls, *Music*, p. 114.
 xxviii Walls, *Music*, p. 114.
 xxix Translation quoted from Judy Smith, "The Art of Good Dancing - Noble Birth and Skilled Nonchalance. England 1580-1630," *Historical Dance* 2.5 (1986-1987), p. 30.

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Dance and *theôria* in Greek antiquity : Homer, Plato and Lucian of Samosate, beyond the distinction practice - theory.

Michel Briand

An international and multicultural conference may be multilingual (here english, french, greek), since cultural practices and theories have something to do with language politics and pragmatics. This paper is written in French, for its most part: let it be an alternative form of presentation, since it also deals with both ancient Greek matters and post-modern issues, following the footsteps of Foucault's *critical* and *archaeological* last books on sexuality (Foucault: 1976-1984). And let those rather theoretical lines, although referring to ancient practices and literary or philosophical representations, become some kind of partial perspective about the ways, during this SDHS - CORD congress, dance theoreticians, especially historians and anthropologists, practiced and presented their researches and practitioners theorized their activities, particularly on a spectacular, linguistic (that is both semantical and pragmatical), philosophical, and political level (as now traditional in contemporary dance scholarship, e. g. from Bruni: 1993, to Louppe: 2007). In ancient Greek terms, each of us was a *theôros*, in this congress, that is an active spectator, in festive rituals and political gatherings.

On mène ici deux réflexions parallèles, par un décentrage linguistique et anthropologique qui invite à la pratique (théorisante) d'un anachronisme contrôlé (Loraux: 1993):

- une histoire grecque de la *theôria*, opposée à la *praxis* après Platon et Aristote, et dans des termes qui ne recouvrent pas la distinction moderne dominante entre théorie et pratique.

- l'étude des relations entre *theôria*, *praxis* et *poiêsis*, dans trois textes anciens, d'époques différentes, sur la danse (voir Naerebout: 1997, et Lauzou : 2004), exprimant des pratiques et représentations de la danse, de la création poétique et musicale, de la théorie, du corps, du *gender*, du regard, à la fois proches et étranges pour nous, modernes (Briand: 1997, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2005,1).

L'histoire d'un mot et d'une pratique, du rite à la pensée

Le mot *theôria*, avant de signifier "théorie", suit une évolution sémantique complexe, d'abord dépendante puis dissociée du nom d'agent dont elle est un dérivé, *theôros*. On peut distinguer trois étapes principales, autour des notions de rite, spectacle, enfin réflexion.

theôros

1. envoyé officiel auprès d'une fête religieuse, d'un oracle, ambassadeur religieux, pèlerin
2. spectateur
3. -

theôria

1. ambassade religieuse, procession, voyage
2. spectacle, contemplation, observation
3. pensée, spéculation, méditation, étude, théorie

theôreô

1. assister à une fête religieuse, voyager
2. être spectateur, contempler, observer (*theôrêma* "spectacle")
3. examiner, établir des théories, théoriser (*theôrêma* "théorème")

Le nom d'action *theôria* désigne d'abord une pratique sociale et religieuse (Rausch: 1982, Rutherford: 2000, Nightingale: 2004). Le *theôros*, délégué officiel d'une cité auprès d'une cérémonie publique (oracle, jeux athlétiques, culte panégyrique, mystères ...), observe les rites et y participe, avant d'en informer son groupe d'origine, à son retour. La *theôria* relève d'abord du spectacle rituel et du pèlerinage, avant de désigner soit le voyage (et les observations qu'il induit), soit le spectacle (même sans voyage, ni procession).

Le sens philosophique, puisqu'en grec le regard est une activité, repose sur des métaphores visuelles: la pensée est une contemplation, surtout quand ses objets (astres, nombres, notions) sont assimilables à

des entités divines, et l'enquête cognitive à un dévoilement, avant de s'abstraire en construction logique (Méchoulan: 1990). Les linguistes hésitent entre deux étymologies, suivant l'assimilation du premier élément du composé avec les termes phoniquement proches *thea* "vision" (*theâ-(w)oros "qui observe un spectacle", Chantraine: 1999) et *theos* "dieu" (*theo-ôros "qui observe le (dessein du) dieu", Koller: 1957-8). Dans les deux cas, il s'agit d'un spectacle, à voir, et d'un rite, à accomplir, le spectateur étant aussi un acteur.

La *theôria* est ainsi passée du pèlerinage à la spéculation, du déplacement vers un spectacle rituel (vision active) au spectacle spéculatif, sans action (réflexion théorique).

Danse et *theôria* : trois textes en dialogue¹

Homère, *Iliade*, chant XVIII, v. 483-608

Dans le *Bouclier d'Achille*, au VIII^e s. avn., Homère décrit la fabrication d'une œuvre-monde (Aubriot: 1999, Wegner: 1968), par Héphestos, le dieu démiurge, "artisan". Cette *ecphrasis*, objet de *theôria* poétique et rituelle, évoque en détail la création ou *poiêsis* d'une œuvre d'art qui représente le monde comme une danse circulaire cosmique, entourant trois scènes de danses humaines, suivant la relation habituelle entre micro- et macro-cosme (Miller: 1986). Le verbe qui désigne l'action du dieu est *poiêin* "faire, fabriquer" (cf. *poiêma*, *poiêsis* "création, poésie") et non *prattein* "faire, agir" (cf. *pragma*, *praxis* "action, conduite").

Le premier groupe de danses (v.483-496), à la première extrémité du bouclier, associe le chœur des astres ("Il y fabriqua la terre, le ciel, la mer, / le soleil infatigable et la lune pleine, / et tous les prodiges dont le ciel est couronné, / Pléiades, Hyades, la force d'Orion, / l'Ourse, qu'on appelle aussi du nom de Chariot, / et qui tourne sur elle-même et observe Orion, / et, seule, ne prend pas part aux bains d'Océan") et le spectacle des noces et banquets dans la ville ("des jeunes mariées, hors de leurs chambres, sous les torches brillantes, / étaient menées à travers la ville, et un grand chant nuptial s'élevait. / Des jeunes gens tournoyaient en dansant, et, au milieu d'eux, / des flûtes et des

cithares résonnaient. Et les femmes, / debout, s'émerveillaient, chacune devant sa porte"). L'harmonie du monde naturel et des noces humaines, évoquée par la voix de l'aède, fait de l'auditeur ancien du poème épique (et même du lecteur moderne) le spectateur de la toute-puissance créatrice des dieux, et la danse décrite est une célébration spectaculaire mise en abyme.

Le deuxième groupe (v. 561-572) décrit les vendanges, autre moment d'exultation et de paix universelle: "Des filles et des garçons, pleins de pensées tendres / et douces, emportaient, dans leurs paniers tressés, des fruits. / Au milieu d'eux, un enfant, de son luth sonore, tirait des sons charmants, et chantait une belle chanson, d'une voix grêle. Et les autres, bondissant, ensemble, en chantant et criant, le suivaient, à pieds cadencés". C'est cette fois le chant poétique qui est mis en abyme, sous forme monodique, au centre du monde, de l'œuvre d'art et du poème, tous organisés en mouvements circulaires réguliers.

Le troisième groupe (v. 590-608), symétrique du premier, à l'autre extrémité du bouclier, décrit la cité pacifique, comparée à la Crète du Labyrinthe, où alternent rondes et danses en rangs, acrobaties, avant, de nouveau, la danse d'Océan: "Et l'illustre Boiteux y grava une place de danse, / pareille à celle que, jadis, dans la vaste Cnossos, / Dédale a construit, pour Ariane aux belles boucles. / Là des garçons et des filles aux nombreux prétendants / dansaient, se tenant la main au-dessus du poignet ; / les filles portaient des tissus fins et les garçons étaient vêtus / de tuniques bien filées, doucement brillantes d'huile. / Et elles avaient de belles couronnes, et eux des poignards / d'or, avec des baudriers d'argent. / Tantôt, ils couraient à pas savants, / avec facilité, comme quand, le tour bien en main, assis, un potier l'essaie, pour le mettre en marche, / tantôt ils couraient, en rangs, les uns vers les autres. / Une foule immense était debout, autour du chœur charmant, / ravie, et deux acrobates, au milieu de tous, / lançaient la danse et tournoyaient. / Enfin, il y plaça la grande force d'Océan, / au bord extrême du bouclier large et fort". La danse, ici dotée de connotations plus guerrières, est, comme le travail du potier et du dieu forgeron, une

poiësis, qu'observent les spectateurs représentés sur le bouclier et qu'imaginent, avec attention et plaisir, les auditeurs du poète. On notera enfin combien la danse collective représentée ici, investie de valeurs morales, sociales et religieuses décisives, est liée à des rites de passage fondamentaux, entre ordre et désordre (Lonsdale: 1993, et Calame: 1977).

Platon, *Lois*, VII

Le philosophe classique intègre la danse dans une réflexion indissociablement éthique et esthétique sur les arts du corps (gymnastique, partagée entre lutte et danse, elle-même partagée en mode mimétique et mode abstrait, rythmique) et de l'âme (musique), 795d: "L'instruction à donner est double, pour ainsi dire : elle doit former le corps par la gymnastique, l'âme par la musique. Or la gymnastique elle-même a deux parties : la danse et la lutte. La danse, à son tour, ou bien mime les paroles de la Muse et veille à exprimer fidèlement ce qu'elles ont de noble et de libre ; ou bien vise à entretenir la vigueur, l'agilité, la beauté dans les membres et autres parties du corps en leur donnant le degré de flexion ou d'extension voulu, en les mouvant chacun selon le rythme qui lui est propre, et qui se distribue sur toute la danse en l'accompagnant exactement." La danse est ainsi soit plutôt associée à la poésie et à la musique, dans des rites beaux et bons, soit plutôt une technique du corps, une *praxis* éducative fondamentale. Par ailleurs, les danses sérieuses, en particulier la danse guerrière, se caractérisent par leur rectitude et leur tension, formelle et morale, 814e: "Ce qu'il y a dans ces danses, de droit et de bien tendu, à l'imitation des beaux corps et des belles âmes, se réalise quand l'ensemble des membres du corps garde la rectitude des lignes; voilà ce qui est droit, et rien de contraire à ces attitudes ne peut être accepté comme droit. Quant à la danse pacifique, ce qu'il y a, dans chaque cas, à considérer, est de savoir si l'exécutant se conforme ou non à l'attitude d'une belle danse et se comporte jusqu'au bout, dans ses mouvements, comme il convient à des hommes formés par de bonnes lois".

La cité utopique de Platon est réglée par des magistrats qui procèdent à l'examen critique des danses, jugées désordonnées, inconvenantes (genres comique et bacchique, dionysiaque), ou convenables, sérieuses (genres guerrier et pacifique, comme sur le *Bouclier d'Achille*, Delavaux-Roux: 1993-5), 802a: "Quant aux chants et aux danses, voici comment il faut les ordonner. Les anciens nous ont laissé beaucoup de vieilles et belles compositions musicales et, pour exercer nos corps, non moins de belles danses, parmi lesquelles nous pourrions, sans irrévérence, trier ce qui convient et sied à la constitution que nous établissons. Pour faire cet examen et ce tri, il faudra élire des hommes d'au moins cinquante ans, et tout ce qui, dans ces anciennes compositions, sera satisfaisant, l'adopter, ce qui sera insuffisant ou tout à fait impropre, soit le rejeter absolument, soit le reprendre et le remodeler. Ils s'adjoindront des poètes et des musiciens, dont ils utiliseront les talents poétiques, mais, sauf rares exceptions, sans se fier à leurs goûts ni à leurs désirs ; ce sont les volontés du législateur qu'ils interpréteront, pour instituer autant que possible, dans son esprit, la danse, le chant et tout ce qui concerne les chœurs." Les législateurs, moralistes de la danse, de la musique et de la poésie, savent désormais seuls ce qui est bien et beau, contrairement aux praticiens : Homère est loin.

La vie harmonieuse des citoyens est figurée par la correspondance fondatrice entre ces danses belles et bonnes et la route unique et circulaire des astres, 816c: "Il appartient au législateur de les décrire à grands traits, au gardien des lois de chercher à les réaliser, et, quand il l'aura fait, de combiner la danse avec les autres parties de la musique, de répartir de telles danses entre toutes les fêtes, assignant à chaque sacrifice la danse qui lui convient, et, quand il aura consacré le tout dans l'ordre voulu, de ne plus toucher par la suite à rien de ce qui appartient soit à la danse, soit au chant ; ainsi, passant leur vie de la même façon dans les mêmes plaisirs, cité et citoyens demeureront les mêmes et, se ressemblant autant que possible, vivront parfaits et heureux." La pratique politique et religieuse, sans histoire, comme souvent dans les utopies,

est entièrement soumise à la théorie juridique et morale. Le triomphe de l'idéalisme platonicien (Festugière: 1975) est celui de la théorie systématique, contemplative, sur la pratique sociale, figée dans ses normes.

Lucien de Samosate, *De la danse*

Lucien, au II^e s., dans son dialogue *Sur la danse*, présente un plaidoyer théorique et pratique pour la danse nouvelle: 6, "Je te dirai quels sont ses avantages, comment elle n'est pas seulement agréable, mais encore utile à ceux qui la voient, quelles leçons, quels enseignements elle nous donne, comment elle règle les âmes des spectateurs en les exerçant par les plus beaux spectacles, les occupant par les meilleures harmonies, et en leur montrant une sorte de beauté commune à l'âme et au corps. Quand on obtient tous ces effets au moyen de la musique et du rythme, ce n'est pas le blâme, c'est l'éloge qu'on mérite."

Le sophiste reprend des références platoniciennes, sur le chœur éternel des astres comme prototype des premières danses, à l'harmonie rituelle réglée, d'origine divine, et modèle du bonheur civique: 7, "... la pratique de la danse n'est pas récente, elle ne date pas d'hier ni d'avant-hier, comme qui dirait du temps de nos grands-pères ou des leurs. Les auteurs qui nous donnent la généalogie la plus véritable de la danse te diront qu'elle prend son origine à la naissance de l'univers et qu'elle est née avec l'antique Éros ; car c'est le chœur des astres, la conjonction des planètes et des étoiles fixes, leurs mouvements associés selon les lois du rythme, leur harmonie réglée qui ont été les modèles de la première danse. Puis elle s'est développée et, de progrès en progrès, il semble qu'elle a atteint aujourd'hui son plus haut point de perfection et qu'elle est devenue un art précieux, varié, qui réunit tous les genres d'harmonie et les talents de plusieurs Muses."

Mais, contrairement au philosophe, c'est la nouveauté que le rhéteur défend avec le plus de fermeté (et d'humour), en l'occurrence la pantomime soliste, "protéiforme", narrative, virtuose: 19, "... Protée était une espèce de danseur, un homme habile à imiter et capable de prendre toutes les attitudes et de se métamorphoser en toutes choses, en sorte que,

par la rapidité de ses mouvements, il imitait la fluidité de l'eau, la vivacité de la flamme, la féroce du lion, la colère de la panthère, l'agitation d'un arbre, en un mot, tout ce qu'il voulait. Mais la fable, qui tourne au merveilleux tout ce qu'elle reçoit, a expliqué ce don naturel de Protée, comme s'il devenait réellement ce qu'il imitait. Nos danseurs font encore la même chose : on les voit changer rapidement de figure suivant l'occasion et imiter Protée lui-même."

La danse nouvelle, enfin, pour Lucien, par sa multi-modalité remarquable et son efficacité spectaculaire, conjugue tous les arts, tout en constituant une morale en action²: 72, "comment ne pas voir que la danse concilie en elle tous les arts, elle qui aiguise l'âme, qui exerce le corps, qui plaît aux regards, enseigne mainte histoire des vieux temps au son des flûtes et des cymbales, par des chants harmonieux, et en charmant les yeux et les oreilles? (...) Tu deviendras meilleur moralement en fréquentant un spectacle où tu verras sur la scène la haine des mauvaises actions, la compassion pour les victimes de l'injustice, en un mot les leçons de morale qu'on y donne aux spectateurs." Le théoricien ici, à la suite par exemple des analyses aristotéliennes de la pragmatique et de la réception rhétoriques et poétiques, fait de la pratique du danseur et du spectateur une activité morale de premier plan, sans laquelle les idéaux ne sauraient se réaliser concrètement, c'est-à-dire artistiquement³.

Conclusion

In Greek antiquity, as in other times?, dance, while staging the relation between micro- and macrocosm, ethics and aesthetics, or creation, action and thought, can be figured out as a group of ritual (religious and social) and artistic (aesthetic and ethical) *practices*, which need to be shown, observed and criticized, to produce *theories* which in turn, sustain other *practices* and *poetics*. In ancient Greek, *theôria* is a *praxis* which does not exist without the *poesis* it looks at, and vice versa. Practice, theory and poetics, from their beginnings, are three sides of one general activity: modern practitioners and theoreticians cannot forget or despise one side of this

triangle, without weakening the two other ones.

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Endnotes

- ¹ La traduction du texte homérique, du grec au français, est celle de l'auteur de l'article. Pour Platon, on cite la traduction d'A. Diès (1956, Platon, *Les Lois*, VII, in *Œuvres complètes*, CUF, Paris: Belles Lettres) et pour Lucien É. Chambry (1950, "De la danse", in Lucien, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. II, Paris: Garnier).
- ² Sur l'interdépendance entre esthétique et éthique, dans la construction d'une œuvre d'art (et en particulier pour la poésie, la musique et la danse), à l'époque de Lucien, voir (Briand: 2005,2 et 2006).
- ³ Sur la danse dans la critique ancienne tardive, en particulier dans les scholies à Pindare, voir Briand, to be publ. 2007 et 2008.

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Enjeux de la pratique de la danse contemporaine en prison

Laurence Pagès

Le point de départ de notre réflexion sur la pratique des ateliers de danse contemporaine en prison a été déterminé par notre pratique de chorégraphe en détention : Comment, par quels détours, amener la danse aux personnes détenues ?

Comment éviter la mise en place d'une danse « de la prison » ou d'ateliers spécifiques à la prison, sans transiger sur les principes de la danse contemporaine, ni sans mettre les détenus en danger par rapport au milieu dans lequel ils vivent.

L'idée d'entreprendre un travail théorique s'est imposé à moi, parce que je souhaitais m'interroger sur ce qui ne fonctionnait pas au sein des ateliers en détention, je souhaitais tenter de comprendre comment le pouvoir carcéral s'inscrit à la fois dans les corps et dans le fonctionnement même des ateliers, pour réellement saisir comment et à quel prix la danse peut pénétrer ou influencer ce système. C'est dans un second temps et dans un cadre universitaire que j'ai donc mené ce travail théorique.

Dans ce travail de recherche, la pratique - danser avec les détenus dans des ateliers de création - s'est avérée fondamentale. L'essentiel de nos observations a été tiré de ces expériences, même si notre démarche n'a pas été celle d'un chercheur-anthropologue en immersion sur le terrain. En effet, il n'a jamais été pour nous question d'entreprendre une recherche universitaire au moment où nous agissions en tant que chorégraphe au sein de ces ateliers de création. L'énergie nécessaire à la conduite de ces ateliers, l'investissement émotionnel et affectif que représentent à la fois « l'entrée en prison » et la rencontre d'« enfants » détenus – entre 13 et 18 ans – n'auraient de toute façon laissé aucune place à l'adoption dans l'instant d'une double posture de chorégraphe et de chercheur. Le travail de recherche que j'ai écrit et duquel je tire l'essentiel de ma présentation ici est donc une tentative d'objectivation a posteriori de ma pratique. Cela a constitué une difficulté

supplémentaire pour trouver une distance juste par rapport à l'objet et pour déjouer les pièges de la recherche. Mais, sans cette émotion première, je n'aurais jamais entrepris aucune démarche de recherche, ni d'objectivation a posteriori.

Cependant la distorsion introduite par notre méthodologie a permis d'éviter l'introduction d'un autre biais dans notre recherche : celui du paradoxe de l'observateur, défini par Labov¹, et qui semble particulièrement marquant concernant la prison. Pour Labov, l'observation neutre, le regard pur n'existe pas. L'observateur est toujours un élément perturbateur et il doit entreprendre un processus de contre-interprétation de l'observation et des relations observateur-observés. Dans le contexte carcéral, cette théorie semble prendre plus de sens encore, en raison de la transformation des « regards » que produit la prison. Les détenus sont devenus socialement invisibles. En revanche, ils subissent perpétuellement le regard de « l'œil carcéral », le regard des gardiens, des médecins, mais aussi celui des travailleurs sociaux chargés de préparer leur réinsertion, et qui jaugeront et jugeront leurs dispositions à l'insertion. L'introduction d'un observateur supplémentaire fausserait donc d'emblée ce qui peut se jouer au sein des ateliers entre le chorégraphe et les détenus, la relation qui peut émerger de leur rencontre et qui a de manière exceptionnelle en prison la possibilité d'être une relation librement consentie.

A travers l'analyse des enjeux qui se posent au chorégraphe intervenant en milieu carcéral, l'objectif a été de saisir comment la danse peut constituer un modérateur des effets dévastateurs de l'enfermement. Mais d'autres questions ont été soulevées, notamment sur la manière dont la recherche en danse peut aider à comprendre l'univers carcéral, quel regard spécifique un chorégraphe pose sur les corps en détention.

Dans cette imbrication de la théorie et de la pratique, une autre question s'est aussi posée : en quoi une expérience de danse en prison aide t-elle à comprendre l'acte de danser ? C'est, en effet, seulement par cette pratique de chorégraphe que nous avons pu accéder à cet univers, à une expérience sensible avec les détenus qui a permis l'émergence d'un objet théorique. Seul le partage d'une sphère d'intercorporité permet de comprendre l'ampleur du bouleversement sensoriel et physiologique qui affecte les personnes en détention, la désorganisation de la sensorialité inhérente au fonctionnement de la prison française provoquant une dépersonnalisation et des troubles identitaires.

Avant de chercher à comprendre comment la danse peut agir comme modérateur de l'enfermement, il faut donc d'abord cerner quelle est la place du corps dans le monde carcéral.

Le corps en prison

Notre attention s'est portée autant sur la chair, la peau que les gestes et la corporéitéⁱⁱ des détenus, pendant les ateliers et les temps de discussions. Nous analysons comment la prison agit sur les corps d'une manière un peu différente des sciences sociales en général.

Le premier fait marquant est la négation de l'intimité, qui se manifeste d'abord à travers la surpopulation carcérale chronique, et l'absence de sanitaires individuels. Les pratiques encore systématiques des fouilles au corps participent de cette violation de l'intimité et de l'intégrité physique.

La violence comme pilier des rapports sociaux carcéraux (de la part des gardiens, des détenus entre eux) et la privation sexuelle et affective contribuent également à nier l'intimité et l'intégrité corporelle des détenus. La prison enlève à la personne détenue le sentiment que son corps lui appartient. Cet enfermement réduit l'individu à l'impuissance, lui supprime toute possibilité de maîtrise de soi et de son corps.

Le second fait caractéristique de l'empreinte carcérale sur les corps est l'amputation sensorielle : clôture de l'espace, monde sonore oppressant, où les bruits sont à la fois étouffés et pourtant omniprésents,

nourriture infecte, sans goût, odeurs souvent nauséabondes, amputation du toucher, interdit pour tous, sauf à travers des contacts violents.

Le corps et la privation des plaisirs des sens sont donc au centre du dispositif de la peine carcérale. Mais il ne s'agit pas simplement d'une question de confort. Reconnue comme une torture par la Cour Européenne des Droits de l'Homme, cette privation constitue aussi un moyen qui, poussé à l'extrême, est capable de provoquer chez un individu d'importants troubles psychiques et de graves régressions mentales. Surtout, en réduisant la sensibilité, la prison affecte aussi les capacités d'imagination, et d'énonciation des personnes détenues, parce que toute sensation est à la fois « expressive » et « énonciatrice »². Elle affecte donc leurs capacités d'évasion (imaginaires).

C'est également la corporéité entière des détenus qui se transforme sous l'impact de la vie en prison. Apparaissent des corps carapaces, des corps de guerrier musculeux, tout en tension. Beaucoup prennent du poids, comme pour faire le poids dans cet environnement hostile. La pratique des automutilations y est plus répandue qu'ailleurs, agissant autant comme un soulagement de la tension intérieure, que comme un moyen d'enlever à la machine carcérale le monopole de la violence légitime.

La dégradation de la santé en prison est par ailleurs manifeste : un quart des détenus souffrent de pathologies dermatologiques durant les huit premiers mois de leur incarcération.

Les ateliers artistiques au sein du système carcéral

Si le corps et l'amputation des sens sont placés au centre de la peine, on mesure donc à quel point la danse contemporaine, travaillant sur la sensorialité, les sensations internes, la respiration et les release techniques semble parfaitement appropriée à jouer le rôle d'un « modérateur de ce temps de passage³ » que représente l'enfermement. La réalité n'est cependant jamais aussi simple : le travail se fait dans des conditions difficiles, souvent dans l'urgence. Le contexte carcéral est si fort qu'il ne peut jamais être oublié et qu'il prend

le plus souvent le dessus par rapport à l'atelier de danse : L'Administration Pénitentiaire utilise ainsi les activités artistiques pour maintenir le calme au sein de la prison comme le fait la télé ou le cannabis. Elle s'en sert également comme moyen de pression sur les comportements des détenus, attribuant des récompenses et des punitions - dont la privation d'ateliers - au sein du système de privilèges pénitentiaire.

La prison est considérée historiquement comme un lieu d'enfermement et de réadaptation. Dans l'exigence faite à l'art d'être un outil d'insertion, il faut aussi ne pas perdre de vue ce qu'il reste de l'objectif premier et historique de réadapter et de rééduquer les individus.

D'une certaine manière, même si une intervention artistique peut avoir ponctuellement des effets émancipateurs à l'échelle individuelle, elle nourrit structurellement la machine carcérale. Elle participe notamment du fantasme d'une « prison propre » qui favoriserait la réinsertion alors que, tout comme la guerre propre, elle n'a jamais existé. La modestie s'impose donc par rapport aux effets réels que la pratique de la danse contemporaine peut amener.

Mais, malgré tout, l'atelier de danse (sans être particulièrement d'un autre atelier de sensibilisation) peut agir ponctuellement à la condition expresse d'avoir pris conscience de ce que la prison fait au corps et à l'individu.

La danse, pratique d'improvisation et de composition

Faire acte de création, improviser signifie qu'il devient possible de prendre des initiatives dans un monde où toute initiative est habituellement suspecte et où tout est figé. Créer de nouveaux espaces, jouer dans des espaces restreints pour éventuellement les ouvrir, créer des labyrinthes, des tracés complexes et trouver les chemins du corps qui permettent de s'y tenir.

Ouvrir des espaces intérieurs et imaginaires par des exercices simples de respiration et de release-techniques, pour prendre conscience du volume intérieur du corps et des espaces internes.

Parler de soi autrement : Avoir la possibilité de parler de soi, par exemple en se plaçant dans des situations métaphoriques de l'enfermement et de la libération. Dans les improvisations des adolescents incarcérés, se manifeste une forte volonté de distanciation et de symbolisation par rapport à ce qu'ils vivent : fort désir de danser l'attente, l'ennui et l'enfermement.

La pratique de la danse libère une parole emprisonnée.

L'expérience de ces ateliers a montré également à quel point la pratique de la danse pouvait être directement liée à la parole, en ce sens que l'ouverture du corps ouvrait également quasi-automatiquement les vannes de la parole.

Elle vient ainsi apporter une validation empirique à la réflexion de Michel Bernard, tant sur l'homologie du sentir et du dire que sur sa définition de la danse comme exploration de la sensorialité. Ainsi, l'analyse de ces expériences limites, par leur marginalité même révèle ce qui constitue finalement les enjeux fondamentaux de la danse contemporaine, et notamment l'importance de la sensorialité.

La danse comme pratique sensorielle

S'interroger sur ce que peut apporter la danse contemporaine en milieu carcéral revient à se demander comment elle peut nourrir et soutenir la résistance des individus face à la machine carcérale. Si l'on souhaite éviter que la danse renforce les mécanismes de dépossession et de morcellement du corps à l'œuvre en prison, elle doit impérativement être envisagée là comme une pratique sensorielle et perceptive et non comme une pratique technique qui morcelle le corps.

Elle peut ainsi restaurer des pratiques sensorielles oubliées du monde carcéral : la perception du poids et de l'axe du corps, la sensation des appuis des pieds sur le sol. A la Maison d'arrêt des femmes de Fresnes, il est encore interdit d'être pieds nus, ou couchée au sol dans sa cellule ! Des exercices simples prennent ici une réelle dimension existentielle. Ainsi des massages, ou de l'expérience d'appréhension de l'espace les yeux bandés.

Touchant aussi à l'acceptation de baisser sa garde et de se laisser désarmer dans ce contexte hostile, cet exercice ne peut être proposé que si l'atelier est réellement perçu par les détenus comme un lieu à part, un lieu de non-violence et de confiance mutuelle.

La pratique de la danse contemporaine peut donc représenter une atteinte symbolique à l'ordre, une forme de subversion physiologique de la danse par rapport à la contention des corps en prison.

Une danse de la peau et du contact

La peau peut aussi être envisagée comme surface d'auto-inscription. Ce phénomène est très important en prison, puisque traditionnellement, les tatouages étaient une marque du passage en milieu carcéral.

Dessins sur la peau, ou peinture à l'argile, constituent des moyens de retrouver un contact doux par un détour anodin. Ils sont aussi prétextes à mettre en mouvement, puisque l'objectif peut être de faire danser le dessin ou la marque... Cette mise à distance est parfois utile avec certains détenus pour qui la mise en mouvement est difficile, ou taboue.

Automassages, initiation à la danse-contact, les entrées en matière peuvent être multiples pour engager un travail sur la peau. Souvent, il est utile de prendre des détours pour parvenir à des contacts doux : portés acrobatiques, contacts vigoureux à l'image des contacts rugbyistiques

Aborder le toucher et la danse-contact constitue une des dimensions les plus subversives de la pratique de la danse en prison parce qu'elle concerne le franchissement de l'interdit du toucher. Cet interdit est quasi-total en milieu carcéral (entre détenus, avec personnel pénitentiaire, et surtout au parloir).

Comme l'explique longuement le psychanalyste Didier Anzieu dans *Le Moi-Peau*, l'interdit du toucher en tant qu'acte de violence physique ou de violence sexuelle prépare ou précède l'interdit prohibant inceste et parricide. Cet interdit porte donc sur les pulsions agressives et sur les pulsions sexuelles, in fine sur l'interdit du meurtre et du viol.

Même si l'ensemble de la population carcérale n'est pas concerné par la transgression de ces deux interdits du meurtre et du viol, la sollicitation du toucher prend ici un autre enjeu. La danse et surtout la danse contact entre dans l'univers carcéral en effraction. Contrairement à l'exigence de la détention, les pulsions sont donc stimulées, mais pour transcender la matière pulsionnelle, pour l'utiliser dans le but de faire autre chose : Passer donc de la transgression à la subversion. La subversion implique une construction éthique, contrairement à la transgression, elle est symbolisation et non passage à l'acte.

La danse permet justement ce franchissement de l'interdit. C'est sans doute là où résident les enjeux les plus fondamentaux. C'est là aussi où la pratique de la danse est sur un fil. Où tout peut basculer.

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Notes

- ¹ William Labov, *Le parler ordinaire – La langue des ghettos noirs des Etats-Unis*, Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1978.
- ² Nous utilisons l'expression de la corporéité telle qu'elle a été définie par Michel Bernard.

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**Gene Kelly and *Invitation to the Dance*:
Past and Present: Reconsideration**

Ray Miller

Introduction

If you are from the United States, the Gene Kelly you might immediately recognize is this one. (Run the clip from the opening scene of *On the Town* when the three sailors, played by Gene Kelly, Frank Sinatra and Jules Munshin) are on shore leave and are making their way dancing and singing to many of the easily recognizable tourist attractions of New York City.)

If you are from Paris, the Gene Kelly that you may more easily recognize might be this one. (Run the clip from *An American in Paris* in which Kelly performs in the Montmartre of Toulouse-Lautrec with Can-Can dancers.)

Of course, the Gene Kelly that most people from anywhere in the world will recognize is this one. (Run part of the title dance from *Singing in the Rain*.)

Biography

Christened Eugene Curran Kelly on August 23, 1912, Gene Kelly was one of five siblings born to James and Harriet Kelly – a strong Irish Catholic family in the tradition of the political dynasty of the Kennedy's and the literary tradition American teacher-writer Frank McCourt and his brother, Malachy. They were tough, independent and did not suffer fools gladly. Each child was expected to find what they were good at and then be the best. Those values continued to inform not only Gene Kelly's personal ethic but his dance aesthetic as well.

His family placed a strong emphasis on education, Catholicism, athleticism and the performing arts. Gene would develop a life long appreciation for three of these four areas. (He became an agnostic while in college and remained so throughout his life).

He was attracted to dance at an early age and performed with his family and friends in local shows and vaudeville in and around the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area from the time he was enrolled in elementary school. From the beginning, he relished the competitiveness of tap dance and the comic theatricality of musical

comedy routines. He enjoyed vying for the audience's attention and approval and oftentimes used his athletic prowess to develop tricks and specialty routines to impress those audiences.

As with the rest of the country, 1929 was a demarcation line for the Kelly family. His father lost his job selling records to coal mining families and it nearly devastated him. Meanwhile, Gene enrolled in Penn State College. While studying economics, he continued to study dance from anyone he could, including black tap dancer Frank Harrington. He admired and tried to copy the precision steps of fellow black tap dancer Dancing Dotson and he mimicked the cocky self assured walk and strut of Mr. Broadway – George M. Cohan. He and his brother Fred continued to perform in vaudeville, film houses, nightclubs and revues. By 1931, he and his family opened their own dance studio. The school played to Kelly's passion for dance and his keen ability as a teacher, particularly of children. Between his business acumen and his mother's keen economic common sense, the popularity of the studio grew and became the primary means for the entire Kelly family to make a living throughout the Depression.

While Kelly may very well have been content with owning his own studio and teaching, performing and choreographing in Pittsburgh and the surrounding area, it was clear to his family, particularly his mother Harriet, and his close friends, that he needed to step out of the comfort zone of this medium sized city and try his hand at "the big time."

At age 26, older than most chorus boys at that time, Kelly stepped on a bus for New York City in August of 1938 to see what he could do. Before the end of the month, he was performing in a Robert Alton choreographed show written by Cole Porter entitled *Leave it to Me*. In quick succession, there were a number of shows, Broadway and otherwise, that he performed in and/or choreographed. There were two projects, however that would not only propel him to Hollywood and the movies but they would also

define the persona that would follow him for the remainder of his career.

The first was his role as Harry the Hoofer in William Saroyan's play, *The Time of Your Life*. "Set in a San Francisco water-front saloon, and peopled by a ragbag collection of sailors, cops, bums, prostitutes, drunks and young men in love,"¹ this play was described by theatre critic Louis Kronenberger as "a chant of love for the sacred and the rejected."² The play itself appealed to Kelly's political leaning; that is that of a life long liberal democrat who identified more with the working class than the upper class; and, from the point of view of an actor-dancer, this was a role in which he could choreograph his own dance and movement to conform to the needs of the character. As he was to later note: "I realized ... that there was no character – whether a sailor or truck driver or gangster – that couldn't be interpreted through dancing, if one found the correct choreographic language."³

The second show, of course, that was to have a life long impact on Kelly's career was Rodgers and Hart musical, *Pal Joey*, in 1940. It was directed by the legendary George Abbott and choreographed by Kelly's mentor and friend, Robert Alton. In the chorus was a 16 year old boy from South Carolina who would later become a collaborator and co-director with Kelly on some of his major films – Stanley Donen.

This was a ground breaking musical. Based on the short stories of John O'Hara and set in Chicago, it tells the story of a low life night club entertainer, played by Kelly, who – like a child of two years old – wants what he wants when he wants it – whether that is money, a nightclub, celebrity status, or, of course, women, lots of women. In the end, he loses his material dreams and the women in his life and he is left bereft and lonely. The tone of the story is cynical and bleak. This certainly was not typical of musicals of the time. Consequently, it enjoyed only a modest success by comparison to its contemporary musicals on the Broadway stage.

What it did for Kelly, however, was that it brought him to the attention of Hollywood as well as the New York theatre world. He was viewed as a rising star not only as a dancer but as a dancer who could act. As a consequence of

coming late to this level of late to this level of professionalism, it could be argued that *Pal Joey* and *The Time of Your Life* permitted him to use dance as a way in which to develop character in plays that – from his point of view – had substance and a quality of writing that a grown man dancing could be attracted to. He was very aware that his audience might perceive a man dancing as effeminate and childish. He conscientiously worked to develop a persona that would counter that image.

Years later, when Stanley Donen was interviewed regarding this part of Gene Kelly's life, he made the observation that Kelly "had cockiness, a confidence in himself, and a ruthlessness in the way he went about things that ... was astonishing. I also found him cold, egotistical and very rough. And, of course, wildly talented."⁴ And then he concluded with the now well known quote that Kelly "was the only song and dance man to come out of that period who had balls."⁵ Astaire had class; Kelly had something else.

Broadway to Hollywood

Two years later, Kelly played opposite Judy Garland in the movie musical, *For Me and My Gal*. Within a short period of time, his star was rising as the rival song and dance man to Fred Astaire. What the later was to the 1930s musical, Kelly would become with the 1940s and early 1950s musical. His performance in 1945 with Frank Sinatra in *Anchors Aweigh* earned him a Best Actor Oscar nomination. While Kelly performed and choreographed in many musicals and film dramas, it was the triumph of the three musicals that we saw clips from at the beginning of this presentation *On the Town* in 1949, *An American in Paris* in 1951 and *Singing in the Rain* in 1952. that established him as the preeminent movie song and dance man of his time. Within a brief four year period of time, Kelly and his collaborators were able to revolutionize how dance was used and viewed in the Hollywood musical.

Like his predecessor, Fred Astaire, he was meticulous about choreographic and performance detail. Shooting a particular segment of a dance 30 or 40 times to "get it right" was not unusual. But, in addition, Kelly was engaged in the writing of the script – even

when he wasn't invited to do so. It was important to him that the dialogue, the lyric and the movement all be justified according to an overall concept and that it progress seamlessly from one scene to the next. No Busby Berkeley jarring transitions for him. And, of course, he wanted to learn everything he could about directing the camera and about cinematography. He was keenly aware that he was creating dance on film not dance as performance being filmed. He wanted to learn what the capabilities of this medium could be and then apply that to dance. The result, of course, was a body of work that continues to not only entertain but mesmerize audiences sixty years after the fact.

Invitation to the Dance

As early as 1949 with the success of *On the Town*, Kelly was trying to generate the backing to do an all dance film. There was little response from movie producers until after his follow-up successes with *An American in Paris* and *Singing in the Rain*. Even then, producer Arthur Freed reluctantly agreed to support Kelly's effort in what would become *Invitation to the Dance*. It was very clear from the beginning that this was Gene Kelly's project. "...Gene is not simply a persuasive man-he's a slugging persuader. There's very little velvet glove when he sets his sights on something, and so *Invitation to the Dance* came to be."⁶ It was Gene who conceived the project from beginning to end including commissioning the music, seeking and casting the project and directing, choreographing and performing in the movie.

Originally conceived to be a film of four interrelated stories told through dance, it eventually was condensed to three stories. As it was originally conceived, Kelly was to serve the project as its director-choreographer-dramaturg with a minimum appearance as a performer. The producers made it clear, however, that they would not back the show without him making a more substantial stage appearance in the movie. This insistence to overburden Kelly with performing on top of conceiving and directing the production may have been one of the main reasons why Kelly was unable to fully realize on the screen what he had for so long imagined the full possibility could be for dance on film.

Clearly, *Invitation to the Dance* was the culmination of Kelly's interests in dance on film and career aspirations up to that point. Kelly had always been a proselytizer for dance. Kelly saw this particular project as being an opportunity to bring together some of the best talent from the concert and popular dance stage into one film. He wanted to employ the best in scenographic artists as well as in cinematography. He wanted to explore the full potential for dance on camera technique. While his previous movie musicals might be described as popular art with fine art aspirations; this was an opportunity to make dance as fine art accessible to a wider audience. At the time, the film was viewed by many as a commercial flop and, in many ways, artistically pretentious. Let's take a closer look.⁷

The film is divided into three sections. The first take us back to Kelly's lifelong interest and respect for the figure of the clown. It might be viewed as Kelly paying homage to his theatrical roots in the clown-mime-dance tradition of the *commedia dell'arte* and Pierrot.

The first of these three dance stories is simply called, "Circus." With music by Jacques Ibert, conducted by John Hollingsworth and played by The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, this section included the following cast and performers:

Cast

The Lover: Igor Youskevitch

The Loved: Claire Sombert

The Clown: Gene Kelly

The *Commedia dell'arte* Clowns

Opening Shot: On a poster there are images of the clown, the woman and the high wire acrobat with the words *teatro* (theatre), *circo* (circus), *commedia* (comedy), *danza* (dance) and *acrobatismo* (acrobatics)

Villagers are reading the poster while others are milling around waiting for the *commedia dell'arte* players to begin. The scenography of the buildings and the costumes for the villagers reminds are reminiscent of a cross between William Hogarth and Brueghel. There is a market scene with buying and selling.

Out from behind a soft blue curtain comes the barker, who rings a giant bell four times and

strikes his staff to the stage floor three times. The curtain opens.

Gene in a clown/pierrot costume is discovered sitting in a stage of melancholy. The audience laughs. He has on a Pierrot white flowing top and pants with white ballet slippers and a black skull cap. His face is painted in the traditional white mime face.

The two lovers enter. She wears a ballet like outfit with pink feathers to accent the costume and her headpiece. She wears a full blue laughing comic mask. She is accompanied by her lover- suitor dressed in earth tones of brown with a mask with a long, pointed nose and playing a lute. They exit.

A scene is enacted in which Pierrot portrays a Walter Mitty scenario in which he beats up his rival for the girl's affection. The lovers re-enter. Pierrot crosses to stage right. The male lover serenades the object of his affection. Pierrot leave stage only to return with a long white cone like hat, a black Zorro-like mask, red carnations and a lute. While he serenades her, the high wire man, unmask the clown by removing his Zorro mask and hat and takes his lute. Everyone laughs, including the female lover. The lovers exit.

Pierrot sits, take out a paper heart and tears it in half. He resumes his opening pose. Legs crossed (like Rodin's *The Thinker*), hunched over, dejected. Curtain. During the curtain call, it becomes clear that the clown has real feelings for the woman.

It is show time and therefore there is no time for melancholy. The dressed in a Picasso like costume and performs an athletic dance with a company of other clown figures whose costume suggest a more modest version of Cirque du Soliel. The dance combines simple elements of children's dance, acrobatics and soft shoe. It is a demonstration of sorts of how dance might evolve from simply pedestrian-like movements. The dance evolves into a production number based on more complex orchestral sounds. Sometimes, they mime playing instruments, sometimes they dance out the sound of those instruments. Eventually, it becomes a kind of male version of the Rockettes.

Scene three is the dance of the high wire man suspended over the heads of the villagers. All are impressed with his skill and daring,

including the female ingénue. The lighting for this scene suggests the dramatic lighting in the paintings of Velazquez or Goya. Fade on the sad clown as the villagers applaud and the lovers are reunited.

It is night. Pierrot is found lying on a ladder that is placed diagonally. Out of the womb like cocoon of her trailer comes the female lover wrapped in a red cloak. She is greeted by her lover. She drops the cloak to reveal her white leotards and tights and he is still dressed black leotards and tights. They are separated by a rope curtain that looks like a soft pliable version of the fence in *West Side Story*. The do a pas de deux engaging the rope sculpture. Pierrot looks on devastated. At the end of the dance, the lovers embrace and walk off.

Pierrot picks up her red cloak and expressing in slow lyric movement his pained longing for her. She enters. She observes him. She tries to leave. He is frightfully embarrassed. He cries. She comes to him to comfort him. The highwire man enters. He is jealous. The lover rejects the loved. Pierrot tries to explain and the High wire man pushes him into the rope sculpture and walks out. The woman cries. Pierrot tries to comfort her and decides to show her that he is as much of a man as her Lover and climbs the high wire pole. Villagers and the Highwire Man enter to watch him up on the hire wire.

He slips and falls onto her red cloak. Pierrot takes High wire man's hand and puts it into that of the girl. . He dies as the camera pans away. The End.

In this sequence, we observe several aspects of Kelly's approach to dance on film. Kelly natural optimism lends itself to the figure of the clown and the clown's relationship to humor, pathos and dance. This is a theme that one finds in most of Kelly's musical films. Second, the choreography for each section is developed out of simply gesture and movement. He uses pantomime as the basis and then extends and develops his choreographic vocabulary. Finally, Kelly weds character type with movement style. From the very beginning of his career, Kelly conscientiously stove to develop a movement vocabulary that would come out of the life of the character he would be playing. Though the pacing on for this section of the dance is slow

for a contemporary audience, it is also a way in which to observe how character movement can evolve into a choreographic structure.

The second dance piece is set in 1950s fast paced American city life. If “Circus” reflected how Kelly saw his childlike beginnings in dance, this would be Kelly as he saw himself and the world that many of his contemporaries experienced. Based on the well known Arthur Schnitzler’s story, *La Ronde*, “in which a theme forms a link between a chain of lovers.”⁸ In the original story, it was syphilis; in the Kelly film, it is a bracelet originally given by a husband to his wife that eventually makes its round through a series of romantic and erotic encounters between various characters before returning at the end on his wife’s wrist.

This second dance is entitled, *Ring Around the Rosie*. The music was composed and conducted by Andre Previn⁹

Cast

The Husband: David Paltenghi
 The Wife: Daphne Dale
 The Artist: Igor Youskevitch
 The Model: Claude Bessy
 The Sharpie (Flashy Boyfriend): Tommy Rall
 The Femme Fatale (Debutante): Belita
 The Crooner: Irving Davies
 The Hat Check Girl: Diane Adams
 The Marine: Gene Kelly
 The Girl on the Stairs (The Street Walker): Tamara Toumanova

After the initial credits, each character enters to stand on a circle. Their facial image is projected on to the center of the circle and their character name is placed at the bottom the screen. Once they are all in place, they step forward, take hands, and walk in a circle to the ring around the rosy theme and the image of the bracelet comes up. Each dance in this sequence introduces new characters and has a short amount of screen time. This device would have helped the audience to keep the story line clear as they watched the dance unfold.

Fade to Blue Curtain, which comes up to reveal people at a high society party. The scene is shot in short sequences – small vignettes of what one might observe at such a party in the

1950s with people taking drinks, gossiping, eating, telling stories, and social dancing. The speed of each sequence shot faster than normal. The slower rhythm of the commedia dell arte scene is in sharp contrast with this one. While the idea of telling a story in simple repetitive gestures in short narrative scenes resembles that of its ancestor, the commedia, the emphasis now is on stereotypical actions of the characters rather than their engagement with each other or a developing story line.

In the first scene, the wife received a bracelet from her husband, dressed in a simple business suit. She, however, is clearly attracted to one of the other guests – an artist. After her husband leaves, he artist eyes the bracelet and he asks her to dance. While the other dancers dance up-tempo, they dance a bit slower. The husband calls for his hat and leaves. Fade to a portrait of the wife.

There is a cross fade to the portrait of the model being painted as a ballerina by the artist in his studio. She is wearing a white leotard, tutu and ballet point shoes. He is dressed in white dress shirt and dark slacks. He declares his love for the model and puts the bracelet on her wrist. There is a knock at the door. In comes a hand with a sandwich, pickle and bottle of milk. She is just as attracted to the food as the bracelet. She eats, drinks and kisses her lover as they execute a pas de deux. When there is no more food, she spins into a fall and an embraces the painter.

There is a cross fade to a Back Stage Door Scene that suggests *Guys and Dolls*. There are eight Back Stage Johnnies dressed in dark suits and hats waiting for the chorus girls. In comes the Sharpie dressed in grey hat, checkered black and white jacket and dark pants. To indicate the quickness of time passing as the men await the arrival of the girls, he does a quick tap dance with the other men take various poses. Eventually, the girls come out and leave with each man on their arms. The last is the model from the previous scene. The Sharpie notices the bracelet and offers her a Hot Dog. The camera comes in on the bracelet and there is a cross fade to the bracelet now on the arm of the Femme Fatale at a night club with Sharpie.

The music goes from a Broadway sound to a sultry jazz. She is dressed in a tight leopard skin

dress with blond hair that covers half of her face. On stage, in a down pool stands the Crooner. The camera zooms in on a close-up and this section becomes a dance for a mouth and a microphone. His mouth is choreographed to the sound of a searing jazz horn. Girls swoon. Kelly shoots this scene with sharp diagonal camera angles. The Crooner meets his match with the Femme Fatale slinking up to him over the “dead bodies” of the girls through a smoky atmosphere. She beckons. He slinks off the stage. And, they stride past the Hat Check Girl.

There is a cross fade to the Crooner’s arms and the bracelet while he is playing a piano. He is back at the nightclub. It is closing down. Enter the Hatcheck Girl. He percussively throws his wrist with the bracelet in her face. She responds and they do a jazz pas de deux to piano music typical of the period. Jazz and ballet vocabulary mix with percussion and quick changes of direction. As the dance ends, he takes the bracelet off and gives it to her.

The next scene takes place in a small apartment with a single bed and dresser with vanity mirror. It is drawn with several bold lines and shaded in various shades of dirty yellow. The set is structured like a triangle. It is reminiscent of Jo Mielzner’s set for the 1949 production of *Death of Salesman*. A Marine (Gene Kelly) is pacing in a circle. The Hatcheck Girl enters. The Marine embraces her – happy to be reunited. She – not so much. She touches her stomach – maybe indicating that she is pregnant by another man. The Marine discovers the bracelet on her arm. They argue. He rips it from her. She strikes him. He pushes her to the bed. He walks out.

It is late. The Marine exits a bar. He is drunk. Before he can light up a cigarette, The Girl on the Stairs struts down to the sidewalk and they execute an elaborate lighting of their cigarettes sequence. She wears the obligatory slit red skirt and high heels. They perform a lyric and sensual jazz pas de deux on the stairs and the banisters of an outside apartment. Before they can kiss, he pulls out the bracelet and puts it on her wrist. He walks away – down the empty city street.

The husband exits a high class hotel and sees the bracelet on the streetwalker’s wrist. He offers her money for the bracelet and returns

home to his wife. The frantic partying is still going on. She is contrite as she accepts the bracelet. She and her Husband exit up the spiraling staircase as the party continues in a ring around the rosy circle. Suddenly the partygoers fall in slow motion as the set falls apart.

Ring Around the Rosy is an homage to the influence of jazz on contemporary American. There is a world weary cynicism reflected in the story and the various dances. The center can not hold and Kelly reflects that in the various solos, duets and group segments of the dance.

The final dance-drama may be viewed as Kelly’s looking into the future possibilities for dance on film by exploring what he had originally started doing in *Anchors Aweigh* with cartoon animation and the danced cartoon figure. This section of the film took the longest to shoot and to develop. Involving the talents of well known animation artists like Fred Quimby, William Hanna and Joe Barbera, it involved over a quarter of a million sketches with over 57,000 frames of film that were used “to synchronize the cartoon characters with the live actors.”¹⁰ This dance sequence allowed Kelly the freedom to explore dance and animation possibilities in a world of fantasy that was only limited by the imagination of the artists involved. If *Ring Around the Rosy* revealed a cynical Kelly who could look the realities of contemporary life squarely in the face, *Sinbad the Sailor* reaffirmed his belief in maintaining and fostering a child like faith in the possibilities for an unlimited future. This tension between a gritty acceptance of the harsh realities of daily life and the openness to an imaginative possibility to alter that reality framed much of Kelly personal and professional life.

Entitled *Sinbad the Sailor*, this section was choreographed to the music of Rimsky-Korsakov with the following cast.

Scheherazade: Carol Haney
The Genie: David Kasday
Sinbad: Gene Kelly

In the Prologue, Carol Haney (Scheherazade) sits and pantomimes telling stories from a book. She picks up a Genie Bottle

and we are transported to a Middle Eastern bazaar in which the Sailor (Kelly) proceeds to walk/dance through the bazaar. He purchases a book, vase, umbrella, shoes, basket, rug, and other objects. He retreats to a side street inspect his purchases. After rubbing a magic lamp, a Genie Boy appears. They bond by performing a soft shoe and she shows the sailor how to enter a magic book

Within this fantastic cartoon world, they meet a dancing Cobra, two large mustached guards of the Sultan and Scheherazade herself. With each character, Kelly choreographs soft shoe, tap, ballet and musical comedy routines. The interplay between the cartoon characters and the “real life” character of the sailor permits Kelly and his collaborators to explore various ways in which to manipulate these characters and their shapes as a part of his choreographic conception. As individual sections, there was a great deal of originality in conception and cleverness in execution.

A part of the reason why this worked in *Anchors Aweigh* is because it was one dance within the context of the film. In *Invitation to the Dance*, it comprised nearly one third of the film and Kelly and his collaborators were not able to sustain a momentum for the merging of this technology with the choreography. In addition, it was the last section of the movie. What may have been an excellent idea fell flat upon execution.

For Kelly, *Invitation to the Dance* was to have been his apogee. His passion for dance, and film, along with his experience, should have provided him with the ingredients to make this project a success. There were, however, factors beyond his control. The producers were lukewarm in their support. The movie musical had reached its zenith and was about to begin its spiral into the nostalgia bins. The euphoria of America’s success in World War II was giving way to a growing critique of her materialistic wealth and her emphasis on the “organization man” over that of the individual. Conformity of all kinds was being challenged by America’s artists, intellectuals and young people in the form of beat poetry and rock music. To America’s young, the movie musical was beginning to look more naïve than optimistic.

His attempt to blend popular tastes with artistic aspiration characterized much of his previous work. He had every reason to believe he could eliminate song and dialogue and search for a purer combination of dance, movement, narration and music in this project. What he left undone continues to be a source of inspiration for dance artists working in film today. Not a bad legacy to leave.

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Notes

- ¹ Clive Hirshhorn, *Gene Kelly: A Biography*, 67.
- ² Ibid., 67.
- ³ Ibid., 67.
- ⁴ Steven Cohan, *Incongruous Entertainment: Camp, Cultural Value and the MGM Musical*, 150.
- ⁵ Ibid., 158.
- ⁶ Tony Thomas, *The Films of Gene Kelly: Song and Dance Man*, 165.
- ⁷ Throughout the presentation of this paper at the conference, the author would show brief film clips of sections of this film so that the audience could see what was being referred to in the presentation.
- ⁸ Ibid., 168.
- ⁹ What is technically interesting to note here is that the dance was choreographed and filmed to the music of British composer Malcolm Arnold. The executives at MGM did not like the music. Kelly then sought out Andre Previn, who composed an original composition to the already shot dance drama.
- ⁹ Ibid., 168.

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Revealing the Wizard of Oz: Interrelationships between performer-dancer, performer-operator and digital sprite

Sita Popat & Scott Palmer

Introduction

This paper presents the research methodology employed in *Projecting Performance*, a research project at the University of Leeds, UK, investigating interrelationships between performance and technology, dancer and operator. Dance and scenography academics are collaborating with digital technologists KMA Ltd (York, UK) to develop new approaches to the role of the technical operator in performance. The project focuses on the choreographic and scenographic relationships between performer-dancer, projected digital non-humanoid 'sprite', and what we have defined as the 'performer-operator'. It questions the traditionally separated roles of performer and technologist, as the operator takes on an embodied role in performance.

We take issue with the requirement for the dancer to act simultaneously as operator in interactive stage environments, as we see fundamental tensions between embodied performance and technical operation by spatial or physical triggers. Robert Wechsler of Palindrome Dance Company argues that digital interactivity is often characterised by 'automation, not interaction'. He explains that:

Interaction implies a back-and-forth of energy and impulse between artists or between artist, artwork and audience – not simply one isolated action triggering another.¹

Susan Kozel (2005, p.40) calls for 'responsive' technologies that are 'designed to generate meaningful responses'. Interactive stage environments where the performer triggers the scenographic elements are for the most part reactive, rather than truly inter-active or responsive. Yet where the role of the operator is separate from that of the dancer, engagement with the performance is usually of the 'button-pushing' variety; disembodied from the kinaesthetic experience of dancing in a Cartesian manner akin

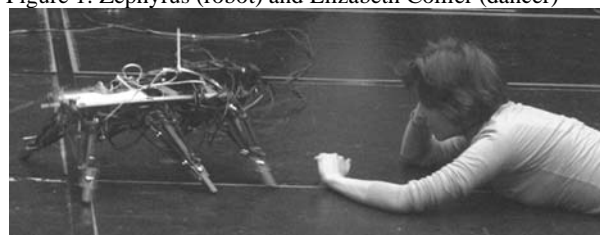
to the little man behind the magical façade of the Wizard of Oz. In our research, we choose to acknowledge the role of the operator as performer and to explore potentials for that individual's phenomenological and, critically, embodied engagement in the performance. How, then, can we shift the experience of the operator into this frame? How can we reveal the Wizard without losing the magic?

Performance Laboratory Methodology

This project uses the 'performance laboratory' methodology established at the University of Leeds for collaborative practice-based research in performance (Popat & Palmer, 2005). This methodology asks open-ended research questions within a playful environment that dissolves disciplinary boundaries and encourages 'off-the-wall' experimentation. In order to illustrate how this works, let us tell you the story of Liz and Zephyrus. Liz is a dancer and Zephyrus is a prototype robot built by Shadow Robot Company, London (see Figure 1). Liz encountered Zephyrus at a week-long workshop/laboratory held at the University of Leeds. The workshop participants were performance academics from dance, drama, puppetry and performance studies, engineers from Shadow Robot Company, two dance students and two performance design students. This was an open laboratory, with no specific aims other than trying to find a common language to communicate. The participants were seeking to explore the spaces that their collaboration opened up between performance and robotics, which was a vague and uncertain place to start. At the beginning of the week we felt worryingly unprepared because the brief was so open. However we also felt that this was an important aspect of the collaboration. We did not want to be tied by plans and expectations, but there was always the risk that nothing would be achieved because of this lack of focus, and so a wide range of materials was assembled to provide maximum flexibility. The Shadow Robot team brought three 'ready-made' robots and copious

amounts of equipment. They set up a temporary workroom in a Pilates studio, with two larger studios available for practical workshops. All workshop participants purposely tried to preserve open minds in order to see where our experiments would take us. Performers constructed bits of robots, and engineers took part in movement and drama workshops, in an effort to come to understand each other's disciplines and research imperatives.

Figure 1: Zephyrus (robot) and Elizabeth Collier (dancer)



On the first day of the laboratory, Liz engaged with Zephyrus via performance exercises. Zephyrus had a rectangular body and six legs, with limited movement at the 'hip' joints and no knee-joints. This meant that in order to gain any forward motion it had to move its legs repeatedly over short distances, giving all its movement an impression of great effort and struggle. It was powered by air-muscle technology with compressed air, so it made regular and insistent hissing noises and clicks. This gave it a strong 'character', leading to much anthropomorphism during the course of the week. An embodiment exercise was set up using techniques normally associated with mask work. Liz chose to embody Zephyrus. Embodiment is beyond the act of 'copying' the movement, and requires the performer to gain a feel for the essence of the entity that they are embodying so that they can come to 'experience' what it is to 'be' that entity. Liz watched Zephyrus closely, trying to gain a feel for it, and to translate that experience into her own body. She took on the movement qualities and restrictions of the robot and experimented with the extremely limited possibilities. Her emerging embodiment was a demanding and intrusive character, with much action for little forward motion. At that stage the performance researchers were more engaged in watching Liz's work than the engineers were, as the full import of her actions had yet to dawn upon us.

As the week continued, the embodiment exercise became just one of a number of interactions that Liz had with Zephyrus. She also acted with it on two occasions and improvised a danced duet with it on a third. Liz became more comfortable moving within the embodiment of the robot, and began to find new options through experimentation. Her movement became richer and more complex, but remained fairly closely within the robot's own constraints. Zephyrus itself was used in different workshop contexts, and in one of these it was discovered that the robot could balance on its back legs in a 'sitting' position and wave its 'arms', which then provided Liz with more alternatives for her movement vocabulary. Gradually it became apparent that her growing familiarity with the restrictions, but also with the possibilities, was leading her to develop movements that were currently beyond Zephyrus, but these movements could potentially become realised through changes in the robot's design. One of the engineers was astonished to recognise that Zephyrus might be made capable of jumping. The prospect had not occurred to him previously because there were no knee joints to bend. However Liz discovered that when she was standing on her hands and feet, although her limbs were straight, if she pulled them together sharply then she was able to make small jumping movements. The engineer began to recognise the new design potentials in what was happening, and he started watching Liz and Zephyrus closely and making notes on what Liz was doing and how that could relate to robotic design principles.

On the final day of the laboratory, the same engineer asked tentatively if Liz could find a way to embody Zephyrus standing up on its hind legs. He acknowledged that this was well beyond the design possibilities currently, but he wanted to see it anyway. Liz improvised for fifteen minutes, and she eventually used Zephyrus' insistent rhythmical sound to find a way to stand by working the rhythm through her hands and feet first on the floor and then up her body. The struggle that was evident in Zephyrus' movement at all times was particularly pronounced as she tried to achieve the task whilst staying within the movement parameters as far as possible. As she worked at this challenge, the engineers were sitting around the studio sketching and quietly discussing possibilities, looking at her movement from the

point of view of mechanical joints, air-muscles and programming. Then finally there was silence in the room as the suspense and concentration became palpable, until Liz finally managed to achieve a standing position. As she ended the improvisation there was a spontaneous round of applause from performers and engineers alike. This was an unplanned moment of performance, which had also generated pages of robotic design notes.

The Shadow Robot engineers explained that normally changes in a robot's design require the building of new robots, which takes time and focuses on the components. The process is product-orientated because the design exists only in theory and there is little opportunity to see what will actually happen until the product is built. 3D-modelling programmes now enable the designer to see the design on screen and make alterations to it comparatively quickly, but Liz provided more than an approximation of the movement. As a dancer, she also brought to it her understandings of movement and the complex human body, which opened up the field of experimentation considerably. The engineers described how watching Liz embodying Zephyrus enabled them to have an overview of the potential within the whole of the robot. It allowed them to see possibilities towards which they could then design.²

This illustration indicates the potential for the performance laboratory methodology to incubate and generate ideas and understandings in an interdisciplinary environment beyond the expectations of any of the individual disciplines. This is achieved through iterative cycles of knowledge exchange, where the disciplines begin to develop some porosity through the development of shared understandings. (Popat et al, 2004) This is difficult to achieve, and it requires considerable trust and investment from all parties, but it has been used in a range of projects within the University of Leeds to great effect. One of those projects is *Projecting Performance*.³

Projecting Performance

The seeds for *Projecting Performance* were sown when KMA Ltd approached the University of Leeds in 2004 for support in their company's research and development. They had been commissioned to work with Phoenix Dance Theatre (UK) on a new production called *Eng-er-*

land, but they had no experience of working with dance. They are a small digital arts company based in York, UK, and their primary employment up until that point had been in web design and creating projected backdrops for large-scale popular music events such as the UK Smash Hits Awards and singer Craig David's 2003 tour. We offered to spend two days in the theatre with KMA's director Kit Monkman and programmer Tom Wexler, exploring how the company's digital arts work could integrate with dance performance. Monkman and Wexler were originally interested in interactive stage environments, but we did not have the appropriate sensors available for our workshops. Consequently we decided to 'mock up' the situation by simulating an interactive environment through real-time operator control of the digital image projections. Images were front-projected onto a downstage gauze. The dancers worked upstage of the gauze, so that they could see the projections in front of them and thus interact with them. (See Fig. 2) The operators were sitting at a table facing the gauze and the dancers. (See Fig. 3)

Figure 2: Sprite and dancers (Keziah Mallard & Laura Blazy)



Figure 3: Performer-operators controlling sprites via graphics tablets. Operators: Tom Wexler and Lisette Wright.



The images or ‘sprites’ are abstract or semi-abstract shapes of varying colours and sizes. One point on the sprite is controlled by the computer cursor that the operator manipulates, so that the sprite can be moved around the screen. The precise parameters of each individual sprite can be modified in performance mode through keystrokes or more intuitively by using a midi interface, allowing elements such as delay times, rates, shape changes and subtle colour alterations, to be achieved with an instantaneous effect. Wexler has created the sprites through programming that is “rooted in the modeling (sic) of the physics of nature, using the mathematics of swarm behaviors (sic), springs and masses, cellular automata and chaos.”⁴ Ultimately these principles define the characteristics of each individual sprite, dictating how they are able to move and the extent to which they can be manipulated by the performer-operator. Many of the most engaging sprites appear to have an inherent natural fluidity that is easily understood and controlled by the performer-operator.

We initially controlled the cursor points on the sprites with a computer mouse, but we quickly moved on to a graphics tablet and pen. This provided freedom and flexibility to achieve a dynamic range of expressive movement input, enabling both fine control and broad gestures that could be translated directly into the motion of the sprite. The pen provided an intuitive input mechanism that functioned as an extension of the body along the lines of Heidegger’s hammer, where the engagement is haptic and becomes sub-conscious so that the operator thinks only of the results and not of the action. After a short while we removed the computer monitors and the operators worked looking directly at the stage space, where they could see the sprites and also the dancers. This directly immersed the operator’s

attention within the stage environment. At that point we discovered that the operators began to feel that they were performing with the dancers. Some reported that they felt as if they were actually dancing themselves. The kinaesthetic engagement through the sprite enabled them to feel as if they were partnering the dancers on stage. The stage performers also felt that they were dancing with the sprites, rather than simply having the sprites react to them. We were finding the responsiveness for which Susan Kozel was calling in the quotation in the introduction to this paper.

The qualities of the operator’s spontaneous movement are embedded in the digital sprite, concentrating those qualities through abstract forms. Operators often quickly develop a preference for a particular sprite, and with experience they will prefer particular settings of the sprite parameters (where available). They will usually begin to develop a movement vocabulary with that sprite including habits and personal quirks, much as a dancer develops a vocabulary that constitutes a personal movement style. Performer-dancers and performer-operators engaging in improvised movement together over a period of time will come to know each other’s movement vocabulary and be able to respond more easily to each other, just as dancers who improvise together regularly will ‘learn’ each other as dancing partners and be able to increase their sensitivity in responses over time. Despite the restrictions in the sprites’ programming that tend to push the operator towards particular types of movement, performer-dancers can consistently tell when the performer-operator changes, even if this is disguised from them by swapping operators secretly. They notice the changes in the sprite’s behavioural patterns, even if they are inexperienced dancers themselves. It is telling that the performer-dancers describe the sprite as “alive” and “intelligent”, seeming to indicate that they can sense the intention/attention of the operator in the sprite, yet they almost never report thinking of the sprite as being controlled by the operator. The dancing sprite exists between the sprite’s inherent programming and the performer-operator’s personal movement, mapping closely to the tripartite models offered by Castronova for digital game avatars (2003) and Zich for the “stage figure” (McAuley 2000, p.94).

Critical to this research is the flexible, tolerant software used to facilitate fast alterations to the parameters of the sprites in response to the developing choreographic and design concepts. Wexler is able to respond quickly (often in minutes) to the request for minor alterations to sprite parameters such as colour, line thickness, etc. This supports an improvised approach to the programming in line with that of the performance process, enabling the two to engage in iterative cycles of development. Some issues arise through the different understandings of aspects of the stage space. We asked Wexler to supply a variable that provided the illusion of gravity by allowing us to change how much the sprite's 'tail' end was attracted towards the bottom of the screen. He put the variable onto one of the vertical sliders on the midi-interface. On first use, the operator (a dancer by training) became confused because when she pulled the slider downwards, the sprite's tail was less attracted to the bottom of the screen (i.e. it seemed to have less gravity). When she pushed the slider upwards, the sprite's tail was more attracted to the bottom of the screen (i.e. it seemed to have more gravity). She described this as 'the wrong way round', as her embodied understanding of gravity prompted her to think that pulling the slider downwards would increase gravity and pushing it upwards would decrease gravity. On questioning Wexler, we discovered that he was thinking in terms of the programming rather than the visual illusion – pushing the slider up increased the numerical variable (which caused the sprite to be more attracted towards the bottom of the screen) and pulling it down decreased the numerical value (with the opposite effect). Acknowledgement of the different ways in which we understood the sprite's movement enabled us to explore further ways of thinking about the moving image. Similarly we discovered that operators who have previously trained as dancers understand space in different ways from those who have previously trained as scenographers. When operating for the first time, dancers often initially keep the sprite in the lower regions of the projection screen. They seem to be subconsciously bound by a physical gravity that does not actually exist for their projected sprites. When this self-imposed limitation is pointed out to them, they are usually surprised at their own intuitive actions. Scenographers, by contrast, will tend to use the

whole of the projection surface, soaring their sprites high above the heads of the stage-performers. They are accustomed to designing and visually engaging with the whole stage 'picture' from an external perspective.

We have invited participants from a broad range of disciplines to take the role of performer-operator in our research workshops. Afterwards, we ask them where they remember being located whilst they were operating. The vast majority report feeling that they were present on stage with(in) the sprite. Others reply that they are unsure of where they were located. Only one participant to date has responded that he was at the operating table. We are intrigued by the embodied experience that seems to be inherent in the role of performer-operator within our work, and we continue to explore the reasons for this through practice and theory. We are current developing a taxonomy of sprites with different qualities and parameters that will give us a flexible palette for performer-operators to find their own embodied performance potential.⁵ We are also experimenting with placing the performer-operator in different positions in relation to the stage space, the on-stage performer, and the audience. We do not think that revealing the flesh and technology of our Wizard of Oz is problematic, as the performer-operator is in a sense already revealed as an embodied presence through the sprite. Instead we seek to explore how we can design and use embodied interfaces in performance, and what that means for performance practice and the role of the operator.

Re-thinking (our) theory and practice

This paper is primarily about a methodology for practice-led research in performance. The knowledge that is developed through this research is being disseminated through the written/spoken word (journal papers, conference presentations) and through embodied practice (workshops, video documentation, performance). We have identified a range of applications for different aspects of the work in professional and academic fields. Our research into the embodied interface for the performer-operator is ongoing, and we are grateful to the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK) for their support and funding. Our findings have informed KMA's professional work on Phoenix Dance Theatre's *Eng-er-land* (2005), their interactive kinetic light installation *Dancing in the*

Streets (2005, York, UK and Rome, Italy), and their installation in Trafalgar Square, London, UK in 2007, titled *Flock*. In 2006, Lloyd Newson, Director of the UK-based DV8 Physical Theatre Company, approached us about our research. Newson and his dancers have been workshoping ideas for his new production with KMA and us at the University of Leeds. We are currently exploring the potential of the role of performer-operator for people with physical disabilities.

We propose that one of the reasons why our research is so broadly applicable is because it is based in an embedded relationship between theory and practice, coupled with long-term collaboration between academic and commercial partners. These inherent pairings require iterative cycles of interrogation and development that constantly challenge and enthuse us as researchers.

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Endnotes

- ¹ See Palindrome web site at <http://www.palindrome.de>
- ² The story of Liz and Zephyrus is adapted from a section of Popat & Palmer (2005).
- ³ Other applications of the performance laboratory methodology include Emergent Objects, a research project jointly funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, UK. For more information, see <http://www.emergentobjects.co.uk>
- ⁴ Quotation from KMA's web site <http://www.kma.co.uk>
- ⁵ Movies of some of our current experiments are available on our web site at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/paci/projectingperformance/home.html>

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Accented Body and Beyond: a Model for Practice-Led Research with Multiple Theory/Practice Outcomes

Cheryl Stock

Dance has always been a collaborative or interdisciplinary practice normally associated with music or sound and visual arts/design. Recent developments with technology have introduced additional layers of interdisciplinary work to include live and virtual forms in the expansion of what Fraleigh (1999:11) terms 'the dancer oriented in time/space, somatically alive to the experience of moving'. This already multi-sensory experience and knowledge of the dancer is now layered with other kinds of space/time and kinetic awarenesses, both present and distant, through telematic presence, generative systems and/or sensors. In this world of altered perceptions and ways of being, the field of dance research is further opened up to alternative processes of inquiry, both theoretically and in practice, and importantly in the spaces between the two.

Practice-led or performative research

The theory/practice nexus in dance in simplistic terms might once have been thought of as those who investigate intellectually in order to write/talk about, and those who investigate experientially to create/perform. Whilst slippage has always occurred between these two domains, there was a certain mutual distrust that those who tried to bridge both activities were not well-versed in either. The last two decades have seen increasing numbers of artists enter the research arena to investigate their practice within an academic framework in a form of research variously named 'practice-led', 'practice-based', 'practice as' or more recently 'performative' research.¹ These artist/researchers play dual roles reflecting on, contextualising and theorising their own practice whilst drawing on dance and cultural studies and a range of methodologies to inform their practice. Conversely, academics whose practice may have taken place only within a university context are being encouraged to form collaborative relationships with external partners.

The rise of creative practice-led research has opened up potential for collaborative models of bringing together the domains of professional practice and academic research in dance to work towards mutually beneficial outcomes. The success of this is contingent on acceptance by academe that embodied practice engenders ways of knowing, and therefore is a knowledge claim in its own right with a rigorous epistemology, methods and evaluation processes.² To further add to the complexity is the recent prominence of dance and technology exploring virtual presence and interactive modes of performance.

PARIP (Practice as Research in Performance) is a platform which has led discussions from the University of Bristol around 'facilitating performance practice within broadly academic contexts' (Piccini, 2002:1). One of the principal dilemmas of performance in research contexts is the issue of 'liveness' and the ephemerality of the art object, which is an event 'that takes place in a temporal and often spatial relationship with an audience.' (Piccini, 2002: 13). This remains problematic for research where the public outcome is expected to survive in a tangible and durable form. This paper will provide a case study which suggests a model of performance 'preservation' that has parallels with Rye's (2003) multi-camera and multi screen interactive digital documentation, thereby expanding the potential for practice to maximise its research outcomes. In viewing digital documentation of what was originally live (apart from a memory of the experiential knowledge gained at the time of the performance³), we must rely on what amounts to a translation of the performance or 'research product'. The necessity of digital translation does not or should not obliterate the live nor replace it, but captures the event in a way that transforms it from three-dimensional reality to predominantly two-dimensional virtual representation. Thus live performance must produce an additional artefact in order to enter the research domain in terms of

its ability to be archived. This has opened up ongoing debates as to what should accompany a dance work to ensure academic legitimacy. Most often this is in the form of an exegesis in practice-led research, normally a text accompanying the performance or art object.⁴

These discourses have begun a process of legitimising what Haseman, using the term 'performative' research, claims 'will become recognised and valued as one of the three research paradigms' (2006:8). Haseman posits new strategies and methods are being invented 'to probe the phenomena of practice' (2006: 7), moving away from qualitative designs and adaptation of existing approaches to those in which the symbolic forms of the practice represent knowledge claims (2006:4-9).⁵ Whilst practice-led or performative research is one way in which practice and therefore the artist's voice is privileged in research, the nexus with theory is never far away, either embedded in contextual analysis or interpretation of the practice, or emerging through conceptual ideas underpinning the work, and indeed embodied in the practice itself.

Artists as living data for academic researchers

However, not every artist wants to be, or can be, a practitioner/researcher. Currently, in the Australian context, there are at least three other ways in which theory and practice can mutually benefit one another in a synergistic interplay. The first is a traditional model in which academics propose an area of dance research via a question/problem through an (inter)national or internal competitive grant submission.⁶ If the project includes embodied inquiry through practice, professional artists can be employed as Research Associates or Assistants. Such research may require the artist to articulate their experiences in ways different from their self-reflection in a professional engagement, but not undertake an academic research role.⁷

The artist /researcher – moving between two worlds

Another model is that of the artist/researchers who juggle external (industry) and internal creative practice with university research imperatives. Such hybrid creatures are

increasingly challenging the traditional separation between artistic practice and academic research, moving fluidly between theoretical writings encompassing methodological, conceptual and pedagogical concerns, and immersive professional creative practice. These artist / researchers often come out of a practice-led research higher degree and have returned to practice with new tools and understandings which they continue to apply, within and outside academic settings, accommodating what Candlin (2000: 100) refers to as 'the practical elements of theoretical writing and the theoretical aspects of art practice'.

The creative process as a form of research

There is an argument to claim that all dance practice is research. Certainly any choreographer undergoes a creative process akin to the process of research in that both are pursuits involving experiment and exploration, which investigate concepts (experientially in dance practice) to advance understanding and knowledge. Both have practical, public outcomes and ideally produce new ways of thinking / viewing / experiencing things. Most contemporary choreographers outside the university sector would undertake background research (a form of data collection) into the content or concept of a new work, as well as immerse themselves in a principally studio-based embodied and experiential inquiry into the form. Professional artists increasingly ask for (and in some funding contracts are required to engage with) peer feedback to encourage reflection and refinement of their work. Arts funding bodies in Australia are also pro-actively encouraging creative development periods prior to a work becoming fully developed for production.⁸

This process has parallels with the cyclical reflection in action of Schon (1983) and the case study cycle of action research.⁹ Krauth (2002:5) argues that the exegesis in academic higher degrees constitutes a 'framing device' which positions itself between the work and the audience, 'creating a link between the creative work, its milieu of production, and the broader field into which it is projected.' He suggests that the 21st century industry context of media interviews, artist talks, workshops and group

meetings is ‘the exegetical process in action today’(2002: 4). Such comparisons further narrow the perceived gap between creative practice and its surrounding contextualisations outside the academy, and the ‘bona fide’ research structures within the academy.

At a time when multimodal methods and interdisciplinary approaches are prevalent in both theory and practice, is it possible to integrate the above models in an inter-related nexus of mutually beneficial outcomes? This model would leave room for participation by theorists within and outside the field of dance, accommodate the domain of pure practice by professional artists and incorporate researcher/practitioners at varying levels. The *Accented Body* project, outlined below, is posited as such a model.

***Accented Body* – concept and realisation**

Accented Body was a dance-led, large-scale interdisciplinary event which evolved over a two year period (July 2004 to July 2006). Featured in the 2006 Brisbane Festival, it culminated in a promenade performance event of interconnected installations across six predominantly outdoor interactive sites in Brisbane, with a distributed presence in Seoul and London. This project brought together professional independent artists, theatre and computer technicians, practice-led doctoral and masters students, university staff and students, academic researchers and artist/researchers in the areas of dance /movement, music, media and digital performance, lighting and interactive technology. Although not the primary motivation of the project, *Accented Body* has become an integrated theory/practice model for producing multiple research outcomes.

The overarching concept of the project was the body as site and in site, in parallel with notions of connectivity, which became the common multi-faceted agenda providing cohesion whilst allowing differentiated interpretations and creative explorations to flourish. As Susan Leigh Foster (2002: 203) points out, the body ‘constitutes both a subject area and a mode of inquiry that can connect distinct fields’ which can also allow the privileging of ‘an embodied sense of human agency’. This duality and agency was a principal

feature of *Accented Body* within the particular context of integrating creative and research outputs.

In addition to the central creative and research investigation embedded in the concept, *Accented Body* provided a community of practice to open up and share creative processes through peer feedback. The setting in which this occurred was the new Creative Industries Precinct which houses a Faculty of the same name at Queensland University of Technology, an enterprise centre, a theatre company, a black box theatre, a café, and a series of outdoor and indoor screens, all equipped with state of the art facilities. The project assembled cultural, university and community sectors to work together in a celebration of this precinct of buildings designed to encourage innovation and creativity. It provided an accessible arts experience for the local community as well as a setting for multiple research interests.¹⁰

The initial step was to invite thirty key artists from Australia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and the UK, who had highly developed creative practices in interdisciplinary, intercultural, interactive and/or site-specific work. Their brief was to provide a dynamic engagement, via the concept of body as/in site, with the architectural and landscaped environment of the Creative Industries Precinct and still under-construction Kelvin Grove Urban Village. A fluid process evolved in which collaborative teams of artists and technicians with diverse aesthetic sensibilities and cultural backgrounds, and with support from academic and cultural organisations from all countries, investigated the creative brief. Together and separately, remotely, and on site in Brisbane, the artists layered their responses to *Accented Body*. Connective threads – physical, virtual, cultural, geographical and spiritual – emerged, exposing both commonalities and differences.

Six distinct performance installations evolved, which nevertheless located connections within and across sites whilst at the same time maintaining the particular aesthetics and peculiarities of each work. Dancers, visuals and sound were linked by screen footage and overlapping live elements in the sites, through which the audience wandered, altering images and sounds by its presence.¹¹ An animated form

of urban public art, *Accented Body* comprised local performances, global reach, and distributed outcomes, with ninety seven personnel working in small collaborative teams to make up one large creative work.¹²

Student participation

Accented Body was an experiment in integrating university staff and students, professional artists with independent practices, individual and affiliated researchers and those who inhabited both worlds. The technical production team, led and mentored by professionals, comprised mostly undergraduate students working across teams. Undergraduate students from the Dance department worked with a professional choreographer as performers, or as guides, leading the audience from site to site. Designated computer support staff from the Creative Industries Faculty worked with both artists and the technical production staff to ensure that the interactivity and streaming functioned in a way conducive to the aesthetics and vision of the project.

Documentation and the research environment

A professional filmmaker, undertaking a Masters at QUT, made a documentary interviewing the principal personnel during the creative process. The documentation of the live event itself comprised four film crews of undergraduate students from the Film and Television Discipline of the Faculty, whilst the website was constructed and maintained by a web-developer who also taught in the Communication Design discipline. In terms of documentation of the event for post-performance research, the digital footage and the ongoing web presence have proved invaluable.¹³

The project encompassed four types of investigation: sociocultural, practice-led, technological and artistic/choreographic. An ethnographic study of *Accented Body* was led by an experienced researcher Barbara Adkins, investigating collaborative processes which emerged across all domains of practice and within the artistic, management and technical teams of *Accented Body*. The second research area was a formal practice-led study in which one of the site realisations, 'living lens', was the final examinable creative component of a Doctor

of Philosophy, 'exploring interdependencies between performing bodies, visual and sonic media in immersive installation'.¹⁴ The 'living lens' team included professional dancers and a Master of Fine Arts student, whilst another Master of Fine Arts student took on the role of rehearsal director for the 'prescient terrain' site team.

Accented Body was also a site of technological research. The 'living lens' team comprised three Japanese interactive sound and visual media experts undertaking their own research within the project. Dr. Junji Watanabe used 'living lens' as a test bed for his 'moving ultrasonic speaker system that transmits sonic effects as a sound beam, tracing the direction of a performer's movement through camera tracking'.¹⁵ In a less formalised research environment Logistics and Technical Coordinator Daniel Maddison developed with his colleagues a matrix system, dubbed the 'main frame', to integrate all the technical and interactive audiovisual requirements across all sites, including those overseas.

The fourth overlapping research area was of course that undertaken by the artists through their practice. Artist explorations covered conceptual, environmental, spiritual, technological, cultural and embodied (choreographic / performative) domains. The content of the myriad investigative concerns of individual artists and their teams is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that the discrete teams and their connection to the larger project allowed for idiosyncratic approaches and explorations which richly contributed to the overarching brief of the 'body as site and in site'. A community of practice emerged, not unlike the more traditional research collaborative teams of other disciplines, which opened up possibilities of new or altered directions of artistic inquiry. Avril Huddy, a performer/choreographer in the 'shadows' team commented on the extended development period.

This proved invaluable to both the collaborative process and the final product allowing us the physical time and space to expand initial concepts, edit, learn from each other, indulge in

creative discourse, explore as a group the individual areas of expertise and play and explore as individuals within a group.¹⁶

From a dance perspective, the ‘accented’ body was investigated through diverse fluid embodied iterations of cultural (Indian, Butoh and Chinese styles), spiritual (Malaysian trance dance) and genre specific (Western contemporary, postmodern, classical ballet) influences. Elise May, a performer across several sites, believes that ‘finding a new repertoire of stylistic influences through learning about butoh and other forms has added to my skills set as a performer by enriching my somatic range of expression’.¹⁷ In the body-centred exploration of all the site teams, we were, in the words of Foster (2002:205) privileging ‘a bodily writing’, with ‘a body that ‘initiates as well as responds’.

Overlaying existing and newly acquired bodily encodings were the altered choreographic and performance sensibilities of those working with interactive technologies and telematic presence.¹⁸ Directors of the ‘global drifts’ team Sarah Rubidge and Hellen Sky, who were responsible for the distributed presences across all sites including those in Seoul and London, refined their long term research interests of ‘integrated choreography’. This included developing a ‘more sophisticated understanding of and skills with programming in Isadora software, and an understanding of the skills required for global streaming and processing of live video imagery’, as well as devising and practicing ‘complex notions of choreography, and performer presence in physical and virtual environments, simultaneously regarding the aspects of image, sound, and movement generation’.¹⁹ These kinds of experiments contribute to the ongoing current research into what Naugle (2002: 57) suggests becomes ‘an iterative process between people and machines’ creating a ‘distributed choreography’ (2002: 60).

Convergences: hybrid collaborative methodology

The few examples above demonstrate the multi-faceted nature of creative and research concerns within the project, which similarly

encompass a range of methodologies that continue to provide a framework for ongoing investigations in professional and academic spheres. These methodologies correlate with the four areas of research concern. The sociocultural aspect employs ethnographic action research, whilst the artist/researcher embeds his/her work in flexible practice-led strategies outlined earlier. The technological areas tend towards iterative design approaches and multi-modal data acquisition; whilst the professional artists employ the creative processes most suited to their individual or group practices, which are predominantly practical and embodied and where concerns are emergent and in flux.²⁰

All the above methodological approaches focussed on embodied accents as the research catalyst, whether investigated literally and/or metaphorically. This encouraged a unifying hybrid collaborative methodology encompassing the above four approaches, which together sought to create the conditions for innovative breakthroughs through a democratic interplay. Birringer (2003/04:108) refers to such approaches as ‘co-authoring processes that are team-based and no longer hierarchical’. The culturally diverse backgrounds of the researchers and artists also provided a context informed by differentiated world views in terms of both content and processes.²¹

Such an overarching methodology allows for the mutual influencing of theory and practice through ongoing cycles of action, reflection and refinement / improvement, which have strong parallels in professional dance practice in both interpretive and creative spheres.²² In *Accented Body* these cycles had parallels in the technological arena which were integrated into the creative process cycles. The other significant commonality is the collaborative nature of the grouped methodologies. Equally important is the distributed and dispersed nature of that collaboration in accommodating artistic and research agendas across teams. All key participants of the project were embedded strongly within one collaborative team but formed part of other teams in various ways; as artists, technical personnel, designers, along with documenting and observing research personnel. This provided a rich tapestry of interlinking creative and research concerns

which could all be traced back to the two meta-narratives of the body as site and in site, and notions of connectivity. Whilst the relationship between the body and technology was one of the driving forces behind *Accented Body*, the interdisciplinary nature of the broader inquiries encouraged the emergence of the above diverse methodologies and processes via the practice-led research ethos of open inquiry.

Artistic outcomes

Encompassing both artistic and research outcomes was the public performance season – large-scale, high profile, complex, site-specific, interactive – an outdoor promenade event presented in the context of an international festival. Its impact can be measured by the amount of multi-sector funding and partners it attracted²³, the audience numbers (between 300 and 500 each night), media coverage, critical reviews and audience feedback.²⁴ Its location, described by Mary Ann Hunter (2006:10) as 'an international hub for practice-led new media arts research', was the backdrop for what she claims 'is local testament to the value of the big, global, and ambitious conversation that [*Accented Body*] has initiated'. Whilst this conversation continues, the durable outcome of the live event exists in its documentation and the future projects it spawns.

For the artists, the outcomes most valued beyond the final performances were professional development, networking internationally and future opportunities. Performer / choreographer Liz Lea cited 'nurturing new relationships and developing new art forms further by encouraging inter-site collaboration' as a valuable outcome.²⁵ The 'ether' team spoke of 'a unique conceptual approach to future projects',²⁶ through which evolving creative processes developed during the project would contribute to the ongoing development of the participating art forms. A significant outcome of *Accented Body* is how it acts as a conduit for other artistic events and concepts, which flow from the original event into new contexts and partnerships.²⁷

Expanding choreographic concepts

From a dance point of view, integration and juxtaposition of diverse movement styles and

approaches, and immersion in the technological environments expanded choreographic concepts. Working in outdoor sites necessitated alternative choreographic approaches to accommodate scale, interruption and spatial flexibility, transforming the way dance-makers look at perspective, intention, readability and working in a shared public performance arena. The most far-reaching of the choreographic outcomes emerged from the interaction between site-specificity and technological intervention in the sites. Although a detailed investigation is beyond the scope of this paper Rubidge and Sky of 'global drifts' summarise how this relationship

expanded notions of choreographic form through an integrated interconnectivity with digital interfaces and computational programs, such that the movement of the performers equally addressed the real time orchestration of image and sound generation, and simultaneously considered their distribution to both actual (built environment) and virtual projection screens and spatialised sound systems. This choreography also considered the way in which the generated dataflows from the movement were distributed via networking systems to remote responsive installations in two international sites.²⁸

Research outcomes

Research outcomes at the time of the project included the nesting of creative practice higher degree projects and candidates within a high profile industry context, and the validation of the artist / researcher working across university and industry sectors for the mutual benefit of both. This has had another important consequence of providing a model for funding partnerships in research which attracts external sources not normally available to the university sector.

Extensive digital and textual data of the creative project provides a rich resource for publications and digital re-versioning as research output. This data also comprises meeting notes, resource requirements, funding submissions and

acquittals, concept development journals and e-mails, streaming maps, architectural drawings, schedules, timelines and budgets; providing a repository for theorising the multidisciplinary strands of *Accented Body*. Analysis of this data also provides the material for further conceptual development through competitive university research grants. At the time of writing, 'global drifts' and 'ether' team directors together with the author are formulating a research project which continue Rubidge's and Sky's explorations of the technological extension of body to both virtual and physical architectures, that can 'connect sites globally via networking systems, and analogically, philosophically to concepts of 21st century bodies that are altered and extended via technology systemsas a total choreography.'²⁹

Towards a distributed integrated model for multiple artistic and research outcomes

Despite *Accented Body* being of its time and place, the model can be adapted to other contexts, places and practices. Central to the model is a willingness for cultural, university and community sectors to work together towards an overarching concept but with agreed differentiated outcomes in each sector. Commitment from the host institution is crucial. Performer Elise May believed that the success of the *Accented Body* collaboration was largely due to its being 'grounded in and around the supportive and resourceful structure of the Queensland University of Technology' with its generosity in terms of time, expertise and in-kind resources.³⁰

Our model comprised a small management team of producer/director, logistics and technical coordinator and curatorial assistant who took on specific areas of responsibility with clearly delineated roles pertaining to the whole project. These key personnel became the liaison point for team directors who took responsibility for those in his/her team. Equitable sharing of resources and transparent, devolved team budgets were essential to maintain trust within and between teams. Project durations may need to be flexible so that other creative and/or research projects can be accommodated if the project is lengthy and at times fragmented. Clear and effective lines of communication, resource management

and reporting are crucial to establish and maintain.³¹ Mutual respect and a good fit between the creative processes of artists and the research methodologies of academics, as outlined earlier, is conducive to shared understandings.

Following a performative or public outcome, the project can have a life as a research vehicle for further investigation, and act as a conduit for other artistic events and concepts to flow from the original project, providing an outlet for the exchange of ideas, resources and practices, building on the international and national networks that have emerged. Interdisciplinary projects which are dance initiated extend the reach and parameters of dance, but more than that place dance and dance epistemologies at the centre of the interdisciplinary agenda, enriching multi-vocal and inter-textual research methodologies.

Projects such as *Accented Body*, through bringing professional artists into the university environment in an industry performance context, privilege their internally theorised embodied knowledge. The articulation of this knowledge in the artists' own language, to sit side by side with academic research of dance and cultural theorists, greatly enriches the field of dance research, and its multiple outcomes extend both dance practice and theory.

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Endnotes

- ¹ For a sequential brief history of practice as research in the UK, including definitions of 'practice-based' and 'practice through/as' refer: Piccini, Angela "An Historiographic Perspective on Practice as Research." (2002)<http://www.bris.ac.uk/parip/artexts.htm> Accessed 20 April 2007.
- ² For a similar but somewhat different view on embodied knowledge in terms of an artefact (rather than in this case where the artefact is literally embodied in the artist/researcher), see Scrivener (2002) who claims that the art object cannot in itself contain knowledge but can 'engender' knowledge.
- ³ Even memory is of course a translation of the lived experience of the performance.
- ⁴ The relationship of the exegesis to the practice is as diverse and contested as the practice itself, and not the subject of this paper. For discussions around this issue see articles listed in the bibliography below for Piccini, Angela (2002), Rye, Carolyn (2003), Candlin,

- Fiona (2000), Pakes, Anna (2003), Haseman, Brad (2006), Krauth, Nigel. (2002), de Freitas, Nancy (2002).
- ⁵ Haseman (2006:7) suggests that these knowledge claims, through 'attending to the symbolic form of particular art works provides a powerful focus for the performative researcher (and their audience) as each symbol functions as a means to conceptualise ideas about aspects of reality and also as a means of communicating what is known to others'. An emerging methodology to support these claims includes a contextualisation of practice in the form of an 'artistic audit' (2006:7).
- ⁶ In Australia, the ARC (Australian Research Council) at the time of writing have two main categories: Discovery and Linkages, the latter requiring funding from external partners. Linkages grants have in the past been used to gain funds to employ artists with a performance outcome, through national and state arts funding agencies as partners, for example.
- ⁷ For an example of this theory/practice model see Smith, Anna (1999) 'Appendix 2: Creating Red Rain: Choreographer Anna Smith's annotations of video, March-September 1999': 203-211 and Stevens, Catherine (1999) 'Trans-disciplinary Approaches to Research into Creation, Performance, and Appreciation of Contemporary Dance': 154-168, in Grove, Robin; Stevens, Catherine; McKechnie, Shirley (2005) *Thinking in Four Dimensions; Creativity and Cognition in Contemporary Dance*.
- ⁸ For example, in Sydney a research and development venue called 'Critical Path' has been established which is artist-based and not connected to an academic research agenda. It is a purely exploratory laboratory with no performance outcomes. This is in some ways a 21st century version of the choreographic centres set up in France (and elsewhere) in the 1980s.
- ⁹ See for example Schon, Donald (c1983) on reflective practise and Stake, Robert (1994) on case studies, listed in bibliography.
- ¹⁰ Harnessing cash and in-kind support was essential from all three sectors to ensure commitment for the project. Total cash support of A\$240,000 for *Accented Body* comprised Cultural and government organisations: Australia Council (Stage 1: A\$26,000; Stage 2: \$59,000), Arts Queensland (Stages 1 and 2: A\$50,000), Creative Sparks, (Stage 2: A\$5,000), Brisbane Festival (Stage 1: A\$10,000), Australia Korea Foundation (Stage 2: A\$10,000), External organisations: Kelvin Grove Urban Village (Stage 1: A\$10,000, Stage 2: \$10,000), Besen Family Foundation (Stage 2: A\$10,000), University: QUT Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Fund (Stage 1: A\$10,000, Stage 2: A\$20,000), International: Korean Culture and Arts Foundation (A\$21,000).
- ¹¹ On-site collaboration occurred in two stages; creative development November / December 2005 and final rehearsals and performances in June/July 2006.
- ¹² For details of personnel and site teams see www.accentedbody.com under 'about', then 'personnel and site teams' and click on each of the six sites *Global Drifts* | *Ether* | *Separating Shadows* | *Prescient Terrain* | *Living Lens* | *Dissolving Presences*.
- ¹³ For example, at the time of writing Dr. Sarah Rubidge was in Australia accessing the *Accented Body* archival documentation to support her ongoing research as part of the RAE (Research Assessment Exercise) which measures research quantum in the UK.
- ¹⁴ Title of Maria Adriana Verdaasdonk's doctoral thesis is: '*Living Lens*: Exploring interdependencies between performing bodies, visual and sonic media in immersive installation.' The candidate has since submitted her exegesis and creative work documentation (an interactive DVD) for final examination.
- ¹⁵ Verdaasdonk, Maria Adriana, from program notes of 'living lens', in the *Accented Body* program. At the time Dr. Watanabe was a PRESTO researcher at Japan Science & Technology Agency in the area of cognitive science and communication devices using applied perception.
- ¹⁶ Huddy, Avril, in Stock, Cheryl, (2006) *Accented Body* Artistic Acquittal, unpublished report, Brisbane: 17.
- ¹⁷ Elise May, in Stock, Cheryl, op. cit: 4.
- ¹⁸ Performer Liz Lea commenting on her experience in the 'global drifts' team, found that she developed a particular interest 'in the way technology and the live body has an interdependent relationship choreographically' (in Stock, Cheryl, op. cit: 4.)
- ¹⁹ Sarah Rubidge and Hellen Sky, *ibid*: 5.
- ²⁰ It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss individually the research methodologies mentioned. Useful references are Newman, Judith M (2000) on action research, and Smits, Rudd (2002) on those relating to technology, listed in bibliography.
- ²¹ I would like to acknowledge my colleagues in the development of some of the thinking that has collectively occurred around these issues; specifically Dale Johnstone, Sarah Rubidge, Hellen Sky, Barbara Adkins, Dian Tjondronegoro, Jinglan Zhang, Aster Wardhani.
- ²² Pilot and case study strategies are very similar to creative development and final product processes, usually with both having an intervening period of reflection.
- ²³ See note 21 for funding partners who provided cash. Major In-kind partners: QUT Precincts (throughout project: venue, technical expertise, equipment, logistics); Creative Industries Faculty, QUT (student volunteers Dance, Film and Television, Technical Production, Communication Design, Music); Ausdance Queensland (management, promotions, grant auspicing and budgetry assistance, general support throughout the project); University of Chichester (Stages 1 and 2: salary of senior researcher /artist, equipment, airfare); Siobhan Davies Studios, London (Stage 2: London venue, technical support); TRIAD New Media Gallery, Seoul (Stage 2: venue and technical support); Media performance unit 66b/cell (throughout project: media programmers, interactive expertise, sensors). Minor partners and

- sponsors: Brisbane City Council Creative Sparks Grant with the Queensland Government, through Arts Queensland; ACID (Australasian Centre for Interaction Design); Centre for Public Culture and Ideas (CPCI), Griffith University; PRESTO Japan Science & Technology Agency (Tokyo, Japan); SADI (Samsung Art and Design Institute (Seoul, Korea); Dancehouse, Melbourne; Brisbane Powerhouse; TWCMA web development; Victoria University, Melbourne, Hybrid Projects: ICEPA; Milton Motel Apartments; Brisbane Sound Group; Chameleon Touring Systems; J LX; The Production Shop; Create Café.
- ²⁴ See www.accentedbody.com under Media and Feedback files.
- ²⁵ Liz Lea, in Stock, Cheryl, op. cit: 6.
- ²⁶ Tony Yap, Madeleine Flynn, Tim Humphrey of the 'ether' team, ibid.
- ²⁷ For example, Liz Lea collaborated with 'global drifts' co-director Sarah Rubidge in a commissioned work at the Royal Opera House in London, June 2007; followed by a creative development period in Seoul with 'global drifts' interactive media artist Hyojung Seo. The 'ether' team is re-casting the work developed in *Accented Body* for inclusion in national and overseas festivals.
- ²⁸ Hellen Sky and Sarah Rubidge, in Stock, Cheryl, op. cit: 7.
- ²⁹ Ibid: 18.
- ³⁰ Elise May, in Stock Cheryl, op. cit: 6.
- ³¹ A successful communication strategy in *Accented Body* was to build a public website (partly a marketing tool) that also had general log in access for all participants to download information, with other layers of access for individual teams to upload onto their team site, and access to all layers by the management team.
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Des gestes, des mémoires. Les représentations de Lia Rodrigues autour de la figure du « Musulman » des camps de concentration.

Mattia Scarpulla

1. Lorsque le chercheur analyse une scène de danse, il se confronte à plusieurs mémoires : le moment scénique a disparu à jamais et reste la mémoire de l'artiste, reste le témoignage d'une captation, la mémoire de chaque spectateur, la mémoire des publics, enrichies par la presse, par des entretiens. Le chercheur fera évoluer ses recherches en se rapprochant de l'une ou de plusieurs de ces mémoires.

Pour que le spectateur s'intéresse au spectacle et y prenne du plaisir lorsqu'il assiste à la représentation et après, en y repensant, il doit trouver dans sa mémoire des repères, liant le spectacle à d'autres contextes ou d'autres sujets, émotionnels ou historiques, pour que l'action scénique fasse sens en lui¹. Le spectateur est sensible à la représentation si elle lui évoque son intime et ses désirs. Le spectateur est attiré par un spectacle par métaphore.

Si le chercheur est intéressé par la mémoire personnelle du spectateur, est aussi intéressé par sa propre mémoire de spectateur². L'analyse n'est pas objective, mais elle est un appui pour comprendre l'un des éléments du spectacle vivant post-dramatique : Hans Thies Lehmann, dans son livre *Théâtre Post-dramatique*³, parle de la scène totale actuelle, mélange interdisciplinaire, « espace métaphorique ». La scène est éclatée, un espace accueillant des lieux différents, des réalités différentes, mais qui possèdent leur sens dans l'intime de l'artiste, qui les lie autour d'un même sujet. A partir de la danse libre et moderne et des avant-gardes du début du XXe siècle, en passant par les scènes de Pina Bausch, de Tadeusz Kantor, du Living Theatre et de Robert Wilson, jusqu'à la danse contemporaine de trente dernières années, la scène est devenue un lieu de croisement de fragments, de traditions et de techniques corporelles, de plusieurs époques historiques, recomposés dans un style chorégraphique personnel, qui éveille l'attention du public sur des aspects de mondes présents ou disparus. Le chercheur qui analyse une chorégraphie par le biais de ses souvenirs cherche à comprendre le spectacle sans en demander le sens à son créateur,

sans s'intéresser aux réflexions de la presse ou du public. Il voyage dans sa pensée, trouvant un sens par sa mémoire de chercheur, de spectateur et d'individu. Son voyage ressemble ainsi à celui de l'artiste qui a créé son spectacle en se promenant dans son intime et dans les cultures qu'il connaît. Le sens donné au spectacle dépendra alors du moment présent vécu par le chercheur. La relation métaphorique que le chercheur crée entre le spectacle et son intime ressemble ainsi à la relation qui naît sur la scène post-dramatique entre des fragments appartenant à différentes réalités.

2. Nous avons assisté pour la première fois à la chorégraphie *Incarnat* de Lia Rodrigues au Centre national de la danse de Pantin⁴. Nous avons ensuite regardé la captation du spectacle, et avons donc vu la scène au travers de l'œil de la caméra. Des détails d'actions alternaient avec des plans sur la scène entière. Le même jour, aussitôt après *Incarnat*, nous avons regardé le film documentaire de Luli Barzman *Les 1001 vies de Lia Rodrigues*, réalisé en 2005 et retraçant les dernières années du travail de Rodrigues, et sa relation avec le Brésil et la France. Nous étions en train de lire *Quel che resta di Auschwitz* de Giorgio Agamben⁵, dans le cadre de nos recherches de thèse sur les représentations de la guerre en danse contemporaine. Nous lisions aussi des œuvres littéraires de Milan Kundera et Jean-Marie Le Clezio qui, par un style fragmentaire et par l'alternance temporelle et historique des actions, croisent des événements semblables mais appartenant à divers conflits sociaux et politiques. En ce moment, nous analysons des chorégraphies de plusieurs artistes, sans étudier la presse ou le discours de l'artiste. Nous voudrions ainsi trouver des relations analogiques entre les différents spectacles, vus et revus au travers de leurs captations. Plusieurs de ces chorégraphies, dont celles de la franco-vietnamienne Ea Sola, de la bosniaque Jasmina Prolic, de l'allemande Sasha Waltz, tout comme celles de la brésilienne Lia Rodrigues, parlent de divers conflits, physiques ou psychiques, mais par des esthétiques similaires,

des « esthétiques pudiques et métonymiques⁶ » : dans sa thèse *Pour une esthétique du témoignage*, Gilles Guigues confronte des œuvres d'art plastiques qui sont des « témoignages pudiques⁷ », des fragments de réalités, retravaillés par les artistes mais qui évoquent au spectateur des réalités qui lui sont connus. « Pudique, [le témoignage] porte en avant un geste qui, dès qu'il se déploie, tend vers le retrait »⁸. Ces œuvres-témoignages analysées par Guigues ne tiennent pas un discours explicite sur une réalité. Elles saisissent un détail réel, le retravaillent dans un contexte artistique, pudiquement, et crient un instant, puis se taisent aussitôt, et un message violent est transmis sans déranger. Guigues explique : « L'intériorité d'un témoignage, dans la rigueur des mots [des gestes et des images] se réserve, car aucune évidence n'en simplifie l'accès, ni n'en brise la sauvegarde. Préservée par la pudeur, l'œuvre qui le porte ne livre pas directement son intériorité : il y demeure un secret »⁹. Ce « secret » est une dimension imprécise de l'œuvre artistique pudique, qui laisse chercher le spectateur d'autres significations logiques du témoignage. Les quatre chorégraphes citées, très différents dans leurs parcours artistiques et culturels, travaillent sur des images fragmentaires, issus de la réalité d'un pays en guerre, ou sortant de la guerre, en encore issus dans des conflits intimes en quête d'une reconstruction identitaire, et les spectateurs sont saisis par la violence ou la douleur exprimée sans connaître précisément le contexte, sauf s'ils lisent le programme de la soirée. Les détails gestuels font sens pour le spectateur s'il se remémore d'autres réalités de conflit ou de douleur où les mêmes référents visuels peuvent être intégrés.

Dans un instant précis, nous avons donc visionné *Incarnat* de Rodrigues, intéressés par une certaine esthétique chorégraphique, un discours sur la figuration des guerres à nos jours, et par le même discours développé par des auteurs littéraires, et étant nourri par les lectures d'études sur un art de témoignage. Et les mots d'Agamben sur la guerre et le témoignage se sont mêlés aux témoignages de Rodrigues et de ses danseurs dans le documentaire de Barzman. Alors, les corps de Rodrigues et les mots des danseurs et des livres ont pris un sens précis, figurant notre mémoire de spectateur.

3. Dans les camps de concentration nazis, des hommes et des femmes perdaient la volonté de vivre. Dans les récits des survivants, ces individus sont généralement nommés « Musulman », et décrits comme des corps creusés, immobiles, des rejets de la vie sociale des camps, éparpillés aux abords des baraquements, des corps à la tête courbée, souvent assis, à qui manque la force de rester debout, et rappelant l'image des mendiants musulmans courbés en prière, image rencontrée dans les rues des villes judéo-chrétiennes¹⁰. Mais le corps du « Musulman » des camps a perdu la logique des mots et des actions, son corps est vivant dans la mort, c'est un être mort en vie, le « Musulman » vit sans plus d'espoir, vit seulement parce qu'il n'est pas encore mort. Le « Musulman » devient dans la société des camps l'image du seuil entre la mort et la vie, entre l'humain et l'inhumain.

« Musulman » vient du mot arabe *Muslim*, qui nomme celui qui s'est soumis inconditionnellement à Dieu¹¹. L'image d'un « Musulman » serviteur absolu du Dieu s'était répandue dans les légendes du monde chrétien, dès le Moyen Âge. Dans plusieurs légendes, les personnages de culture musulmane vivent absolument selon la volonté de Dieu, sont des êtres fatalistes¹². Et dans les camps, cette image de résignée et fataliste était révélatrice de l'innommable douleur, subie par un corps humain soumis à la torture nazie systématique. En outre, comme seuil entre l'humain et l'inhumain, le « Musulman » était méprisé par les autres déportés : ceux-ci avaient peur de se trouver face à ces êtres manquant de force, de volonté et d'espoir, ils avaient peur de voir la mort dans les « Musulmans » encore en vie, et de se perdre eux aussi dans l'état précaire de ce seuil.

L'expression « Musulman » était surtout utilisée à Auschwitz. D'autres noms étaient utilisés dans les autres camps pour nommer ces corps-seuils : à Dachau, par exemple, ils étaient appelés *Kretiner* (des hébétés) ; à Mauthausen *Schwimmer* (ce qui flotte comme un mort), dans le Lager féminin de Ravensbruck *Muselweiber* (musulmanes) ou *Schmuckstücke* (babioles). Ces autres expressions enrichissent la description du « Musulman », soulignant sa lenteur ou son immobilité, son être vide de vie, sa fragilité et son inutilité¹³.

Trois témoignages descriptifs du « Musulman » : « [le « Musulman »] était un cadavre ambulant, une gerbe de fonctions physiques en agonie »¹⁴ ;

« Je me souviens que, pendant que nous descendions les marches vers les salles de bain, [les nazis] ont fait descendre avec nous un groupe de *Muselman*, comme nous les appelons, des hommes-momies, des morts-vivants ; et ils les ont fait descendre avec nous pour nous les montrer, pour nous dire : vous deviendrez ainsi »¹⁵ ;

« [...] la masse anonyme des non-hommes qui marchent et fatiguent en silence, éteint en eux le scintillement divin, déjà trop vides pour souffrir vraiment. On hésite à nommer mort leur mort, devant laquelle ils n'ont pas peur, parce qu'ils sont trop fatigués pour la comprendre. Ils peuplent ma mémoire de leur silhouette sans visage, et si je pouvais donner une image à tout le mal de notre temps, je choisirais cette image, qui m'est familière : un homme maigre, au front penché et aux épaules courbées, et sur son visage et dans ses yeux nous ne pouvons pas lire une seule trace de pensée »¹⁶ ;

Le « Musulman » est l'image qui vient à l'esprit des survivants lorsqu'ils ne réussissent pas à verbaliser la douleur subie, « image de tout le mal de notre temps », douleur en puissance, mort en puissance. Ces êtres aux corps et à la volonté atrophiée sont l'image de l'incommunicable, de tout ce qu'on ne peut pas dire sur le seuil entre la douleur et la mort. Le « Musulman » est la douleur sculptée par la violence sur le corps. Le corps perd ainsi sa forme et son identité humaine.

4. Dans une première partie du documentaire *Les 1001 vies de Lia Rodrigues*, Luli Barzman retrace le parcours professionnel, d'abord comme danseuse puis comme chorégraphe, de Lia Rodrigues. Une deuxième partie commence lorsque Rodrigues dit qu'à la suite de quelques changements dans sa vie, elle a commencé à travailler différemment sur le corps et sur l'espace. A partir de ce moment dans ses créations le corps se dépouille des costumes typiquement scéniques, il est habillé de ses vêtements quotidiens ou bien il danse nu. L'espace est dépouillé, les éclairages et les musiques sont réduits au minimum. Le danseur est proche du spectateur, quelquefois jusqu'à le toucher. Au travers d'un dépouillement des éléments scéniques, Lia Rodrigues attire toute

l'attention du spectateur sur le corps, et place sa recherche sur les gestes intimes de la chair. Parmi ses créations, en 2005 naît la chorégraphie *Incarnat*. Lia Rodrigues et ses danseurs sont allés travailler au sein des favelas de Rio de Janeiro. Ils alternent les répétitions avec la restauration d'un vieil entrepôt, leur lieu de travail collectif. Dans *Incarnat*, Rodrigues dit des sentiments ressentis face à des lieux et des individus brésiliens par un mélange de danse et de théâtre corporel. Dans le documentaire de Barzman, les danseurs et la chorégraphe décrivent la douleur rencontrée dans les rues : un danseur dit que la violence ne commence pas dans l'agression d'un individu sur l'autre, mais dans l'agression d'un lieu misérable et déficient sur les individus qui sont obligés de le vivre. Les bâtiments insalubres, les puanteurs et l'absence d'aides sociales et de transports : là est la violence fondamentale que subit un habitant des favelas. Un autre danseur raconte comment la vie des favelas est un passage continu de la tristesse, provoquée par le fait d'avoir assisté à un conflit armé dans la rue, à la jouissance éphémère dans des rires ou des jeux, ou dans le bavardage avec les autres.

Dans *Incarnat*, la compagnie de Rodrigues danse la douleur, la vie entre tristesse et jouissance, sans décrire ses réalités quotidiennes. Si dans le documentaire Rodrigues exprime la relation entre sa création et le Brésil, en regardant le spectacle nous n'avons pas vu le Brésil, mais la manifestation d'une douleur absolue. Le corps danse la douleur en puissance, quand elle se montre déroutante dans l'âme des individus.

Sur un plateau vide, les danseurs entrent habillés de leur tenu de répétition. Ils forment un cercle, se regardent, écoutent leur présence, marchent lentement en se rapprochant, rétrécissant ainsi le cercle, ils se prennent par la main, font tourner le cercle toujours en marchant, dans un sens, dans l'autre. Ainsi, un rite unit des corps dans un même but représentatif, et ce début ritualise le travail intime qui a évolué dans la compagnie. Ensuite, le cercle se rompt, les corps rapidement s'éparpillent, remplissent l'espace de leur marche, les pieds forts contre le sol, les corps se croisent, frénétiques, changeant la direction de leur marche juste avant de se cogner. Une danseuse marche vers le public, commence à crier, les corps s'éparpillent sur les côtés de la scène, la scène se réduit à ce corps de femme qui crie dans

le silence, son corps qui se recroqueville sur le cri, la danseuse tombe, elle s'étrangle dans sa respiration, étouffe, vomit de la bave, sa douleur. La danseuse a cassé par son cri la relation d'écoute dans le groupe des danseurs. A partir de ce moment, les corps alterneront des danses calmes sinueuses, qui évoluent dans des raptus de folie, avec des présentations de gestes de douleur, cri, larmes, grimaces. Des solos alternent avec des compositions en petits groupes, pendant que les autres danseurs regardent. Des corps habillés représentent le passage rapide de l'instant de la tristesse à celui de la joie. Des corps nus s'approchent du public présentant l'acte du surgissement de la douleur. La chorégraphie montre ainsi les états extrêmes créés par la vie dans les favelas.

5. Ces premières réflexions et descriptions sont nées dans un deuxième temps, lorsque nous avons visionné le documentaire après la chorégraphie. A la fin de la chorégraphie, nous étions surtout émus par des solos de corps nus, qui correspondaient aux descriptions de la figure du « Musulman », rapportées dans le livre d'Agamben. Nous n'avons pas vu le Brésil, nous n'avons pas vu les récits des danseurs sur les favelas, nous avons vu des corps se transformer en une chair amorphe de la douleur, nous avons vu naître l'image décrite incommunicable du « Musulman ».

Deux images du « Musulman » perçues chez Rodrigues : Une femme nue au fond de scène. Elle est petite avec un bassin et des seins gros et ronds. Une image maternelle qui semble sortir des sculptures primitives. Les yeux fermés. Entourée par le noir, peu éclairée, sans faire de bruit sur le sol, sans regard, elle avance lentement vers le public, tourne sur elle-même, elle avance en suivant une ligne droite, une jambe ou un bras plié en angle droit dirige le corps aveugle, l'espace derrière elle redevient noir, la route derrière elle disparaît, elle s'avance, incertaine, pliant les genoux et se relevant, cherchant dans le vide. La danseuse semble un spectre. Arrivée près du public, elle apparaît dans sa chair humaine, vivante. Elle est debout, immobile. Elle ouvre ses yeux, grands et ronds, regarde le public. Immobile, elle tourne seulement le cou, ses yeux cherchent ceux de chaque spectateur. La danseuse semble être revenue à la vie. Son regard devient incertain, elle commence à respirer profondément. Puis

lourdement. Sa respiration semble un étouffement. Les poumons se soulèvent, les épaules aussi, plusieurs fois. Enfin, elle reste figée, elle ne respire pas. On voit seulement le blanc de ses yeux, son visage n'est plus humain. Son ventre est devenu creux, les bras sont écrasés contre le corps, et sont ainsi amaigris, deux bâtons froids, le cou aussi semble creux, les os du thorax sont à vue. Le corps de la danseuse est vide d'air, creusé, un cadavre.

Un homme danse des gestes sinueux, lentement. Il est grand et maigre, ses jambes et ses bras tournent autour de son corps, s'éloignent dans l'espace, le corps s'épanouit vers l'extérieur. Puis, graduellement, il perd le contrôle de ses membres. Les bras et les jambes ne réussissent plus à se tendre, son dos se courbe, il répète les mêmes gestes, mais toujours plus replié sur lui-même. Enfin il boîte, ses longs membres sont faibles, plus un geste n'est possible, ils couvrent le ventre et la poitrine. Le danseur semble rapetisser, se recroqueviller, jusqu'à être deux bras-deux jambes-une tête mal collés entre eux. Le visage est défiguré dans une grimace. Le corps tombe bruyamment. Il ne se relève plus. Il est réduit à une carcasse d'os et de peau, qui glisse difficilement vers le noir du côté de la scène.

L'homme et la femme ont perdu le contrôle de leur corps et leur forme humaine. Pour parler de ces deux corps, nous pouvons utiliser les descriptions du « Musulman », cité auparavant. Comme le disent les témoignages, la femme devient une « silhouette sans visage ». L'homme devient « un cadavre ambulante, une gerbe de fonctions physiques en agonie ». Tous les deux, à la fin de leur performance semblent vides, légers, des peaux sans organes, « qui flottent ». Rodrigues sculpte la douleur sur la chair de ses danseurs parce qu'elle fait se tendre et se creuser leurs corps, qui semblent vides de leurs organes et devenir des squelettes de peau et d'os.

6. Les corps nus proches du public se dépouillent aussi de l'espace, et restent éclairés pendant que la scène disparaît dans l'ombre. Le corps sans espace est aussi dépouillé de toute action : l'homme et la femme « Musulmans », tout comme les autres corps, deviennent des statues de la douleur, après que les corps ont crié, se sont transformés ; ils restent immobiles dans la figuration d'un mort-vivant, d'un cadavre qui

respire encore. L'action et le temps sont réduits à un instant où une statue de la douleur reste seule, « geste signifiant » en scène, sans temps, sans lieu, sans action. Le dépouillement scénique et corporel voulu par Rodrigues permet la visualisation de l'instant de la douleur. Cette douleur que nous ressentons, mais que nous ne pouvons pas retranscrire précisément à travers les mots. La douleur est liée à l'instant où elle a surgi, où elle s'est révélée à nous dans un contexte déterminé. La danse est un art de l'éphémère, un corps qui crée un instant fugitif d'émotion. L'instant de douleur peut apparaître dans l'instant de la danse. Selon Michel Guérin : «[...] l'inspiration première de la danse est de tourner sur place, quasi sans changement de lieu [...]. La danse se met à tourner à l'instant que tous les buts tournent court. C'est un marcher qui ne va nulle part, ne mène à rien, n'aspire pas au terme ; un mouvement qui n'entend pas jouer les utilités pour ajouter au réel, qui plutôt, se prend lui-même pour fin »¹⁷. La danse tourne en rond dans une action gratuite, dans la génération d'une émotion et non d'un but. Dans *Incarnat*, les corps dansent souvent sur place repliés dans leur intime.

Lia Rodrigues représente l'irrationalité violente de la douleur dans des statues creusées. Chaque corps abandonne sa forme humaine et devient statue de la douleur sans entrer en relation avec les autres statues en transformation. Les corps deviennent ainsi des bribes d'une même mémoire, la mémoire de la réalité brésilienne. Mais la scène recueille des statues disséminées dans le vide, sans contexte précis. Déracinées de leur contexte brésilien, les images de la douleur peuvent aussi bien évoquer la condition existentielle du « Musulman ». La danse devient ainsi témoignage d'événements historiques et d'événements présents, par des corps qui suggèrent la douleur humaine qui se répète face à différentes réalités, par des corps qui se font « citations » d'un passé et d'un présent. Quelle que soit la forme qu'elle prenne, Walter Benjamin confère à la « citation » : « non pas la force de conserver, mais de purifier, d'arracher au contexte, de détruire ; elle est la seule force recelant encore de l'espoir que quelque chose de cette époque survivra – justement parce qu'on lui a extirpé »¹⁸. Les corps de Rodrigues arrachent le souvenir de la douleur au contexte de la réalité brésilienne, « extirpent » le récit concret de cette réalité, pour mieux l'évoquer à travers un

voyage dans l'histoire rappelant la douleur du « Musulman ». Les statues de la douleur deviennent des citations d'un état d'âme qui passe d'un contexte à l'autre, d'un temps à l'autre, et se font mémoire de la possibilité pour l'homme, de tout temps, de perdre la volonté d'agir. Les danseurs incarnent la douleur des camps nazis et du Brésil, instaurant une mémoire émotionnelle d'une histoire à l'autre. Les corps citent le Brésil, mais citent aussi inconsciemment la réalité des camps de concentration, et permettent ainsi la transmission d'une figuration universelle qui voyage d'une mémoire à l'autre, « une communication de la mémoire de l'homme, entendue comme une connaissance du passé et du patrimoine collectif d'histoires et de vérités, et pas seulement comme la capacité à se souvenir »¹⁹.

7. Les statues de la douleur sont sculptées dans des grimaces de cri, de larmes, de vomissements, déroutées par une crise, une peur. D'une statue à l'autre, donc d'une figuration figée à l'autre, d'un geste quotidien de la douleur à l'autre, Rodrigues crée une répétition d'images instantanées émotionnelles. Dans leur passage d'une forme humaine à une forme grimacée, les gestes des larmes et des cris, et d'autres gestes comme se tenir le ventre, ouvrir d'énormes yeux, qui sont des gestes parmi les plus instinctifs de l'homme en douleur et restent toujours présents, toujours actuels. Dans *Incarnat*, même dans les moments les plus dansés, que nous avons seulement survolé, des gestes frénétiques, par exemple se frapper soi-même, se répètent. Des états physiques de notre quotidien émotif passent d'une danse à l'autre, relient un contexte suggéré à une autre réalité suggérée, et forment un témoignage essentiel de l'histoire de notre chair humaine. Jean, protagoniste du roman *Révolutions* de Jean Marie Le Clézio, découvre et reconstruit un siècle des vies de ses ancêtres par les souvenirs de sa tante Catherine, et en lisant les journaux intimes de différents personnages de la famille, que la tante a gardé précieusement. « Assis sur le bord du sofa, [Jean] voyait la silhouette de Catherine, comme elle avait vu dans son enfance la silhouette de Charles, et comme lui-même avait vu celle de son grand-père, qui était arrivé le premier aux ravins d'Ebène et avait fondé la maison Rozilis. C'était cela qui faisait battre son cœur, d'être à la fois au début et à la fin d'une histoire »²⁰. Jean voit défiler

sur la silhouette de sa tante tous les personnages de sa famille. La tante Catherine est une « citation » des mémoires des ancêtres, elle garde sur son corps, dans sa tête, et dans son appartement des bribes des passés, des témoignages de l'histoire de la famille de Jean. Dans le roman *L'immortalité* de Milan Kundera²¹, le geste d'une femme - son salut en arrière vers un homme -, ouvre une histoire de la mémoire qui reviendra en arrière dans les siècles, à la recherche de l'origine de la beauté de ce geste qui s'est figé dans cet instant sur le corps de cette femme. Elle a une cinquantaine d'année, mais son geste rappelle au narrateur une fille de vingt ans. Les âges et les temps se confondent en un seul geste, une figuration de séduction et de pudeur, un geste d'adieu qui est aussi un geste d'invitation à la suivre, un geste qui ouvre et clôt le roman, en un seul instant qui se répète dans plusieurs vies et dans plusieurs temps, sur le corps d'autres individus, un geste immortel passant d'une mémoire individuelle et corporelle à l'autre.

8. La chorégraphie *Incarnat* s'insère dans l'ensemble de ces œuvres d'art qui citent les gestes les plus simples de notre quotidien émotif pour construire de nouvelles images de sens, pour continuer à essayer d'expliquer les désirs et les douleurs de l'homme, réussir à cerner en un seul instant de danse tout le conflit de l'être humain contre l'être humain, pour l'être humain. Arrivé sur scène, un geste quotidien est au-delà du contexte où il possède une fonction précise : l'action de caresser ou de pleurer par exemple a été déracinée d'une action affective qui a eu lieu à un certain moment entre deux individus. Le geste quotidien est exécuté sur scène comme un signe d'un langage artistique composé par l'artiste, et assume un sens symbolique, métaphorique. Par exemple, les pleurs et les sourires dans la création de Rodrigues sont très puissants parce qu'isolés dans une dramaturgie scénique qui privilégie le silence et le noir, qui place toute l'attention du spectateur sur le geste. Mais on ne sait plus pour quelle raison le danseur pleure. Le geste quotidien, devenu geste artistique appartenant au langage d'un chorégraphe, est reconnu par le spectateur par sa quotidienneté, parce que le spectateur retrouve des contextes où il a pleuré ou a vu pleurer. Et la chorégraphie de Rodrigues touche le public parce que chaque geste artistique redevient un geste

quotidien évocateur dans la vie de chaque spectateur.

Un langage corporel ne peut pas dire comment, dans les camps de concentrations, les corps subissaient des tortures jusqu'à devenir des « Musulmans ». Mais la danse peut dénoncer par son langage propre, composé d'écritures charnelles, la vie au Brésil, comment les gens subissent la pauvreté et un pouvoir violent. La danse de Rodrigues retrouve son contexte brésilien si on y ajoute un texte décrivant le contexte et le lien avec Rodrigues et sa danse. Le public comprend alors que les corps en scène représentent la douleur face à cette société.

Les corps de Rodrigues étaient la dénonciation d'une injustice, et nous pouvons en nous la relier à toutes les situations d'injustice de notre présent. En même temps, cette représentation nous gênait, parce qu'elle témoignait de tout ce que nous ne voulons pas ressentir du monde qui nous entoure. La danse ne peut pas raconter par le seul mouvement un événement historique, mais elle peut le crier, en représentant ses aspects irrationnels et émotionnels. Elle représente ainsi tout ce qu'un livre d'histoire ne peut pas traduire, cet état d'impuissance à cerner la réalité de quelque chose qui a existé, qui existe, dont on ne voudrait pas qu'il ait existé.

Après avoir lu le récit sur le témoin et le « Musulman » d'Agamben, lorsque nous avons visionné la captation de la chorégraphie d'*Incarnat*, par instinct, par métaphore, nous avons mis en rapport les mots des rescapés avec les corps transfigurés de Rodrigues, nous avons vu se manifester l'irrationnel état de douleur d'un corps mort par torture psychique et physique. Nous avons ensuite regardé le documentaire de Luli Barzman, et les mots des danseurs composaient dans notre tête un écho aux mots des rescapés des camps de concentration, mais en décrivant une autre réalité actuelle invivable. Les images d'absolue douleur de Rodrigues ont alors construit un arc émotionnel entre deux réalités, entre le passé et le présent, entre des mémoires au plus profond de l'émotion humaine.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Cf. Duvignaud J. (1999), *Sociologie du théâtre. Sociologie des ombres collectives*, Paris, éd. Presses Universitaires de France; et Gourdon Anne-Marie (2000), *Des arts et des spectacles à la télévision. Le regard du téléspectateur*, Paris, éd. de CNRS.
- ² Cf. Leveratto J-M. (2002), *Introduction à l'anthropologie du spectacle*, Paris, éd. La Dispute, 2006.
- ³ Cf. Lehmann H. T. (2002), *Le théâtre post-dramatique*, L'Arche 2002.
- ⁴ Saison 2005/2006.
- ⁵ Agamben G. (2005), *Quel che resta d'Auschwitz – L'archive et le témoin*, Torino, éd. Bollati Boringhieri ; *Ce qui reste d'Auschwitz* (1999) tr. fr., Paris, éd. Bibliothèque Rivages
- ⁶ Cf. Guigues G. (2005), *Pour une esthétique du témoignage*, thèse pour obtenir le grade de docteur de l'université Aix-Marseille I, directeur Michel Guérin
- ⁷ *Ibidem* p. 17
- ⁸ *Ide.m*
- ⁹ *Ibidem* p. 52
- ¹⁰ Cet figuration du « Musulman » appartient aussi à la culture populaire judaïque : Cf. *L'Encyclopédie Judaïque*.
- ¹¹ Agamben G., *Quel che resta d'Auschwitz...* op. cit., p. 39.
- ¹² *Idem*.
Encore maintenant, dans les récits de la presse, le terroriste de tradition musulmane reste souvent un être absolu, sans qualités humaines.
- ¹³ Sofky W., *L'ordine del terrore* (1995), Roma-Bari, éd. Laterza, p. 464 ; cité, tout comme les trois témoignages suivants dans G. Agamben, *Quel che resta...* op. cit., pp. 37-39.
- ¹⁴ Amery J. (1987), *Un intellettuale ad Auschwitz*, Torino, éd. Bollati Boringhieri, p. 39 ; cité, tout comme les deux témoignages suivantes dans G. Agamben, *Quel che resta...* op. cit., pp. 37-39.
- ¹⁵ Carpi A. (1993), *Diario di Gusen*, Torino, éd. Einaudi, p. 17.
- ¹⁶ Levi P. (1995), *Se questo è un uomo. La tregua*, Torino, éd. Einaudi, p. 82
- ¹⁷ Guérin M. (1997), « Faire et danse. Ou les deux corps de la danse », Colloque/Festival de danse d'Uzès 1997, publié dans *Skéné* n.2-3, *le corps*, 1998.
- ¹⁸ Benjamin W. (1990), *Karl Kraus*, Paris, Editions Rivages, p.78
- ¹⁹ Mastropasqua F. (1998), *Metamorfosi del teatro*, Napoli, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, p. 95.
- ²⁰ Le Clézio J. M. (2003), *Révolutions*, Paris, éd. Gallimard, 2003, p. 106
- ²¹ Kundera M. (1990), *L'immortalité*, Paris, éd. Gallimard, surtout pp. 13 et 14.

Performing *capoeira angola*'s tactics of deception in the *chamada*

Ana Paula Höfling

Capoeira, the Afro-Brazilian movement practice that combines martial art, dance and music elements is known today throughout the world. In the 1930's, as part of the effort towards decriminalization of the form, capoeira went through several innovations that sought to bring it closer to a Western, if Asian influenced, definition of martial art. These innovations—the de-Africanization of capoeira in an effort to conform to a hegemonic physical education aesthetic—earned capoeira not only legal status, but the designation of “national sport” by the Brazilian government.¹ These changes resulted in the division of the form into capoeira regional—the form that today includes belt systems, graduation ceremonies and tournaments—and capoeira angola, the form that was created as a reaction against capoeira regional, calling for the re-Africanization of the form and a return to capoeira's roots.

While capoeira regional remains the unmarked capoeira, often referred to as just *capoeira*, capoeira angola marks itself by emphasizing the word *angola*, sometimes omitting the word *capoeira* altogether, as in the term *jogo de angola* (game from angola), a term synonymous with this style of capoeira. The player of capoeira angola is not just a *capoeirista* (capoeira player), but an *angoleiro* or *angoleira*. By foregrounding its connection to Africa in its very name, capoeira angola marks itself as Other.

At the movement level, one of the ways in which capoeira angola distinguishes itself from capoeira regional is through the practice of *chamadas* (calls). The *chamada*—a seemingly cooperative, truce-like break in the game, which has come to symbolize the capoeira angola style—is the moment when one player challenges the other in the playful power struggle that takes place throughout the game. Although the *chamada* looks remarkably different from the rest of the game, I will argue here that it exposes and reinforces the same rules and values that permeate the game as a whole. I will examine how the *chamada* amplifies and comment on the tactics of

resistance present throughout the game, and I will consider the *roda* (the capoeira circle) as a rehearsal space for these tactical practices that have the potential of being carried over to life outside the protective circle of the *roda*.

In the *roda* of capoeira angola, two players weave in and out of each other's spaces, in a constantly moving puzzle where each attack elicits an evasive maneuver that itself becomes another attack, demanding another evasive maneuver. Attacks and defenses become almost indistinguishable in skilled games, creating the continuous movement flow that is characteristic of capoeira angola. The *chamada* interrupts this seamless flow and the players make contact. In a carefully chosen moment of the game, one of the players stops, opens her arms and offers her torso, exposed and unprotected. The other player approaches, carefully and indirectly. Palms meet, heads lean against each other. In another kind of *chamada*, the responding player carefully places her head against the caller's belly, or, in the *chamada de costas*, the calling player turns her back on the game, opens her arms and is answered by open hands or wrists carefully placed against the backs of her arms. Maintaining this connection, the players take relaxed steps back and forth, until one player, usually the caller, breaks the *chamada* with either an attack or a gesture that offers the floor to the other player. There are about six types of *chamadas* commonly taught in capoeira angola classes. Although the basic shape of each *chamada* is codified (e.g. right hand up, right foot forward), in the *roda*, the players are expected to use their creativity and improvise within this set structure, making each *chamada* unique.

On the surface, *chamadas* are moments of vulnerability, mutual trust and cooperation, where torsos are exposed or backs turned. The fact that capoeira scholar John Lowell Lewis describes the *chamada* as “mock ballroom dancing,” as a “waltz,” and a moment when “hostilities are suspended” in the game, reveals his focus on the outside shell of the *chamada*, which, from a Euro-

American perspective, is indeed reminiscent of ballroom dancing. Greg Downey, in his book *Learning Capoeira*, also briefly compares the chamada to ballroom dancing, proposing that the chamada may have its origins in a possible parody of this dance form by slaves in colonial Brazil.

While the chamada does seem like a tender moment that could be mistaken for partner dancing, I argue that chamadas are moments of heightened tension and mistrust in the game, where “hostilities,” to borrow Lewis’s term, are re-negotiated and renewed rather than suspended. Mestre Jogo de Dentro, whom I study with in Brazil, constantly reminds his students that the chamada is an *emboscada* (ambush). Rather than a truce, the chamada is a trap.

In a common front chamada, the right palm of the responder touches the caller’s right palm, but the left hand carefully protects the responder’s face from the caller’s elbow, either by touching or remaining in the vicinity of that elbow. The players are never unprotected, an indication that the chamada is not a truce.

Understanding the chamada as a trap or ambush calls attention to the series of playful traps that make up the game of angola: each attack has the potential of leaving the player unprotected, and these “openings” can be accidental but they are often premeditated, especially in skilled games. A purposefully created vulnerable moment in the game sets a trap much like the chamada does. By inviting an attack, both the purposeful “opening” and the chamada demand the close proximity of the other player, who is lured into the trap—knowingly in the chamada, but unknowingly during the rest of the game. The chamada functions as a magnifying glass, making visible the smaller, subtler traps woven throughout the game.

The chamada has been analyzed as a separate moment in the game with its own set of rules. Lewis analyzes the chamada as a “game within a game” (1992: 120; 195), where the superficial rules of the game (what he calls the lower-order rules) are broken while leaving intact the fundamental principles of the game (what he calls the higher-order rules.) Lewis identifies the two highest order rules of the game as “the pragmatic principle of self-defense and the assumption of malicious intent” (Lewis 1992:199). One of the lower-order rules that, according to Lewis, is

broken during the chamada is the rule that “one should never turn one’s back on the adversary” (Lewis 1992:121). However, in a *chamada de costas*, the caller always turns her head and carefully observes the approaching player. The turned back of the watchful player does not break the rule of never turning “one’s back on the adversary” (in the sense of losing sight of the adversary) but rather comments on it. The chamada theatricalizes the rules of the game. The player’s back is turned, but her eyes are not, adhering to Lewis’s higher *and* lower-order rules. The chamadas are not separate events, subroutines where certain rules are allowed to be broken as Lewis has argued, but ludic moments of magnification and commentary that adhere to the same principles as the game as a whole.

Lewis’s “principle of self-defense” and “assumption of malicious intent” can be condensed in the concept of *malícia*. *Malícia*, the opportunistic trickery that drives the game of angola, has been translated as deception, trickery and cunning (Lewis 1992:236), but, as Downey points out,

[o]ne essential dimension of *malícia* that the English word “cunning” does not capture is playfulness. Capoeiristas use humor in spite of—or as a defense against—the inherent perils of the world. [...] A person who is *malicioso* [*sic*] is a sly trickster, ever vigilant for a chance to enjoy a good laugh as well as to exploit an adversary’s vulnerabilities[.]
(Downey 2005:124)

Malícia, the art of looking for opportunities and taking these opportunities with a sense of humor, but never with *real* malice (the other sense of the word *malícia* in Portuguese), is also part of the more complex concept of *mandinga*, which includes an element of magic and *axé*, the “life force” of Afro-Brazilian religions (Abib 2004:192 and Matory 2005: 123).

Mandinga has been deemed the “central structuring element” (Vieira 1998:111 quoted in Abib 2004:192) of the game, and *malícia* “the guiding principle of capoeira play” (Downey 1998:184). The driving forces in the game, *mandinga* and *malícia* create an environment of

mistrust that demands constant alertness, but this mistrust is practiced in a safe environment, where attacks are “shown” rather than delivered with the intent to harm. In the chamadas as well as in the rest of the game, a moment of inattention is met with a lesson, a cautionary feigned attack rather than a real blow. And the feigned attack is, in turn, met with a smile.

The chamada creates an opportunity for angoleiros to teach, learn and practice deception. Mandinga and malícia—Michel de Certeau’s trickery in his discussion of strategies and tactics—are present throughout the game, where real openings caused by moments of inattention co-exist with false opportunities engineered as traps. These techniques of deception become especially visible during the chamada, where unintentional openings and calculated traps are exposed.

Downey points out that capoeira’s “emphasis on cunning indicates that it developed as a ‘weapon of the weak’” (123). In this game, both players embody the position of the “weak,” as signaled by their constant movement, their trickery and opportunism. However, a playful struggle for control of the space takes place throughout the game, where subtle negotiations and shifts of power can be identified.

This competitive yet cooperative power struggle is magnified and theatricalized during the chamada: the caller stops and opens her arms, claiming control of the roda. The chamada takes place typically when one player has established a momentary advantage over the other. The caller symbolically claims not only the space where she stands, but she also claims the whole *roda* as her territory. When the responder comes to meet the caller, movement resumes, but it is initiated and controlled by the caller: the responder now plays by the caller’s rules. Sometimes the caller emphasizes her position of power by breaking the chamada with an attack; other times the caller breaks the chamada by politely offering “the floor” to the other player, a gesture that itself creates a trap. The caller establishes her position of power and challenges the responder—the one who is now in the position of the weak—to use his mandinga to “come out on top” at the end of a chamada.

This subversion of power—constantly rehearsed inside the roda and hyperbolized in the

chamada—sometimes anticipates the chamada itself in a humorous reversal of positions of power. Although the chamada is typically initiated by the player who has the advantage in the game, I have witnessed many chamadas where this practice is reversed. The “losing” player usurps his adversary’s chamada before it starts, claiming an advantage in the game through wit rather than physical skill.

Conclusion

The chamada defines capoeira angola and embodies its core principle: deception. The chamada is also deceiving in that it appears to break the rules of the game but in fact it reinforces, magnifies and comments on these rules. The game of angola, a constant negotiation of power between the two players, is a rehearsal of tactics of resistance, with the implicit knowledge that neither player is in a position of power outside the roda. The chamada offers the angoleira the opportunity to impersonate and expose the power that oppresses her outside the roda, and in the chamada, as well as in the rest of the game, she is playfully invited and challenged to subvert that power, in a rehearsal for such transformations outside the roda.

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Endnote

- ¹ See Leticia Vidor de Souza Reis (1993) for a detailed historical account and political analysis of this process.

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Repenser la Modernité Re-Thinking Modernity

Gabriele Klein

Je souhaite contribuer au thème de la conférence en interrogeant comment l'époque moderne de la danse est écrite dans l'étude de la danse, ou plutôt comment elle a été écrite jusqu'à présent. Dans cette révision de l'historiographie de la danse, je porte mon focus sur la danse européenne dans l'époque moderne, que je comprends entre la période des Lumières en Europe jusqu'à la moitié, voire la fin du XX^{ème} siècle.

Mon discours se base sur différents projets de recherches empiriques, que j'ai effectués ces dernières années. Les objets de mes recherches étaient surtout les cultures de la danse non européennes et leur influence sur la culture de la danse en Europe. Au vu du temps qui m'est imparti, je ne peux malheureusement développer ces aspects de mes recherches que dans un temps limité.

Historiographie comme histoire de l'écriture historique de la danse

En 1789, l'année où les événements révolutionnaires de Paris firent naître une césure dans la vie politique moderne en Europe, la revue allemande 'Mercur' publia le discours d'ouverture de Friedrich von Schiller, qu'il avait tenu à Iéna. Il avait pour titre : 'Que signifie et à quelle fin étudie-t-on l'histoire universelle ?' Ainsi Schiller appartenait à ceux qui prenaient congé du XVIII^{ème} siècle, valant comme le siècle philosophique, et sonnaient l'avènement du XIX^{ème} siècle, qui allait devenir le siècle historique. C'était le siècle pendant lequel l'époque moderne commençait à s'établir – grâce à l'économie industrielle, la démocratie politique, la culture bourgeoise et l'art "libre", et parallèlement le siècle de l'histoire universelle, marqué par la théorie de Hegel de la philosophie de l'histoire. L'histoire, ainsi était-elle nommée chez Hegel, exigeait nécessairement une concomitance dialectique entre des faits pris séparément et une représentation intégrale du processus historique. C'était également Hegel,

qui, d'un point de vue philosophique, préparait le concept de liberté dans l'époque moderne. Ce concept de liberté allait également avoir un rôle central dans la danse du XX^{ème} siècle, quand il fut question de se libérer des entraves des artifices du ballet, de la liberté dans l'invention et l'exécution du mouvement; de la liberté dans la création et du choix des thèmes, de la liberté de la représentation et de la liberté dans "l'entre deux" d'une grammaire de la danse.

Le concept de la liberté chez Hegel était et est un concept central de la pensée moderne. Il s'imposait précisément à l'époque où le système économique occidental s'était assis sur l'esclavage systématique de Non-Européens servant de main d'œuvre dans les colonies. Hegel avait détourné le concept de liberté vers la représentation qu'il s'était faite du rapport entre domination et servitude. Il avait employé pour la première fois ce concept à Iéna en 1805/06, un an après la révolution haïtienne¹, dans la 'Phänomenologie des Geistes'. À cette époque, cette révolution passait déjà pour le creuset des idéaux des Lumières français et pendant plus d'un an, il en fut régulièrement rapporté dans la revue allemande 'Minerva', avec laquelle Hegel était familiarisé. Si l'on interroge dans l'histoire de la philosophie sur quel discours de Hegel reposait le concept de liberté, on trouve toujours les mêmes réponses : Elle se basait sur sa réception des écrits d'autres philosophes et non sur la connaissance des mouvements de liberté contre l'oppression coloniale.

L'idée de liberté de l'homme blanc de la bourgeoisie commence donc par le décalage entre l'image de la société idéale et la société coloniale réelle, laissant la question ouverte: Comment la liberté en tant que topique central de la danse et de l'histoire de la danse pendant l'époque moderne trouve-t-elle une place dans ce contexte de pensée et marque le XX^{ème} siècle.

Le concept de liberté ainsi que celui souvent associé à la politique nationale d'histoire

universelle est tardif, discrédité seulement dans les années 60 – à savoir à l’époque où les dernières colonies ont été remises en liberté. C’est aujourd’hui un lieu commun de la science de l’histoire contemporaine de dire que l’écriture de l’histoire s’accomplit suivant des critères qui sont déjà connotés et influencés par le concept historique de chaque historien; et que le regard sur l’histoire dans le sens de science de l’histoire est constamment soumis à des métamorphoses, qui nécessitent une permanente réécriture de l’histoire. Des “faits” historiques, comme on les nomme aujourd’hui - à la différence de Hegel - sont finalement choisis selon des critères idéologiques, nouvellement réécrits, classés, interprétés. Ainsi l’écriture de l’histoire n’est jamais Re-construction, mais toujours une constante Nouvelle-construction et un modèle de communication et d’interprétation en soi pour le présent et le futur de sociétés, de cultures et de certains groupes. Ainsi, elle est également histoire politique.

Ce qui vaut pour l’écriture de l’histoire et la science de l’histoire en général, vaut aussi pour l’histoire de la danse et la science de la danse. La science de la danse. Elle aussi prend la position d’un porte-parole légitime, d’un locuteur, et marque la mémoire culturelle et historique de la danse grâce à ses narrations. Par conséquent, ceci est particulièrement important, car dans de nombreuses formations pratiques de la danse, la matière ‘histoire de la danse’ est la plupart du temps la seule matière socioculturelle enseignée et ce savoir transmis influence ainsi de manière déterminante le positionnement individuel dans le monde de la danse. Ainsi, la question relative à l’histoire de la danse apparaît virulente: Dans quel sens l’histoire de la danse – et en l’occurrence celle de l’époque moderne – est-elle écrite et par qui ?

L’Ecriture historique de la danse de l’époque moderne

Encore au début du XX^{ème} siècle, l’histoire de la danse a été écrite dans le style de l’histoire universelle courante dans la science de l’histoire du XIX^{ème} siècle². Mais longtemps après que la science de l’histoire ait pris congé de ce modèle, les publications, qui portaient leur regard sur une “histoire mondiale de la danse”, disparurent. Car le paradoxe de cette forme d’historiographie

était soumise à une critique massive : D’une part l’histoire est ici comprise comme illimitée en espace et en temps, mais d’autre part l’écriture d’une histoire du monde n’est pratiquement devenue possible qu’à partir du moment où une partie de l’humanité a été capable de porter son regard sur la planète entière, concrètement: Depuis les voyages de découverte des européens et le début de l’expansion européenne à partir du tournant du XV^{ème} et du XVI^{ème} siècle. En conséquence, l’histoire universelle resta encore récemment eurocentriste. Les œuvres qui traitaient de l’histoire occidentale - et qui la reliaient avec celles des pays et des cultures de la danse avec lesquelles l’Europe se sentait proche - étaient en général également reconnus dans l’histoire de la danse comme des histoires universelles. L’Afrique Noire, l’Asie du sud-est et l’Océanie, pour donner quelques exemples, ne font aujourd’hui encore toujours pas partie de ces pays.

Même dans les plus jeunes ‘Dance Studies’ européennes, l’histoire de la danse artistique européenne est plutôt rédigée et interprétée dans l’époque moderne surtout depuis la généalogie des cultures européennes ou depuis la perspective d’une histoire sociétale nationale. À ce sujet, des ouvrages dominent, qui, tout à fait dans le sens de l’écriture historique traditionnelle, relatent l’histoire de la danse comme l’histoire de danseurs excellents ou qui la présentent comme l’histoire de concept³ (par exemple la ‘Modern dance’).

La structure du contenu de publications littéraires sur l’histoire de la danse comporte d’étonnantes ressemblances, qui se montrent particulièrement selon les trois caractéristiques suivantes⁴:

- Dans l’histoire de la danse artistique en général, il ait peu arrivé qu’on ait évoqué des influences provenant d’autres pays et d’autres cultures, lors de l’histoire de la création de la danse – que ce soit en Allemagne, en Angleterre ou en France. En l’occurrence on souligne particulièrement l’influence de la ‘Modern dance’ made in USA.
- L’histoire de la danse artistique est racontée comme une histoire de ses protagonistes. C’est-à-dire qu’une

chronologie ou une typologie est créée dans chaque ouvrage et que des chorégraphes isolés sont rassemblés systématiquement sur des phases isolées.

- Les chorégraphes masculins et féminins représentés sont pour l'essentiel des européens, plus exactement des européens de l'ouest.

En bref: l'histoire de la danse européenne de l'époque moderne est relatée comme une histoire de l'Occident, donc une histoire d'une culture bourgeoise blanche et de ses mouvements d'avant-garde. Elle apparaît comme un système dissipatif, dont parle Niklas Luhmann, dans la mesure où il est suggéré que l'art de la danse ne trouve ses références que dans sa propre histoire – et la plupart du temps c'est l'histoire de la nation qui est thématisée. D'après cela la 'Ausdruckstanz' se détache du ballet classique, le 'Tanztheater' développe des idées de l' 'Ausdruckstanz', la 'Postmodern dance' se détache de la 'Modern dance' etc.

En outre elle apparaît comme une histoire de ses protagonistes, comme histoire d'un nombre cernable de chorégraphes et de danseurs, dont l'importance pour le développement de l'histoire de l'art de la danse est accentuée. Ce sont par conséquent ces chorégraphes, qui sont déclarés sujet de l'histoire, ceux qui 'ont fait l'histoire'. L'histoire de la danse est présentée sous cette perspective comme l'histoire de personnes et non de structures.

Et finalement l'histoire de l'art de la danse se développe d'elle-même; la proportion de la culture populaire de la danse au XX^{ème} siècle ainsi que l'influence des émigrants et des esthétiques de la danse d'autres groupes culturels n'est la plupart du temps pas mentionnée ou alors elle est thématisée dans des publications spécifiques⁵.

J'en arrive ainsi à mon 3^{ème} point avec cette question : Comment l'histoire de la danse dans le sens d'une "Global History" est-elle possible dans le XXI^{ème} siècle ?

L'Histoire de la danse comme "Global History"

Une multitude de problématiques est inhérente à l'écriture historique de la danse contemporaine: À côté de la mise en évidence

des acteurs individuels, des "faiseurs d'histoire" et des génies, c'est par exemple la naissance performative et la mise à jour du concept de nation, un modèle imaginaire, comme l'avait dégagé Benedict Anderson⁶, qui implique obligatoirement certains mécanismes d'inclusions et d'exclusions de groupes ethniques, d'émigrants, d'esthétiques. Et qui du seul fait de la globalisation du monde de la danse ne peut pas être maintenu. De plus - malgré de maintes publications dont les thèmes sont orientés autour des théories sur le genre sexuel ou encore sur la "race", "l'ethnie" et la "nation" - on se pose encore la question suivante: À quel point ces catégories structurelles sont-elles des catégories *implicites* de l'écriture historique de la danse européenne ? Ramsey Burt⁷ a eu le mérite, et pour cause, d'avoir souligné que les préjugés sur le danseur mâle ont servi pendant 150 ans à mettre à jour régulièrement les normes de la masculinité hétérosexuelle. Cependant, comment l'écriture historique de la danse thématise la question de l'orientation sexuelle des danseurs et des danseuses? L'inattention structurelle du genre sexuel n'est-il pas non plus une confirmation implicite de la normativité hétérosexuelle coloniale, pré-coloniale et post-coloniale? Cette question se pose notamment parce que "race" et genre sexuel n'ont pas simplement comme thèmes la couleur de la peau et de la sexualité, voire l'orientation sexuelle, mais aussi les stratégies de travail assujetti, d'exploitation coloniale et d'exclusion sociale d'une part, et l'attribution simultanée de connotations exotiques, érotiques et essentialistes des corps d'autre part. 'L'ambivalence de l'époque moderne', comme l'a nommée Zygmunt Bauman⁸, se dévoile précisément ici et est habitée dans la dialectique des Lumières: Le "danseur noir" ou le "latino" sont encore des figures mythiques de la pensée occidentale. Tout comme la sexualité, la construction du terme "Whiteness" dans la danse européenne en tant que catégorie implicite de l'écriture historique de la danse est plutôt obscure. Des titres ou des chapitres d'œuvres comme 'Vom anderen Ende der Welt' ('À l'autre bout du monde') ou 'Der exotische Tanz' ('La danse exotique'), der 'schwarze Tanz' ('la danse noire') ou simplement 'außereuropäische

Einflüsse' (influences extra-européennes) renvoient à des schémas de construction de "l'autre" corps et ainsi à la création implicite du terme "Whiteness". Et ce n'est pas rare que la construction de l'Autre aille avec une différenciation entre la haute culture et la culture populaire. Ainsi que la danse de l'époque moderne du XXème siècle n'est pas représentable sans migration, l'influence de la culture populaire sur la danse artistique n'est pas négligeable non plus.

Néanmoins la relation entre l'époque moderne de la danse et la culture populaire n'est thématifiée que dans des publications spécifiques consacrées à la culture populaire ou à des danseuses en particulier⁹. Par exemple, dans leur livre sur les 'Danseuses de variété autour de 1900'¹⁰, Brygida Ochaim et Claudia Balk montrent que ce ne sont pas seulement quelques-unes des plus importantes pionnières de la danse moderne comme Ruth St. Denis, Loïe Fuller ou Isadora Duncan qui ont commencé leurs carrières dans la variété tandis que d'autres grandes danseuses de cette époque sont restées cantonnées dans les lieux et établissements de plaisir de la pègre et du demi-monde comme Anita Berber. Il est vrai que la thèse n'est pas nouvelle: Longtemps après les premières représentations d'Isadora Duncan en Europe, des mouvements de danse s'étaient déjà formés et on pouvait les considérer comme un début généraliste de l'époque moderne de la danse. En revanche, les noms des plus importantes danseuses - comme 'La Goulue', 'La belle Otero', Saharet, Sada Yacco - ont en grande partie disparu de l'écriture historique de la danse; leur contribution à l'époque moderne de la danse est pour ainsi dire invisible.¹¹ Ceci est un bon exemple pour montrer que les lieux où se trouvent l'art de la danse, le public et les discours sont de ce fait devenus très déterminants dans la perception de ce qu'est et de ce que doit être l'art de la danse.

Toutefois les danses populaires étaient précisément devenu l'incarnation de la culture urbaine moderne, du mélange hybride, marqué par des émigrants: Déjà au début du XXème siècle, des vagues de migration provenant de l'Amérique Latine transforment fondamentalement la culture de la danse européenne: Des danses noires, accompagnées

par du "Niggerjazz" ont fait la conquête des palais de la danse, des établissements de plaisir des nouveaux urbains.

Ces danses déconstruisent d'une manière très subtile, car pré-réflexives, l'idée du corps tel qu'elle a été transmise dans la danse européenne. Ces danses font non seulement expérimenter d'autres combinaisons figuratives dans les danses de couples, mais elles introduisent aussi des principes polycentriques et polyrythmiques dans la danse européenne et mettent en avant le bassin comme centre du mouvement. Du Charleston au Hip-Hop, les danses populaires sont une expression éruptive directe de l'expérience sociale et urbaine et deviennent un sismographe important d'une existence sociale fragmentée perceptible du corps.

J'en arrive à la conclusion:

En somme, ces aspects soulignent la question suivante: Où et comment la recherche sur la danse succède-t-elle à une pensée et un discours sur la danse, qui succède implicitement à la re-construction d'une culture blanche et bourgeoise? Et comment peut-on inclure la pensée et le discours non occidental dans la danse? Plus concrètement: Jusqu'à quel point se donne-t-on la peine en Europe et dans les autres pays occidentaux - et en l'occurrence plus particulièrement à propos de l'hégémonie linguistique dont disposent les pays de langue anglaise - d'inclure des traditions critiques, non occidentales, et des écritures historiques et ceci au préalable en rendant possible des traductions et ce faisant en marquant une rupture avec les discours hégémoniques - également en danse. En 1955, longtemps avant le livre pionnier d'Edward Said, 'Orientalism', ou plus tard avec les travaux de Homi Bhabha, Césaire a posé la question dans le 'Discourse on Colonialism', dans quelle mesure nous construisons le particulier occidental comme universel.

Autrement formulé: Jusqu'à quel point nos interprétations occidentales de la danse sont-elles des systèmes de représentations coloniaux? Attirer l'attention sur cette question est la préoccupation de ma conférence. Dans le cadre du thème du congrès 'Repenser la Théorie' j'oriente ainsi une réflexion sur l'historiographie de la danse. En référence à Schiller, on pourrait

poser cette question: Que signifie et à quelle fin écrit-on l'histoire de la danse ?

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Endnotes

- ¹ Voir à ce sujet: Buch-Morss, s.a.: 66-69.
- ² Voir: Boehn, 1925, et: Sachs, 1992.
- ³ Voir: Huschka, 2002.
- ⁴ Cette petite recherche est basée sur des livres sur l'histoire de la danse publiés en allemand, en anglais ou en français, parmi ceux mon propre livre *Frauen, Körper, Tanz. Eine Zivilisationsgeschichte des Tanzes*, déposé comme thèse de doctorat en 1989. Ainsi, cette conférence intègre un aspect d'auto-critique et d'auto-réflexion après plus de vingt années de recherches en danse. Et il fait référence à la discipline dans laquelle j'avais débuté auparavant dans le monde académique: Les sciences de l'histoire.
- ⁵ Voir p.ex. Manning, (2004). Ou d'autres publications qui traite plutôt de cultures de la danse populaire comme p.ex. Ochaim/ Balk, 1998. Ceci vaut en grande partie aussi pour la littérature de la pédagogie en danse, dans la mesure où des chapitres y sont existents qui aborde la relation entre la création artistique en danse et l'activité pédagogique en danse.
- ⁶ Voir: Anderson, 2006.
- ⁷ Voir: Burt, 1995.
- ⁸ Voir: Bauman, 2004.
- ⁹ Par exemple Fischer, 2006.
- ¹⁰ Voir Ochaim/ Balk, 1998.
- ¹¹ Voir aussi Robinson, 1997, qui ne prend pas en considération ces influences bien qu'elles soient d'autant plus liées à l'histoire de la France qu'à celle de tout autre pays.

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A Fight As Celebration: Embodied Conflict and Ecstatic Connection in the Argentine Tango Dance Community in Chicago

Susan Lamberth

In a building on a deserted, industrial street on the Near West Side of Chicago, up a wide metal stairway, past photography studios and artists lofts, a large red door opens into a room with dimmed lights and recorded music playing tango classics. Café tables with a smattering of wine bottles have been pushed closely together to create more room for a dance floor. Couples ranging in age between 20 to 75 lean in towards each other as they glide circularly across the floor, their motion barely interrupted by sharp kicks of the women's legs. No one talks on the dance floor and most of the women have their eyes closed. They appear to be in a tango induced trance.

Although there are a few teachers who are from Argentina, for the most part the community of tango dancers in Chicago are middle class Midwestern people, with the kind of diversity you might expect in a big city like Chicago in terms of nationalities, ethnicities, ages and histories. Argentine tango in Chicago brings together people from all over the city, assembling people who would probably not otherwise meet. In Chicago, the tango scene is of moderate size compared to other big cities such as New York or Paris. Dancers estimate about one to two hundred people tango regularly in the Chicago area. With such a small community of dancers in regular contact with one another, the dancers know each other by sight if not by name.

Tango has often been described as a symbolic re-enactment of gendered conflict as two dancers fight for domination. The movements of tango are at the same time intimate and aggressive. Partners interweave their bodies as they hook, trip, and kick between each others legs. Much has been written about the gendered conflict symbolically enacted in tango in Buenos Aires (e.g. Savigliano 1995; Taylor 1998). In Chicago, however, dancers emphasize an energy connection between partners as definitive of tango. For them, Argentine Tango dance involves and invokes a (meta) physical energy connection binding the bodies of two people together. This energy connection is said to

be what differentiates Argentine tango from ballroom tango or show tango. The communication achieved through the connection allows for complicated yet improvised steps, rather than what Argentine tango dancers see as the set choreography of other tango styles. It is emphatically a social form that allows people who have never met and who have had different teachers come together to dance. The connection of energy is used to improvise complex movements necessitating a high level of sensitivity for both partners.

Although dancers search for a connection with another person believed to be accessed through the tango, the members of the community of tango dancers in Chicago are disconnected and the community itself is fraught with conflict. Dancers come together to tango; but instead of the dance encouraging cohesion within the group, individuals argue, resentments form; and splinter factions compete to the point of taking legal action. Although the tango integrates members into a community with common interests; at the same time it instigates and represents conflict. Dancers emphasize the importance of the connection, but agree that gendered conflict is also part of the equation.

Through an ethnography of the Argentine tango community in Chicago, this paper examines the way the theoretical bindings and disruptions of tango are enacted and negotiated, showing interdependency of conflict and connection in Chicago Argentine tango dance¹.

Practice: Energy as Projection of the Self

According to Bourdieu, practice is the site of the dialectic between structure and *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1980:52). The *habitus* are, "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them"

(Bourdieu 1980:53). The habitus produces the improvisations of daily life. Habitus constructs and is constructed through practice (Bourdieu 1980:52). Practice is therefore constructed through the dispositions or preferences upon which choice is based. Bourdieu believed that his notion of habitus dissolved the division between subject and object that acts as an impediment to the recognition of the individual choices and dispositions that exist in a dialogue with the structures of society.

Bourdieu conceptualized the “field” as a social construct of systematized social positions relating to one another through power relationships. The field involves a set of arbitrary rules about behavior which nevertheless are necessary for the functionality of the field (Bourdieu 1980:67). Fields are “products of a long, slow process of autonomization” as an individuals’ habitus is developed through exposure to a field (Bourdieu 1980:67). The field doesn’t only develop the habitus, but also allows the network of social relations of the field to work. A learned field involves a “slow process of co-option and initiation which is equivalent to a second birth (Bourdieu 1980:68).

Using Bourdieu’s concept of habitus and field provides an orientation to the practice of tango dance. The set of dispositions that tango dancers hold within the structure of the field, the rules of the dance, are constituted through the practice of tango and also generate the way tango is practiced. The choices individual dancers make about the styles of performance, choices of music, methods of learning, and the construction of social space tend to persist even after the conditions of the field have changed. The fields of Argentine tango in Chicago include the rules pertaining to the structure of the movements as well as associated behavior, including choice of dance partners, the procedures for asking, accepting and declining a dance, and the amount of time spent dancing with a given individual. Conflict occurs between members of the community when their habitus contradict one another. Different fields are developed autonomously in Chicago through the wide variety of styles of Argentine tango that are taught. As a result, widely varying habitus are developed within the community of tango dancers. When these fields intersect periodically, divergent understandings create conflict.

Argentine tango dancers in Chicago describe a connection of “energy” between the dancers that serves to communicate the movement to be performed. Projected forward from the chest of the leader, it is received through the chest of the follower who interprets the meaning of the energy to enact movements. The follower must also project her² own energy back to the leader to communicate her desires about how the dance is going. As a dancer increases in ability, there does not need to be a visibly perceptible movement of the chest, rather the energy can be felt intuitively.

The development of energy and the ability to project it meaningfully to another person constitutes a tango dancers’ habitus, cultivated in the field of tango classes. The first step in learning tango often consists of learning to feel and project energy, convincing the unbelievers in the crowd that this is even possible. A common practice exercise for beginners entails placing the follower’s hands on the leader’s chest as simple steps are performed. This is thought to develop the ability to give and receive energy. Beginning with this physical contact, the progression of learning proceeds to watching the chest of the partner, and then simply by feeling the energy without visual cues. The last step in this process is being able to dance with eyes closed, solely feeling the impulses through the body.³ As the follower learns to receive the impulses from the leader, she begins to be able to understand what the impulse means and translate it intuitively into one of many acceptable responses. As Cynthia Novack explains regarding the development of modern dance contact improvisers, “in the learning process, the sense of touch and physical reflex actions assume more importance for the dancer than the sense of vision and consciously chosen actions” (Novack 1990:150).

Energy is said to exist in different quantities and qualities between individual tango dancers. Even without physical contact of a partner, one can feel another person’s energy in the tango.⁴ The ability of an individual to project his or her energy can be improved, though the basic quality of the energy remains tied to the individual personality. Skills of alignment, strength, flexibility and balance allows the dancer greater facility to manipulate their own energy, and the ability to read another person’s energy is based solely on a sensitivity that is both inherent to the

person, as well as developed through practice, becoming a part of the dancers habitus.

Energy exists independently within each person, but is perceived relationally. A sense of another person's energy cannot be understood without reference to and influence of one's own energy. The energy between partners must be matched in order for the transmission of energy (the connection) to occur. If the leader's energy is too strong it may overwhelm the follower. Concurrently, if the follower's energy is too strong, she may begin to take over the dance, displacing the leader as the active role. The dance relies on a balance of "masculine" leading energy and "feminine" receptive energy in order achieve a sense of the whole.

The culture of tango dancers has designated energy as a concrete manifestation of the self. It represents a projection of the self that arises from within and can be encountered, manipulated, and melded with the energy projected by another person. Members of the tango community in Chicago share an idea about energy derived from an understanding about how men and women can relate to each other. Although energy can be manipulated into different directions and dynamics, the quality of the energy remains that of the individual self from which it emanates. The projection of energy outside of one's self expresses a desire to share one's self with another person, and to have the experience of as one dancer pointed out, the "internalization" of another self.

Nirvana: Achieving the Connection

Maurice Merleau-Ponty attempts to overcome empiricism and intellectualism by merging subject and object, uncovering the body as the "very centre of our experience," (Merleau-Ponty 1945:82). Through the body's spatiality and its ability to move it can go beyond literal actions necessary for the sustenance of life, to figurative actions (Merleau-Ponty 1945:169). Tango dance is one example of the figurative meaning that Merleau-Ponty posits as the "union of essence and existence" (Merleau-Ponty 1945:170). Perception of the world through the medium of the senses is what we believe to be true about the world (Merleau-Ponty 1945:62). Perceptions based on sight, sound, touch, smell, taste, and kinesis end in objects, but begin with and are grounded in the

body (Merleau-Ponty 1945:77). Being is defined as "being-in-the-world," taking into account our perception of reality as a three-dimensional existence moving uni-directionally through time (Merleau-Ponty, 1945:202).

The perception of another individual rises above objectification. Another person is perceived as the "completion of the system," an "other self" that exists in relation to the perceiver (Merleau-Ponty 1945:410). The body develops perception as a "knowledge-acquiring apparatus," with different individuals acquiring diverse assessments of knowledge due to the varying perceptive equipment between bodies (Merleau-Ponty 1945:409).

When the energies of tango dancers match, there is a possibility of establishing a connection between dance partners. The ability to connect is considered more important; and is theoretically more indicative of a good dancer than elaborate footwork or fancy ornamentation. In fact, these are sometimes seen by dancers as a mask for a lack of facility with sending and receiving energy. The reason to tango, and the essence that enables an ideal performance rests in finding a connection with another person, specifically another person of a different gender. Dancers often use metaphors of spiritual ecstasy to describe the connection. For example; one dancer said when the connection occurs it is "nirvana."

The presence of an emphasis on connection is the essence of the attraction for many people to tango over other forms of social dance. The desire to connect to another self represents a completing of one's own self. Through the tango connection, the part becomes whole.

The connection is not necessarily an ephemeral experience. Dancers describe the connection, and the memory of the connection as remaining embodied for a period of time even after the dance is over and the partners have gone separate ways. A connection may only happen once in an evening, if at all, so when it does happen, it is highly valued.

Connections may be missing or bad. When the connection is absent, the ability to communicate does not necessarily completely vanish, but the satisfaction of a linkage with another person is gone. A follower may understand what step the leader is marking even without feeling the connection. Communication therefore is not the same as connection.

Skill in dancing is not the primary constituent of the ability to establish a connection, rather it is achieved when the flow of energy is balanced between leader and follower. A breakdown of the connection often occurs when the leader projects energy too forcefully without being sensitive to the energy given back by the follower. The follower in turn must maintain the energy that the leader gives. Without sufficient projection on both sides, the couple loses the ability to connect.

As tango dancers dance with a partner, they enact the connection to another self that Merleau-Ponty places at the heart of interaction with the world. Dancing places an emphasis on kinesis, the perceptual ability to feel the muscles of the body moving through space. As a dancer connects to another person through the dance, the kinesthetic perception is expanded to include another self. In a social dance context of a *milonga* (tango dance party) they are also enacting a larger integrated system of dancers revolving around the dance floor. Tango dancers embody this connection after knowledge gained through long hours of study, which reconstruct perceptions of subjectivity and begin to erase boundaries between the self and another person, an “other self.”

The Lead: Mark and Respond

Both Merleau-Ponty and Bourdieu attempt to erase the dyad of subject and object by placing the body, the point of contact and representation between selves, as the ground of culture. Thomas Csordas established an approach to embodiment that merged Merleau-Ponty’s pre-objective, perceptive body with Bourdieu’s *habitus* of socially interactive and thus constituted dispositions (Csordas 1990:12). The body’s role becomes a mediator between the static view of individual in society and dynamically changing actions, experiences, and perceptions. A sense of embodiment includes the subjectivity of one’s own body, action and experience with other subjects and objects, and the objectification of other bodies. Through a lens of embodiment, Csordas views the body not as an object to be studied, but “as the *subject* of culture, or in other words as the existential ground of culture” (Csordas 1990:5). Csordas begins with Merleau-Ponty’s concept of the preobjective, “that moment of transcendence in which perception begins, and, in the midst of arbitrariness and indeterminacy, constitutes and is

constituted by culture” (Csordas 1990:9). The preobjective body is combined with a view of the habitus as the generator of the objective structures of practice and the unifying principle of social practices (Csordas 1990:12). An analysis of perception and practice merges subject and object and allows for an understanding of how selves become objectified (Csordas 1990:40).

However, if the subject and object are dissolved, how do we examine the interactions between individuals that are the basis of social life? Michael Jackson provides a view of intersubjectivity, in which reality, like Merleau-Ponty’s Being-in-the-world, is relational (Jackson 1998:6). Jackson advocates an intersubjective approach because it identifies ways of seeing the world that,

“emphasize identity as ‘mutually arising’- as relational and variable-rather than assign ontological primacy to the *individual* persons or objects that are implicated in any intersubjective nexus” (Jackson 1998:7).

As the desire to find a connection with another person through the tango as it is practiced in Chicago shows, people search for a sense of shared identity. The attempt to establish a connection through tango represents a belief in possibility of a relational identity.

Embodied interactions are not always positive experiences, with empathetic feelings towards another person, but are often wrought with destructive impulses, conflict, and ambiguity (Jackson 1998:4). Jackson’s approach to intersubjectivity encompasses the positive and negative poles of interaction. Continuing Bourdieu’s theory of habitual dispositions that shape interaction and Merleau-Ponty’s placement of the body as a perceiving, knowledge seeking being, Jackson’s intersubjectivity can be constructive or destructive, arbitrary or impersonal (1998:9). Social inequality between two subjects does not negate their interdependence (Jackson 1998:9). The subject is also unstable; it is a dynamic and changing being (Jackson 1998:9).

The improvisatory nature of Argentine Tango within a certain vocabulary of steps, places the nonverbal communication of the connection as a priority. Unlike other social dances, in tango the

two partners do not necessarily mirror each other's steps. They may do completely different movements, stepping on the same or opposite feet. The follower may step while the leader holds his position. They may also step in different rhythms as the leader performs a catch step, quickly shifting weight, while the follower maintains even stepping.

The connection found in Argentine tango means that even complete strangers can negotiate an intricate and complicated set of figures. Specific signals that the leader gives must be immediately and instinctively translated by the follower. For example, if the leader turns his upper body slightly to the right when the follower is standing on her right foot, it means she must follow his turn by making a half turn with her body and hips and step backwards with her left foot (part of a step called a back ocho). The signals given are subtle movements which are easily missed without full concentration directed at the partner. Improvisation brings a heightened sense of excitement, as one leader explained "the ability to improvise allows you to create new things. Whenever you get a new partner and she does something a little bit different, it makes you say 'Wow! I've never had this door open before. What happens if I step through?' Suddenly you find yourself in new expressions."

Sometimes there is a breakdown in communication which necessitates further improvisation. If the follower doesn't give the expected response; the leader must adapt; letting the following step flow from the current situation. Improvisation without using choreographed sequences allows for the continual renegotiation of the dance.

The requirement for the dance to be improvised in order for it to be considered authentic Argentine tango is said to necessitate a division of roles. In English the two roles of tango are designated as leader and follower, but the words used by serious Argentine tango dancers, *marcar* and *responder*, translate more precisely as "to show the way" and "to respond." The movement of the leader's body marks a situation into which the follower responds. The leader may take advantage of all of the directions the spine can move, forward and back, shifting laterally to either side, or turning on his axis. Every cue the follower receives is based on the placement and

movement of the upper torso of the leader, though in practice leaders often use pressure of their hand on the followers back to clarify the communication..

Tango dancers in Chicago stressed the agency of the follower. They maintain that the follower is able to express herself and add to the movement through the use of adornments including tapping her foot, circling her foot on the floor, or kicking her leg. The follower does not have a choice in the transference of weight from foot to foot or in the turning on her axis. However, any movement with the free leg is at her discretion. A sensitive follower can feel the amount of energy with which she is being turned or stepped and will respond with greater or lesser energy in her adornments. A sensitive leader pays attention to the adornments of the follower to allow her enough time to complete what she sets out to do.

Merleau-Ponty states that, "the subject does not weld together individual movements and individual stimuli but acquires the power to respond with a certain type of solution to situations of a certain general form." (2003:164). During the tango, leader and follower react to the situations presented by each other with a response embedded within the body. The follower responds to the situation the leader presents with her own solution, and the leader continues to mark new situations based on the followers response.

Tango dancers have divergent modes of interaction, in which destructive and impersonal elements can exist at the same time as constructive and subjective modes. Though the dancers may construe their relationship as a power dynamic as the leader directs the follower's motion, they are still interdependent on each other. A shared goal of dancing tango exists between the dancers, but their ideas about what tango means and how it should be enacted may be different. Additionally, many selves can be present in the course of one dance as the situation evolves. The skill of dancing tango, though intertwined with the subject, may take over and the dancer's self objectified. The skill of a dancer may become the subject with which another dancer enters into an intersubjective relationship.

In his history of the tango, Borges described the dance as, "the conviction that a fight can be a celebration" (Borges 2003). Tango in Chicago theoretically involves gendered conflict as well as

well as an ecstatic relatedness. While this may appear initially as a dichotomy, the two are actually interdependent. The connection doesn't happen without the tension held between the partners, and the enactment of conflict is made possible through feeling the connection. In this way dancers in Chicago locally configure this transnational genre. Emphasizing the connection, for Chicago Argentine tango dancers the essence of tango lies in each moment of charged transcendence.

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Endnotes

- ¹ This paper draws from a my thesis, submitted in July, 2005 for the Masters of Arts Program in Social Science at the University of Chicago.
- ² I will designate the leader as he and the follower as she for the sake of clarity and adherence to the dispositions of the dancers. Male leaders and female followers constitutes the norm, although when there is an unequal distribution of sexes either role may be taken. I should also note that gay milongas do form a small yet enduring presence.
- ³ This may even be done with the followers eyes closed and without the partners touching at all, just standing very near to each other.
- ⁴ Many of the dancers I interviewed in Chicago equate the concept of energy with ideas such as *chi* or *prana*. The development of this energy is said to be a benefit of tango, just as the development of *chi* in tai chi or *prana* in yoga.

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Repertoire: practice vs. theory. The Greek paradigm.

Christos Papakostas

1. Introduction

Dancing constitutes a cultural practice (Bourdieu 1977) by the means of which a given community administers its past and present, restructures itself at a symbolic level and integrates the current reality in its tradition in a dynamic way. Dancing is not to be seen as a static cultural act, as a 'list' of stable and unaltered traits, but as a dynamic process, historically determined and subject to social and political manipulations and negotiations. This perspective allows us to consider dancing beyond the perception of it being well rooted into the spatial boundaries it represents, that is as being interwoven with a given geographical area (Nitsiakos 2003).

Thus, when researching dancing, one should not just aim to locate the target geographical area and to classify 'pure' dancing forms, nor should one merely view the question on the basis of the non flexible polar antithesis of 'native/non native'. After all, the homogeneity of the term native has been questioned by several ethnographical and anthropological studies. What should be seen each time as a native dance is the result of a historical procedure closely related to any given social and economic conditions, the patterns of power and authority that develop in a given temporal setting, as well as the agency of the social actors. (Papakostas 2007a, 2007b)

2. The Deterritorialization of Greek Dance

Since the end of World War II, people have been able to witness a gradual ever-increasing 'transference' or to be more specific 'deterritorialization' of dancing. In other words, dancing is extracted from the community, its natural space of realization and practice, and it is used as a theatrical, artistic, entertaining and educational cultural form. This extraction takes place in non-places (Auzé 1995). That is, in places which are not related to the historical, social and cultural context of the community. Such places are theatres, festival and other venues, teaching classrooms and others. All these places are products of modernity and postmodernity. Going

deeper into the problem of this peculiar dancing 'deterritorialisation', it can be argued that it is associated with the local, regional and town cultural-dance clubs. A dance club is a modern 'artificial habitat' of the musical-dancing tradition and assumes the role of fertilizing in vitro the new generation and folk culture.

A central feature of the aforementioned procedure is the presentation of traditional dances on stage. The presentation of a dancing performance gives motivation to the performers, makes the dancing club known to the public and creates conditions necessary for the clubs sustainability and development. To prepare a dancing performance, one needs a variety of dances to be performed on stage, while teaching the dances to the performers is a necessary prerogative. Schematically, one could describe the process of preparing a dancing performance as follows:

- a) collection, evaluation and selection of the dancing repertoire
- b) dance teacher selection, dance teaching
- c) stage production, performance

All the above parts of the dancing performance procedure constitute structural elements of the identity of a dance club and result in the following poles:

- regional/national repertoire
- Greek/non Greek
- 'authentic' / folk performance and eventually
- 'we' and the 'others'

3. The Repertoire in Greek traditional dance context

The term that is mostly used when it comes to understanding and analyzing the dancing event is the *repertoire*. The latter relates to practitioners (dancers, dance teachers and musicians), as well as to a big part of the academic community in Greece, mostly those who are involved in the Department of Physical Education and Sport Science, where dancing is a core module, however focusing on movement itself. The usage of the term appears to stem from the necessity of

organizing a body of dances which are initially to be taught and then performed on stage. When it comes to a dance club, the term *repertoire* refers to an ensemble of close movements (dancing forms) aiming to provide dancing knowledge and experience. These forms are characterized by cohesion, are remade in genre and renewed in form, always aiming in a better aesthetic result (Loutzaki 2004).

There are many technical factors that eventually formulate, and sometimes define and contain the dancing *repertoire*. Such factors can be found at performance, music and costume level. In more detail:

1. At a dance and performance level.

- The variety of dance forms: circles, couples, singles, males, females etc

- The organization of dances in a group (*suite, suita*). The term 'suite' marks the sequence of dances organized in an organic whole on the basis of the given geographical area, the dance dynamics, and the gradual climax as far as the needs analysis of the performance is concerned.

- The space (scene, square) and time available for a performance and stage production. At any moment we try to adjust the unity of the dances to the different conditions. That is:

- The rhythmic pattern, speed and interesting pace

- The transferability of a given dance on stage

- The subjective factor, that is, the artistic sensibility, wishes, expectations and quests of the teacher of the dance club.

2. At a music level

- Which existing bands are available in the given area, what are their financial claims, to which extent they can meet the requirements of a contemporary, disciplined stage production.

- The general premise followed- although without guaranteed success- is a dance repertoire in accordance to a given geographical area or cultural group and the relevant musical representation. Whenever this is not feasible, for instance in trips abroad, and in participations in international folk festivals (the dance club) chooses one or two bands in order to ensure the greatest possible variety of the repertoire.

3. At a costume level

- Which costumes are available in the dance clubs wardrobe. This is most likely the biggest practical problem. An ideal but simultaneously unlikely

situation is that each dancing unit has a correspondent costume representation.

4. Further factors that formulate a Dancing Repertoire can be:

- a) a political occurrence

- b) dance political economics

There is the need to differentiate between the dance clubs. This need is facilitated by the professional competition among dance clubs and dance teachers. Expansion of the works and financial enterprises and communication strategies within the net of dance clubs. It is a fact that dance clubs change their dancing preferences. We can mention indicatively that in the late part of the 80s there was a big interest (fashion) in Northern Thrace (*Anatoliki Romilia*) dances, while this was the case with Central Greek Macedonian dances in 1990-93 (was the period of the political tension between Greece and Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia) of and so forth.

Hence, the term repertoire is by definition linked to a positivistic and technical consideration of the phenomenon of dance and dancing practices. The procedure of compiling a dance repertoire follows a reverse course, since it takes dance teaching and stage performance for granted. However, the terms 'dance teaching' and 'dancing performance' are immediate products of the nation-state policies. This entails a monophonic and single-minded perspective of the repertoire. The dance forms that compile it are not random, but they have been under the control and filtering of the nation-state. Hence, the repertoire should be seen through this spectrum, so that light is shed on all its dimensions, as well as its relation to the community, identity, space and history. Thus, apart from the introductory notes we have seen so far with regard to repertoire, we can proceed to some further argumentation.

1. The repertoire is a tight, static, close, in vitro entity where movement itself, form and dance structure get an advantage over the historical, social and cultural context. The use of this term seems to derive from the necessity to formulate a body of dances that will firstly be suitable for teaching and subsequently for theatrical and stage performance. The term repertoire is associated with a positivist and technical view of the dance event and the dancing practice. The process of the formulation of the dancing repertoire follows a reverse order, since

the concepts of teaching and stage performance are taken for granted, being considered to derive from the strategic choices of the nation-state. This view (of repertoire) dictates the general rational behind the selection of local dances and their compilation into a repertoire. In the framework of the political economy (Savigliano 1995) of Greek traditional dance, the repertoire should be composed in such a way that it may raise and preserve the interest of the audience and cultivate an exotic sense that will spring from the contact with otherness. We do not refer to the provision of a real otherness but only to the offer of realised forms of otherness, which are never authentic (Gross 1992). This artificial otherness does not undermine the planning of national identity.

2. The main source of dances for the compilation of a repertoire is the community. The urban space is almost completely ignored. The focus on the community and the (mostly) 'exotic' (-distant) but so proximal at the same time places is a product of the late, post-war decades, when the community is perceived as a collection of unique, odd and touristy isolated cultural (customs, rituals) features (Avdikos 2002). The community functions as the place of collection of 'authentic' dances which satisfies the imagination and the expectations of the experts involved, dance teachers, collectors and tradition lovers. In other words, the community constitutes an 'other space', as Foucault (1994) has aptly put it and becomes the centre of peculiar exoticism at home.

3. In a repertoire, dance is perceived as fully identified with space. One does not take into consideration the local cultural and historical particularities, unless they fully meet with the intentions of the nation state, that is, the isomorphism (Gupta & Ferguson 1992) between dance, space and ethnic territory. Whichever dance form does not satisfy these principles, is transformed, hidden, rejected and is generally dealt with as a problem. In any case, the local dance identity should be fully aligned with the ethnic identity. In an opposite situation, the catharsis from features impure and alien to the ethnic identity is considered to be imperative. The tension between the local and national element reminds us of Herzfeld's ambiguity (1987). This ambiguous pair is a representation of an identity problem that every person faces, that of equilibrium between

self awareness and self image when it comes to confronting the powerful *other*. This issue creates a constant tension between the formal representation and the more private and less formal process of self awareness between the formal and informal levels of culture. Hence, the repertoire is not an analytical construction that would contribute in the understanding of dance as a cultural phenomenon, but rather a hierarchical dominant construction that structures and restructures itself in proportion to the non acceptable, the impure, the 'other' (Kaftantzoglou 2001).

Moreover, it has a clear positivistic and in general terms quantitative orientation, where the local dance is "a fixture" and is likely to submit in one and only of the pre-constructed categories. This is a strict taxonomic technique and a procedure with clear boundaries and rules that aims at organizing and projecting geography of dancing. It is not random that in many cases the repertoire is represented with non verbal but visual means. Dance maps, diagrams, histograms, PowerPoint presentations, signs are some of the means used for the visual depiction of a repertoire. The result of these depictions is the clear cut distinction between dance and the person who has the potential of representing it (scientist, artist, dance teacher), as well as the separation between those who actually dance and those who study dance and discuss about it.

4. The safest way to legalise and standardise the repertoire is by resorting to history. Thus, during the design of the repertoire, predetermined historical moments are used, projecting the suggested standard presence of the nation-state in space and time. Dancing, although the opposite is initially declared, is conceptualized as a cultural form in its historical route (ancient Greece, Byzantium, Ottoman occupation) but it fundamentally remains unchanged. This model, deeply influenced by evolutionism, elucidates a dark side of the repertoire, which urges us to define it as an a-historical and unhistorical construction. The tendency of historicism permeating the repertoire leads to searching the old within the new and not the new within the old (Franko 1993). The relationship between the 'old' and 'new' is no longer experiential and tends to become archival and bibliographical. Furthermore, as it has become a rule to choose an

important piece from the cultural practice and knowledge of the previous generations, that was learnt empirically through example and action, dancing is transformed into mechanical and programmed practices, the significance of which seems to be determined by a professional or amateur know-how rather than socialized and culturally treasured knowledge (Skouteri 1996).

5. One of the basic claims of the repertoire is the presence of the original, which, for Benjamin (1973), is the “prerequisite to the concept of authenticity”. This principle is to be followed piously in the process of teaching the repertoire. To achieve this aim, dance “materializes” and transforms itself in a particular and defined unit in the form of teaching material, so that the students can learn it more easily. It is evident that this contrasts to the intangible character of dance, which “exists at a perpetual vanishing point...and disappears in the very act of materializing” (Siegel 1968:1). A basic practice of the teaching process of dance is the mechanical reproduction.. Mechanical reproduction sets aside the originality of the prototype and detracts the reproduced object (dance) from its territorial claim. (Benjamin 1973). In any case, the teaching objective is a homogeneous and recognizable form, synonymous to the repertoire. This is obvious in various practices of the nation state, such as the National Curriculum for the teaching of Greek traditional dances in primary and secondary Education. Extensions of this consideration can be found in the Ministry of Education decrees addressed to the judging committees of the student Art Festivals, where there is a clear reference to the local repertoire which is judged in terms of credibility and originality.

To summarize, one would support that in the Greek traditional dance the notion of ‘repertoire’ does not offer the theoretical tools that contribute in a holistic interpretative approach of the phenomenon of dance. The repertoire arises as “grand” theory that confirms the total isomorphism between dancing, space and national space. Neither local cultural and historical peculiarities are taken into consideration nor the incalculable variation of dance (Derrida and Mc Donand 1995), that is the local “small” theory. Hence, it imprisons dance in close boundaries, does not put forward the multi-

dimensional and liquid cultural and social character, nor it leads to new artistic and educational approaches.

This notion of the repertoire appears as the theory of practice, without taking into consideration the theory in practice and were dancing is transformed into “past”. By no means do I wish to undermine the artistic and educational value of dance. In contrast, as a person who entered the theoretical study of dancing through practice (as a dancer, dance teacher and musician), my primary concern is a creating a creative bridge between theory and practice.

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Let's Talk About Flesh or What Is Left of the Body, When We Speak About Dance?

Susanne Foellmer

At a certain point in the piece *Jérôme Bel* (1995) by the choreographer of the same name, a dancer sits on the floor. She writes the words “Christian Dior” in lipstick on her right leg. A little while later, she runs her hand over the words and smudges individual letters:

“CH A I R” (flesh) is all that remains.

This situation in *Jérôme Bel* is one of the key moments in contemporary dance in which the body as material in motion becomes the focus of choreographic research. Aside from the demonstrative commodification of the body, which hasn't spared dance either in the least (see Siegmund, 2006: 15 ff.), it also raises the question: what kind of material is that which dances? Bel's example nonetheless is not a presentation of the body as an organic entity or residuum of authentic experience. This body on stage is already literally a de-scribed body and is presented here in its emblematic quality. Dance Scholar Pirkko Husemann reflected on that (Husemann, 2002: 47).

And yet the body of the dancer as the de-scribable body does not completely merge with the choreographic discourse. Instead the “de-scribed” material of the body has found its way as a procedural matrix into numerous choreographies since the mid 1990's. Exemplary for this development is Xavier Le Roy's piece *Self Unfinished* (1998), in which the body is presented in constant proliferation, transforming again and again, passing through constantly re-interpreting metamorphoses. Accordingly, the question of material is now omnipresent not only in numerous discourses in dance and theater studies, but also in visual arts and film studies.

On Materialities

As the title of my lecture demonstrates, I now ask myself to what extent such materialities on stage can be described, especially if it is not dance with a nameable movement vocabulary as its basis, like in ballet. This is quite problematic

in itself, for the word “body” in the title admittedly already prompts a demand to know which bodies we are speaking of here in the first place. I have therefore gone through various theories of body and materiality of the last few years. The fascination of approaching the material, the “thing-itself” or whatever one may call it, is immense, as I was able to note, but ultimately always also marked by failure. However, the debate seems to me to be so important, that I would like to describe it for you here. In the following I will present various and very concisely formulated positions – due to the short space of time available – with a slight focus on German theories and philosophers. Contrary to the abstract I will focus on those theories, as the “question of material” has gained such a prominent position in my research. At the end of this paper, more questions and almost no answers will therefore remain – I hope that we will be able to continue the discussion following.

On the side of performative theory, Judith Butler slightly revised of her concept in “Bodies that matter”. In it, she states no interest in a construction of the body through linguistic practice alone (Butler, 1993: 14). Instead the constitution of the subject is composed of processes of materialization “that stabilize in time” (Butler, 1993: 32). This does not describe an irrefutable formation of identity, but instead a process in which these materializations must constantly be repeated, must literally be made “to matter” (Butler, 1993: 58) to preserve their stability within the normative structure. How then can resistance and change be possible? Butler emphasizes that the processes of materialization are connected from the onset with signification (Butler, 1993: 57). As she formulates it, the so-called non-intelligible can only be situated in a realm of the “constitutive outside”. It is the *sine qua non* of materialization, although it is ultimately not

representable. So: there is something akin to a wildly proliferating, deformed matter as yet untouched by meaning, and yet it is not possible to speak of it without immediately encumbering it again with meaning, casting it in a certain light.

This hypothesis of unrepresentability is also emphasized by the German philosopher Dieter Mersch, though not in connection with Butler (Mersch, 2005: 32). Speaking of the paradox of materiality as well as of the performative, he defines them as placement, the combination of showing and naming (Mersch, 2005: 31), whereby however the naming itself can not be discussed (Mersch, 2005: 32). The naming remains exterior, withdraws itself, while nevertheless constituting the process of positing meaning. Mersch therefore emphasizes avant-garde art's capacity for resistance, for example in Kurt Schwitters' sound poetry, whose units of meaning are so oft dissected and deconstructed until nothing remains but "the corporeity of the sound" in the sense of an eventfulness presence (Mersch, 2006: 214). Here the voice as a material semaphore enters the stage. However one may ask oneself to what extent art is here idealized as the residuum of resistant experience and what happens to this art and its corporeal being as soon as it is discussed.

The dance scholar Gerald Siegmund has recognized this discord. In his theory of the absence of dance as a critical counterdraft to theories of presence and sensuality as the signum of the performative, he postulates that stage bodies have always already been "an imaginary model of the body" (Siegmund, 2006: 44). Contemporary dance therefore carries critical artistic potential, because it acts out the position of the absent, which Siegmund calls "the moving force"^{ci} (Siegmund, 2006: 101) as a "conditional prerequisite of constitution" (Siegmund, 2006: 102), with reference to Georges Didi-Hubermans talk of "le visuel". Of course the moving force is always a blind spot, not ungraspable. Hence, speaking of the body can always only occur through its imaginative projections.

So is the attempt to speak of the material, the proliferating matter, to speak of that which exists between the signs, exists in suspension, doomed to failure?

As an aside, I would like to mention the German philosopher and advocate of new phenomenology Hermann Schmitz. According to him, a corpus exists before the experience of an external force that expresses itself in corporeal self-centerednessⁱⁱ, in a sensing of self, in comfort or discomfort, in pain (Schmitz, 1990: 115), in feelings of constriction or expansionⁱⁱⁱ (Schmitz, 1990: 122). However: in which categories, which materializations can we speak of such a body? Can such a corporeity only be experienced in an artistic creation process or in the first sensual impression gained in a theater experience, prior to being put into words? Or even, is such an experience at all possible?

Dance scholar Christiane Berger cites among others Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Schmitz in her argument pronouncing the perception of movement as an inter-corporeal experience that occurs in the exchange between the audience and the performers on stage (Berger, 2006: 118; 122). Dance stimulates the audience's physical competence and is therefore can be experienced through the authority of corporeal knowledge. And yet: What is it then that I am speaking about? Is my corporeal experience when speaking at all something akin to something "subjective"? How and under what premises do I visit a piece? In what way does my professional eye already pre-conceive that which I hope to see on stage? Do I make a prior selection? How do I "read" the dance, to use Susan Leigh Foster's words? Do I even develop a certain kind of "lecture de la danse" as Gabriele Brandstetter's *Tanz-Lektüren* proposes?

Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that his concept of the flesh is not about matter or substance as the source of experience (Merleau-Ponty, 1986: 183). However, it is also not concerned with the Cartesian polarity of mind and body. On the contrary, Merleau-Ponty attempts to perform a volte-face in the flesh towards a temporal concept of matter. Matter, insofar as it is an element of being, is always existent in its possible form... is conceived as process. As potential. As experience.

And yet: is Merleau-Ponty's talk of the flesh not also a transcendental ideal, whereby body and environment are already constantly in exchange with each other? To what extent do I

separate myself from what I see? The German philosopher Bernhard Waldenfels points out in Merleau-Ponty's theory the ontological "self-reference" of the body, even before differentiation has occurred – which nevertheless can never be accomplished without the other (Waldenfels, 2000: 43). Self-referentiality therefore arises simultaneously as self-withdrawal^{iv} (Waldenfels, 1997: 27). Is there then a material body prior to imagination? How can it be described? Or if asked in another way: Where and when does matter mix with image? And at what intersections in performative practice does theory emerge?

Over and over again the conquest of form-matter-binaries or inner-outer-dualisms are announced in some of the theories mentioned here. However it seems impossible to do without them. Maybe it is, with Merleau-Ponty, that the chiasm is currently the topos that ensures a discourse of body and environment as an intertwined structure (or as the German word "Umwelt" so wonderfully explains both as world and the world surrounding us, in other words: environment). But even here the "two sides of the page" of experience cannot be brought to match. If one attempts to describe them cognitively, they drift apart, but without in turn letting themselves be separated from one another. It is like facing an invincible paradox.

In its phenomenological definition, the subject is however not to be understood as a psychological entity. On the contrary, the French "*sujet*" describes among other things something that "experiences 'constitution'" and is therefore incomplete (Merleau-Ponty, 1966: 7, footnote d). In the end, the writing subject that practices dance theory as a scientific act must therefore also examine itself – the dance scholar Isa Wortelkamp hereby posits the theory that the in-scription of the dance observed is in itself an incomplete event (Wortelkamp, 2006).

Imprinting and Naming as Corporeal Practice

At this point I would like to pause and show an excerpt of the production *Jérôme Bel*, of which I spoke of earlier on. [showing of video footage]

This piece examines the gap between signification and dance-material (body, skin, muscles, movement, etc).

What is meant to be described here? Which materials? Which elements are visible?

We observe Frédéric Séguette's hand, onto which something has been drawn (with lipstick). A blow to Claire Haenni's left side of the rip cage, the pressure of Séguette's hand on her skin. A de-scription of pain, a de-scription of the sound of pain, also a chronologically visible shift, a delay, a tattoo, applied to the skin that takes a while to adhere. The "AIE" appears as an expression of the sound of pain. We laugh. Why? Because here is the invocation of a classical theater paradigm, the "as if" of inflicting pain, evoked by the display of "bad" timing? The indication proving this is the ensuing smudging of the sound marker. The smudging of the lipstick creates a red spot, which wouldn't correspond in "reality" to the strength of the blow, for Séguette had not hit as hard or as often. Representational aids such as theater blood are referenced: whether ketchup or "real" blood, this is about fluids. We could say that the "as-if" itself is designated as matter, created through movement, pressure and warmth.

My closing thought is that in this case, it is not always about the body as an "always already" – existent carrier of signification (in theater). However it also seems to me to fail to generate "phantom pain" in the audience as an expression of the real, as Gerald Siegmund discerned for this performance (Siegmund, 2006: 333).

Instead pain is here designated as a performative utterance, which incidentally contradicts the idea of a distinct body, which

Endnotes

ⁱ The english translation is not very precise here. Siegmund is helping himself with the french term „l'(é)mouvant“, which in german is „das Bewegende“.

ⁱⁱ In German: Eigensinn.

ⁱⁱⁱ German: Engung or Weitung.

^{iv} German: Selbstentzug.

Being With It: Dance Theory and Cultural Transfer in the Work of Hanya Holm

Tresa Randall

After Mary Wigman sent her to New York to open an American branch of the Wigman School in 1931, Hanya Holm played a critical role in the development of American modern dance. She was one of a number of German-trained modern dancers who introduced improvisational methods into American modern dance, and has had a lasting impact on dance in higher education. This paper describes Holm's theories and practices, as she presented them to students at the New York Wigman School between 1931 and 1936.¹ In particular, I draw attention to Holm's emphasis on experience, "being," and non-rationality. I suggest that Holm is a model of the *modern dancer as missionary*, devoted to transforming human social experience and creating a new way of life. In fact, she brought to the U.S. not only theories and practices; she brought a complete belief system. She was a missionary for the religion of dance founded by Rudolf Laban and Mary Wigman.²

Within this conference's discussion of theory and practice, Hanya Holm presents a dilemma, because she rejected both "thinking" and "doing" as authentic pathways to dance. Wigman and Holm believed that dance should be intuitive, creative, organic, and metaphysical.³ They sought the primal roots of dance. They rejected intellectual analysis as a method for dance, and even insisted that mere "doing" wasn't enough – the dancer must "be" the dance. This is what Holm referred to as "to be with it": being alive in the moment, being conscious of dancing while you are experiencing it, and being *with* the world around you. The state of "being with it" was a genuine presence, a true expression of the self moving from the heartbeat and rhythm.⁴

During its formative period in Germany (1910s – 1920s), German modern dance was part of the larger body culture, and shared body culture's aspirations to being a social revolution that would usher in a healthier way of life.⁵ This new life-style would counteract the negative,

debilitating effects of modern life by ridding the body of destructive habits; by developing more intuitive senses; and by accessing primal drives through movement, rhythm, and living in harmony with nature. Dance played a special role in this utopian and liberating body discourse, and thereby became associated with the interest in "re-ritualising" modern society and the search for national community.⁶ There was a pronounced faith that the generative strength of dance, rhythm, and movement could be made accessible by new rituals and practices and with it the "suffering German body" and the soul of the post-war period could be transformed and healed. Hanya Holm attempted to apply this project to America.⁷

Wigman and Holm believed that their work was unearthing "the dance itself." Holm explained: "Dancing itself, as an experience partaken in by the individual and the group, is the original source, and at least a part of the ultimate goal and value of the dance."⁸ She often used metaphors of natural phenomena to describe this:

Like a great river the original source spreads and subdivides, encircling the world in an ever widening network of tributaries—some closely related, others seemingly utterly divorced. The customs, the past history, the present crisis, and the racial and national temperaments all play their part in determining the final result. An organic development of this kind can be sensed, it can be followed, and through inspiration and genius it can be furthered on its way. But it can not be arbitrarily prescribed, nor dare we limit or stem its onrush.⁹

In other words, the great river — dancing itself — exists in all time, separate from the forms, techniques, theories, and methods that seek to

contain it. The contents of dance are eternal, while the forms are time-bound and changeable.¹⁰

Holm and Wigman's faith in the scientific infallibility and universality of their concepts of dance provided the foundation for this worldview. Wigman built upon Laban's movement research and endorsed his belief in a science of dance. A prospectus for the New York Wigman School claimed: "Never before has a system of dance training been developed that is so definite, infallible, and broadly applicable."¹¹ Wigman had absolute confidence that what she taught constituted the most comprehensive and universal knowledge about dance itself.

In the spirit of psychotherapy, Wigman and her disciples looked to themselves and their own lived experiences as sources of human truth.¹² Modern dance built on Freudian concepts of the subconscious and primal drives, and approximated the power of therapy to access deep emotions and fantasies. According to Wigman and Holm, the development of the dancer involved the "clarification" of "impulsive movement activities."¹³ Modern dance also followed the example set by life reform, which sought a new awareness of the senses and a kind of "intuitive seeing" that could perceive a person's essence.¹⁴ All of this aimed to reduce the dependence upon rationality and what Laban called the "print-culture," and instead re-value intuition, instinct, and experience.¹⁵

The Wigman method aimed to free the body from the constraints of routinized, mechanized life in the modern *Gesellschaft* (civilized society). As Holm explained, first the "impeding habits" of the body needed to be "thrown off."¹⁶ This included getting rid of physical evidence of other (unnatural) dance styles, to make the body "pure."¹⁷ Once the body had been freed of its repression and destructive habits, its true nature could be "awakened," and the dance itself could be unleashed.¹⁸ The Wigman teachers proposed: "Once the body is freed of its habits, it develops in innumerable possibilities along natural lines"¹⁹; this was accomplished through the exploration and practice of the fundamental movement concepts.

One of the foundational concepts of the Wigman method was tension-release, or *Anspannung-Entspannung*.²⁰ The Wigman teachers emphasized that tension and release could be found in nature, in the rise and fall of the tides, the moon waxing and waning, and winds blowing and dying down.²¹ It was a cyclical pattern of action, a charge and discharge of energy. Tension-release was central to the Wigman method because it represented simultaneously the driving power of action, and the ability to completely surrender the body to outside forces. Holm explained that the muscles "must be so loosened, so relaxed, that it is possible to release the body from the conscious direction of the will. Only then can the body as a whole respond with complete freedom to physical laws such as that of gravity."²² This principle was also reflected in the movement style of the Wigman School, which featured powerful, intense movements, luxurious backbends, dervish spinning, and ecstatic pulsations.

The principle of *tension/release* could be applied in a number of ways. In one exercise, students engaged muscular tension throughout the body — often by pushing the limbs out from the center of the body with great exertion — and then released that muscular tension in a collapse.²³ Tension was also explored between two points in space, embodied by two dancers, or through oppositional spatial pulls on a dancer's body. Release was explored with pendulum swings backwards and forwards, circling out, circling in, and making circle 8's that gradually reduced in size. Movement sequences could be performed first in a state of tension, and then in a state of release, or the movements could alternate between the two states. When the New York Wigman School first opened, all the classes emphasized release as the starting point,²⁴ because the Wigman teachers believed that the modern body needed release from the stresses of the mechanized, fast pace of modern life.²⁵

Another fundamental movement concept was *Schwung* (Swing), which had carried great power in German modern dance and body culture. Two of the movement's most important goals were to "swing" with others in order to create community, and to find your own inner

force by tapping into the swing of the natural world. Jazz and the “swing” of African-American-derived dances like the Charleston, the Rumba, and the Lindy Hop had exerted a strong influence on Weimar-era German youth culture.²⁶ In the Wigman method, *Swing* was understood as an underlying flow that provided the basis for all other movements. Holm compared it to “the endless, organic movement of the particles of water in the ocean.”²⁷ On a functional level, swing was a movement of the joints, as the force of gravity acted on a relaxed arm, leg, or torso. In classes, students would perform swings on different planes and in different directions.

Similar to swing, elasticity and vibration were fundamental movement ideas that could be applied in infinite ways. “Elasticity” meant the ability to spring from the ground and return again with ease. It was explored through all parts of the body, and then applied to movement traveling through space such as leaping and skipping. “Vibration” was a quivering energy and an underlying pulse in movement. In class, Holm would begin an exploration of vibration with a pulsing walk across the space, which would gradually develop into larger vibratory movement. Holm referred to “vibration” as something you “found” – something that is there all the time, though you have to become aware of it and be able to channel its power.

Another central principle in the Wigman method was the practice of the passive and active locomotive scales. The passive scale included vibration, walking, gliding, floating, sinking, and falling. The active scale included walking, running, circles without changing front, circles changing front (rotating), suspensions, and leaping. A central feature of the locomotive scales—as in musical scales—was that they were progressive; it was important that movement develop naturally as it progressed from simpler to more complex variations of passive or active locomotor movement. The scales revealed harmonic balance in the body.

Perhaps most importantly, the Wigman method developed theories and practices about “*Space*.” Wigman and Laban had concluded that space was the most important medium for dance, and held mystical keys to truth. Wigman proclaimed, “Only in its spatial embrace can the

dance achieve its final and decisive effect.”²⁸ She described space as “timeless and visionary,”²⁹ imaginary and irrational.

Paying attention to space enabled the transcendence of the ego by manifesting the interaction of the dancer with external forces. Susan Manning has termed this strategy “*Gestalt-im-Raum*,” or “configuration of energy in space,” Wigman’s ability to animate supra-personal forces beyond her physical self.³⁰ For Wigman, space was a partner against which, and with which, she could dialogue in order to express deep human experiences. Space was not empty; it had volume and mass, and the dancer’s relationship to that space had emotional meaning. Space made concrete the relationships between self and other and self and world. Wigman’s emphasis on space enabled her to construct her theory of absolute dance, or dance free from a dependence on music (time).

Holm designed her famous lecture-demonstrations around a series of “space etudes.” She spoke of carving through space—an active engagement with the space around the dancer’s body. This often took the form of circles. Classes involved a number of variations on the idea of circles: rotations of the hips in place; rotations of the hips as the impetus for traveling through space; walking on circular pathway, etc. Circles, as a basic form, carried mystical significance:

There are books written about circles and squares. The ancient people understood them . . . The more intelligent the ancient peoples were, the more mystical was the form in its use and significance. There is more to a round than just making a circle. You will have to run in circles for many days before you will know what a circle is. Then all of a sudden you will realize that you are not yourself anymore, that your space is dynamic and powerful and that you have to master that force.³¹

The goal was for the dancer to become “dissolved and simply surrounded” by the dance itself—to become the essence of “circle.”³²

The Wigman School was also famous for its spinning exercises, in which dancers would spin in one spot for many minutes, even hours. Like circles, spinning had the capacity to induce a trance state. Marian Van Tuyl remembered classes at the New York Wigman School in the early 1930s: "I would spin out of Hanya's classes almost drunk, because it was such a vibratory experience to go to a climax."³³ The classes were designed to bring dancers into an altered state by the end of the session. Wigman referred to spinning as an intoxicating experience of possession, an "almost lustful destruction of the physical being."³⁴

All of these movement concepts—tension/release, swing, vibration, elasticity, space, circles, and spinning—were taught through improvisation. Holm often reiterated that improvisation did not mean "to throw oneself around into, say, freedom for freedom's sake."³⁵ Rather, improvisation required great discipline and focus on the task at hand. The Wigman teachers served as guides through the material. Nancy Hauser described the teaching method:

[A] class evolves and develops . . . you don't have any kind of curriculum except for a preparatory warmup exercise, things like that, which is equivalent to a barre. But a class itself will evolve from the movement which you begin establishing. And most often, a mature teacher who's had experience will go into a class with nothing more in mind than, maybe, a first movement across the floor, a walk or something. And then things will begin. And it's a very creative and wonderful process because it's always alive. You never teach two classes that are alike . . . each class is almost like a miniscule bit of choreography, except that you're developing it from a different standpoint. You're developing it from the idea of learning certain things about movement.³⁶

May O'Donnell remembered that Fe Alf—Holm's associate teacher in the first year of the New York Wigman School—always seemed to

be in a trance when she taught, because she was tuning into "feeling a step, then feeling the next rhythm that would come out of it . . ."³⁷ Her attention was on her intuition, feelings, and response to the dance itself.

Wigman and her inner circle insisted that dancers must have their own inner experience of discovery and not simply use "borrowed phrases" learned from others. The dancer had to have a lived experience of the fundamental movement principles in order to truly understand them and be alive in the moment of dancing. Murray Louis recalled: "[Holm] insisted that the physical presence always be part of every movement. There were to be no dead eyes or lazy minds. Every part of the body was to be alert to the action."³⁸ Dancers achieved this state of vitality and presence through the improvisational class work.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the Wigman School—particularly in comparison with American dance techniques—was the importance of "group dance" classes. Movement choirs, choric dance, and group dance were essential to German modern dance. Laban was particularly known for his development of the movement choir as a form, which he began developing in the alternative-living community in the Swiss Alps on Monte Verità between 1911 and 1917. Wigman was Laban's primary assistant between 1913 and 1917, and helped him to develop his fundamental concepts of dance. At the New York Wigman School, group dance classes were intended to develop responsiveness, spontaneity, and the ability to sense others and work together rhythmically and spatially. Dancers would work in partners, and then in smaller groups and larger groups, to get a sense of moving with others. They would practice moving with their eyes closed, moving in unison, reacting to others' movement impulses, and so on.³⁹

In the first few years of her American career, Holm was frustrated by her American students' disbelief and unwillingness to give themselves fully to the cause of modern dance.⁴⁰ She described her professional division students as intelligent and eager to learn, but she complained that they analyzed everything, until the last little bit had been destroyed. She called them "notorious doubters," and complained,

“there is no bridge they are able to cross toward irrationality or mysticism.”⁴¹ They only wanted formulae for creating dances or technical exercises for developing their bodies.

Holm proposed, “American girls reason too much,” and declared that her mission was to teach them how to think with their bodies.⁴² Here Holm reflected the anti-rational bias of German modern dance, and, indeed, of much German thought. Historian Wolf Lepenies has suggested that if there is such a thing as a German ideology, it is the tendency to play off Romanticism against the Enlightenment, the Middle Ages against the modern world, *Gemeinschaft* against *Gesellschaft*, and culture against civilization.⁴³ Similarly, German modern dance emphasized faith rather than reason; emotion, mystery, and experience rather than the intellect; communal bonding rather than the alienated competition of “civilized society.” In terms of dance, this translated into an approach that was based on experiential learning and exploring the mysteries of human movement. It mandated a creative approach in which each new work had to find its own form out of the choreographer’s emotional and subjective experience of it. Forms could not be fixed; they had to be authentic and living—constantly in flux.

Holm felt that this was one of the most important distinctions between German and American approaches to choreography—while the Americans created objectively, through distanced observation and decision-making, the Germans created subjectively. She wrote, “The distinction is one of ‘being’ as contrasted with ‘doing’—of immersing the self in an emotional state as the necessary prelude to creation as contrasted with objective reconstruction of a known situation.”⁴⁴ She insisted that the dancer must plunge deep into the experience of an emotional state, and create the form of the dance organically out of that experience.⁴⁵

When Holm first arrived in the U.S., she was frustrated by her American students’ lack of faith. Students at the Wigman Schools in Germany had been admonished to “make themselves servants of . . . the dance art-work”: “Only in the instant that they give themselves up as the focal point, will they be able to sail the dance art-work, as artistic work actually has as a

prerequisite complete devotion to the idea.”⁴⁶ In the American context, though, she encountered skepticism. This resistance and the shifting political scene over the 1930s forced her to sublimate her beliefs.⁴⁷

Over her first decade in the U.S., Holm gradually gave practice more overt importance. The mystical form of circles, for example, became the practice of meticulous body placement and pathways through space. The search for universal human movement concepts became “The Attainment of Conscious, Controlled Movement.”⁴⁸ What I find particularly striking when looking at the development of her work after her American emigration is a shift from irrationality to rationality, from trance and the annihilation of the body to conscious control of every part of the body. In other words, from religion to technique. Holm gradually conformed to the American concept of modern dance as technique and stage performance.⁴⁹ Though she never went so far as to create a codified technique, she did sublimate her view of dance as a communal and spiritual experience, and its mission to transform everyday life.

Through her own teaching and the work of her protégés, Holm has had a lasting impact on American modern dance, especially in higher education programs. While it is perhaps impossible to know how much the religious connotations of the original practice have survived, I assert that it is important to consider those roots in the context of this conference’s examination of theory and practice. Holm and other German-trained modern dancers promoted an anti-rational, anti-technical approach. In a sense, it was an anti-theory, an anti-practice; it was a belief system and a way of surrendering conscious control. I wonder if this history and its reverberations in the past and present are part of why, as a discipline, we have had a conflicted relationship with notions of theory and practice?

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Endnotes

- ¹ The New York Wigman School was founded at Steinway Hall in 1931 under the sponsorship of impresario Sol Hurok. American students had been

- traveling in increasing numbers to the Wigman School in Dresden, and Mary Wigman's first American tour, 1930-1931, had been a resounding success. At first, the New York school was considered a branch of the Wigman Central Institute, which meant that it offered the curriculum established at Dresden.
- ² On Laban's quest to create a religious community, see Marion Kant, "Laban's Secret Religion," *Discourses in Dance* 1.2 (2003): 43-62.
- ³ In 1931, Holm and Wigman shared a worldview; as Wigman's official representative, Holm literally spoke for Wigman.
- ⁴ Hanya Holm, "To Be With It," *Focus on Dance* 8 (1977): 61.
- ⁵ On German body culture, see: Yvonne Hardt, *Politische Körper: Ausdruckstanz, Choreographien des Protests und die Arbeiterkulturbewegung in der Weimarer Republik*, Münster: Lit 2004; Inge Baxmann, *Mythos: Gemeinschaft; Körper- und Tanzkulturen in der Moderne*, München 2000; Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890-1930*, Chicago, London 2003; and Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
- ⁶ Baxmann, *Mythos: Gemeinschaft*, 9.
- ⁷ Tresa Randall, "Dance and Locality: Hanya Holms Suche nach einem 'Amerikanischen Geist,'" *Tanz Metropole Provinz*, ed. Yvonne Hardt and Kirsten Maar, *Jahrbuch Tanzforschung* 17 (2007, forthcoming).
- ⁸ Hanya Holm, undated typescript, Hanya Holm Papers * (S) MGZMD 136/593, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts [Hereafter JRDD, NYPL-PA].
- ⁹ Hanya Holm in *The Modern Dance*, (1935) ed. Virginia Stewart (rpt. Dance Horizons, 1970) 80.
- ¹⁰ Hanya Holm, "Vocabulary of Choreography," undated notebook page, Hanya Holm Papers * (S) MGZMD 136/599, JRDD, NYPL-PA.
- ¹¹ Prospectus, New York Wigman School of the Dance, *MGZ [Wigman Schools], JRDD, NYPL-PA.
- ¹² See Hedwig Müller, "Introduction: A Matter of Loyalty – Hanya Holm and Mary Wigman," *Liebe Hanya: Mary Wigman's Letters to Hanya Holm*, ed. Claudia Gitelman (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003) xxii – xxiii.
- ¹³ Hanya Holm, (undated typescript, probably ca. 1928-1930), Hanya Holm Papers (S) *MGZMD 136, JRDD, NYPL-PA.
- ¹⁴ The notion of "intuitive seeing" was particularly well-articulated by proponents of racial science, who sought to understand the essences of racial types. (Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890-1930* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003) 159-160.)
- ¹⁵ For a discussion of Laban's rejection of "print-culture," see Inge Baxmann, "Die Gesinnung ins Schwingen Bringen; Tanz als Metasprache und Gesellschaftsutopie in der Kultur der zwanziger Jahre/Stirring Up Attitudes: Dance as a Language and Utopia in the Roaring Twenties," *Ballett International* 12.2 (Feb. 1989, bilingual edition): 13-19.
- ¹⁶ Hanya Holm, "Eight-Day Holiday Course for Teachers and Dancers Offering a Quick Glimpse of the Scope and Aim of Wigman Training" (1931). [School Memo, New York Wigman School], Hanya Holm Papers * (S) MGZMD 136, JRDD, NYPL-PA.
- ¹⁷ Martha Wilcox remembered that Holm urged her to stop teaching ballet and other forms of dance, so that she could get rid of the bad habits they created. ("The Reminiscences of Martha Wilcox" (1979), Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, p. 22.)
- ¹⁸ Hanya Holm, "The Aim of the Modern Dance," (undated, probably 1932) p. 3, Hanya Holm Papers * (S) MGZMD 136, JRDD, NYPL-PA.
- ¹⁹ Gerald Goode, "The Tanz-Gymnastic (sic) Comes to America: Aesthetic Movement Launched with Opening of First Wigman School in U.S.A." p. 2 [Press release, Hurok Musical Bureau] (September 1931), Hanya Holm Papers * (S) MGZMD 136, JRDD, NYPL-PA.
- ²⁰ Like many elements of the Wigman method, this was based on Laban's concepts. Sometimes the term "*die Abspannung*" was used in place of "*die Entspannung*."
- ²¹ See, for example, Goode, "The Tanz-Gymnastic (sic) Comes to America."
- ²² Hanya Holm, "An Educational Approach to the Dance of Mary Wigman" (January 1932) p. 7, Hanya Holm Papers * (S) MGZMD 136/590, JRDD, NYPL-PA.
- ²³ My description of class exercises was compiled from a number of sources, including programs from Wigman School demonstrations in Germany and the U.S. (1928 – 1932), interviews with Hanya Holm, reminiscences of students, and notebooks and documents in the Hanya Holm Papers. See also Ruth Page, *Class: Notes on Dance Classes Around the World, 1915 – 1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Book Company, 1984) 87 – 93; Manning, *Ecstasy and the Demon*, 89 – 96; and Dianne Patricia Hunt, *Erika Thimey: A Life of Dance, A Dance of Life* (Washington, D.C. 2000).
- ²⁴ Hanya Holm and Fé Alf, "Schul-Bericht Wigman School New York" (1932), p. 2, Hanya Holm Papers * (S) MGZMD 136/298, JRDD, NYPL-PA.
- ²⁵ Goode, "The Tanz-Gymnastic (sic) Comes to America."
- ²⁶ After arriving in New York, Holm made frequent trips up to Harlem to observe the Lindy Hoppers and other jazz and swing dancers ("Hanya Holm" [sound cassette] (9 March 1984) Learning from Performers Series (Cambridge, MA: Modern Language Center, Harvard University, 1984)). I explore the concepts of race and primitivism embedded in the Wigman method in my doctoral dissertation (in process).
- ²⁷ Hanya Holm, "The Educational Principles of Mary Wigman," *The Journal of Health and Physical Education* (June 1932): 60.
- ²⁸ Mary Wigman, *The Language of Dance*, trans. Walter Sorell (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1966) 12.

- ²⁹ Mary Wigman, *The Mary Wigman Book*, ed. and trans. Walter Sorell (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1975) 56.
- ³⁰ Susan Manning, *Ecstasy and the Demon: Feminism and Nationalism in the Dances of Mary Wigman* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 43.
- ³¹ Hanya Holm quoted in Walter Sorell, *Hanya Holm: The Biography of an Artist* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1969) 186-187.
- ³² Eugene Stinson, "Music Views: Hanya Holm," *The Chicago Daily News* (Feb. 13, 1937).
- ³³ Marian Van Tuyl Campbell, "The Reminiscences of Marian Van Tuyl Campbell," (1979) p. 23, Oral History Office, Columbia University, New York, NY.
- ³⁴ Wigman, *The Mary Wigman Book*, 52.
- ³⁵ Holm in Tobi Tobias, "Interview with Hanya Holm" (1975), MGZMT 5-1007, JRDD, NYPL-PA.
- ³⁶ Nancy Mason Hauser, "The Reminiscences of Nancy Mason Hauser," (1979), pp. 40-41, Columbia University Oral History Office, New York, NY.
- ³⁷ Tobi Tobias, "A Conversation with May O'Donnell," *Ballet Review* 91. (Spring 1981): 70.
- ³⁸ Murray Louis, "No Dead Eyes or Lazy Minds: Some Thoughts on Hanya Holm," *Ballet International* 16.3 (March 1993): 19.
- ³⁹ Margaret Gage, "Notes on Wigman Technique 1932-1933," MGZMC-Res. 16, JRDD, NYPL-PA.
- ⁴⁰ See Tresa Randall, "Dance and Locality: Hanya Holms Suche nach einem 'Amerikanischen Geist,'" *Tanz Metropole Provinz*, ed. Yvonne Hardt and Kirsten Maar, *Jahrbuch Tanzforschung* 17 (2007, forthcoming).
- ⁴¹ Hanya Holm, undated typescript (probably 1933), Hanya Holm Papers, (S) *MGZMD 136, JRDD, NYPL-PA.
- ⁴² Hanya Holm in Ruth Seinfeld, "American Girls Reason Too Much, Says Dancer Who Teaches Them to Think With Their Bodies," *New York Evening Post*, 26 Sept. 1931.
- ⁴³ Wolf Lepenies, *The Seduction of Culture in German History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).
- ⁴⁴ Holm in *The Modern Dance*, 83.
- ⁴⁵ For a description of Holm's process, and how her students applied it to their own work, see Mary Anne Santos Newhall, "Uniform Bodies: Mass Movement and Modern Totalitarianism," *Dance Research Journal* 34.1 (Summer 2002): 27-50.
- ⁴⁶ Hanya Holm, undated typescript (probably ca. 1929-1930), Hanya Holm Papers * (S) MGZMD 136, JRDD, NYPL-PA. Translation mine.
- ⁴⁷ Susan Manning, Claudia Gitelman, and Ellen Graff have all discussed the mid-1930s controversy over the Wigman School's relationship to the Nazi regime, and Holm's response to it. See Susan Manning, *Ecstasy and the Demon: Feminism and Nationalism in the Dances of Mary Wigman* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 275-279; Claudia Gitelman, "Dance, Business, and Politics: Letters from Mary Wigman to Hanya Holm, 1930-1971," *Dance Chronicle* 20.1 (1997): 16-18; and Ellen Graff,

Stepping Left: Dance and Politics in New York City, 1928-1942 (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997) 115-116.

- ⁴⁸ This was the title of a short treatise she wrote in 1940: Hanya Holm, "The Attainment of Conscious, Controlled Movement" (1940), *Dance: A Basic Educational Technique*, ed. Frederick Rand Rogers (rpt. New York: Dance Horizons, 1980).
- ⁴⁹ On Holm's adoption of the American model of technique, see also Manning, *Ecstasy and the Demon*, 271-275.

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L'influence des théories du corps à l'œuvre dans le Butô de Tatsumi Hijikata sur les pratiques des danseurs contemporains en France

Sylviane Pagès

Le butô fondé par Tatsumi Hijikata à la fin des années 1950 met particulièrement et directement en travail les notions de théorie et de pratique. Pour T. Hijikata en effet, le travail d'artiste était conçu comme un travail autant sensible que théorique. Entretenant un rapport étroit avec de nombreux textes d'Artaud, de Sade, Bataille, Genet et Lautréamont, il s'est également consacré lui-même à l'écriture. Influencé par les arts plastiques et la littérature, T. Hijikata a puisé des notions théoriques d'autres champs en cherchant à les appliquer à sa danse. A travers toutes ses activités et ses discours sur la danse, il a en définitive produit une véritable pensée issue de sa pratique, conduisant à une remise en question de la séparation classique entre théorie et pratique.

Dans notre approche qui relève de l'esthétique chorégraphique et de l'histoire de la danse, nous portons justement notre regard sur les théories du corps et du mouvement qui émergent de la pratique dansée. Tout au long de ses expérimentations, T. Hijikata a élaboré des concepts pour rendre compte des théories du corps inhérentes à sa pratique comme par exemple les notions de corps en crise, de corps asthéniqueⁱ ou corps-mortⁱⁱ. Dans son travail d'élaboration de ses parti pris esthétiques, il a entrepris un projet de définition de sa démarche artistique, jusqu'à renommer même sa danse, d'abord comme anti-danse (han buyo) puis Ankoku butô et Butô.

En tenant compte de la réalité du Butô depuis la fin des années 1970, qui n'est plus seulement lié au contexte japonais mais présent dans de nombreux pays du monde, nous étudions l'influence de ces théories du corps dans les pratiques contemporaines en France. Aborder ainsi la réception du butô en France, c'est étudier un cas particulier d'allers-retours multiples entre théorie et pratique, de dépassement de la séparation habituelle théorie-pratique dans un contexte interculturel.

La réception en France de ces théories-pratiques du corps : interactions entre pratiques et pratiques discursives

Pour tracer à grands traits une histoire du butô en France, nous rappellerons le choc suscité par les premiers spectacles présentés sous ce label en 1978 et le succès immédiat qu'ils ont connu, ce que révèle notamment la large couverture médiatique, tant les grands quotidiens nationaux que la presse spécialisée. De nombreux danseurs françaisⁱⁱⁱ ont ensuite revendiqué cette influence. Les années 1978 – 1980 sont fondamentales pour l'histoire du butô en France puisqu'en l'espace de quelques années, la plupart des grands artistes butô sont programmés dans les lieux les plus légitimants du champ chorégraphique^{iv} : Carlotta Ikeda et Ko Murobushi, Yoko Ashikawa, danseuse fétiche de Tatsumi Hijikata, Min Tanaka, Kazuo Ohno, Sankai Juku...

Ce succès est allé de pair avec de nombreux écrits critiques empreints de malentendus mais également créateurs de fictions, de constructions, qui peuvent être résumées par le lieu commun d'un « butô né sur les cendres d'Hiroshima ». Cette expression récurrente dans les discours français porte en elle plusieurs fictions et malentendus, dont en premier lieu, l'articulation entre le butô et Hiroshima - cette métonymie^v pour parler des explosions atomiques survenues au Japon en 1945 - qui se révèle être un stéréotype.^{vi} Ce lieu commun porte également en lui la construction d'un butô comme une catégorie esthétique homogène, malgré la diversité des artistes invités en France, et plus largement se revendiquant du butô. La projection d'Hiroshima sur le butô en fait de plus une danse sans histoire, coupée des avant-gardes japonaises des années 1960, qui constituent pourtant son contexte d'émergence. En étant associé à Hiroshima, événement hors du temps, le butô se retrouve dans un suspens

historique. Le fantasme d'Hiroshima renvoie en définitive au caractère nécessairement japonais de cette danse. La nationalité japonaise devient, avec le lien à Hiroshima, un élément de définition immédiat du butô. Mais en étant toujours ramené à sa nationalité japonaise, le butô se retrouve au cœur des représentations occidentales d'un Japon Antipodique, rejoignant tout un ensemble de discours attachés à la singularité de l'île japonaise. Le butô devient typiquement autre, étranger : typiquement japonais. Dans sa réception française, le butô est par conséquent construit et perçu comme une danse radicalement différente de la danse contemporaine. Les danseurs et chorégraphes contemporains français ont largement relayé cette vision du butô comme altérité radicale, qui correspond au final à une vision exotique. Dans notre approche de la réception qui vise à faire une histoire des désirs de butô en France, ce désir d'Hiroshima semble ainsi aller de pair avec un désir d'exotisme.

Ces désirs ont eu pour effet une interaction entre les pratiques - les trainings, les œuvres - et les écrits critiques, théoriques. En construisant des fictions, des représentations du butô, les discours ont, dans leur ensemble, proposé des interprétations, des théories du butô. Or ces discours, dans le contexte français, se sont très vite figés, reconduisant des stéréotypes. Parallèlement, les œuvres se revendiquant du butô présentées en France se sont figées, passant de la diversité des propositions esthétiques en 1978 au style de la compagnie Sankai Juku : des corps peints en blancs, des crânes rasés, une lenteur inévitable... Ces éléments scénographiques deviennent alors des caractéristiques récurrentes dans de nombreux spectacles étiquetés butô. Peu à peu, les représentations du butô ont été recouvertes par le travail d'une compagnie, il est vrai particulièrement diffusée en France. Sous l'influence de cette compagnie et de l'accueil qui lui a été réservé, le caractère exotique des œuvres butô semble avoir été renforcé, consciemment ou inconsciemment, par les discours et les interprétations françaises, dans un va-et-vient entre théories, pratiques et attentes du public, des critiques et des programmeurs.

Ces fictions du butô construites ont eu corollairement des effets positifs, puisque ce sont justement cette dimension exotique dans les désirs de butô, cet attrait pour la différence et l'étrangeté, ce fantasme d'Hiroshima qui ont nourri les pratiques et les processus de travail et de création dans la danse contemporaine en France, qui ont suscité ces désirs d'une corporéité butô. Le cas du butô en France, histoire d'influences croisées et d'interaction entre pratiques et discours est ainsi un cas particulier d'allers-retours entre théorie et pratique. Mais si ces fictions et désirs ont des effets multiples, ils sont également les symptômes de désirs souterrains, et masquent des désirs de danse dont il reste à préciser la nature.

La nature des transferts chorégraphiques entre la France et le Japon

Dans le souci d'historiciser ces désirs de butô en France, deux moments esthétiques nous semblent importants dans les rapports entre danse contemporaine et butô et plus généralement, dans l'histoire de la danse contemporaine en France dans ses rapports avec l'autre, deux moments qui mettent également en travail les notions de théorie et de pratique. La danse contemporaine au début des années 1980, à la suite de l'introduction du butô en France, est influencée, travaillée par ces théories du corps butô. L'analyse des discours et des œuvres des chorégraphes influencés par le butô révèlent qu'ils n'ont retenu ni le grotesque, ni les performances travaillant le genre, mais bien un travail de la présence, de l'intériorité. En effet, ce sont les corps des danseurs, leur densité, l'intensité de la danse qui ont fasciné les critiques comme les danseurs, toute une corporéité butô construite par des processus de travail que les danseurs et chorégraphes ont cherché à expérimenter. Or ce qui se joue dans ce corps dilaté, c'est une façon de théoriser et pratiquer le corps et la danse, qui passe avant tout par un jeu essentiel de la sensorialité dans l'émergence et la conduite du geste : la sensation est nourrie par un travail intense de l'imaginaire, par l'utilisation par exemple de métaphores langagières, de poèmes. Cette attention portée de façon prédominante sur les

sensations induit un état de conscience particulier, un certain lâcher-prise de la conscience, visant à un abandon d'intention dans le geste, et cherchant le moment où sensation et action coïncident. Ce travail corporel implique une conception nouvelle de la composition et de l'écriture chorégraphique, consistant par exemple en une partition d'états de corps. Cette conception de la danse proposée par le butô tel qu'il a été introduit en France défend une danse avant tout de l'intérieur du corps, de l'intériorité, qui rejoint la recherche expressionniste de la « nécessité intérieure », d'un geste juste et nécessaire, d'une technique de « l'événement intérieur », pour reprendre une expression de la chorégraphe Mary Wigman. Sans être tout à fait conscient, explicite, ce désir d'intériorité pourrait être vu comme un désir d'un geste expressionniste.

Sans nous concentrer sur les filiations directes ou indirectes issues des nombreux transferts chorégraphiques entre l'Allemagne et le Japon dans les années 1920, nous proposons un rapprochement entre ce qui se joue dans le geste butô et ce qui se joue dans le geste expressionniste allemand. Nous pensons l'expressionnisme comme un geste qui pourrait se jouer ailleurs qu'en Allemagne et à d'autres moments ; l'introduction du butô en France pourrait alors être vue comme une résurgence du geste expressionniste dans la mesure où pour plusieurs raisons d'histoire et de mémoire de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, l'influence de la danse moderne allemande a été particulièrement occultée dans l'histoire de la danse moderne en France.

Les chorégraphes de « l'explosion de la danse contemporaine française » des années 1980 – pour reprendre l'expression récurrente dans l'historiographie française – ont souvent valorisé l'autodidactisme, taisant et masquant de ce fait les influences de la danse moderne en France, largement issue de la danse moderne allemande. La cristallisation sur le caractère « français » de cette danse, en lien avec l'émergence d'une politique de la danse, semble renvoyer le butô à son caractère japonais, à sa nationalité. Nous relevons ainsi la coexistence de deux mythes historiographiques : celui d'une explosion de

la danse contemporaine française, et celui d'un choc butô – cette danse japonaise issue d'Hiroshima. Ces deux mythes ont contribué à poser le butô comme radicalement différent de la danse contemporaine française.

Mais si le succès du butô a été si fulgurant, c'est peut-être parce qu'il proposait une relation complexe entre identité et altérité. Construit comme nécessairement autre et antipodique, il renvoyait pourtant à des processus de travail communs avec la danse contemporaine développée en France. Ainsi, plus qu'une nouveauté, plus qu'un déplacement esthétique, le butô semble avoir ré-introduit, rendu visible un geste moderne, allemand, marqué par le primat de la sensation comme moteur du mouvement. Les premiers spectacles de butô sont donc venus combler un désir de Japon, d'exotisme, visible dans des signes nouveaux – les corps japonais, les crânes rasés –, qui ont conditionné toute une vision exotique du butô mais qui ont constitué un écran exotique, masquant des forces connues, comme un certain travail de l'improvisation et de la sensorialité.

Comment les théories de T. Hijikata peuvent aujourd'hui encore travailler la danse contemporaine en France ? La période actuelle est le deuxième moment sur lequel nous nous penchons afin d'étudier les allers-retours et dépassements entre théorie et pratique. Depuis quelques années, de nouveaux désirs de butô semblent travailler la danse contemporaine en France. Plutôt qu'un désir d'exotisme, il prend la forme d'un désir théorique. En effet, après la lente émergence d'écrits théoriques et scientifiques publiés en langue française sur le butô, est paru en 2002 l'ouvrage *Butô(s)* sous la direction d'Odette Aslan^{vii} qui a suscité un vif intérêt autant dans le champ théorique que chez les danseurs et chorégraphes. Depuis quelques années encore, les rencontres, les projections d'archives filmiques se multiplient et les textes et idées de T. Hijikata commencent à être accessibles notamment par les articles et traductions de Patrick de Vos. Les désirs de butô prennent ainsi la forme d'un appétit théorique ; le butô n'est dès lors plus seulement exotique. Les collaborations avec des artistes butô, mettant en évidence la proximité du travail entre danse

contemporaine et butô se développent^{viii}. La figure d'Hijikata, longtemps méconnue, est redécouverte. Un intérêt nouveau pour le butô en tant qu'avant-garde des années 1960 semble également significatif.

Ces désirs de butô, d'une toute autre nature qu'au début des années 1980, s'inscrivent dans un moment esthétique particulier, celui des années 2000, analysé notamment par Isabelle Ginot dans son article « Un lieu commun »^{ix} comme un retour aux avant-gardes des années 1960-1970 américaines par une communauté de danseurs et chorégraphes. Ce moment et cette communauté se caractérisent par plusieurs aspects : la multiplication des anti-spectacles^x, un appétit théorique des artistes, une conception du travail de création comme travail intellectuel et travail sensible, le passage du souci d'une écriture à la prédominance du dispositif, de la construction d'une gestuelle à des consignes d'improvisation...

Ce bain esthétique semble ainsi faire écho aux nouveaux désirs de butô, et semble intégrer parfaitement cette redécouverte de l'inscription du butô dans les avant-gardes des années 1960. Ce deuxième moment esthétique est également caractérisé par un autre rapport à l'histoire et à l'Autre que le début des années 1980. Loin de disparaître, les désirs de butô se transforment, variant ainsi selon les contextes esthétiques.

Considérant l'histoire du butô et de sa réception comme un processus, dans lequel les artistes travaillant en France sont également des interprétants des œuvres et pensées du butô forgées au Japon, nous tentons d'écrire une histoire de la danse et des pratiques dansées, qui partirait de l'histoire des désirs de butô chez les danseurs contemporains dans un contexte de circulation intense de gestes et formes dansées. Il s'agit alors d'associer cette histoire à une géographie des gestes.

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Notes

- i Patrick de Vos, « Le temps et le corps : dedans/dehors. », *Le Temps des œuvres*, 2001, p. 110.
- ii La notion de corps-mort (Butô-sei) est étudiée par Christine Greiner. Cf. Greiner, Christine (2002) « Ono Kazuo : le corps où les mots ne s'inscrivent pas ». *La danse en solo*. Pantin : CND.
- iii Parmi lesquels Catherine Diverrès, Bernardo Montet, Santiago Sempere, Sidonie Rochon...
- iv Festival de théâtre de Nancy, Festival d'Avignon, Montpellier danse, Centre Pompidou...
- v Cf. Alain Brossat, « Si loin, si près, Hiroshima et Auschwitz », *Hiroshima 50 ans. Japon-Amérique : mémoires au nucléaire. Autrement*, Série Mémoires. Paris : Ed. Autrement. 1995.
- vi L'analyse de l'émergence de ce stéréotype mériterait un long développement qui ne rentre pas directement dans le sujet du colloque. Pour approfondir cf. Patrick de Vos, « Danser après la bombe », Europe, 2006 et Sylviane Pagès, « La réception du butô en France », mémoire de maîtrise, Département Danse, Université Paris 8, 2002.
- vii Odette Aslan, *Butô(s)*. Paris : CNRS éditions, 2002.
- viii Josef Nadj et le Dairakudakan dans *Asobu* (2006), Françoise et Dominique Dupuy et Sumako Koseki dans *Le Regard par-dessus le col* (2007), Cécile Loyer et Mitsuyo Uesugi dans *Puppi* (2003)...
- ix Isabelle Ginot, « Un lieu commun », *Repères*, mars : 2-9. 2003.
- x On retrouve là aussi des préoccupations et formulations proches entre l'anti danse de T. Hijikata et les formes anti-spectaculaires actuelles.

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While Dancing the Oriental....-- Rethinking Aesthetic Translations of Sadayakko and Ruth St. Denis

Chia-Yi Seetoo

In her autobiography, Ruth St. Denis, a pioneer of the U.S. modern dance, reflected on the impact of seeing the Japanese dancer and actress, Sadayakko, perform in the Paris Exposition in 1900. She remarks that:

For the first time I beheld and understood the beautiful austerities of Japanese art. Here, in her dancing [...], was the antithesis of the flamboyant, overblown exuberance of our American acrobatics.[...] From her I first learned the difference between the words “astonishing” and “evoking.”

(St. Denis, 1939: 40)

At the time, Ruth St. Denis had just finished performing on tour with David Belasco's company in London and took an excursion to Paris before going back to the U.S. Sadayakko, on the other hand, had gone through a longer touring trip in the U.S. and Europe from 1899 to 1900. Emblematic of Sadayakko's performance was the Kabuki-derived piece titled *The Geisha and the Knight*.

Ruth St. Denis danced with David Balesco until 1905 and premiered her first Indian dance piece, *Radha* in 1906. After much investment in creating Indian and Egyptian dances during her European trip between 1906 and 1909, Ruth St. Denis created a short Japanese dance called *A Shirabyoshi* in London in 1908 and the Japanese dance drama *O-Mika* in New York in 1913.

Entering from Ruth St. Denis's primary documentation of encounter and affect, some of the issues I want to address and invoke in this paper are:

1. How a *constructed* Orient was complicitly produced from both the performer and the viewer/producer and the consumer.
2. The difference between creativity within indigenous continuity and the autoexoticized creation conceived under asymmetric power relationship.ⁱ

3. The relationship between Sadayakko's autoexoticization and Japan's own nationalist, modernizing project that ultimately leads to Japanese imperialism.
4. The question of authenticity; the criterion used to judge the degree of authenticity that's reflected in the historical documents.
5. The modernity syndrome shared by both the Western and the Eastern reviewers in which the longing for an untainted, pre-modern past was figured through the fixated romanticization of the Oriental.

Looking at how Japanese dance in the West was invented and traveled from Sadayakko to Ruth St. Denis, I propose to rethink their performance in terms of “filtering” as a process and a mode through which their dancing takes form, travels, generates meaning, and creates reverberations. Filter refers to the porous medium, passing which things are left out, but part of the “original” is retained. Filter also refers to the screen that selectively absorbs light of certain wavelength or colors, registering a manipulated coloring of the photographic material. As things are left out and color is added, I find the idea of “filtering” fitting to describe the process and range of mediation including the discursive mindsets, discourses, technology, and the performer's body, a body of tissues, pores, and intelligence.

The *fin-de-siècle* saw the trend of *japonism* in Europe and the U.S, its manifestations ranging from artifacts to literary and performative tropes. Procelains, lacquer, textiles, and woodblock prints were ardently collected. Exotic literatures and performances include Pierre Loti's *Madame Chrysanthemum* (1885), David Belasco's play *Madam Butterfly* (1900), Guilbert and Sullivan's musical *The Mikado* (1885), and exotic tales of Lafcadio Hearn, on which Ruth St. Denis's Japanese pieces were based. Japanese woodblock prints also influenced European Art Nouveau and its affinity in Symbolist movements. Sadayakko's

engagement in the Paris Exposition was contracted by dancer and producer Loie Fuller, herself an embodiment of Art Nouveau and Symbolist ideals. The reviewers of Sadayakko's performance often evoke this web of associations, filtering their reception through sensibilities they recognize or identify with. Ruth St. Denis certainly also filtered her vision of Japan through her lifelong "divine" aspiration.

Sadayakko was a geisha in the pleasure district of Tokyo and did not officially become an actress/dancer until she toured in the U.S. and Europe with her husband Kawakami Otojirō's troupe. Kawakami had been actively involved in the theatre reform in Japan, in tandem with the nation's modernizing project. In theatre historian Ayako Kano's words, what Kawakami engaged in was "the 'straightening' of Japanese theatre" in which "*kabuki* is labeled as "old theatre," is regarded as "archaic, decaying, and associated with femininity and homosexuality, in contrast to the new and vigorous modern theatre, associated with masculinity and homosociality." As to the actual practice of "straightening," it involves purging song, dance, and the stylized action of *Kabuki* while enhancing direct speech, more naturalized action, and the dichotomized ideal of gender which "buttress[es] a theater of masculine subjects and feminine wives, of warriors and their helpmates—or, alternatively, their seducers" (Kano, 2001: 58).

While Kawakami did attempt to make adaptations from Shakespeare and Greek mythology, his most popular play *The Geisha and the Knight* was taken from two of the traditional *Kabuki* repertoire, *Sayaate* and *Dojoji*, to form the "exotic Japan" that met the western audience's expectation. The extreme case of such an autoexoticization was the increasingly extravagant "hara-kiri" (belly-cutting) scenes created out of the demand from the audience and their producer Loie Fuller.ⁱⁱ Due to the language barrier, speeches were toned down, and physical actions and dances took the center stage. In *The Geisha and the Knight*, Sadayakko's dance of *Dojoji* became the highlight of the play.

Dojoji as a *Kabuki* dance drama has gone through metamorphoses from the aristocratic

theatre of *Noh* to the popular theatre of *Kabuki*. The *Kabuki* piece features transformations of womanhood through different kinds of dances with quick costume changes and handling of various props. Through native reformist revision as well as autoexoticized refashioning, Kawakami's adaptation of *Dojoji* was a structurally and textually diluted version of the *Kabuki* dance drama, losing especially the accompanying *Nagauta* lyrics which conveys significant emotional subtlety and depth. In the script preserved by the Orientalophile Judith Gautier at the time of Paris Exposition, only four dances were recorded, in contrast to fourteen dances in Nakamura Tomijuro's standardized version set down in 1753.ⁱⁱⁱ We should note that the shortening of performance time as the Japanese reformist theatre's agenda certainly has affected the presentation of both *Kabuki* and the straight-theatre. In Judith Gautier's script, the scenes in *The Geisha and the Knight* were carried out in directly spoken dialogues between the geisha and the monks in simple, one to two sentences. Before each dance, the geisha would announce that she is going to do such and such dance and then plunge into dancing, while the monks would compliment how beautiful she is and how lucky they are to see her dancing. The monks imitate her dancing into a wiggling fish dance called "*dodjio*" (loach) that puns with *Dojoji* (literally Do-jo temple), while she exits temporarily for costume changes.

Dance scholar Shelly C. Berg has made the connection between *Kabuki* aesthetics and what had been evoked for the Symbolists reviewers in Paris of their own ideal and iconography—the revelation of the soul, a meaning invoked by mysterious symbols free of literary connotations, and images of the exotic, the bizarre, the extravagant, and the artificial that would "float somewhere between this world and the next" (1995: 377). Film scholar Tom Gunning has also traced modern arts' discovery of and fascination with motion by making connection between the parallel phenomena of early cinema and Loie Fuller's Serpentine dance, which was extolled by the Symbolists and Decadents of the 1890s. Gunning points out that "the Symbolists' concept of an art of continual transformation supplied not only new techniques for making art, but announced new perceptions of the world in

which the perceptible and the ideal or spiritual worlds intersected" (2003: 77). To Symbolist writers such as Camille Mauclair, cinematic motion out of static images became reversible in philosophizing Sadayakko's performance. He described the affect of seeing Sadayakko's performance: "We are wrapped up, taken, violated, and breathless not because of the atmosphere, [...], but by the kind of singular illusion given by this almost cinematic accumulation of truths, which are extremely correct in their detail, to which the speed of their presentation serves as a synthesis, just as the intense rotation of a body ends up giving the illusion of immobility" (1900: 278-284). Such a modern cinematic association of "image" in "motion" was also shared by English critic Max Beerbohm. However, Beerbohm's, (as well as many reviewers') account, was always framed within the chauvinist exoticist manner that spoke more about himself than the performer, as he remarked that "[Sadayakko] is so remote from my understanding—because her face is a mere inscrutable oval, and her gestures have for me no meaning, and to her gait I know no parallel—that I (deeming fair her face, and fair her gait and gestures) have set her thus above you [(Sarah Bernhardt and Rejane)]" (1954: 160).

In her intriguing appearance in the West, Sadayakko, filtering the aesthetics of Kabuki dance as characterized by *mai*—a paradox of "dance without moving" as "in the feeling conveyed by the placid surface of a body of water; the water, though constantly in motion, seems not to be moving at all" (Berg, 1995: 385)—invigorated many reflections regarding the perception of motion colored by exoticism, mystic synthesis of meaning, and technology.

As noted earlier, Ruth St. Denis's performance of Japan was enmeshed in the web of *japonism*. However, the weight she placed on the impact from seeing Sadayakko's performance is worth pondering. Unlike most of the reviewers who were amused by the "*délicieuse*" geisha who could turn fierce and menacing, Ruth St. Denis was struck by Sadayakko's "austerities" and "the subtle and elusive in art" that were "evoking" than "astonishing." The sublimation of Sadayakko's art as austere perhaps speaks more about Ruth St. Denis's own anxiety of transcending the

"low" of vaudeville acrobatics—as the backbends, high kicks, and all sorts of acrobatics prevalent in the vaudeville arena where she started her career. The overall trajectory of elevation, the negotiation between the high and the low, also factored in the invariably "divine" motif she embodied by dancing the Oriental. Sadayakko had certainly become the emblematic iconography that stood out from the web of *japonism* available to Ruth St. Denis.

Taken from Lafcadio Hearn's Japanese tale "The Legend of Fugen Bosatsu" in the book *Shadowings* (1900), *O-Mika*, like Ruth St. Denis's many other Oriental dances, repeated the prototypical characteristics of *Radha* in the sanctity of a goddess and the renunciation of the senses,^{iv} which is very different from the plot of love jealousy and passionate revenge in *The Geisha and the Knight*.

The American press described *O-Mika* ambivalently as "artistic,"^v and that Ruth St. Denis "[had] become a real artist."^{vi} In dance scholar Elizabeth Kendall's assessment of the American reception, she concludes that *O-Mika* was "too delicate and abstract to grip an audience." Kendal remarks that "[Ruth St. Denis] did not break the mood with any crescendos of backbends or spinning turns" (1977-1978: 69). How do we situate *O-Mika*, which was relatively less performed among the other pieces, in Ruth St. Denis's overall career? What kind of sensibility is filtering the reception here? Could we posit that *O-Mika* was Ruth St. Denis's failed early attempt of making "high art"? What does the popular ambivalence toward some of the "high art" association of *japonism* reflect the social stratum of its audience?

The reception from Japanese critic is a mixture of positive and negative comments. *O-Mika* was invited to be performed before the Japanese Society at the Hotel Astor in New York. Though St. Denis's "air of refinement" was praised, critic from *Japanese Times* dismissed the slapstick routine of the samurai "smacked of a cheap show" (Shelton, 1981: 110).

In the Japanese program of Denishawn's performance in the Imperial Theatre of Tokyo in September, 1925, Mitsuyoshi Natsuya wrote an introductory article on Denishawn including

significant portion of commentary on *O-Mika*, although *O-Mika* was not included in Denishawn's repertoire in their Japan stop.^{vii} He commented that "the flower dance and the spear dance in *O-Mika* aptly reflect the duality of Japanese artistic and martial spirits." He especially praised the details that Ruth St. Denis had paid attention to. For example, to put a serving maid next to *O-Mika* the *oiran* (courtesan of the highest rank), showed how well she exceeded the other superficial Japanophiles. The way she handled the Japanese spear, unlike many foreigners who only hold it casually as they like, was also very accurate. Moreover, she wore the kimono properly, which was rare among the foreigners. Her costume of *oiran* was correctly extravagant, following the custom of tying a big, long elaborate knot in front of her *obi*.^{viii} The only thing Mitsuyoshi picked on was that the section of flower arrangement is somewhat funny.

As to the reception from Japanese critic on Sadayakko's part, the painter and critic Kubota Beisai's review on Sadayakko represents the more in-depth discussion within the Japanese traditionalist frame.^{ix} Kubota Beisai's main criticism was that "the geisha was too extravagantly dressed" that "it was unthinkable according to the plot." He also did not understand certain elements of the samurai protagonist's dressing, which was reminiscent of the soldiers, for he did not recall him having military training. He concluded in his last paragraph that the "staging was chaotic with no unison, and all the lines were delivered in monotone, but no one else in Paris had pointed out such flaws." In Kawakami's response, he explained that he dressed the *geisha* (artistic entertainer) in the extravagant costume of *oiran* (courtesan of the highest rank) in order to show the beautiful design of Japanese kimono. It was for the similar reason that the samurai protagonist wore the hat which "nowadays could only be seen in museums or antique shops." He thought that "To stage something entirely different in style from the western theatre would appeal to their eyes." He also explained that "geisha" was more understandable for westerners than "*shirabyoshi*," (woman dancer dressed in male attire in the Noh fashion with the eboshi cap and a sword) and "*samurai*"

corresponded to the westerners' direct association with Japanese culture.

Interestingly, not only is the criterion pitched according to the level of "authenticity," but the "authenticity" is largely based on *visible referents* as costume, décor, or "custom" that is more easily spoken and documented in a more fixated manner such as the procedure of putting on kimono, the way of holding the sword, the way of tying the knot, [etc.] than the [harder to grasp, the more intangible, transient practice of "dancing"—which, though treatises pass down, can never replace the corporeal coaching and miming between master and disciple.

There is more documentation in terms of bodily coaching, miming, and refashioning on Ruth St. Denis's part. In 1910 when Ruth St. Denis already harbored the idea of making *O-Mika* in her domestic coast-to-coast tour, she found a former geisha in Los Angeles and took dance lessons from her for six weeks. She described the difficulty of learning to move in a foreign physicality that is precise, steady, and grounded:

With much pressing on my shoulders and much sagging of her own knees, she finally settled me in the classic mold, with knees bent, toes in, and eyes down...For six weeks I slowly and painfully learned how to move in my little white tabi, how to take up as little space as possible, both laterally as well as longitudinally, and above all how to approach the art of Japanese dancing with reverence...Weeks and weeks later, when both my back and my spirits had been broken, I was just beginning to show signs of a little Japanese grace,

Endnotes

ⁱ I draw the concept of autoexoticization from Marta Savigliano in her book *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*. Savigliano talks about autoexoticism as an identification interrelated with exoticism, a "looking for identity through the Western mirror" resulting, from "the colonial encounter...that is asymmetric in terms of power"(1995: 77).

ⁱⁱ When the Kawakamis were invited to perform for President McKinley at a gala performance in Washington D.C., the diplomatic audience requested that *hara-kiri* be performed in *Soga*, regardless of Kawakami's explanation about the historical inaccuracy of doing it in the classical piece (Berg, 1995: 180). Similarly, when the troupe was in Paris,

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- Loie Fuller also suggested adding more hara-kiri to *Kesa* because French people still remembered that more than thirty years ago a group of samurais had killed some French soldiers but later all committed *hara-kiri* as a repentance. Although the hero of *Kesa* supposedly wants to live on at the end, Kawakami, with the mediation of Japanese ambassador, eventually yielded to Fuller's suggestion, and made the hero die of *hara-kiri*. (Shirakawa, 1985: 332-333).
- iii Judith Gautier left two versions of the script *The Geisha and the Knight*. One is a more complete documentation/translation of the performance, "*La Ghéscha et le Chevalier*," *Les Parfums de la pagode* (Paris: Charpentier, 1919), 193-238. The other one appears in her anthology of the exotic music of the Exposition 1900, in which the script is much simpler purely for the sake of outlining the plot and appended an excerpt of its musical notation—"Les Danses de Sada Yacco," *Les Musiques Bizarres à l'Exposition de 1900* (Paris: Ollendorff, 1900), 6-20.
- iv Ruth St. Denis's biographer Suzanne Shelton has remarked that "*Radha* became the prototype for St. Denis's ballets, and the role became her stage persona: a virginal deity or queen who descended from the altar of purity, wrestled with evil, then returned to the peaceful sanctity of her throne. Many of her ballets followed the scenario, and even her shorter character dances were mutations of the solos in *Radha*" (1981: 62).
- v "Ruth St. Denis Applauded," *New York Times*, March 12, 1913, p.3.
- vi Charles Darton, "Ruth St. Denis Beautiful to See in Dance Plays," *The Evening World*, March 13, 1913.
- vii *O-Mika* was only performed in full length during the Mar, 1913 premier. The rest of the appearances of *O-Mika* were excerpts. In the route sheet of Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, *Japanese Flower Arrangement* (excerpt of *O-Mika*) was among the list of "Substitute and New Dances" when touring the South Asian countries in the first half of 1926 (Schlundt, 1962).
- viii *Oiran* of the Yoshiwara as the latter-day *tayū* rank of high-class courtesan was "overdressed, overpainted, overloaded by a coiffure bristling with dozens of bodkins...She might keep a suitor waiting,...while, surrounded by two *kamuro*, one or two maids, and lantern and parasol bearer, she began her deliberate parade from her residence to the house where her guest waited" (Shively, 1978: 53). *Obi* is the sash worn around the waist of a kimono to hold in place, normally tied at the rear in decorative knots according to the period, type, occupation, sex, and rank of the characters represented. The most spectacular is worn by *tayū*, which is tied at the breast and cascades to the floor in a combination of fringes and stiff material (Leiter, 1997: 480).
- ix Kubota Beisai published four serial articles in the Japanese daily *Yomiuri Shimbun* soon after witnessing *The Geisha and the Knight* at the Paris Exposition. To his criticism Kawakami also published his response in the same newspaper (Shirakawa, 1985: 324-334).

Dancing Toward Integration: A Mixed-methods Study of Argentine Tango, Adult Health/Well-being, Aging, and Spirituality in Philadelphia

Elizabeth Marie Seyler

Welcome. Bienvenue. I am a doctoral candidate in dance at Temple University in Philadelphia in the United States. I am also an Argentine tango dancer and have been a member of the tango community in Philadelphia since 2002. Today, I am presenting on research in progress, and I begin with some key terminology. I use the term “tango” to mean Argentine tango danced socially, not tango performed on stage nor ballroom tango, which differ in history, aesthetics, culture, and technique from Argentine tango. I use the Spanish word *milonga* to mean a tango dance event where people dance socially, and the Spanish word *práctica* to mean a tango practice session. Philadelphia is a city of 1.4 million on the East Coast of the United States between New York and Washington, DC. When I refer to Philadelphia, I am referring not just to the city proper but also to its suburbs.¹

Introduction

Tango is a social pairs dance form that originated in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Montevideo, Uruguay, at the turn of the twentieth century and is now danced in cities around the globe by people of diverse ages, backgrounds, and abilities. It is danced in a lead-follow structure and is highly improvisational and intimate. I will demonstrate tango for you at the end of this presentation.

Scholars like Donald S. Castro (1991), Simon Collier (1995), Marta Savigliano (1995), Julie Taylor (1998), and Robert Farris Thompson (2005) have published extensive works on tango’s history, and a few authors have written about tango in specific United States locations, like Carmen Lea Maret (2005), whose master’s thesis was on tango in Michigan. Though the Philadelphia community has existed for more than fifteen years and has grown to a membership of approximately four hundred dancers, it has not been the subject of any large-scale, formal research, to my knowledge.

In my roles in the tango community as dancer, instructor, performer, and event organizer, I have seen

many changes and been intrigued by how tango affects those involved. These experiences led me to ask the primary research question, “What is the history of tango in the Philadelphia area, what forces have shaped the community, who are its current members, and how do dancers perceive that dancing tango affects them?” Because a significant number of dancers are middle-aged or older, I am particularly interested in intersections among tango and aging, including how practicing tango may improve adults’ health and well-being. Using phenomenological, sociological, and historiographic methods, I seek to illuminate the dance practices of an aging population and to theorize about tango’s significance for them.

Because I am still analyzing the research data, this presentation focuses on selected findings with regard to the history of tango in Philadelphia and the demographics and characteristics of its members. I will discuss questions raised by these data and some nascent theories on what tango may offer to specific segments of this population.

History of Tango in Philadelphia

Because tango was first danced in Philadelphia in 1986, its history there is quite recent. The first stage performance and workshop offered by visiting tango professionals took place in 1986, the first weekly classes offered by local instructors began in 1991, and the first weekly *milonga* began in 1993. The community has grown quickly—from a handful of students at the first weekly class to approximately four hundred active dancers and an email list of nearly one thousand.

Because this history is recent, it resides *within* the people who have offered instruction and hosted events. I gathered data primarily through an eleven-page questionnaire of open and closed-ended questions that twenty-two local instructors and organizers, including myself, completed in the fall of 2006. I communicated with some respondents via telephone and email to clarify questionnaire data, and I invited all respondents to review

and edit drafts of the history text. Note that because I used *self-reported* information, I present not an irrefutable portrait of the history of tango in Philadelphia but, rather, a portrait of respondents' records and perceptions of what took place. Whenever possible, I used other primary sources, like newspaper articles and event flyers, to expand on, support, or refute respondents' data.

Forces outside the community that sparked tango's development centered around traveling shows like *Tango Argentino* that celebrated tango music and dance in full-length, professional performances. Since *Tango Argentino* first came to Philadelphia in 1986, shows like it have played regularly at local, high-profile performing arts venues. These shows sparked public interest in tango, and the increased use of tango in movies and television, particularly from the mid-1990s onward, has helped encourage participation in tango locally and nationally.

An overview of tango events and the people running them from 1991 to 2006 shows fairly consistent growth of tango in Philadelphia over time as illustrated in "Chart 1: Change in Number of Milongas per Month, Instructors, and Event Organizers by Year in Philadelphia" at the end of this paper. The top line with diamonds indicates the number of *milongas* per month, which held steady at nine from 1994 through 1999, then began to increase in 2000 until there were twenty-one in 2006. The middle line with squares indicates the number of instructors and illustrates, for example, that Kelly Ray and Lesley Mitchell began teaching tango in 1991, Jean Fung began in 1994, and a host of other local instructors began from 1998 to 2006. The bottom line with triangles indicates the number of event organizers and shows a temporary peak in 1997 due to collaboration among approximately ten dancers who hosted "Tango Vivo!"—the first local tango festival. Overall, in the seven-year period from early 2000 through 2006, the community grew faster than it had in the preceding fourteen years. The number of *milongas* more than doubled, the number of instructors nearly quadrupled, and the number of event organizers increased six times over.

Forces and Themes

Many forces within the tango community supported and shaped its growth. As I traced the history of each instructor and organizer and their

unique contributions, a number of themes arose as well as an ethos in their approach. Among the more predictable themes were entrepreneurship and competition, which drove increases in instructional offerings and the number of tango events. There was also conflict among some instructors and organizers in 1997 that may have limited the community's growth somewhat. In addition, instructors' and organizers' demographics and characteristics in terms of age, country of origin, occupation, and/or previous experience in dance and movement may have attracted a population of dancers with similar demographics and characteristics.

However, the most interesting phenomenon became visible by viewing a number of themes collectively. I believe that early local entrepreneurs promoted and modeled an ethos that placed a premium on tango's community-building capacity and that this ethos influenced most other instructors and organizers and has become a foundational force in the growth of tango in Philadelphia. Four key themes in the behavior of instructors and organizers could be viewed as outgrowths or elements of this ethos. These themes are altruism, collaboration, education, and being of service to others.

For example, since 1997, Michael Van Buskirk, a local lawyer and tango dancer, has epitomized altruism by maintaining the Tango Philadelphia website as a free service to the community. It includes a comprehensive calendar of events and information about most classes and instructors. Another example was the frequency with which organizers invited dancers, musicians, and visual artists to perform or display art at local *milongas*. I believe that these invitations were motivated not only by competition—a desire to make one's *milonga* appealing to dancers—but also to enhance attendees' enjoyment of an event, highlight local artists' talents, educate the community about the arts, and provide free publicity and exposure to artists.

A third example was and is a monthly *milonga*, called "*Milonga en Casa*" meaning "milonga at home" which begins with a pot-luck dinner and ends with dancing. Ray and Mitchell host it in their studio apartment as a way to encourage socializing and strengthen bonds among tango dancers. In addition, many instructors and organizers regularly collaborate to host special

events and to conduct tango outreach and advocacy events for the public. They have also donated tango services to support dance education in local schools through individual efforts and through two large fundraising events that I directed at Temple University in 2004 and 2006. The Philadelphia tango community is known among dancers from other cities for its friendliness and warmth, and I believe that instructors and organizers have played pivotal roles in creating this reputation through an ethos that emphasizes building community through tango.

Overall, these data illuminate the history of tango in Philadelphia and the people behind its growth. Data also raise questions about local tango dancers. What are their demographics and characteristics? How do these demographics and characteristics contribute to defining the community and understanding tango as a dance form? Has the community been shaped by local instructors and organizers?

Dancers' Demographics and Characteristics

In January and February of 2007, I collected demographic and other descriptive data on local dancers. Through making announcements at *milongas*, sending emails, and posting information on the Tango Philadelphia website, I invited all local dancers to take an anonymous survey. One hundred and three people completed it, which represented approximately one quarter of dancers who were attending local *milongas* in the winter of 2007.

An important limitation of this form of sampling, called volunteer or convenience sampling, is that I cannot generalize from the sample population to the general tango population with any validity—I am limited to drawing conclusions about those who completed the survey (Nardi 2006: 118). To mitigate the effects of this limitation, I patterned some questions after the 2000 United States Census so that I could compare and contrast my data with Philadelphia census data.

There was both diversity and uniformity among tango survey respondents. They were quite diverse in terms of marital status, country of origin, ethnic background, faith tradition, occupation, level of income, and years of experience in tango, other dances, and movement forms like yoga and Tai-chi. They were more uniform in their ages (approximately two-thirds were aged forty-five to

sixty-four), in their levels of education (fifty percent held a master's degree or higher), in their sexual orientation (ninety-two percent were heterosexual), and in their political party affiliation (forty-six percent were Democrat and forty-five percent were independent).

To determine which census data (i.e., from which cities and towns) would be most relevant as a context for understanding tango survey data, I analyzed the home locations of my respondents. Because more than three-quarters (seventy-eight percent) of respondents resided in Philadelphia or within twenty miles of Philadelphia, I decided to use data from the "American Community Survey" for Philadelphia County (which is comprised entirely of the City of Philadelphia) from the year 2005, the most recent year for which data was available as of April 2007 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). Although these data did not include information on residents of Philadelphia suburbs, they offered the closest match to my tango survey population that I could identify.² Keeping these limitations in mind, tango survey respondents were about fifteen years older than the Philadelphia mean; they were nearly four times more likely to be divorced; they were twice as likely to have been born outside of the continental United States; they were five times more likely to hold advanced degrees; they were twice as likely to work in the arts and in professional, scientific, and management occupations; and they had significantly higher incomes. While these differences between data sets do not offer irrefutable evidence of how the tango survey population may be unique compared to the general Philadelphia area population, they are consistent with my observations during five years of participation in the Philadelphia tango community, particularly with regard to dancers' ages, countries of origin, educations, occupations, and incomes. For brevity's sake in the remainder of this presentation, I explore what the ages of tango survey respondents may indicate about the community, the nature of tango as a dance form, and ways in which local instructors and organizers may have shaped the community.

Findings and Nascent Theories Regarding Age

According to the "American Community Survey," thirty-three percent of Philadelphia residents were aged forty-five to sixty-four (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). By comparison, sixty-nine percent

of tango survey respondents were in this age group—more than twice the percentage of Philadelphia residents. In addition, the mean age of tango survey respondents was fifty-two and the mean age of local instructors and organizers was fifty. Because ninety-five percent of tango survey respondents began learning tango in Philadelphia (according to tango survey data), local instructors and organizers may have had significant opportunities to influence them. Regarding age specifically, they could have attracted dancers of similar ages to themselves by demonstrating that tango is accessible and enjoyable to those at midlife and beyond.

The prevalence of survey respondents in this age group may also indicate that tango is well-suited to them due to physical changes associated with age, rich life experience, higher disposable incomes, and/or more spare time. Regarding the physical realm, though one's dancing is enhanced by good balance, one does not need very high levels of strength, flexibility, or stamina to enjoy dancing tango. Sometimes referred to as "fancy walking," tango can be danced very pleasingly with small steps and simple patterns, so it is well-suited to people whose physical abilities may change or decrease over time. Tango is also a dance of subtlety and self-expression, which can be enhanced through life experience. According to Mariela Franganillo, a professional tango artist who helped spawn the Philadelphia community, a woman's skill in tango comes from her experience and self-knowledge, which both improve and become visible in her dancing.³ Similarly, in *Paper Tangos*, author Julie Taylor wrote, "to dance the tango you remember with your body; that is why it is not usual or easy to dance the tango when you are very young" (1999: 80), the implication being that the more life experience you have, the more depth you bring to your dancing.

In addition, the costs associated with tango may make it more attractive to people at mid-life and beyond than to younger people. While the entrance fees for *milongas* are quite low (ten to fifteen U.S. dollars per person), one cannot learn how to dance tango simply by attending *milongas*. Most dancers also attend weekly tango classes and/or *prácticas*. For the period of November 2006 through January 2007, tango survey respondents reported spending an average of ninety U.S. dollars per month on tango activities, not including

tango shoes or clothing. If one's income increases with age, it could be more feasible to dance tango in mid-life and beyond than in one's young adulthood.

Finally, even if one's income is sufficient to dance tango, the dance requires a significant time commitment. On the survey, I asked how often dancers had attended tango activities. Fifty-seven percent attended three or more *milongas* per month, fifty-three percent attended three or more group classes per month, and forty percent attended three or more *prácticas* per month. To give you an idea of the time involved in these activities, *milongas* last three to four hours and often end at one or two o'clock in the morning, group classes last one and one-half hours, *prácticas* last two to three hours, and travel time can range from five minutes to more than an hour. Many respondents attended multiple tango activities per month, and twenty-five percent of them attended three or more *milongas*, classes, and *prácticas*, meaning that they spent from twenty-two to forty hours per month dancing tango. Tango may be prohibitively time consuming for young people raising children and/or investing in a career. In summary, people at mid-life and beyond may be drawn to tango in Philadelphia because they have sufficient time and money, they can express their life experience, they are not limited by their physical abilities, and/or they are encouraged by local instructors and organizers who are also at mid-life or beyond.

Intersections Among Tango, Aging, and Spirituality

While there are many other data that I will explore further, like the fact that the percentage of people born outside of the continental United States who responded to the tango survey was twice the percentage of those living in the city of Philadelphia (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005), the data that I find most intriguing are those suggesting intersections among aging, tango, and spirituality. The high percentage of respondents who are middle-aged or older, coupled with literature showing that people at mid-life are inclined to consider mortality, life purpose, and meaning through spiritual inquiry (Ai and Mackenzie 2006; Irwin 2002; Jewell 1999), raise questions about the role that dancing tango may play in this inquiry. In addition, while tango survey respondents indicated practicing more than fifteen faith traditions,

twenty-five percent of them practiced “self-designed spirituality,” a term I created for the survey. These data prompt me to ask how tango dancers define spirituality, whether they experience tango as spiritual, and whether age may factor into their experience.

Concluding Thoughts

Data from tango survey respondents has illuminated their diversity and uniformity both within the tango community and in the broader context of Philadelphia. These data helped me to understand a portion of the community and led me to develop nascent theories and pose more questions about why tango may appeal to dancers at mid-life and beyond. Data also indicated that local tango instructors and organizers are likely to have shaped the community through an ethos of community-building and by modeling inclusivity for older dancers. Data also illuminated that the community has grown steadily, primarily since the year 2000.

Many questions remain, particularly those that address how local dancers perceive that tango affects them and what intersections may exist between tango, aging, and spirituality. I am in the process of analyzing qualitative and quantitative data to address these questions.

This research holds significance for Philadelphia tango dancers by documenting the community’s history and forces that have shaped it, providing descriptive information about its members, and offering opportunities for deepened appreciation of what tango has to offer. It holds broader significance for historians and social scientists interested in tango and for other professionals in the fields of dance, health, gerontology, spirituality, and arts advocacy. On a personal level, I hope this work inspires more dancing and deepened spiritual inquiry, both of which I believe are essential for addressing current global challenges. As I continue to analyze data, I will publish articles and make conference presentations, so feel free to contact me for more information at eseyler@temple.edu.

Note to the reader: At the end of this presentation, I invited my friend from Philadelphia, Marie Dilisizian, who is a native of Paris, to demonstrate dancing tango with me. I emphasized that she and I not only practiced tango but also embodied much of the data driving my theories on tango in Phila-

delphia. We were in mid-life and divorced; we were born in different countries; and we were two spiritually minded women dancing together as leader and follower. I asked the audience to consider what they saw and, mostly, what they felt as we danced. Given what they had learned through the presentation, I asked “how does our practice inform your theory about tango?”

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Endnotes

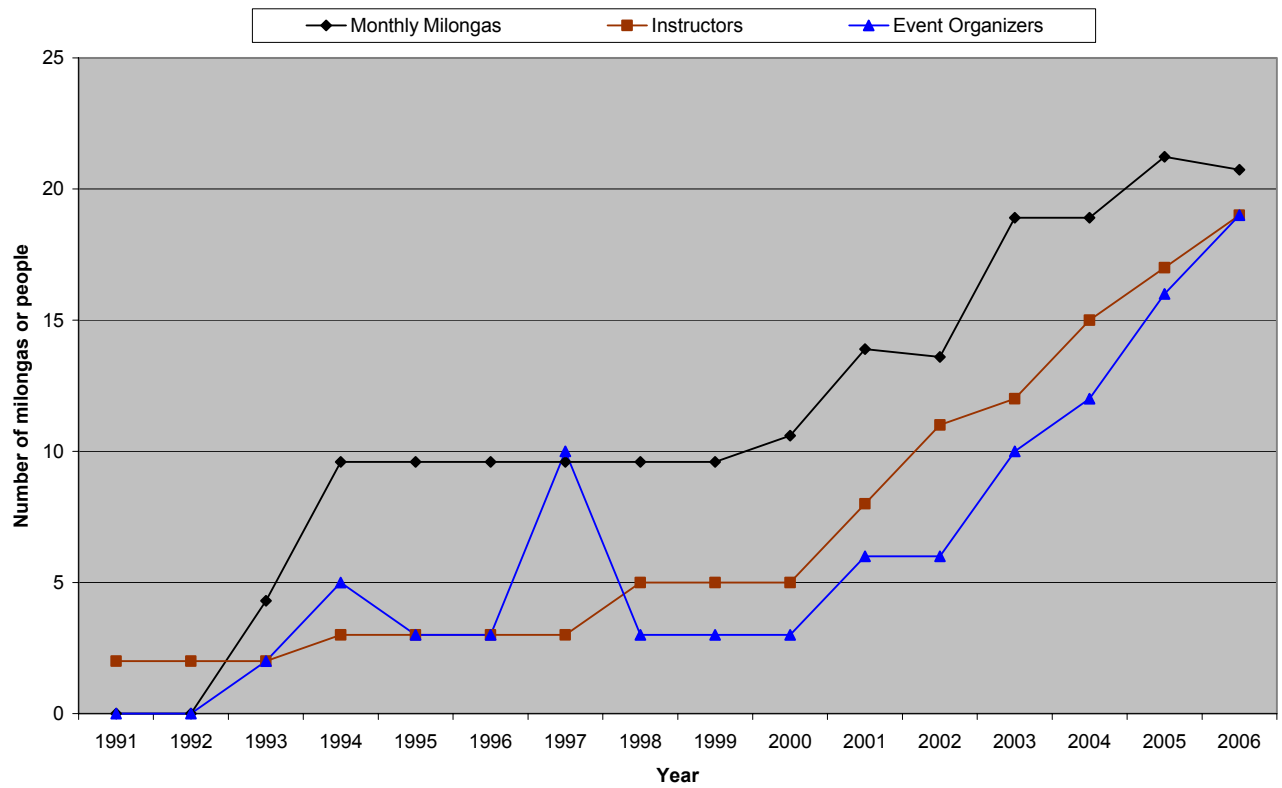
1. In this paper, “Philadelphia” includes Princeton, NJ, and all cities in Pennsylvania and New Jersey within a 20-mile radius of Center City, including Blue Bell, Camden, Cherry Hill, Collegeville, King of Prussia, Media, and Trenton.
2. Because of how “American Community Survey” sample areas are devised, I could not find data on Philadelphia residents that was combined with data on residents from the other areas where tango survey respondents lived, like Allentown, Pennsylvania and Newark, New Jersey, for example. I considered using data from the “Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD Metropolitan Statistical Area,” but only three of my respondents lived in Maryland or Delaware. Comparison with these data would have been misleading.
3. I gathered this information in a tape-recorded interview with Mariela Franganillo on November 2, 2003, at the Union League of Philadelphia as part of a research project for a Temple University course.

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Chart 1: Change in Number of Milongas per Month, Instructors, and Event Organizers by Year in Philadelphia



Choreography as *Live Theoretical Practice*

Brenda Farnell and Robert Wood

Introductory Remarks

This year's conference theme—Rethinking Theory and Practice—has encouraged the examination of relations between theorizing *and* practice in diverse ways. It has provided opportunities to examine disciplinary borders as well as interdisciplinary directions that constitute the current 'state of the art' in dance and movement research, opening up what the terms 'theory' and 'practice' mean from different perspectives. Potentially problematic, however, is an overall tendency to readily assign 'theory' to academic research whilst relegating artistic research/explorations to the realm of 'practice'. Positioning artistic practice as the *object* of research neglects to acknowledge that a consideration of the reverse formulation—academic *practice* and artistic *research*—might offer a congruency that can enrich the field. In the spirit of challenging this tendency in Western academic dance research, the central concept of our proposed contribution to the conference (and our overall research) entailed the presentation of a theory *in practice*, that is, a concern with exploring what kinds of theoretical knowledge might be built into choreographic work in Contemporary Dance¹, but realized only in live performance. For this exploration, we required a conventional Western theatrical space and members of *Robert Wood Dance New York inc.* Contemporary Dance Company. The conference organizers may not have perceived the exact nature of our movement research, or, for other reasons would not or could not accommodate these needs, and so we find ourselves limited to talk, text, and viewing video footage of RWDNY's repertoire instead of experiencing a live performance.

We respectfully suggest that the difference between this typical mode of academic conference presentation and an environment that serves a live movement exploration/performance is not merely cosmetic or aesthetic, but theoretically important. Video illustrates through *representation* what would be experienced directly through the multi-dimensional realms and

kinesthetic attributes of a live, humanly motivated, exploration.

A broader note of caution, then, is appropriate given this reduced context. The ready availability of audio-visual technology has its drawbacks if it perpetuates the disposition of researchers to undermine the centrality of communication in live performance, restricting it to the conventional performer/ audience relationship instead of positioning live performance as a central component and context for theorizing in research about dancing. In our specific case, being unable to create the performance environment appropriate to sustain effective involvement by the dancers removed the professional reasons for the company to be here, because the movement exploration would no longer be in a position to address the maturation of its parameters. We find this disruptive beyond the immediate fact that it compromised the effectiveness of our presentation because it widens the perceivable gap between conventional Western academic research and the professional practitioners/researchers of Contemporary Concert Dance and related movement arts, rather than bridging the divide.²

An Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Robert Wood is a New Zealand-American choreographer and distinguished dance artist, who, from 1981- 1992 worked with a wide range of prominent New York Contemporary dance-makers. He danced with Pearl Lang, David Gordon, Martha Clarke, and Donald Byrd prior to joining Merce Cunningham and John Cage from 1987-92, and subsequently developed his own company and dance organization - *RWDNY Inc.*

What brings Wood's choreographic investigations and research and Farnell's cultural and linguistic anthropological interests into conversation, is that in certain important respects, we both seek to move beyond certain components of *post-modernism* in reference to the dance arts and the social sciences, more of which later. We share a commitment to a new humanism and

furthering knowledge of who we are as human beings through investigating the artistic activity of people exploring space, time and energy, and what that means and/or produces. As an experienced contemporary dance choreographer, Wood has discovered much about what it means to be human through this process, and recognizes that it has not been well documented to date, a primary incentive for our collaborative project.

What we present today is the result of challenging efforts over many months—in studio, performances, during visual documentation, presentations, conversations and discussions—to forge adequate translations between the discourses of our two disciplines. We recognize that both ‘science’ and ‘art’, as epistemological categories, use the inherent ambiguity of human language for their own specific purposes, and indeed, Wood believes there is a science to this art, just as many scientists have come to understand that there is an art to doing science. Indeed, Jacob Bronowski (1965) suggests that scientific language seeks to *reduce* the inherent ambiguity of words to obtain a factually grounded, logically coherent explanation of the world, whereas art *exploits* that ambiguity poetically in order to give us an expansive enriched experience of human being in that world.³ In one sense, then, our collaborative endeavor seeks to exploit a space where artistic creativity and procedures, which envision movement as the enactment of a whole body intelligence, meet a social scientific orientation towards body movement as dynamically embodied meaningful action that is culturally and historically situated.⁴ To develop Bronowski’s point—artistic discourse serves a vision, the purpose of which is to provide a rich and expansive experience. By comparison scientific discourse serves the understanding of such experience through *explicit* conceptual formulation *about* it. Wood captures the difference succinctly in the following statement about his approach to movement exploration:

Its not about ‘this is the procedure’ and ‘this is how it works’—its not a ‘method’ in that sense—its not a recipe for doing choreography. Do I need a

model of all that—is it a philosophy? A theory? The

belief, desire and passion of it overwhelm any need for the formalization of it (Wood, Notes 5/07)⁵

However, at a deeper level, rather than accepting Bronowski’s duality—science and art—as a given, we also seek to challenge it by positioning ‘movement intelligence’ and ‘dynamic embodiment’⁶ at the center of the enquiry. We have discovered that, although the purposes may differ, the kinds of questions being explored through artistic practice can be closely related to those being asked in the social sciences. Movement explorations entail rigorous investigations that lead to significant findings about being human. Understandings achieved through this process shape the future directions of research, leading to new investigative procedures and possibilities, a process which has a robust dimensionality and durability that parallels scientific enquiry in interesting ways.

A significant difference, perhaps, is that the movement artist aims to create something new, finding things that are not known, or reconfiguring the familiar so that we see things differently, whereas the social scientist seeks to uncover or discover what is already there in the natural and social worlds, and to interpret and document it accurately.⁷ In both cases, the investigator finds things directly responsive to the questions being asked, or the parameters being addressed. How best to write about this remains an interesting challenge and part of our experiment.

To claim that the choreographic process can be a *theoretical act*—a theory *in* practice—requires us to articulate the theoretical ideas that are the choreographic *means* to realizing the significant intellectual and experiential resources that constitute the exploratory sector of Contemporary Dance. The details of this are beyond the scope of this paper, but include addressing choreographic method (in Wood’s case, open, casual, and chance procedures) and the multiple factors involved in his experimental work, including visceral, cerebral and personal insights, immediacy, simultaneity, mathematical possibilities, occurrence/ non-occurrence, selection/non-selection, embracing influences that come from outside and inside human attributes,

accessing realms of imagined possibilities in space and time, and letting go of one's control over the process. As Wood puts it:

Before a piece of choreographic work is set up it goes through a visceral theorizing, the dimensions of which can be huge. Parameters have to be chosen—scientific, social, poetic and anthropological sensibilities—there is a lot of territory covered by the senses...

Theoria

In Western (that is, European and derived) thought, and stemming from a general principle of the nature of scientific understanding, the concept of 'theory' today reflects what is fundamental to the use of human intelligence *in any context* in order to understand self, world, and others. It is not limited to scientific enquiry. In the history of Western thought, the idea comes from the Greek *theoria*—to seek the reality behind appearances. For the Greeks, this applied to nature and its laws; for Judeo-Christians it was God and the Nature He created (the 'laws' being God's thoughts). The scientific revolution, as a marker of modernity, was a shift to theory as encompassing the reality of nature and its laws, away from theology. In the same sense, an act of choreography is a theoretical act in that it presupposes certain conceptions of what is being worked with, in other words an ontology (what *counts* as real) and epistemology (how one is going to *know* the real). In many approaches to Contemporary Dance, and Robert Wood's in particular, what is being worked with includes:

1. A specific conception of personhood regarding the dancer.
2. Conceptions of space/time, the body, and movement as the medium being manipulated.
3. Commitments to the purposes of the work and its performances.

In this presentation, we introduce some of the issues with which we are grappling, using selected video excerpts from Wood's works—*Ascension* and *SiLenCe*—to talk about aspects of

the first two themes as they appear in his work. First, a word about theory itself, postmodernism, and the new humanism mentioned earlier.

A Word about "Theory"

Recent work in realist philosophies of science that come *After Postmodernism* (Lopez and Potter 2001) opens up the possibility of a new encounter between science and humanism, in which "ontologically adequate conceptions of human agency, embodiment, discourse and their interconnections in actual human action" (Varela 2007:1) provide new ground for a distinctly humanist social scientific enquiry—one that preserves the reality of human freedom against determinism without sacrificing the plausible metaphysics of an *embodied* concept of human being (thereby reconciling or transcending the material/non-material dualism of Cartesian renown).

The old encounter between science and humanism in the late 1950's and early 1960's, often referred to as the "two cultures debate," was between a *positivist* concept of science, and humanism, which was untenable. Postmodernism dismissed the possibility of any tenable solution, since within that paradigm, an absolute relativism reduced knowledge to matters of power, dominance and ideology rather than concerns with truth, understanding and theory. The new realism in the philosophy of science rescues social science from the mistakes of positivism and reinstates science as a practice for pursuing knowledge about people as real human beings—that is, as embodied personal agents in a meaningful world.

In the social sciences, we also now know that theory does not have to be thought of in the *same way* as theory in the hard sciences (such as physics, chemistry or biology) to be considered scientifically sound. Each science has to work out its own conception of theory based upon its own subject matter. According to the realist philosophy of science mentioned earlier, this comes from the limits of the '*natural kind of reality*' that is their interest (Manicus 2006, Varela and Harré 1996). In our case, the reality of interest to us is not biological, chemical or physical kinds of agents, but dynamically embodied human agents and their culturally meaningful practices, that include imagination, moral

and ethical values, human relationships, political as well as spiritual beliefs and practices—all those qualities that make humans distinctly meaning-making, knowledge producing creatures.

From our perspective this means positioning movement at the center of our investigation as a source and repository of knowledge and meaning that exists in human space and time. We privilege talking *from* the movement not *about* it (see Farnell 1994). Acknowledging its sophistication as whole body intelligence at work in an environment that is always adapting and changing, Wood reflects that

As moving intelligence, the whole body in motion is immensely stimulating. Choreographing this way provides access to multiple planes of knowing...the senses are heightened, the mind is getting additional oxygen...this creates an enhanced ability to focus and explore several things at once while simultaneously letting go of the usual patterns of thinking, and traveling over the ideas...being insightful of ...

In addition, in the human sciences, where the investigator is also one of the subjects, new post-positivist notions of objectivity require a critical reflexivity to be at work—that is, a critical awareness of the investigator's own personal, cultural and historical positioning are necessarily brought to bear as a component of the investigation.⁸

Theory and Method

Theory is not usefully separated from method(s), rather, theoretical questions lead to particular ways of working: theory is about *what* you want to know—methods are about *how* you are going to find out. The 'how' is thus dependent on the 'what'. Otherwise the investigation runs the risk of being reductionist. If, for example, an investigator puts method first and determines that the only way to know is to measure—then the only things one can find out are *those presupposed aspects that can be measured*. But what can be measured is not necessarily of value or relevance. This privileging of quantitative method may miss what is most important about

a subject—this is especially the case when it comes to understanding dance and human movement as meaning-making practices. As Roy Bhaskar, (following Rom Harré), puts it, in the humanistic social sciences we are interested in achieving a *precision of meaning* rather than the accuracy of measurement (Bhaskar 1979). If human beings as meaning-makers are to be understood, the strict demands of measurement will fail.

Speaking ethnographically, we see Wood's work operating within a broad set of general philosophical assumptions or principles. He seeks to explore specific theoretical questions or parameters in the making of work, and chooses methods of working generated by these, referring to his choreography as 'movement works' or 'movement explorations' rather than 'dances'. A movement exploration is an investigation into knowledge that can be accessed or discovered through the moving body. Testing ideas here is a theoretical practice driven from moving itself—ideas come *from* here, not the reverse (that is, "ideas" are not imposed onto the moving). To use Gilbert Ryle's (1948) useful distinction, it is not thought *about* something, but thoughtful engagement within the practice of moving that is central to movement investigations. While explorations do cross over into considerations of the choreographic craft or method, this is not the focal point of the construction. Indeed crafting, as usually understood, is used sparingly, and yet, in some cases, remains productive.

A Concept of Personhood and Disposition Regarding the Dancer

What we want to shed light on here combines anthropological thinking about the social construction of personhood⁹ with choreographers' theories of personhood in the sense of attributes considered necessary to the social role of being a 'dancer,' that is, observable and/or perceivable qualities that lead dance-makers to adopt different approaches to their choreographic process.

When talking about the way in which they work with dancers when composing, it is not uncommon to hear leading American choreographers of Contemporary Dance and Ballet to state that they function within a "dictatorship" (e.g. Taylor, 2007; Morris, 2004; Balanchine, 2003)—

—benign, perhaps, but nevertheless a dictatorship in which their ideas predominate. In their established positions, these choreographers have attained the right to control the content and process of making their work. Under such choreographic regimes, the dancer becomes a means to an end—by all accounts a beautiful, skilled, dynamic body, whose personal and human qualities may or may not be central to the resulting art work, but a consenting body-object nevertheless, subject to the manipulations of the choreographer's needs and desires.

At the risk of over generalizing here, one might say that at the other end of the spectrum, it is also not uncommon to find Contemporary choreographers whose *modus operandum* is more democratic. They aim to collaborate with dancers in the making of work, creating community, sharing ideas and building work together. However, in these cases too, the focus of attention is likely to be the movement ideas and themes they have chosen to be danced *about*, and the dancer remains the dynamic means to those ends.

In both these cases, the dancer as a *person*—with a unique disposition as well as a personal and cultural history, is not the primary focus of attention or source of movement material and knowledge. In contrast to this, Wood's work, among others,¹⁰ seeks to reveal to the viewer attributes of the dancer's personal and cultural being, as this is constructed through, and revealed in their movement. Persons are, for Wood, fundamentally *moving beings*, and his work involves creating environments that allow the mover/dancer to discover this for her/himself, encouraging and anticipating a state of being which draws deeply upon their unique personal, cultural and ancestral dispositions and experiences. This is illustrated in the following excerpts from Wood's 1996 evening-length work *Ascension*, selected from section 7 *Reverence*, and section 10 *Elevation*.¹¹

No uniformity of body-type or technical movement vocabulary is at work here. Instead we find dancers who reveal to us, and draw us into, a deeply sensuous, corporeal viscosity that can simultaneously be intensely inwardly focused, while connected through softly surrendering gestures reaching to infinite space. New

York Times dance critic Jennifer Dunning described this as follows

Reverence is a ceremony of slowly changing patterns ... giving [the women] the look of graceful columns. Reverence is a gradual journey towards exultation (Dunning, 1998).

Wood explained to a second critic,

"We are speaking of a language which is visceral," he says of his choreography, "which translates the visual and sensory effects of dance movement into communication that transcends the written word or cognitive thought" (cited in Morrison, 1996).

More recently Wood describes the dancer's experience *inside* the dance as follows:

Tuned into each other and sharing an agreed, visceral *simpatico* that does not require words generates an efficient use of time and energy, an environment that is built selectively outside of the outside world.

For Wood, the dancer/mover is an embodied person with dispositions that *in-corporate* [literally] personal, historical, cultural and ancestral knowledge and experience. Movers are not the programmed super-bodies of a Balanchine, moving to the choreographer's desires in musical space and time, nor the complex, dynamic, organic entities of Cunningham, where chance defines the movement vocabulary in abstract fields of space, time and sound.

Just as Cunningham, in forging a post-modern turn with John Cage, rejected the primitivism, naturalism, psychologism and narrativity of earlier modern dance (see Copland, 2004). Wood departs from Cunningham's frequently de-personalized and asexual handling of bodies in space wherein partners are seemingly manipulated objects (albeit in the service of extending Cunningham's geometric vocabulary for two or more bodies).¹² Instead, Wood seeks to recover an emotionally rich and humanized sense of physicality and state of being which proposes to access the actual and imagined dimensions of

space and time as perceptual and experiential human resources. In part, this is a reaction against the limited perceptions of ‘the dancer’ and his/her work that Wood observed as unnecessarily confining the human dimensions of choreographic work. It is also generated by distinctly New Zealand political and cultural values and ways of being, which are deeply influenced by his native land and richly inclusive of Maori modes of sociality.

A second video excerpt from the evening length movement exploration *siLenCe*, illustrates how Wood uses choreography to address the dancers’ understandings of self and their personal dispositions in ways that relate to who they are, how they are working, and what they want to achieve. Developed with this group of classically trained Italian dancers, it seeks to reveal the personal qualities of the individual dancers and enhance their sense of authorship over their moving, thereby moving away from the tradition familiar to them of learning and then executing ‘the steps’.

Here is a simple movement exploration which addresses multiple possibilities for the dancer. It is kept relatively simple choreographically—its not about the visual movement, but what occurs *from* its doing. For the young dancer it offers an experiential position for searching without observing him or herself and disrupting focus by being self-conscious.

The exploration also seeks to expand the dancers’ understandings of *time*. The simple cannoning structure presents the idea that rather than being exact in musical timing, the dancer can permit her/himself to address a more independent human timing or phrasing that simultaneously addresses their histories, yet is in the moment and nevertheless responsive to the group.

It’s not that each phrase must be ‘three beats apart’ but rather that as each dancer begins to move she [this section has seven women] takes her own time to explore further the visceral, sensational quality of the action and permits a vibra-

tional response—a searching of her own being in place.

Wood notes that this is

a wonderful procedure for these classically trained dancers because they have been brought up on ‘counts’ rather than their own sense of timing...within explorations that are actively seeking what kind of knowledge might be available to their dispositions, their being, and their relationships to everything, both next to them and infinitely distanced.

The footage freezes one particular performance—body movement wise they are “out,” musically they are “out”—but this is the point—someone went into a dream or explored something...comes to their understanding of how they wish to address themselves.

The documentation on film did not serve what actually happened live—the most interesting occurrences and causal interactions or relationships occurred in the initial phases of it—this type of work is addressing change and it’s most successful when disorganization occurs. The greatest experience for many of these dancers is when it “doesn’t work” on stage—they search into other places and something interesting happens — another arrangement occurs or shows itself, is invited or arrives.

This procedure also diplomatically addresses body type:

It also liberates them from the idea that ‘perfect placing’ relates to the height and weight and body type of the dancer. Perfect placing in this context is whatever occurs in the moment, in relationship to each time it is explored. It’s a big leap from perfectionism to a casual human precision.

Concepts of Space, Time and Movement

This choreographic process allows past, present and future time to become available in ways beyond the chronological:

The intelligence that brings [the movement exploration] where it goes at one point in time comes from the last time it was visited. It may be accessing or addressing this same information or it may not. The spirit of the work's exploration may move things forward to another place—it's built to move forward—it allows the dancer, sensing internally, to recalibrate or calibrate to the present time while also working from memory of the earlier search. It is these understandings that are at the center of this moving process for the dancer—an ability to go somewhere—that's what we mean by bodily knowledge.

The casual procedure employed is not just a happenstance, the action is moved to a whole other frequency—a kinesthetic calibration is going on that is addressing the higher functioning that is shown in and through the work—[the higher functioning] shows itself.

A manipulation or “bending” of time takes place via this appeal to a higher level of awareness:

This functioning is interesting because the senses enhance the intellectual rigor of it and provide other dimensions of information. If you are organizing the parameters of your movement—whether using visceral intellectual, conscious recall, future anticipation, or using insight and being involved, you are moving towards these possible realms and/or they move towards you.

In service of the exploration, Wood also aims to bypass the idea that the dancers are “learning” something from without, and replace it with the notion that they are *finding* information that is useful to them—a realization of his theoretical premise that

...the agency and authorship of the dancer should be of primary concern if the dance is to fulfill its promise as a way of knowing and being.

The focus on *progressive discovery in the moment* is central to this premise—it requires instantaneous realizations (sudden insights) within the flow of action, something that is extremely difficult to describe in words and can be easily disrupted outside a conducive environment. As Wood puts it;

I might speculate that we can access connections to pasts, presents, and futures, whether it comes in the form of a sense, intuition, insight, vibration, or instantaneous understanding that defies definition in the words available to us, but that nevertheless suggests investigation. The seemingly mystical, thus becomes appreciable as a hypothetical realm worth exploring. In our dancing it is these realms that are being explored.

It would be inaccurate to assume that this process requires improvisation. It is more closely associated with variations on a procedural theme that has its own structure:

In fact, structurally speaking, in this section there are 27 shapes with 17 transitions; there are 9 sub-transitions and another 13 shapes. One can maintain a personal detachment—addressing the mathematical or geometrical aspects of the piece. One can also access other aspects of nature using the intelligent qualities that arise through casual procedure. It doesn't just involve recall, it creates self-perpetuating new knowledge—embracing what was, what is and what could be. It is key to these states of high functioning to be self-perpetuating. A calm waiting for the factors that reply to these energies brings us to appreciate planes of understanding and perceptual realms within realms.

It's the dancer's choice whether to explore or serve the choreography—all are

equally empowered. Its not about always doing it, its about the fact that they *could* choose to do it, like in the *Si-LenCe* “Samurai”.¹³ Do I play with cause and effect today? What is my state of being today? Do I go for something or stay in this zone of kinesthetic exploration? Kinesthetic being is the key to the whole thing—the brain feels this visceral imagery...

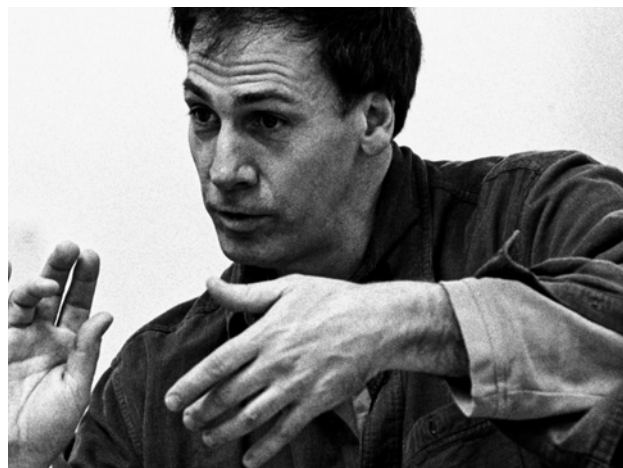
Concluding Remarks

In this presentation, we have suggested that the choreographic process described here can usefully be considered a *theoretical act*—a theory *in* practice. This required us to articulate some of the theoretical ideas that are the choreographic *means* to realizing work in this exploratory sector of Contemporary Dance. We have done this by documenting discourse about concepts of personhood that deeply inform the choreographer’s working procedures with dancers. Interwoven throughout this discourse are statements that address his working concepts of space, time and movement. They reveal a coherent, rigorous theoretical approach to making work, which entails distinct methods and associated philosophical commitments. We have suggested that the kinds of questions being explored through artistic research and practice can be closely related to those being asked in the social, as well as natural sciences.

At the same time we have sought to challenge the conventional Western epistemological division between ‘science’ and ‘art’ by positioning concepts such as ‘movement intelligence’ and ‘dynamic embodiment’ at the center of the inquiry. Both perspectives embrace important theoretical re-positionings after post-modernism. In the case of Wood’s movement explorations, the shift beyond post-modernism entails the recovery of the *mover*. This takes precedence over post-modern interests in, for example, the manipulation of objects or addressing ‘movement for movement’s sake’ (whether the action be highly skilled, virtuosic or pedestrian). In the social sciences, especially cultural anthropology, the move beyond post-modernism entails a recovery of embodied personhood within a ‘new realist’ philosophy of science. This provides us with the most plausible account of human being

so far, according to which we are bio-psycho-social entities whose agentic powers to act are simultaneously grounded in a corporeal materialism. That materialism or ‘corporeality’ affords precisely those socio-linguistic processes which allow us to retain our human freedom— to choose, to create, to imagine, to act, and to dream.¹⁴

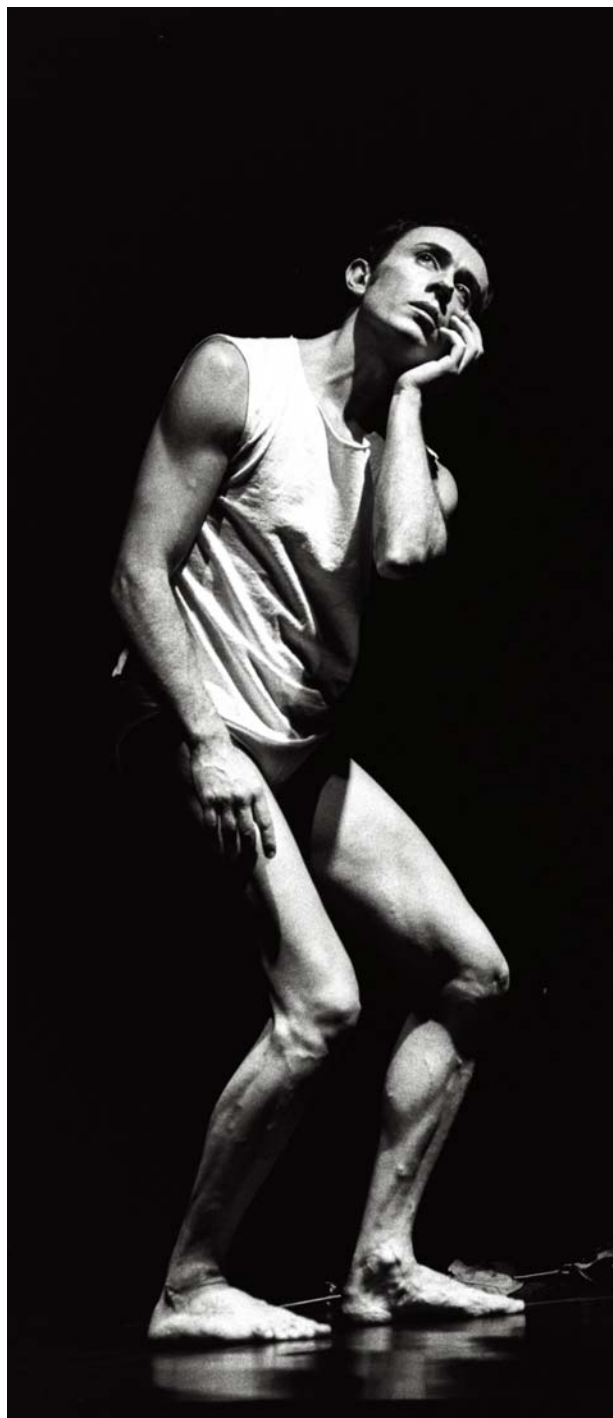
As the philosopher Suzanne Langer noted in her introduction to *Mind: an Essay on Human Feeling* (1967), the greatest test of a social scientific theory is never the experiment, but *art*. In this regard, Wood’s choreography provides us with a potent example of the richness of experience that the social sciences, even at their very best, can never capture, but simply honor.



Robert Wood, Florence, Italy, 2005.
Photo by Alessandro Botticelli



Kelly Slough and Paula Swiatkowski in *Reverence*, New York, 1996. Photo by Chris Ramirez



Luca Tonini in *SiLenCe* 2005, Florence, Italy, 2005. Photo by Alessandro Botticelli

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Endnotes

- ¹ By 'Contemporary Dance' we refer to the European and American concert dance tradition that developed out of ballet and modern dance, and which has since been adopted and developed in other parts of the world.
- ² Bridging this gap between professional and academic worlds is an integral goal of our 3-year association and research.
- ³ For example, while natural scientists work towards a definitive notion of "energy" that has a universal semantic meaning shared by the scientific community worldwide. For the arts, especially in contemporary dance, "energy" is a sensitizing concept referring to a wielding of the power of the body in and through space, being attuned to forces that move things. It is expansive and poetic, an open invitation to the discovery of possibilities through exploration via the dynamics of body movement.
- ⁴ The anthropological approach is grounded in Drid Williams's semasiological theory within the anthropology of human movement. See Williams, 2004.
- ⁵ Indented quotations throughout the paper are selected from notes and recordings taken by Farnell during conversations with Wood from 2004 - 07, unless otherwise stated. Wood was not present at the presentation and quotations were read by Farnell in conjunction with supporting visuals. We both wrote the text surrounding these quotations.
- ⁶ 'Movement intelligence' and 'dynamic embodiment' are terms that relate to a specific theoretical position within the anthropology of human movement.
- ⁷ This statement reveals its limitations almost as soon as it is formulated, since cultural anthropologists also seek to "reconfigure the familiar." We see and experience things differently, even within our own society once viewed through an anthropological lens.
- ⁸ See special issue of the *Journal for the Anthropological Study of Human Movement* (JASHM) on Reflexivity, 1994 Vol 8 (1).
- ⁹ See Harré, 1983, 1987; Harré and Gillett, 1994, and Shotter 1993.
- ¹⁰ See also Canadian choreographer Jean Pierre Perrault in the documentary film *Danseur Perrault*, Director Tim Southam, CBC, Montreal, 2005.
- ¹¹ At this point, the audience viewed video footage which illustrated the discussion.
- ¹² This is not to exclude Cunningham's "memory pieces" (Vaughan, 1997: 232) such as *Fabrications* (1987), *Shards* (1987) and *Quartet* (1982), which are exceptions that reach through Cunningham's adherence to the vocabulary and use of "chance procedure" to human subject matter. See Vaughan 1997 for further discussion.

- ¹³ This is a reference to RWDNY dancer John Hinrich's exploration of power within the opening section of the work *SiLenCe*, developed in 2004.
- ¹⁴ Scientific positivism, with its deterministic paradigm that made any form of agency impossible in the natural biological world, and certainly in the cultural world, made this impossible thereby separating our bodies as biological material entities from our minds as non-material forces. See Farnell 1994.

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Martha Hill's Legacy: Putting Theory into Practice

Elizabeth McPherson

Choreographer Anna Halprin once wrote, "All great innovators and pioneers have three characteristics in common: a fierce commitment and uncompromising integrity to their ideas; a profound and lasting impact on society and culture; and a grand and eloquent vision."¹ Martha Hill is just such an innovator and pioneer. She developed a ground-breaking theory for training dancers in modern and ballet, had the fortunate opportunity to put this theory into practice, and the grace of longevity to see the results of the practice.²

Hill was born in 1900 in East Palestine, Ohio. She began studying dance at The Battle Creek Normal School of Physical Education in Michigan in 1918, taking dance courses in primarily folk and aesthetic dance (a modified form of ballet), but also taking anatomy and kinesiology which would greatly inform her own teaching and the curriculums she would develop. Soon after she graduated from Battle Creek, she took over the position of dance instructor. In the following years she would hold positions teaching dance at Kansas State Teachers College and the University of Oregon, making frequent trips to New York to study dance--ballet, folk dance, Dalcroze Eurythmics, and Isadora Duncan technique. On one of her stays in New York in 1927, she saw Martha Graham perform. The performance changed Hill's life. In her words, "That was it!".... "It was instant conversion, instant."³ She immediately began studying with Graham. No more ballet classes! She moved to New York for good in 1929, and joined the Graham company. Noting the separateness of the forms at that time, she remembered that Graham did not do any of the tendus and other ballet vocabulary that would later creep into Graham technique. Graham was rebelling from ballet, and as Hill noted, had to "react sharply" to distinguish herself and her new ideas. Hill remembered: "The modern dance was a revolt against the strictures of ballet, therefore to dance balletically was anathema, and so you had to get as far away from it as you could."

Hill also completed her bachelor's degree at Teachers College of Columbia University, and

began teaching part-time at New York University. By 1931, she had been named Director of Dance at NYU, and with an increasing teaching load felt that she had to leave the Graham company. Hill was not married at the time and had very little family support. In her words,

It broke my heart to stop performing.... It came to a point where Martha's needs were more demanding. I would have had to have rehearsals in the daytime when I had to work.... I didn't have a husband at that time. I had no one to pay my living. If I were going to live in New York, I had to have a roof over my head.... I couldn't have possibly gone on.⁴

In 1932, Robert Devore Leigh asked Hill to join the faculty of the brand new Bennington College in Vermont. She took the job in addition to the job at NYU commuting back and forth for the next nineteen years, and this trip takes at least four hours. At first she was at Bennington on Fridays and Saturdays, but later added in Thursdays. In 1934, Hill initiated the summer program and festival, The Bennington School of the Dance that she co-directed with Mary Josephine Shelly. This program would bring together four of modern dance's most important pioneers: Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, and Hanya Holm. Although modern dance was by far the focus of the program, Ballet Caravan, a company put together by Lincoln Kirstein, performed at Bennington in 1936 and 1937. In the final year of the Bennington School of the Dance, 1942, Erick Hawkins taught ballet. The school and festival would be reformed with Hill as director, as the Connecticut College School of the Dance/American Dance Festival. The named was later simplified to just The American Dance Festival and the program moved to Duke University in North Carolina.

In the 1940s, Martha Hill and William Schuman, president of Juilliard began discussing the addition of a dance department at The Juilliard School of Music. Hill tells the story that Schuman

was at a social gathering at her home one evening and simply asked her, "What do you think about a dance department at Juilliard?" Hill answered, "Depends on what you want to do with it."⁵ They agreed that it would be a professional department as the music department is and would have a comprehensive level of training with equal emphasis given to ballet and modern. Hill's own background had been in both ballet and modern, and she saw the value in that for herself, believing it would also be valuable for her students. Hill and Schuman wanted to train well-rounded dancers who would be prepared to find work as dance professionals, however this dual training was unheard of in the early 1950s. As Hill noted of this era, the divisions between modern and ballet were such that "it was just assumed that they would mix about as well as oil and water."⁶ Hill herself had stopped her ballet training when she began studying with Graham, but was forward looking enough to envision the dancers this dual training would prepare. Writer Clive Barnes explained:

American dance was less fact than fiction...There was classic ballet on the one hand, and there was modern dance on the other.... The velvety, smiling, iron-gloved Miss Hill cut through the nonsense, deciding that there were only two kinds of dance, the good and the bad.... She quickly dedicated Juilliard to the good and nothing but the good.⁷

In 1979, Hill voiced, "I think today, for the training of a professional dancer, an eclectic approach is wise, as you would know from what I've set up at Juilliard. Because every choreographer you dance with is different, and if you are imbued with one approach and one aesthetic, unless you are a very unusual person, you're limited. That's why Juilliard dancers are very much in demand, is because they are very adaptive."⁸

I remember Hill saying to my entering class at Juilliard in 1986 that her wish for us as we moved through Juilliard and graduated, was that we would receive the training necessary to prepare us to join a company such as Netherlands Dance Theatre which she saw as epitomizing the fusion of ballet and modern. Francis Patrelle, another

Juilliard graduate, once quoted Hill as saying that the well-trained dancer, "could have pointe work ready to enter American Ballet Theatre, and then do a back fall at the same time."⁹

In working out the details of the establishment of the Juilliard Dance Department in 1951, Hill voiced immediately to President Schuman that she would want Martha Graham for modern and Antony Tudor for ballet. Other original dance faculty included Doris Humphrey, and José Limón for modern and Margaret Craske for ballet. Alfredo Corvino would join the ballet faculty in the second year. Hill was filling faculty positions with some of the best-regarded teachers and choreographers she could enlist. Jerome Robbins and Agnes de Mille were actually on the original faculty roster, however, Robbins did not ultimately teach there, and Agnes de Mille gave a couple of lectures the first year but then was too busy to continue.

At Juilliard in the early years of the dance department, each student took ballet and modern, but was allowed to specialize in one or the other after meeting certain general requirements in both. Faculty member Tudor, explained the thinking: "After a year they will begin to know their own minds and bodies and what they're going to put their interest in,"¹⁰ but it was expected that they would achieve proficiency in both. In 1971, majoring in either ballet or modern was eliminated in favor of one general major in dance with technique classes equally divided between ballet and modern.

The training went beyond the classroom onto the stage. Juilliard dance performances ranged across the ballet/modern spectrum. The Dance Department gave its first public demonstration on May 7 and 8 of 1953. The dancers performed Humphrey's *Song of the West*, and did a demonstration in ballet put together by Tudor. P. W. Manchester reviewed the performance and found that although the dancers had only been in training a short time, the demonstration was "fascinating, educational, and admirable."¹¹ Later performances included works by Graham, Limon, Anna Sokolow- who joined the faculty in 1958, and more works by Tudor as well as other ballets.

The influence of ballet and modern being taught side by side at Juilliard also had an effect beyond the Juilliard walls. Agnes de Mille once

voiced the theory that Graham teaching next to Tudor at Juilliard and seeing him at work as well as the results in his students was what compelled Graham to begin to add select ballet vocabulary into her technique. Muriel Topaz in her biography of Tudor noted that his ballets have much in common with the dramatic work of Graham. Although using different vocabulary, they both brought movement down to its core of expression so that every gesture no matter how small furthers character development and the story line or theme. Graham and Tudor became friends, perhaps recognizing some similar beliefs between themselves about dance, despite their differing idioms.

Hill put her theory of dual training into practice, then shepherded its course for the next thirty-five years and beyond. Many colleges and universities followed Juilliard's lead, ultimately changing the course of both ballet and modern dance by developing a bridge between the two forms. Today it is difficult to find a dance department that offers one without the other. Through making strong connections with her students, Hill advanced her own vision. Hill's students have headed many dance departments and others have headed dance companies-- one woman's vision expounding exponentially. Juilliard students through the years have included Pina Bausch, Lar Lubovitch, Paul Taylor, Bruce Marks, Susan Marshall, Michael Uthoff, and many others.

The long term effect of the dual training has been that the two forms have reached a meeting point and then an overlap. As dancers were increasingly able to perform both ballet and modern with proficiency, choreographers utilized the expanding vocabulary. Today, we see most ballet companies performing modern works, and modern companies, not necessarily performing ballets, but certainly utilizing ballet movements and ballet training to strengthen and expand their dancers and their repertoires.

One consequence was that the forms have lost some of their separateness. In 1979, Hill explained her view that in the early years of modern dance, the technique had a "great sense of weight and a great sense of the thrust and drive of movement, a percussive beat in movement. Today, it is smoothed; it's become more balletic, if you will."¹² This mixing of forms which worried Hill

late in her life. In an interview in 1991, she expressed her hope that in the future one will continue to be able to go and see, for instance, George Balanchine and Antony Tudor ballets.¹³ Hill explained, "I hope we don't have a stew of everything poured into a pot."¹⁴ It is an interesting statement for someone who went a long way towards creating that stew! However, I believe Hill valued the stew as well as the separate ingredients, meaning that she enjoyed the mixed forms as well as the separate forms.

Hill was honored for her achievements by many different organizations-- with numerous honorary doctorates and other awards. She passed away in November of 1995, at the age of 94.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Halprin, 2000, p. xv.
- ² This paper draws on ten years of research into Martha Hill's life and career for my doctoral dissertation and forthcoming book on Martha Hill with The Edwin Mellen Press.
- ³ De Mille, 1983.
- ⁴ Martha Hill Video Project, 1990.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Soares, 2002, ¶ 5.
- ⁷ Barnes, 1987, p.24.
- ⁸ Bennington Oral History Project, Hill Interview, 1979, p. 38.
- ⁹ Meredith, 2005.
- ¹⁰ Todd, 1951, p. 84.
- ¹¹ Manchester, 1953, p. 10.
- ¹² Bennington Oral History Project, Hill Interview, 1979, p. 106.
- ¹³ Sullivan, 1992, p. 2.
- ¹⁴ Ibid

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Technique class in dance teaching: questioning the obvious

Nicole Harbonnier-Topin

This paper is based on my first attempts at interpreting the data from my current research for my doctoral thesis regarding “teacher-student interaction in dance technique class”. Field study was carried out with five dance classes given by five different teachers, recorded on video, in two schools which train pre-professional contemporary dancers in Montreal. More specifically, the research focuses on interaction configurations. All recorded verbalisation cited here, whether from teachers or from students, is drawn from the field study data.

In all the cases observed we note a rather typical configuration: the teacher executes a danced sequence, which the students must then reproduce. This learning situation can be qualified as « demonstration – model replication ». If we want to speak in more didactic terms we could say this is an asymmetrical situation involving an expert, or specialist (the teacher) and novices (the students). We will try here to understand the interaction mechanisms involved in a typical « demonstration – model replication » configuration.

Three lines of thinking have provided guidelines for this study.

First of all, a sense of curiosity about why this seemingly set configuration has surprisingly remained stable over time without notable changes. It has, nonetheless, spread to other styles and dance aesthetics whenever the teaching process takes place in a formal setting.

Secondly, relatively recent research in the neurosciences regarding “mirror neurons” requires us to re-think our notions about imitation as learning behaviour, an interaction process particularly present in our teaching practices.

Thirdly, I would like to take into account one of several issues raised during the study: the boredom that may be expressed by a number of students in relation to specific situations. Boredom is often accepted as inevitable; it may be more comfortable not to think about it, yet it is a powerful impediment to the student’s

capacity for commitment to the learning process. The question of how to “avoid producing boredom” incites us to re-think our teaching practises in order to understand how this situation works.

The aim is to become aware of certain mechanisms implicitly and inevitably at work, and then, while bearing in mind their limitations, to consider the resources they offer for learning.

Teaching dance

What is particular about teaching dance is that there is no written score outside of that which is literally embodied by the teacher. What becomes « score », one which is both living and ephemeral, is the teacher’s presentation of a danced sequence. From a psychoanalytical perspective, Lacan, as cited by Jean Oury, has said:

Ne cherchez pas le grand Autre ailleurs que dans le corps. (Oury, 2005)
(The great “Other” cannot be searched for elsewhere but in the body).

Jean Oury has further added:

L’Autre, c’est le réservoir de matériel pour l’acte. (Oury, 2005)
(The other is the reservoir of material for our actions.)

The teacher’s danced “score” is thus seen as the reservoir for the student’s activity.

When the dance teacher shows an exercise, it does remain a “proposal” as in all other teaching situations. Within the dance class framework, we will name this a “danced proposal.” The very concept of “proposal” sets limits to a teacher’s power. Just because the teacher has shown and explained a movement, does not automatically imply that the student has understood it. To some extent, the proposal represents a “suggested signification” (Barbier, 2000:78) from which the student may operate her own “construction of meaning” (Barbier,

2000:78) according to her own level of expertise, to her “attending” at that given moment or even to her degree of receptivity to the proposed signs.

In this regard, I would like to bring to mind a comment made here at the symposium Friday afternoon. Dance educator Eiko Otake, in a filmed interview, spoke about her way of teaching, comparing it to throwing balls out to the students without knowing how, or even whether, they would catch them. This is exactly what I mean by the concept of “proposal”.

Interaction mechanisms

We are going to look at three types of mechanisms that come into play at three different levels in the above context:

To begin with, we will speak about the notion of “resonance” at a pre-reflexive level. Then, we will discuss imitation as a two-pronged process: a first, pragmatic, level concerning the acquisition of movement skills, as well as a second, more symbolic, level dealing with the process of identification. Finally, we will address the question of internalization/integration brought about during the final phases of learning, which will be linked more specifically to the teacher’s communication activity.

Resonance

In the field of neurosciences, the discovery of “mirror neurons” (Rizzolatti, Fogassi, & Gallese, 2001) has led to a “direct-matching” hypothesis which favours action understanding.

By action understanding, we mean the capacity to achieve the internal description of an action and to use it to organize the appropriate future behaviour”, according to Rizzolatti, & al.

...an action is understood when its observation causes the motor system of the observer to ‘resonate’.

The ‘direct-matching mechanism’ holds that we understand actions when we map the visual representation of the observed action onto our motor representation of the same action”... (Rizzolatti, 2001: 661)

...thereby giving access to more than the form of the observed movement.

It has been postulated that a sense of “bodily resonance” allows one to simulate the same actions internally as those performed by another person. Gallese speaks about “embodied simulation” (Gallese, 2005). Berthoz and Petit (Berthoz, Petit, 2006: 237) put forward the notion of “*contagion motrice*”. This mechanism seems to represent a direct, rapid and non-inferred access to another’s movement.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century several authors although using different terminology in disparate fields of research, have in fact referred to mechanisms which are similar to the notion of “resonance”. Husserl, in the field of phenomenology, put forward the notion of “intersubjectivity”. Philosopher and aesthetics specialist, Theodore Lipps (1935) developed the notion of “*einfühlung*”, or “empathy” in speaking of aesthetic reception. Ballet critic John Martin (1939) mentioned “muscular sympathy” after seeing the German choreographer Mary Wigman on stage. Wallon (1970), a medical doctor and psychologist, put forward the notion of “*dialogue tonique*” (tonus dialogue) with reference to the bonding process between mother and newborn child, as well as the concept of “perceptual-motor impregnation” which specifically links perception to tonus.

When one is completely absorbed in the contemplation of a performance, one does not remain passive. It involves more than cerebral stimulus; the stimulation flows out to the muscles. (Wallon, 1970: 123)

Although technique class is neither a performance situation nor a filial relationship, we might suppose that the same type of stimulation would be activated.

The following dancer’s comment, in remembering the learning situation, illustrates this idea remarkably well:

It seemed to ‘taste good’ to dance when we watched her... The whole mimetic aspect, which meant that I integrated her sense of pleasure when I was in her class...

What this student calls the 'mimetic aspect' with reference to the sensual quality she perceived in her teacher's movement strongly resembles the resonance mechanism. Another student goes on to say that when watching the teacher move, she gets the same sensation in her own body:

I do (the movement) at the same time,
copy and paste there... Because I want to
feel what he feels in his body.

She adds that this sensing feedback is what allows her to monitor her own accuracy in the proposed movement:

Like, I look at his placement,... say he's
not there anymore, I'll feel it in my own
body, so I'll know, or almost, if my
movement's right.

She clearly tells us that she doesn't just reproduce the form of the movement but is, above all, focused on the sensations generated by observing the teacher's movement.

It's important to note that the differences in students' capacity to make sense of a given movement may be partly explained by the notion of "resonance between action repertoires". Research about mirror neurons indicates that an individual "resonates" all the better with observed movement when the "model" is similar to her own movement repertoire. To this effect, the following student expresses relative difficulty in accessing the teacher's movement when the internal logic organizing that movement seems far removed from her own:

Sometimes it takes time to feel, because
that's it, her (the teacher's) logic is her
own (laughs), sometimes I notice that the
paths or trajectories of her arms and
hands, that it takes time,...

What would seem important to retain pertaining to the term "resonance" then, is that it postulates the observation of other individual's actions and experience as an authentic source of shared body states and of knowledge and competency. Current research hypothesizes that this is a direct process which, while it doesn't require cognitive mediation, does allow the

observer to infer the goals of another individual's actions (not necessarily the individual's intentions) provided that the observer's repertoire of actions is similar or related to the model observed.

Imitation

I've mentioned acquirement and the construction of identity as a dual constructive process. The dictionary (Le Grand Robert) definitions of imitation refer to both of these aspects:

To imitate is...

'...to voluntarily reproduce the gesture
or actions of another individual...'

And also...

'...to model one's behaviour on that of
another individual' (to take someone as a
model)

These two aspects of imitation are, in fact, elicited when the teacher's demonstration is the support material used by students to learn a danced phrase. The following statement illustrates the notion of acquiring competency while endeavouring to follow the example of another's actions as a pattern or model:

He teaches the path, the way to get
there... Then to see him do it once, for
me it's like, well, that's his way, now I
have to find my own and for me that's
fabulous to see someone move the way
he wants us to. Because me, I work by
imitating... so the best that I'm going to
be able to give, by imitation, that'll be
the person that I watched. So if the
teacher wants to get us to a certain level,
the furthest... that I'm going to get, that's
what he does, if I'm capable of imitating
him (laughs). So if he demonstrates, I'm
convinced that I sure will succeed,
because he showed it, I'm sure.

Or, as another student tells us...

...it's very important to me that a teacher
demonstrates well... I'm tuned a lot to the

visual 'cause the sound I'll get it after.
The visual... the path used..., the
breathing, the energy and the form, three
elements that I'll check.

These two accounts seem to correspond to
Winnykamen's definition (Winnykamen, 1990:
94) in which imitation...

...cannot be compared or likened to any
form of passive compliance.

This author defines imitation behaviour as...

...the intentional observation of an
individual's actions to use as a source of
information in order to attain one's own
goals. (Winnykamen, 1990: 105).

Students clearly indicate the goal of acquirement
when speaking of their expectations in
relationship to the technique class teacher:

To acquire movement patterns that are
unfamiliar to me,
I expect the teacher to give me a little of
what he already has,
To master the material that the teacher
wants to teach me...

Acquirement and identification are closely
related functions. Simply stated, this is the way
young children, through their relationship to
others, grow, develop and apprehend the world
around them. Several authors have developed
the two-pronged, both social and personal,
aspect of the imitation process (Guillaume,
Piaget, Bourdieu, Bandura,...).
According to Wulf's anthropology of child
education:

...mimesis is one of the elements to be
considered in the history of power
relationships in the field of education...
(Wulf, 1998: 245)

and...

...forces other than reason or cognition
are involved in the mimetic processes.
(Wulf, 1998: 266)

...forces which are related to phenomena such as
corporality, perception as well as desire and
envy. René Girard addresses this subject in his
research on desire and mimetic rivalry. The
asymmetrical "expert-novice" situation may
encourage "prestige imitation" as identified by
Mauss, wherein an individual...

...imitates actions which he has seen
successfully accomplished by persons
whom he trusts and who are perceived as
authority figures. (Mauss & Lévi-Strauss
1983, 2004: 369)

Thus, in remembering his own training, the
following dancer speaks about a much-admired
teacher:

He still teaches with the school of the
National Ballet... S. was a star, a
"danseur étoile" with the National
Ballet of Canada, among others. A
wonderful dancer and, still today, when I
do a "port de bras" that's who I think of.
Talk about an example to follow, ("un
model") yes, definitely.

Internalization / integration

Berthoz and Petit point out that in order to
imitate, "co-attending" must be developed. This
pre-supposes that the teacher will guide the
student's attention to a particular aspect of
movement:

In the following example we notice how the
teacher's verbal directions:

...the foot pulls us, the head pulls; my
back goes... tad a dum head, pelvis, hip
up...

...guide the student's attention and, according to
the following statement, enable her to assimilate
the movement:

...she explains what has to be activated,
in which order, then I find it's so clear
about which coordination you have to
find, then I can really let go relying on
those words, then... I'm surprised
sometimes how well it works.

Vygotsky's hypothesis concerning the development of higher mental functions may help us to understand this mechanism. This author considers that the process of integration involves moving from an inter-subjective to an intra-subjective phase ("*de l'inter-psychique à l'intra-psychique*"), where language plays a decisive role. That is to say, the process of integration may involve, first listening to another person's instructions, for example, and then repeating the same instructions to oneself. This is what Vygotsky calls "internal language" which is, according to Brossard, "self-initiated". (Vygotsky, Brossard, 2004: 237). He considers language to be a "psychological tool" (op. cite: 23) which enables the teacher to guide the student's attention in a particular manner. The above example illustrates the inter-subjective appropriation phase.

Subsequently, the student reaches the intra-subjective assimilation stage, which corresponds in fact to the integration mechanism, when he or she is able to internalize the discourse previously expressed by the teacher. In the following statement, the student relies on what might be considered previously acquired competencies while using earlier-understood instructions given by a teacher:

...that time I just trusted the different connections in my body... working with oppositions, to bring one's back in that direction to be able to turn afterwards...

... And that she is now able to activate on her own.

Indeed, Berthoz and Petit (2006) also consider this aspect of abstraction

... which enables one to step back from the continual influx of lived information in order to come up with new solutions... (Berthoz, Petit, 2006: 48)

The interpenetration of symbolic and practical activity is made evident through this mechanism. Symbolic activity frees the subject of the direct constraints pertaining to a given situation; the subject is no longer submerged by the opaque complexity of observed movement –

rather she is explicitly focussed on a particular aspect of that movement. This allows for a sense of perspective and a greater mastery of movement.

Conclusion

We have described how the typical "demonstration – model replication" configuration spontaneously activates the complementary mechanisms of resonance, imitation and integration; the kinaesthetic, emotional, and cognitive aspects of these mechanisms have been pointed out. It would seem that this particular configuration sets up the scenario for a 'spontaneous' way of working within the framework of a formal situation.

We put forward the hypothesis that, as these processes are activated spontaneously, with apparent success, this is what creates a favourable context for a self-perpetuating tradition which shows very little change over time.

The importance of the teacher's danced score cannot be overlooked; however, what about the recurring issue raised by students concerning the question of boredom within the context of particular interaction configurations, notably during the learning process?

There I thought I was worn out, like when we spend so much time, especially like an adage is so slow... then that's twice she showed it.

Ok, like, let's get on with it, y'know... I thought we were getting bogged down. It was long a long time.

... I spent the time doing something else 'cause I thought it was too long just going over the counts...

Boredom may be a sign that the students' attention has not been consciously stimulated and directed towards specific aspects of movement; consequently they are left to their own spontaneous learning strategies which can lead to a sense of weariness.

The continuous/discontinuous theory may help us to understand the process. If we consider...

1. that continuous flow of information tends to generate boredom,

2. and that boredom, being the opposite to a state of emotion, does not provide a favourable context for student's commitment and motivation,
3. and also that emotion has the power to create rupture by breaking up the continuous into discontinuity,

...then the question becomes:

Bearing in mind the mechanisms developed in this paper, how can we create emotion which will enable the student to engage in his learning activity?

We put forward the hypothesis that by better understanding these three mechanisms, we could exploit their inherent potential: develop variations and interplay using their components in order to create stimulating appropriation and integration situations, thereby enhancing commitment. Teaching situations can, in fact, evolve through the use of inventive strategies which have the power to renew our practice.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Symposium « Re-Thinking practice and theory », CND Paris, Friday June, the 22nd 2007: "some things are only effectively known through their enactment: an investigation of the teaching/learning of Contemporary Dance Technique" with Katja Koclio, Wesleyan University; Robin Gee, University of North Carolina, Greensboro; Nicole Stanton, Ohio State University; Bebe Miller, Ohio State University /Bebe Miller Company; Eiko Otake, Eiko and Koma dance company.

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La notion d'incorporation dans les théories du corps en danse

Christophe Apprill

Une conjonction de facteurs contemporains conduit à poser à nouveaux frais les rapports entre la pratique de la danse et la recherche. En un demi siècle, un vaste public s'est rapproché des espaces de pratique et de représentation tandis que la danse est devenue un objet d'étude des sciences sociales, tout en s'introduisant à l'Université via la création de cursus spécialisés. L'espace de la critique tend à se diversifier tout en restant souvent l'œuvre de praticiens. Une approche répandue, influencée par l'histoire de l'art, s'intéresse aux conditions de production des pièces, à l'analyse des répertoires, au travail des chorégraphes, au recueil des discours des interprètes et plus largement des acteurs du champ chorégraphique. Comme dans d'autres pratiques artistiques, des passerelles sont tissées entre la pratique, la théorie et les sciences sociales. Mais la pratique artistique de la danse, tout comme les discours qui s'organisent autour, tendent à exclure la prise en compte des dimensions sociales du corps.

Souvent attirée par des disciplines connexes telle la musique, son approche théorique ne peut ignorer l'une de ses singularités premières, à savoir « l'immanence de la danse au corps » (Monnier, Nancy, 2005). Cette omniprésence lui assigne une multiplicité de constructions théoriques d'époques diverses, dont celles qui relèvent des théories du corps. A l'intérieur de ce champ très large, la notion d'incorporation s'avère incontournable.

L'incorporation est une notion des sciences sociales. Les travaux sur la socialisation primaire et secondaire initiés par Durkheim se sont attachés à reconnaître les effets de l'environnement social et culturel sur le corps. Pour autant, l'entrée du corps comme objet d'étude en sociologie ne va pas sans poser un certain nombre de turbulences épistémologiques. L'incorporation pose aussi le problème des rapports entre corps et inconscient interprétés sur un mode conflictuel entre l'anthropologie et la psychanalyse (Green, 1995).

Consubstantielle de l'acte de danser dans les sociétés industrialisées où des modalités d'appren-tissage académiques se sont substituées aux conditions de transmission de corps à corps, l'incorporation appartient aux problématiques de la danse contemporaine. Le développement d'outils pour analyser le mouvement ainsi que l'intégration des différentes pratiques somatiques jouent un rôle notable dans l'organisation des modalités d'apprentissage.

Notre recherche consiste à confronter ces différentes manières d'appréhender l'incorporation. Dans son acceptation commune de pratique artis-tique, la danse est peu confrontée aux conceptions de l'incorporation produites par les sciences sociales. Examiner les façons dont l'incorporation est entendue en danse doit permettre en retour d'examiner autant les apports que les limites de ses conceptions en sciences sociales. Ce chantier nécessite l'étude des opérations discursives et rhétoriques qui sont construites dans l'un et l'autre champ. En sciences sociales, les travaux sur les sens mettent l'accent sur la construction culturelle des hiérarchies, tandis que les travaux esthétiques et philosophiques tendent à cerner les qualités intrinsèques de la perception (Merleau-Ponty, 1945). D'un côté, l'environnement social est au centre des investigations, de l'autre, il en est exclu. Le champ discursif construit autour de la danse a tendance à mobiliser davantage ces dernières constructions théoriques. Pourtant, même si l'on considère la danse d'un strict point de vue artistique, une contradiction interne surgit car l'analyse esthétique ne parvient jamais à isoler les œuvres en dehors du contexte social, politique et économique dans lequel elles sont produites ; d'autre part le mécanisme propre de l'art contemporain est de travailler des frontières esthétiques, artistiques mais dépendantes également du contexte social, économique et culturel (Heinich, 1998).

En faisant dialoguer les approches de l'incorporation en sciences sociales et en danse,

il n'est pas question de choisir le réductionnisme sociologique contre la singularité de l'expérience esthétique, mais d'observer quels dispositifs conceptuels et quelles fonctions accompagnent l'usage des théorisations de l'incorporation. En sciences sociales, l'incorporation est partie prenante d'une élaboration scientifique inscrite dans une histoire où l'étude du corps est problématique, alors qu'en danse, l'incorporation participe d'une construction contemporaine de la danse contemporaine.

L'incorporation : une notion des sciences sociales

Les acceptations de la notion d'incorporation diffèrent selon les auteurs. En sciences sociales, l'incorporation met en présence le corps, le langage, l'inconscient, les savoir-faire, les dispositions, les manières corporelles d'agir... Au cœur des problématiques de la socialisation, la place de cette notion n'en demeure pas moins complexe dans la mesure où le corps a réalisé une entrée récente dans le champ de la sociologie.

Incorporation et socialisation

L'ouvrage de Durkheim *Education et sociologie* pose les jalons du chantier majeur de la socialisation en sociologie. Dans sa réflexion, Durkheim propose une définition de l'éducation qui comprend les « états physiques » (51). Les exemples cités portent surtout sur le domaine intellectuel, celui qui accueille les enjeux de la science et de la religion, et dont l'accès est rendu possible par la maîtrise du langage (56). Durkheim place le langage au cœur du processus d'éducation, ce qui permet à l'homme d'être « un être social » et de lui éviter de tomber « au rang de l'animal » (51). C'est par le langage qu'il peut transmettre « les résultats de l'expérience humaine [qui] se conservent presque intégralement et jusque dans le détail, grâce aux livres, aux monuments figurés, aux outils, aux instruments de toute sorte qui se transmettent de génération en génération, à la tradition orale, etc. » (57). Sa conception de la socialisation accorde peu de place au corps. Durkheim se pose en partisan du contrôle de l'Etat sur l'éducation, car il y va du maintien

d'« un certain nombre de principes qui, implicitement ou explicitement, sont communs à tous, que bien peu, en tout cas, osent nier ouvertement et en face : respect de la raison, de la science, des idées et des sentiments qui sont à la base de la morale démocratique. » (60). A travers le terme de « morale démocratique », on comprend que la place attribuée au corps dans le processus d'éducation soit limitée dans son approche. Corps et morale – même démocratique – font histori-quement mauvais ménage.

Les terrains de l'anthropologie culturelle (Kardiner, 1969 ; Linton, 1977) montrent la place de l'incorporation dans les processus d'éducation et de socialisation mais c'est tardivement que le corps accède à une mention en tant que tel dans les travaux sociologiques. Marcel Mauss (1950) inaugure le champ de recherche sur l'incorporation des techniques par le corps. Puis au milieu des années 1970, une sociologie du corps se constitue, dont Jean Michel Berthelot (1992) a analysé les contradictions.

À la même époque, Pierre Bourdieu développe le concept d'habitus dont une part consiste en la théorisation d'un modèle d'incorporation qui se réalise en deçà de la conscience. Plusieurs axes sont compris dans l'approche bourdieusienne. L'un d'entre eux comprend la connaissance par corps. Partant d'une formule de Pascal sur la place et la relation du sujet au monde, il introduit auprès de la notion d'espace physique celle d'espace social, qui permet d'aborder un autre mode de relation entre le sujet et le monde (1997 : 157). Ainsi « l'habitus de classe » (1980 : 88-89) conduit à adopter des goûts de classe et un corps de classe qui consacrent l'importance de la socialisation primaire. Cette proposition théorique est explicitée sur la question des biens, besoins et goûts culturels dans *La distinction* (1979) où Bourdieu montrent les effets de la socialisation de classe.

Plusieurs critiques de la théorie de la légitimité culturelle se sont développées. E Ethis et E. Pedler (2001), à travers leurs enquêtes sur le festival d'Avignon, ont étudié la pertinence de variables usuelles telles que le niveau de formation scolaire sur les pratiques culturelles. Cette approche con-siste en une critique de la

construction des appétences culturelles mais ne touche pas ou très peu le versant de socialisation corporelle contenu dans l'habitus.

Dans *L'homme pluriel*, B. Lahire pose le problème du corps et du langage : il rappelle les liens entre la conscience et les formes de langage, entre « la forme linguistique » et la « pensée ». En souhaitant « rendre au langage sa juste place dans l'analyse des phénomènes d'incorporation » (1998 : 190-202), il reproduit les recettes du structuralisme qui, comme le note J.-J. Courtine, étaient tenaillées par une « obsession linguistique. » (2006 : 8). Dans *La culture des individus* (2004), il s'inscrit en rupture avec le modèle de sociologie de la culture développé par Bourdieu. Pour examiner comment s'organisent les préférences culturelles, il affiche un programme de recherche qui privilégie la prise en compte des singularités individuelles.

Dans la filiation de Berger et Luckmann, François de Singly plaide pour davantage de prise en compte des processus de socialisation secondaire, en s'appuyant sur le rôle des conjoints, ces autres significatifs qui jouent un rôle multiple dans la construction du « moi conjugal ». Ce qui est une façon de critiquer la théorie de l'habitus « davantage centrée sur la socialisation primaire que sur la socialisation secondaire. » (2006 : 349).

Les sciences sociales s'intéressent peu aux théories de la danse

Sylvia Faure (2000) a inauguré en France l'étude sociologique de l'incorporation des savoir-faire de la danse. Son approche privilégie la logique de la discipline, c'est à dire la transmission de techniques de danse formelles en classique et contemporain (Cunningham) (115). Le choix de son terrain lui ôte toute échappée vers des théories du corps moins orthodoxes. Elle n'analyse pas les modalités qui reposent sur un travail d'exploration fondé sur la perception et la conscientisation.

De même, les recherches novatrices de Georges Vigarello ne mentionnent pas les théories du corps en danse. Dans *Le corps redressé* (2001 : 194-203), cet auteur analyse la réorientation discursive et méthodologique des disciplines corporelles chargées d'enseigner le

maintien. La finalité des méthodes de gymnastiques qui privilégiaient le rendement énergétique s'infléchissent au milieu du XX^{ème} siècle, et valorisent une approche sensorielle. G. Vigarello note comment les différences d'approche des sciences sociales et des pratiques somatiques rejoignent l'opposition entre les vertus conférées à la parole et celles adressées au corps. Elle s'est manifestée dans les années 1960-1970 par les rivalités entre les outils et méthodes de l'analyse freudienne et ceux des thérapies corporelles. C'est sur une accréditation des premières et une méfiance vis-à-vis des thérapies corporelles que se conclut *Le corps redressé* (2006).

Dans *Histoire du corps* (2006), il poursuit cette approche en étudiant les sources journalistiques qui préconisent des exercices à réaliser soi-même afin de fortifier son corps. Mais il n'est jamais fait mention des soubassements théoriques qui sont au fondement de cette vogue des thérapies corporelles. Les pratiques somatiques ne sont pas citées. On peut se demander si la formation d'origine n'est pas responsable du clivage opéré de part et d'autre : les intellectuels qui travaillent sur le corps ignorent l'existence des pratiques somatiques ou leur accordent peu de crédit, tandis que les danseurs et théoriciens de la danse font de même avec les théories de l'incorporation en sciences sociales.

L'incorporation en danse

On constate plusieurs formes de théories en danse : celles qui sont issues des praticiens et celles qui proviennent d'un autre champ de pratique ou d'une autre discipline. B. Lesage (1998) distingue les théories issues du champ du soin médical somatique, du champ psychothérapeutique et du champ des pratiques kinésiologiques.

Une approche divergente des sciences sociales

Hubert Godard est l'une des figures contemporaines de ce corpus dont les thèses sur le mouvement s'opposent à celle du sociologue Pierre Bourdieu. Pas d'habitus chez Hubert Godard, son approche rompt avec le principe de détermination sociale et envisage le corps et le

geste comme intégrés à une posture qui elle-même « contient déjà des éléments psychologiques expressifs, avant même toute intentionnalité de mouvement ou d'expression ». Son analyse porte sur les rapports entre le sujet et ses fonctions motrices, ses perceptions, son rapport à son propre poids, à son squelette et à son système nerveux.

Pour Godard, le « pré-mouvement » joue un rôle fondamental sur l'organisation gravitaire du corps. Les muscles qui participent de l'organisation posturale seraient également ceux qui sont les plus sensibles à nos changements d'état émotionnel. Etablissant une corrélation entre le changement d'état émotionnel et celui de la posture, il souligne la correspondance entre la vie psychique et son inscription dans le tonus musculaire, dans le schéma postural et le système gravitaire (237). D'où la nécessité pour les danseurs d'appréhender le « pré-mouvement » à travers « l'accès à l'imaginaire ». Avec ce mode d'accès, il néglige les possibilités d'exploration avec les méthodes d'analyse de la vie psychique. Après avoir écarté les possibles déterminations sociales, Godard tourne le dos à la psychanalyse.

Les travaux de Godard fournissent un outil herméneutique bien adapté au champ du mouvement dansé, parce qu'ils viennent opportunément compléter les approches esthétiques qui privilégient des descriptions du mouvement en terme de forme, de technique et de symbolique, par une analyse en profondeur des ressorts cachés du mouvement. Mais ils maintiennent une ombre sur le rôle des déterminations sociales. Les approches de Godard et de Bourdieu explorent les deux faces opposées du même objet en laissant chacune l'une des deux plongée dans l'ombre. Remarquable est l'étanchéité qui caractérise les approches de ces auteurs qui se sont croisés à la même époque dans des champs disciplinaires distincts, mais dans le même champ professionnel de l'Université.

Cette étanchéité place en concurrence d'une part les statuts de la conscience, de la parole et de l'écrit et d'autre part ceux du ressenti, de l'inconscient et du corps dans la production d'un savoir sur l'incorporation. Comment une théorisation se construit-elle ? « Les principes du BMC n'ont pas été élaborés au moyen de la

parole » (S. Aposhyan, in Bainbridge Cohen, 1993 : 13). Ce constat contient l'un des enjeux de la théorisation en danse. S. Faure (2000) a noté comment l'ombre de l'héritage platonicien recouvre les options théoriques mobilisées. Les sociologues s'en remet-tent systématiquement aux vertus du langage, de l'objectivation et de la recherche d'universalité. Les praticiens de la danse s'éloignent des procédés d'analyse intellectuelles pour leur préférer les vertus du corps, de la subjectivation et de la singularité. Lorsqu'il arrive que les savants deviennent praticiens, la culture d'origine ne se laisse pas aussi facilement effacer d'un coup de gomme épistémologique.

Un outil pour construire une histoire de la danse

Dans les années 1980 en France, la danse s'est inscrite simultanément dans le champ de la création artistique, a bénéficié d'une reconnaissance institutionnelle et a développé ses propres outils théoriques pour arrimer son entreprise de réflexivité. C'est dans ce contexte que l'instauration d'un diplôme d'Etat en 1989 s'est accompagnée d'une réflexion sur les manières de pratiquer et sur les contenus à transmettre. A travers la valorisation de la relation entre théorie et pratique, la théorisation du mouvement procure des bases à cette histoire. La présentation de ce corpus théorique à travers traductions, publications et commentaires a permis de développer un espace critique qui n'est plus fondé exclusivement sur l'analyse des œuvres mais concerne aussi le travail du danseur.

Un grand nombre de théories sur le corps, le geste et le mouvement, l'équilibre postural et l'énergie, ont été élaborées à partir de la seconde moitié du XIX^{ème} siècle. La plupart des théoriciens qui ont défriché les liens entre perception et mobilité ne sont pas des praticiens de la danse, l'exemple le plus fameux étant celui de Emile Jaques-Dalcroze. Il est possible de lire le dessein de construire une histoire de la danse à travers la diffusion récente de ces théories (Louppe, 1997). Mais l'adhésion sans réserve à ce corpus dissimule la nature des enjeux théoriques des théories du corps mobilisées. Plusieurs recherches présentent des

concomitances plutôt que des liens directs entre les théoriciens et l'univers chorégraphique. Les études de A. Porte et S. Franco (2000) montrent combien l'utilisation de ces références est souvent abusive. La consultation des textes originaux de Delsarte et Laban - qui dans l'historiographie sont considérés comme des fondateurs de la danse moderne - n'est pas simple et une grande majorité de danseurs n'ont eu accès à leur pensée qu'à travers des travaux de seconde main. Dans son ouvrage très documenté sur Delsarte, A. Porte (1992) étudie comment ce théoricien a été mobilisé pour conforter les intuitions des praticiens et combler le vide théorique de la danse. Contrairement à la démarche des sciences sociales, l'historicisation des théories du corps ne procède pas par la critique des théories existantes mais par l'accumulation de théories divergentes.

Ce corpus est hétérogène et fondé la plupart du temps sur l'observation empirique, ce qui ne poserait pas de problème en soi si cet empirisme était explicité. Une étanchéité isole les théories mobilisées pour servir de support aux activités physiques et sportives (Pociello, 2004) de celles qui circulent au sein de l'univers de la danse, et de celles propres à l'approche anthropologique et sociologique du corps.

Les loyaux services de la théorie

Compte tenu du complexe d'infériorité longtemps entretenu entre le milieu de la danse et le champ de l'écrit, l'histoire de la danse tend à construire des liens ambigus avec la théorie. Dans *Histoire du corps* (2006), un chapitre est consacré au « Corps dansant : un laboratoire de la perception. » Annie Suquet cite l'autobiographie de Loïe Fuller où elle relate comment l'hypnose fut source d'inspiration pour mettre au point ses danses. A. Suquet précise que l'hypnose était à cette époque un « thème fort populaire sur les scènes du vaudeville américain » (398). Plus que la psychanalyse naissante, c'est sans doute davantage cette popularisation spectaculaire qui a eu une influence sur la danseuse. Mais l'auteur avance une autre explication en réalisant des passerelles entre Jacques-Dalcroze, Kandinsky et le père fondateur de la neurophysiologie Charles Scott Sherrington (1906). Elle conclut que « c'est ce

territoire de la mobilité, consciente et inconsciente, du corps humain qui s'ouvre aux explorations des danseurs au seuil du XX^{ème} siècle » (397-398). Ce faisant, elle réalise un lien de causalité entre ces textes théoriques et la modification de la pratique de la danse.

Le lien entre l'évolution des manières de concevoir le psychisme, les pulsions et les relations fraîchement établies entre la perception et la mobilité, n'est pas aussi certain. L'auteur cite en note (485) le cas d'une expérimentation de suggestions musicales transmises sous hypnose pratiquée sur une danseuse. Néanmoins, est-ce parce que le sujet choisi est une danseuse que la diffusion des résultats de cette expérimentation est garantie au sein de la communauté des danseurs (si tant est qu'elle existe). L'écart est souvent très grand entre la production d'un texte et son impact sur la communauté des chercheurs, comme le montre l'exemple des « Techniques du corps » de Marcel Mauss. Comment peut-on supposer qu'il ait été plus réduit entre ces théoriciens et la communauté des danseurs au début du XX^{ème} siècle ?

Des rencontres avortées

La notion d'incorporation apparaît comme un lieu de rencontre entre des théories et des méthodologies qui peinent à se prendre en considération. La première difficulté est l'étendue que ces savoirs recouvrent : nous n'en n'avons présenté ici qu'une infime partie, forcément lacunaire. La seconde difficulté provient des antagonismes générés par des approches contra-dictoires.

Les sciences sociales, à travers leurs protocoles d'observation, tentent de hiérarchiser la place des processus de socialisation dans les modes d'incorporation. Dans la majorité des théories de l'incorporation valorisées dans le champ de la danse, les éléments de socialisation primaire sont passés sous silence, ou bien l'articulation avec ceux-ci n'est pas réalisée. Il y aurait comme une idéologie sous-jacente, basée sur la force de l'appareillage théorique, tout autant que sur la confiance accordée à l'individu. L'incorporation en danse se situerait davantage du côté des théories de la socialisation secondaire.

Les méthodes somatiques proposent des outils pour développer d'autres modes d'apprentissage, des façons d'entrer dans le mouvement, qui prennent appui sur des manières d'envisager le corps fondées sur des savoirs ou des outils qui diffèrent des outils conventionnels. Par la démonstration que l'énonciation de cinq sens constitue une limitation de l'analyse des procédés sensoriels et cognitifs, elles réalisent une critique radicale de l'étroitesse intellectuelle dans laquelle la tradition occidentale a engagé la pensée. C'est un point capital qui détermine la ligne de clivage entre les approches intellectuelles cartésiennes du corps et les approches intellectuelles « sensua-listes ». Ces méthodes procèdent à une double critique, celle de l'héritage platonicien qui a relé-gué le corps et celle des processus d'incorporation liés aux socialisations primaires et secondaires, que les méthodes somatiques prétendent bousculer par le déploiement d'outils tels que « l'attention et la prise de conscience sensorielle, et surtout sur la manière de ressentir ses propres mouvements en bougeant. » (Ginsburg, 2006 : 38). Ces pratiques accordent une grande importance à la perception et postulent que la compréhension des modalités et des champs de la perception ne peut croître qu'avec leur expérimentation : la compréhension du vocabulaire lié à la perception ne résulterait que de l'expérience de cette perception. A l'inverse, nos représentations du vécu et la manière de les construire dépendent de notre culture intellectuelle et corporelle.

Ces deux démarches se différencient par le statut attribué aux sens dans la construction d'un savoir. Les sciences sociales procèdent à une mise à distance de l'objet et à une prise en compte essentiellement discursive des éléments sensoriels mobilisés. Les pratiques d'éducation somatiques sont fondées sur l'expérimentation sensorielle. Cette différence ne se réduit pas à la classique fracture entre théoriciens et praticiens : nous postulons qu'elle conduit de part et d'autre à des distorsions dont les analyses portent la trace, mais que la mise en tension de ces deux champs de construction des savoirs est une manière d'éclairer.

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Itinéraires d'une recherche pratique et théorique sur une «Corporéité Dansante»

Andréa Mendes

De ma pratique de l'improvisation en danse et des questions survenues à l'occasion d'autres propositions artistiques, j'essaie maintenant de développer une pratique d'improvisation et un discours à propos de celle-ci dans son rapport à un quotidien social que j'ai décidé de nommer *corporéité dansante*. Je vous présenterai brièvement ici des esquisses et des intuitions de ce parcours dont le discours suit la voie de la philosophie contemporaine et de l'approche émotionnelle de la sociologie politique, dont l'enjeu serait celui d'étudier une société à partir du "constat et de la description de sa peau" (Simmel, 1986: 107). L'intuition est un mot important dans ma démarche, car à la faveur du croisement des perspectives d'un "observateur participant", je me sens concernée non seulement par une vision du dehors vers soi-même ou sur ce que nous voyons à l'extérieur, mais aussi par la connexion à une vision du dedans.

La pratique chorégraphique des dernières décennies est avant tout, selon les mots de l'historienne de l'art Laurence Louppe, une réponse contemporaine à un champ contemporain de questionnement et constitue une des grandes figures de rupture épistémologique dans les sciences humaines puisque le corps, et surtout le corps en mouvement, veut être à la fois le sujet, l'objet et l'outil de son propre savoir. Dans sa puissance à dire le présent du monde, à le faire surgir parfois depuis sa face invisible, cette pratique chorégraphique prétend surtout qu'une autre perception, une autre conscience puisse s'éveiller (Louppe, 2000: 12). Une chorégraphie, donc, qui 'présente' et non qui 'représente'. Comment pourrai-t-on nommer les traces ou les enregistrements de cette présentation?

L'assertion de Simmel sur la posture de la recherche sociologique prenait déjà l'orientation d'une image du corps contemporain devenue à la fois sujet et objet. Le sociologue, en se détachant

"du moi pour se dissoudre dans l'objet, qu'aucune dualité ne sépare plus de cet objet" (Simmel, 1984: 122) devient un esthète de l'existence, un "sociologue poète". Je pourrais peut-être aller un peu plus loin dans cette formule en proposant un "sociologue performeur" de l'existence qui, à la place d'une dissolution dans l'objet; celui-là l'absorberait en dégustant ses saveurs, ses épaisseurs, ses effets.

Le dispositif pratique/théorique que constitue la corporéité dansante, mais aussi l'art de la composition en temps réel, réside dans les capacités du performeur à rester ouvert, c'est-à-dire à l'écoute intérieure et extérieure, en travaillant simultanément sur plusieurs niveaux de perception et dans son aptitude à traiter la matière dans un flux ininterrompu entre le dedans et le dehors. Ainsi, il écoute, regarde, ressent, agit et réagit selon ses perceptions et celles de ses partenaires dans un espace-temps donné¹.

Le pouvoir "de fiction" propre à la pratique du performeur, et à la danse contemporaine d'une façon générale, découle des dynamiques sensorielles dans son rapport au monde. La notion de corporéité, comme le signale Michel Bernard, implique un chiasme intersensoriel qui invite l'artiste à une errance infinie (Bernard, 2001: 22). En fait, l'immédiat dans la composition en temps réel est vécu comme un présent qui fait de la mémoire une réalité ou une imagination, de la réalité une imagination ou une mémoire, de l'imagination une mémoire ou une réalité. "La mémoire corporelle et mentale du performeur fonctionne autant que l'imagination et autant que la perception phénoménologique du moment immédiat"².

Dans la pratique d'improvisation de la corporéité dansante, au-delà de ce processus poétique, il existe aussi un élément prosaïque, propre à l'exercice de l'improvisation, qui donnent à voir des gestes quotidiens particuliers. Cet élément se trouve lié aux actions non réflexives du quotidien dans son instance

biologique, individuelle ou sociale. L'ordre interne du culturel "est lié à la construction de mondes d'intentionnalité qui constituent l'immédiat, c'est-à-dire le sens non réflexif de l'action"³.

Les actions non réflexives des performeurs (point que je ne développerai pas ici), que j'entends comme actions culturelles, permettent parfois de repérer un ensemble de particularités, de proximités, de repérer donc une éthique, dans son sens étymologique, du rapport à l'Autre, à l'objet et du partage de l'espace.

La dimension éthique dans sa dimension collective est la source qui nous meut et nous émeut et qui fait que le "nous" se tienne même d'une façon éphémère. L'éthique, comprise ici comme une source et non comme fondement, n'a pas un sens à priori ou universel mais relève de ce qui est mouvant, propre à chaque quotidien social et aux cultures qui l'habitent.

Confrontant ce processus d'improvisation en groupe à ce qui serait une éthique du quotidien social, culturel partagé par les performeurs impliqués, nous nous demandons quelle est l'image du corps qui émerge de cette expérience collective? A quelle culture de corps renvoie-t-elle? L'observation de ce processus de l'instant et des modes révélés par les actes des performeurs dans cette expérience collective, pourrait alors nous permettre de nous rendre compte de l'émanation d'une certaine culture du corps, d'un certain quotidien social, mais aussi de son potentiel d'ouverture, d'enfermement, d'inclusion, d'exclusion, de ce qui en lui s'endort, se bloque ou s'anesthésie.

Au début de notre enquête autour de la source vitale d'invention du quotidien social des grandes villes où se reconnaît une convivialité de plusieurs cultures (ethniques, économiques, esthétiques, "internautiques", etc.), notre démarche était largement inspirée par le processus artistique de la plasticienne Lygia Clark, notamment sur la période où celle-ci développait ses propositions sensorielles. Sa recherche artistique menée dans les années 60/70, au-delà de la quête de l'art moderne de faire de l'existence une œuvre d'art, tendait à rechercher des points de liaison entre l'existence individuelle et collective, à s'interroger sur l'agitation des forces qui travaillent en silence,

dans une quête d'un corps de pensée, d'art et d'existence.

Mon intérêt pour la recherche de Lygia Clark réside surtout dans l'emphase consacrée à l'expérience du rapport entre l'existence individuelle et collective. Le fait d'avoir partagé certaines sources culturelles, brésiliennes notamment, et la notion d'anthropophagie, dans toute sa dimension éthique, esthétique et politique nous rapprochent considérablement. Le Brésil est un pays marqué par des différences sociales aiguës et par la convivialité quotidienne des toutes les extrêmes. L'accumulation sans fin de convivialité paradoxale encourage peut-être à vivre l'expérience d'être moins pris ou paralysé par le fait que ces différences contrastées coexistent⁴.

Le mouvement anthropophagique prend corps à São Paulo à partir de la semaine de l'Art Moderne dans les années 20 et s'étend dans le temps dans la culture brésilienne en tant que stratégie d'émancipation culturelle et stratégie cruciale dans le processus de constitution d'un langage autonome dans un pays d'économie périphérique. Bien que cette notion ait été forgée dans un contexte de quête d'une identité nationale, l'anthropophagie a toujours été convoquée, de manière explicite ou pas, dans divers domaines de la culture brésilienne. L'Anthropophagie serait, simultanément, une source de défense contre la domination qui enferme et une arme créatrice, un phénomène d'ouverture dont la dynamique est le processus de reconfiguration des espaces, des positions de l'homme face aux nouveaux défis. Elle serait avant tout une attitude de vigilance et de curiosité en même temps, un "état alerte désirant", ou encore un principe moteur, lequel se refuserait à une image fixe et même à devenir thème, parce que cela lui ferait perdre sa force créatrice.

Au Brésil, en 1967 sous le régime militaire, se ralliant à Oswald de Andrade "contre tous les importateurs de conscience en boîte", l'artiste Hélio Oiticica redéfinissait l'anthropophagie pour la société brésilienne, dans son anthologie intitulée *Nouvelle Objectivité Brésilienne*. L'anthropophagie est "la défense que nous possédons contre les forces de domination, et la principale arme créatrice, cette volonté constructive qui permet d'empêcher une sorte de

colonialisme culturel que, de façon objective, nous voulons abolir aujourd'hui, l'absorbant définitivement dans une super anthropophagie" (Oiticica, 1967: 48).

Lygia Clark a donné un sens corporel à l'Anthropophagie et un développement original des découvertes artistiques de l'abstraction en Europe. A partir de ses propositions sensorielles à la fin des années 60, la quête radicale de la plasticienne avait atteint le point où le vide, l'espace de projection, réalisés dans l'art du XXe siècle s'étaient faits incorporer, ingurgiter par le spectateur de l'art. La place de l'artiste dans le contexte de la modernité au Brésil et à l'étranger était donc significative, puisque c'était à la fois un renouvellement de l'*Anthropophagie* du modernisme brésilien des années 20 et une position conceptuelle radicalement différente dans la scène internationale (Brett, 1998: 24)⁵.

Sa critique du statut de l'artiste et de l'œuvre est cohérente avec sa démarche artistique, laquelle démontre également son engagement social et politique. Le caractère anthropophage de Lygia Clark, dans sa dimension culturelle comme celle d'Oswald de Andrade⁶, est dans la désorganisation, la déstabilisation d'une civilisation qui est en train 'd'être mangée', dans une saine destruction du trait composant "auratique" de l'art et de l'artiste. Le lieu irréductible de cette aventure est le corps et non le discours sur le corps, un corps "dé-sublimé", libéré des ses principes fonctionnels.

Le processus d'incorporation provoque une désorganisation, une déstabilisation de l'image fixe de soi dans son environnement. Ce processus rend la perméabilité à la peau, à plusieurs niveaux, et au corps, sa potentialité temporelle de l'espace. A l'issue de ses propositions, le moment était venu pour le groupe de partager verbalement son expérience.

En fait, l'intérêt de Lygia Clark ne résidait pas directement dans le geste ou le corps, mais dans la 'fantasmagorie': "C'est la fantasmagorie du corps, d'ailleurs, qui m'intéresse, et non le corps en soi" (Clark & Oiticica, 1998: 223) L'artiste connaissait quelques techniques de relaxation apprises à Los Angeles en 1969 durant le Symposium de l'Art Tactile. Il s'agissait de pratiques corporelles, de touchers énergétiques issus des systèmes de guérison non occidentaux. Elle se méfiait cependant dès que

cela devenait un simple "toucher par le toucher" assez répandu parmi des groupes émergents en Californie, des manœuvres corporelles sans expérience de vie et sans propositions qui "venaient du ventre", disait-elle (Clark, 1998: 298).

Dans une interview en 1974, Lygia Clark a tenté de définir la fantasmagorie:

C'est un travail de frontière: impossible de le définir avec une précision (...) Je ne prévois pas préalablement mes cours. Je me soucie dès le début de faire en sorte que les trente jeunes de chacune des deux classes commencent par là où j'ai commencé mon travail sur le corps en 1966. Je leur propose des expériences et je leur demande, à la fin de chacune, de rapporter au groupe ce qu'ils ont éprouvé en les réalisant. Ayant chacun un vécu différent – d'ailleurs, mes élèves ne viennent pas seulement des arts plastiques, mais d'autres domaines, de la musique, des langues, de la psychologie, de l'économie, de la sociologie – tout à coup je les vois, comme dans une sorte d'expulsion ou de vomissement des fantasmes, dialoguant autour d'une même proposition vécue. Il se crée un corps collectif. C'est très exactement mon silence, mon écoute, le fait de recevoir ce qu'ils me renvoient, qui constitue la partie la plus forte de mon travail. Comme en psychanalyse, ce qui compte, ce n'est pas le fait en soi, la figure de la mère ou du père avalée dans l'enfance, mais ce qui l'enveloppe, la 'fantasmagorie' qu'il lui emprunte. Et dans tout cela, j'engage aussi ma propre 'fantasmagorie' pour être élaborée par l'autre. (...) (Comme me l'a dit Fedida, c'était le moment de construire avec le corps un espace pour le mot).

(Clark, 1998: 314)

C'était durant ses cours expérimentaux organisés à la Sorbonne dans les années 70 qu'elle a ainsi pu constater que la relaxation seule ne viabilisait pas uniquement le processus de la fantasmagorie du corps mais que ce contact s'établissait par la relation entre la personne et

l'objet. Tout se passait dans des interstices du contact sensoriel. Ce sont ces sensations qui déclenchaient des fantasmes et non un certain signifié offert par l'apparence de l'objet. La fantasmagorie devait ensuite être métabolisée dans le corps et ce n'était qu'après ce processus de métabolisme que la fantasmagorie faisait devenir dicible le mot vivifié pour ensuite pouvoir se détruire.

Cela nous avertit sur la possibilité d'analyser et de transformer un des domaines de l'inscription du pouvoir, puisque la fantasmagorie du corps peut être travaillée. Lygia Clark avait compris que des registres du passé, qui pouvaient être inscrits dans le corps, pouvaient agir comme source de distorsion de la perception et que les sensations dépendaient de la façon dont les stimuli de perception étaient organisés. La sensation corporelle peut donc être construite et ne se caractérise pas comme n'étant que naturelle. Nous pouvons donc affiner la perception des sensations/images de la mémoire du corps ainsi que nous libérer de celles qui tendent à masquer et anesthésier notre processus perceptif nous empêchant de percevoir autrement.

L'œuvre se réalise aussi dans les sensations des émanations des corps des autres participants, d'une communication intime, comme s'il s'agissait d'un "ectoplasme" qui relirait immatériellement les corps, selon les termes de Lygia Clark dans une lettre à Oiticica (Clark & Oiticica, 1998: 154). C'est à partir des verbalisations du groupe et des lectures possibles sur cet ectoplasme que se viabilise l'enregistrement de la corporéité dansante. Dans les propositions de l'artiste, les participants deviennent l'objet de sa propre sensation et cela mobilise une expérience d'objectivation de la subjectivité, permettant un vivre la forme dans l'instant même de son effacement (Rolnik, 2002: 3). Dans le dispositif de la corporéité dansante, après un travail sur la mémoire du corps et sa fantasmagorie, les participants, au-delà de sentir et de ressentir la déstabilisation du processus de l'objectivation, doivent arriver à agir, à traiter la matière dans un flux ininterrompu entre "le dedans" et "le dehors".

Sans que cela devienne une véritable perte de soi, Lygia Clark amène les participants à une déstabilisation de la subjectivité qui permet

l'accès au monde imaginaire, intermédiaire entre le "nous" et l'espace, et au monde de la mémoire du corps, intermédiaire entre le "moi" et le temps. Autour de la notion de subjectivité, Suely Rolnik, dans une perspective psychanalytique propose l'idée de "corps vibratile" qui peut nous aider à éclairer celle de la corporéité dansante, malgré l'accent de celle-ci se situer dans l'enregistrement et non dans la puissance:

Le "corps vibratile" est la puissance que notre corps possède de vibrer la musique du monde, composition d'affects qui nous touchent au vivant, en temps réel. Notre consistance subjective est faite de cette composition sensible, se créant et se recréant poussée par les morceaux de monde qui nous affectent. Le corps vibratile, cependant, c'est celui-là qui en nous est le dedans et le dehors en même temps: le dedans n'est rien d'autre qu'une combinaison fugace du dehors.

(Rolnik, 1989: 26).

De nos jours, il n'y a rien de nouveau autour des propositions qui visent à ouvrir et à aiguïser la sensation et la perception, que ce soit dans des cadres thérapeutiques, pédagogiques ou artistiques. Pourtant, dans une perspective d'un rapport d'une expérience individuelle à un rapport collectif, au-delà d'une connaissance de soi, le "vivre-ensemble" de cette perméabilité, qui déstabilise la subjectivité, nous permet de communiquer les nouvelles sensations (Rolnik, 2002: 3), donc les inventions, ainsi que les clés d'accès à la visibilité du processus invisible de l'art. Scientifiques et chercheurs, dans des domaines divers du savoir, ont déjà montré que le sensible, l'intersubjectivité parcourent le corps social et que "la réalité quotidienne est éprouvée comme celle d'un monde intersubjectif que je partage avec d'autres" (Simmel, 1986: 108).

Dans son refus à l'Art Moderne, Lygia Clark, à l'écoute de son quotidien social, s'est connectée à un changement de paradigme qui était encore en gestation dans la plupart des pays dans les années 60. Ce refus et, par conséquent, son invention de la perméabilité du corps était un geste culturel, lequel peut être compris comme expansion de la pensée du corps ou

pensée entraînée par le geste du corps pensant: la matière animée dans sa relation au corps vibratile est liée à la vie, au quotidien de la vie, et a donc pu s'enregistrer comme corporéité dansante, ou moins comme source créatrice de dispositifs constatée dans les inventions artistiques de la plupart des artistes brésiliens contemporains.

Certes, l'exercice de la création n'est plus confiné dans l'institution de l'art. Je pars donc de l'hypothèse que la force d'invention se trouve non seulement mobilisée mais aussi célébrée et intensifiée par le quotidien social. La 'fantasmatique' de Lygia Clark m'incite à poser une question qui me semble pertinente quant à l'art de la scène actuel. Où la scène se passe-t-elle en fait?

Il n'est plus question, me semble-t-il, de se demander s'il s'agit d'une présentation ou d'une représentation, ou bien d'un effacement des frontières entre les disciplines de l'art, ou encore d'un geste original, mais, dans notre cas, des alliances entre l'invisible et le visible dans sa diversité dans une convivialité paradoxale. N'y aurait-il pas plutôt des alliances entre des diversités qui partagent une même source quotidienne sociale? Ce que j'appelle corporéité dansante est une sorte d'alliance entre la verbalisation, suite de la destruction de la fantasmatique de Lygia Clark, et la tentative de lecture de la naissance et du développement des formes et des relations dans l'espace et dans le temps proposées par le groupe de performeurs de la composition en temps réel. Je cherche pour cela une diversité dans ce groupe de performeurs ce qui veut dire que des personnes issus de divers domaines peuvent l'intégrer.

Dans le dispositif de la corporéité dansante, je travaille donc avec deux idées de corporéité: l'une liée au corps comme structure vécue et l'autre comme image du corps dans sa vue d'ensemble, dans son rapport à l'autre, dans son rapport au quotidien social. Cela engendre deux alliances paradoxales: l'une allant du vécu à l'image et vice-versa, c'est-à-dire d'une image qui n'est pas nécessairement vue consciemment *a priori* mais vécue; l'autre qui va d'un certain vécu d'un "nous", d'un collectif qui permet la visibilité de l'éthique collective à une certaine culture ou quotidien social.

La corporéité dansante en tant que discours sur cette expérience collective est donc appréhendée comme un support *presque* matériel d'inscription des expériences de la forme sociale et de la forme esthétique, des mutations d'une culture quotidienne et d'une culture d'invention. Scientifique ou artistique, comme le signale Coëllier, l'invention a une inscription de fait dans l'histoire.

Inventer artistiquement serait donc faire advenir à la perception au moins un élément, organiser une disposition nouvelle, composer un assemblage inédit à partir du déjà donné, trouver une configuration qui, sans être novatrice en soi, rafraîchit l'appréhension d'au moins un objet (abstrait ou non) en regard de ce qui l'entoure.

(Coëllier, 2003: 11).

La corporéité dansante, même nourrie par un aspect singulier dans un rapport synchronique avec d'autres cultures quotidiennes, et si elle est pertinente, serait susceptible d'initier une suite (mais pourrait aussi être diachroniquement isolée) (Coëllier, 2003: 11).

J'aborde encore la corporéité dansante en tant que *symbole*, dans le sens grec, comme vecteur d'intense communication qui permet de poser un lien heuristique "entre l'esthétique et la vie sociale, la création artistique et la trame de la vie collective" (Duvignaud, 1973: 13).

Cela peut être non seulement un outil de connaissance du potentiel d'ouverture d'une certaine culture, mais surtout une stratégie d'intervention parmi d'autres dans un quotidien social. Mais c'est une stratégie résistante à la mondialisation de la logique du marché dans tous les secteurs de la vie sociale. Il s'agit d'une résistance à la mondialisation de la culture pour que chaque quotidien social puisse développer son potentiel d'invention selon l'éthique, l'esthétique et le politique propres à son quotidien.

La réalité de la vie quotidienne "s'organise autour du ici de mon corps et du maintenant de mon présent" (Berger & Luckmann, 1996: 35). Pour apprendre à voir le monde imaginaire, situé entre nous et l'espace, il faut l'incarner et le fréquenter intimement pour dévoiler ce qui est

là. Ce serait dans l'interstice de la peau que cela se produirait et dans les pratiques qui éveillent notre état corporel inventif que cela se dévoilerait. Il s'agit de la temporalité "espaciale" vivifiée par les performeurs de la composition instantanée, d'un temps non-rationalisé qui entre librement mais aussi étrangement.

Le performeur garde une posture vigilante. Il est prêt c'est-à-dire à l'écoute de toute une esthétique et d'une politique de l'espace, par le biais de ces objets "incarnant / étant incarné", par l'instant et sa matérialité. "Être prêt" signifie avoir une perméabilité continue entre le dedans et le dehors. C'est regarder et être regardé, regarder en se regardant simultanément, toujours en devenir d'une image qui ne se fixe jamais.

Quelle serait donc l'efficacité, la force interne de l'objet, de la corporéité dansante et de ses images de corps dans son rapport au quotidien social? Comment ces images peuvent-elles se produire et nous-mêmes, comment pouvons nous les repérer, tout en étant "attentifs à'" et "en étant" *in statu nascendi*? Comment une perception énonciatrice d'elle-même s'énonce par des mots? Comment nommer sa perception même? Trouver des assises intellectuelles dans le processus de connaissance et d'expérience compose tout l'enjeu d'être dans la sensibilité de notre temps, dans l'émergence de la sensibilité contemporaine.

Eu égard à l'impossibilité de séparer les dimensions éthiques, esthétiques et politiques, la corporéité dansante peut être un outil de connaissance "choréo-politique", plutôt que de reconnaissance du potentiel social d'ouverture et d'invention. D'une façon générale, la danse en Occident ne nous offre pas de projet proposant une image du corps moins colonialiste, moins aveugle et hermétique, qui donnerait priorité à une politique de la participation à la représentation.

La dimension politique de cette expérience ne peut exister qu'à partir de la visibilité de ces formes. Le politique dans l'acception de Rancière, c'est "la configuration d'un espace spécifique, le découpage d'une sphère particulière d'expérience, d'objets posés comme communs et relevant d'une décision commune, de sujets reconnus capables de désigner ces

objets et d'argumenter à leur sujet." (Rancière, 2004: 37).

Sa notion d'esthétique est également assez pertinente et traduit bien l'expérience de la perméabilité du corps et de la corporéité dansante, parce qu'elle ne porte pas sur la netteté des champs mais sur la dilution, la fluidification des frontières. Rancière ne la pense pas dans le sens classique du terme, selon la théorie traditionnelle de l'art ou du 'beau', mais comme une dimension esthétique du politique, une logique de la connaissance sensible, une connaissance qui reste confuse. Ce n'est que dans ce régime de l'art qu'il appelle "esthétique" qu'il devient possible de parler de l'art aujourd'hui. Je le cite:

Si 'esthétique' est le nom d'une confusion, cette confusion est en fait ce qui nous permet d'identifier les objets, les modes d'expérience et les formes de pensée de l'art. Défaire le nœud pour mieux discerner en leur singularité les pratiques de l'art ou les affects esthétiques, c'est peut-être alors se condamner à manquer cette singularité.

(Rancière, 2004: 12)

Dans cette étude, nous prenons une position de "vigilance curieuse", face à ce processus d'hégémonie culturelle. Notre intérêt est lié aux processus de résistance aux formes d'appropriation impérialistes dont l'objectif est toujours en soi. Ces formes d'appropriation empêchent la participation, éprouvent l'état d'invention au détriment de la représentation, enferment la culture locale et globale en soi-même dans un effet de miroir pervers et invalident le caractère d'ouverture dialogique des cultures et l'enrichissement du quotidien social. Chaque quotidien social peut être habité par des cultures qui n'ont jamais un achèvement mais une dynamique constante à la recherche des ses propres questions et possibilités.

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Notes

- ¹ Selon les mots de Mark Tompkins, performeur, chorégraphe et metteur en scène. Il vit en France depuis 1973 où il a fondé sa compagnie I.D.A. en 1983.
- ² Pris en note durant une conférence d' Eleonora Fabião où elle évoquait les transformations possibles dans la danse contemporaine et dans les arts du spectacle. (Colloque International – TransFormes, 13-16 janvier, 2005, Centre National de la Danse, Pantin, France).
- ³ Jonathan Friedman, "G comme Globalisation", in *Abécédaire de l'anthropologie de l'architecture et de la ville* (à paraître).
- ⁴ Conférence de Eleonora Fabião, voir note 2.
- ⁵ Brett précise: "Le renouvellement du concept "anthropophage" souligna tout en les nuancant les divergences entre le travail de Lygia Clark et celui de bon nombre de ses contemporains en Europe et aux Etats-Unis, en dépit d'une approche formelle plus ou moins partagée. Sur le plan conceptuel, sa notion personnelle de 'l'incorporation' de l'objet par le spectateurs constitua une prise de position radicalement autre par rapport à la sculpture d'avant-garde émergente des années soixante et au body art encore à venir; et cela, malgré son statut indiscutable de novatrice en sculpture pure aussi bien que de pionnière de ce 'retour au corps' souvent tenu pour un des signes les plus marquants de l'art récent. A titre d'exemple – et pour signaler une lacune dans les histoires de l'art européenne ou américaine – son *Obra Mole* en caoutchouc devança de plusieurs années des œuvres telles que les sculptures molles en feutre de Robert Morris, ou *Rosa Esman's Piece*, de Richard Serra, également en caoutchouc. Sur le plan formel, ses *Máscaras Abismo* montrent certains parallèles avec les poids suspendus en filets d'Eva Hesse – *Sans Titre* (1966), par exemple – mais les divergences sont manifestes: les pièces de Morris, Serra et Hesse ne demandent qu'à être regardées, tandis que l'existence et la signification de celles de Lygia dépendent de la présence active, de la participation d'un être humain (...)"
- ⁶ Précurseur de l'utopie anthropophagique au Brésil dans les années 20.

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Transposition and Didactic Engineering of *Kathak* : A case study on the conception of teaching contents of Indian classical dance, in a cross cultural context in France

Malini Ranganathan

Kathak, one of the ancient classical dances of India, comprises «*Nrta*», specific “body techniques” emphasising on the development of dexterity through practice and «*Nrtya*», “narrative significances” depicting mythological stories conveyed through symbolic gestures and facial expressions, learnt theoretically before being perfected through practice. The aim of this research is to develop a didactic engineering of this expert *Kathak* knowledge into an accessible teaching objet, intended for keen but an uninitiated Occidental public and for whom no specific teaching strategy has been developed so far. Our general hypothesis is based on the fact that the transmission of an foreign knowledge to an uninitiated public requires didactic transposition methodology and an intercultural exchange.

To begin with, we have to restore to favour the fundamental corpus of this expert knowledge in order to formalize and institutionalize its instruction in France. This includes the study of the genesis of *kathak* knowledge and its evolution into practical *kathak*. Followed by the analysis of the traditional teaching of *kathak* in India today, which provides us with the description of academic teaching and genetic conditions necessary for the artistic production and the didactic transmission of this knowledge, in its original context. Finally, a teachable *kathak* is produced by adapting it to the demands of the new French environment for which we analyse the characteristics of the pupils in France before working out the teaching contents.

Our principal preoccupation is to elaborate teaching contents of *Kathak* for an occidental public without losing sight of the balance between « body techniques » (practical aspect) and « narrative significances » (theoretical aspect) in the content and the construct of teachable *kathak*. For this purpose, we apply two concepts : theoretically, we comply with the principles of didactic transposition which supervises the change of an objet of reference (original *kathak* culture and knowledge) into a teaching objet, while

practically speaking, we follow the methodology of didactic engineering to conceive teaching contents whose effets are to be further controlled.

The present study illustrates the necessary modifications applied to traditional teaching techniques in order to adapt them to this new environment. The main question of interest being the balance between theory (textual and iconographic study of gestures) and practice (visual application through body movements) in the curriculum of *kathak* for French students. This article focuses on fact that the transmission of expert *Kathak* knowledge in France concerns not only the transfer of objets and methodology, but also the transfer of culture.

Theoretical Questions

Our work of didactic transposition in France, of a “technical object” coming from a different culture, consists in observing the sociocultural characteristics of the public concerned before proposing teaching contents which take into account their resources as much as their difficulties. We analyse the didactic transposition of expert knowledge (esoteric) and teachable knowledge (exoteric) within the Indian institutions, that is to say, the « transpositive remake » of *kathak* firstly in India et later on in France. We also examine the cognitive and motiivty capacities between individuals of Indian and Western origin in order to understand if they are identical or different.

Two types of questions arise subsequently, some research oriented and others operational. The research oriented questions based on survey and analysis done in India and in France are as follows : What is the nature and the aim of this activity in the educational cursus in India ? In the instruction of *kathak*, is the artistic production given more importance than the didactic one or is it the inverse ? What are the traditional techniques of transmission applied? What are the original teaching contents ? What differentiates expressive dance from the technical one ? How does the

kathak dance education define the balance between narrative gestures and body movements ? What kind of public to select in France ? How to situate *kathak* dance in comparison with other dances and physical activities in France ? Is the French public attracted rather by the gestures rather than the visual demonstration or by the philosophy and symbolism hidden behind these dance gestures? In what way will the new protocol of teaching contents depend on the new public? What are the difficulties most often encountered by the non Indian pupils during the course ? Will it be necessary it to preserve the various levels of the original traditional training and the standard structure of the course or should we need to modify it?

The operational questions based on the concrete pedagogical actions to be taken are as follows : How should we orient the conception and the didactic organization of the new teaching contents of *kathak* in France ? Which strategy of transmission would be the most adequate one ? In this new protocol of teaching, the main question is : How to organize the ratio and the correlation between the two salient elements of *kathak* « symbolic significances through narrative accounts and body techniques and codified gestures in the transmission of this dance in France ?

Our entire work is founded on the principles of conceptual analysis where *kathak*, an object of reference (theoretical knowledge) was being transformed into a teaching object (practice). This process involves two levels of operation, on the theoretical level it included the conception of a protocol based on the principles of didactic transposition and on the practical level, the application of didactic engineering.

Method of analysis

The first stage : Analysis of traditional teaching in India in its original context. In order to obtain information of a historical and didactic nature on traditional teaching of *the kathak* in India, we begin with the analysis of the « *kathak* taught » in India in order to understand its global organization in terms of its original context and its specific organization concerning artistique production (dancing) and didactic transmission (teaching). We studied its genesis at three main levels: chronogenesis, Topogenesis et

Mesogenesis. We want to understand if *kathak* meant producing a dance to be understood (full of narrative significances) or rather a dance to be seen as a spectacular show (full of technical virtuosity). Is there a balanced articulation between “significance and Technique” ? To clarify this point, we built evidences of practices and knowledge revealing a balance between these two elements.

The second stage : Analysis of characteristics of French public targeted by our protocol. This study enables us to evaluate the non-Indian public targeted by the didactic transposition of *kathak* and its usual environment. We observe the evidences created by the changes in the fields of cultural and institutional (Indian with French) realities on two aspects : On one side “the expert knowledge of origin and knowledge of reference” and on the other “the artistic and didactic practices of origin against the practices in the new environment in France. We conducted surveys (empirical study carried out since 1980 up to 2002) on French students interested in this dance so as to seek information about their attitudes and their expectations with respect to *kathak*. We need to understand if the teaching of *kathak* must adapt itself to the French pupils. The balance between narrative significances and body techniques was our main preoccupation which guided our choice of teaching contents for French pupils.

Data collection

Principal general data

We mainly turn to textual sources made up of Primary Sources : The fundamental base of *kathak*, mainly written in Sanskrit and their translations and Secondary Sources : Contemporary works (synthetic or analytical matter) often referring to the primary sources .

Specific data

- Oral traces includes testimonies of *kathak* dance experts in the India (Guru Roshan Kumari, Nrtya kala kendra, Mumbai and Guru Damayanathi Joshi, Kathak dance Institute, Mumbai) and reaction of French audience and students.
- Iconographics includes a detailed description of symbolic gestures and facial attitudes which are used for visual confirmation.

- Empirical data includes survey through questionnaires *ante* and *post* cycle before and after the practice of our new teaching contents of *kathak*.

Data analysis and findings of the First stage : The traditional Indian context and mode of transmission of *Kathak*

The descriptors of academic teaching informs us about the three genetic forms of *kathak* :

1. **Chronogenesis** : the strict organization of the duration of study of *kathak*. According to the ancient texts, particularly *Natyashastra*, the fundamental treatise on dramaturgy written by sage Bharata between the 2nd and the 5th century before Jesus-Christ, the acquisition of knowledge by the pupil and the transmission of the knowledge by the Master are two activities considered as eternal and which are not defined in chronological or temporal terms. In India, traditional teaching is composed of dances of triple nature (pure, expressive and creative) and approached in four stages (each of them of three years duration) which are initiation, in depth, completion and confirmation of the pupil. Each stage treats the three forms of dance « pure, expressive and creative » but in a selective way. Through the four different didactic stages we observe that teaching in India emphasizes on the technical base at the beginning by the initiation of the pure dance which is led until the stage of in depth study, where the second aspect of the dance known as expressive is introduced. This aspect is simultaneously treated thereafter in order to acquire a gestural and body autonomy. The stage of completion is the most important one because, at this ultimate stage, the professor, after having strongly constrained the pupil, declares the latter free from the artistic point of view so that the pupil can propose his own improvisations and personal creations and from the didactic angle with the green signal for him take his turn to transmit knowledge. Thus, the practitioner of *kathak* works under the supervision of the same professor during at least twelve years, in order to complete the process of traditional teaching. As a conclusion of this chronogenetic study of the academic teaching of *kathak* in India, we recall the strict and rigid character of the organization of the time of study and the sequential and quasi immutable introduction of the

three aspects of this dance (pure, expressive and creative dance).

2. **Topogenesis** : the hierarchical relationship between professor and student and the traditional transmission of the *kathak* knowledge through « *guru shishya parampara* ». Since generations, this transmission is placed under the institutional responsibility of *gurus*, who are the traditional tutors. They are considered as the heirs of the « sacred knowledge » which they transmit orally, and this requires in return, a high degree of confidence and loyalty on behalf of the pupil. Ideally, for the disciple or *shishya*, the Master or *guru*, is the incarnation of the art which he studies. The secret of the transmission of art lies in the personification of this relationship. This live oral transmission of art is one of the essential factors which makes it possible to understand how, from generation to generation, this immutable artistic tradition was transmitted without any dilution of the original knowledge. According to the Upanishad, the syllable “gu” means obscurity, the syllable “Ru” is that which dissipates the dark cloud of ignorance, and thus is called the guru”. (Advayataraka Upanishad v. V). Since the vedic era, it was the traditional custom that the father transmits his knowledge to his son, thus perpetuating the knowledge through hereditary *parampara* which means succession of knowledge to the descendant. Here we notice the principal elements of the oral tradition : the Master (*guru*), the pupil (*shishya*) and the uninterrupted chain of the knowledge (*gurul parampara*). In conclusion, the hierarchical relationship between the Guru (professor) and the shishya (pupil) clearly defining each one’s tasks and roles, is anchored in the tradition of transmission of *Kathak* knowledge in India since its origin and continues to exist even today.

3. **Mesogenesis** : the interaction with the place of dance practice « milieu », clothing and the accompanying music – The evolution and adaptation of these three elements in teaching and production of dance.

Place of dance practice : Temple to theatre

Formerly, the dance courses took place only in the temples, and was directly dependant on religion or its propaganda. The practicing pupil went there to improve his art under the supervision

of his Master. This tradition took such a scale that the places of training multiplied, and the Master *kathakas* delegated their disciples the power and the duty to transmit the rules of this art to greater number of pupils out of the temple premises. The arrival of the British saw the creation of public dance theatres. Today, it is possible to officially graduate in *kathak* dance from private or public universities having a department of dance.

Attire and Accessories

According to the *Natyashastra* in *Aharya-abhinaya*, the final work of training and application of the Indian dramatic art requires a specific dress codes. Only the suitable use of clothing during the practice of *kathak* dance could produce optimal results. Today, one can recognize a *kathak* dancer due to his typical costume and jewels. We note some transformations in the stage requirements which nevertheless remain close to the tradition but now, each dancer uses the combination of traditional costumes and make up that is the most adapted to his artistic production.

Music

According to the author of *Natyashastra*, a musical support becomes an essential complement when the dancer uses it to achieve the goal of his dance, that is to say, to evoke «aesthetic happiness» initially in him and then into the audience. Bharata speaks about *vachika bhinaya*, made up of melody and lyrics, which are specially conceived for each dance and carry the required feeling in a specific musical (*raga*) and rhythmic (*tal*) mode in order to facilitate the artist's narration in dance. This vocal art implies the control of music and the use of poetic words making it possible for onlookers to understand the meaning behind them. In this case, the recited rhythmic syllables, the percussions and conclusion dance and music are thus indissociable. the tinkling of ankle bells mingle in symbiosis.

The analysis of the traditional modes of training and the modes of transmission of *kathak*, makes it possible to evaluate the practices of teaching and their effects as a usual teaching. We observe the democratization of the knowledge and place of social practice. The traditional teaching of *kathak* in India is regarded as a state of balanced operation of the Indian traditional didactic system. With regards to the questions concerning the obstacles with the transmission of this knowledge in France, we suppose that a certain number of

variables and measures are indissociable with the organization of the studied object. We use three genetic links as necessary conditions for the production and the transmission of *kathak*:

- Chronogenetic : Temporal construction of the pupil
- Topogenetic : Hierarchy between the Teacher and pupil and the responsibilities for each of them.
- Mesogenetic : Decontextualization of knowledge : change in place, clothes and musical support.

How will these variables influence they the contents of the lesson and their transfer to the non Indian pupils ? We note that from the initial stage of training, the methodology aims at a formal acquisition of know-how, necessary for the production of a technical and expressive dance. In the institutional structures, it is impossible to present a dance full of expression and emotional content without a good control of the formal tools necessary such as facial expression, codified gestures and interactive attitude with music. Nevertheless, we observe a constant rebalance between “narrative significances and body techniques” in the artistic and didactic *kathak*.

Data analysis and findings of the second stage : The study of the characteristics of French students targeted by this protocol of *kathak*

We define the need and the limits of transposition of the traditional teaching of *kathak* by enumerating the obstacles in the conception of the protocol of teaching by studying the suitable solutions. The study of the characteristics of the French pupils and the analysis of the interest of the Western public, inform us about two organisational aspects of *kathak*, the student aspect (didactic) which emphasised the need to modify the traditional methods of teaching of *kathak* (demonstration of interest) and the audience aspect (artistic) which show the need to initiate them through transposed shows of *kathak* (demonstration of fascination)

Identified obstacles

The Indian cultural universe in France, shows the existence of an “Indian stereotype” with the artistic presence via programming of *kathak* (dance recitals) but the absence of the didactic transmission of *kathak* (structured and normative

teaching). Here we identify, from a didactic point of view two principal obstacles which oppose a direct transposition Indian traditional teaching. We observe the origin of these obstacles and analyse if these problems concern the variables at a level of individual configuration and motivity or belong to external cultural situations caused socially with the pupils.

Cultural : The variation of cultural disposition leading to difference in cognitive and motivity capacity. These cultural content and context: i.e. the differences between the two cultures acquired since childhood (way of life, habits, food and practices) generates the difficulties related to the differences of the cognitive or body mobility built in the two cultures. Different cultures induce the various ways of life which condition the movements and attitudes. These differences come from the standards and practices established by each society. The French pupil expresses the need to feel and use his body fully and it is necessary to listen to this call.

Didactic : Here again three techniques of transmission are observed.

- **Mesogenetic :** The variation linked to the modes of work (environment and way of doing) i.e. the differences between the two environments (philosophy, narcissism, mysticism) generates the difficulties related to the place of work (dance hall) arranged for the production of dance.

Philosophy, narcissism and mysticism: The Indian philosophy incites the importance of building one's «innerself» and this concept is applied in *Kathak* too. It with is way of thinking that entrusts the total control of our body, where all modifications and corrections of movements or attitude are to be brought through rectifications made after personal perception and feeling and without the intervention of external vision. The importance given to the mirror in the occident is an example illustrating the presence of an external eye. Most dancers in western countries spend long hours of practice in front of the mirror giving the impression of being one with the reflected image which seems incompatible with the practice of *kathak*. Lastly, it is necessary to refrain from any

religious or sacred connotation associated with *kathak* and clearly define the limits of this dance to avoid misleading pupils.

- **Topogenetic :** Balance in the professor-student relationship. i.e. differences between the two social organizations (*guru-shishya* relation : radical, severe, imposing in India whereas this relationship is sometimes distorted or even deteriorated in occident) generate the difficulties related to the degree of hierarchy and responsibility assumed during and after the production of dance. This action of organization of the knowledge, includes the pedagogy which is the relationship between the Master and the pupil. The transmission of art is efficient in the right conditions, which means that a good pupil (justified, assiduous, sincere and hard-working) will receive the best teaching. Nevertheless the direct application of the Indian relation appears quasi impossible in France for several reasons : the basic rules and the student-teacher relationship with the differential progress in the interventions and the responsibilities, the liberty of action is to be respected in each traditional curricular area.
- **Chronogenetic :** The pressure of immediacy i.e. the differences between the two systems of operation generates the difficulties related to the temporal progression of this teaching : Immediacy in the training, the desire to acquire the concepts very quickly and to perform after a short period of training is particularly present here. There is then a risk of demystification of the expert knowledge *kathak*. In France, Indian dance positions itself as a leisure activity instead of being considered as a longterm course and the public wants to test it like other new attractions. Often the pupils underestimate the importance of basic work necessary prior to any public performance. Admittedly, the *Kathak* dance is attractive through its sensuality and its grace, but it requires good basic knowledge of codified body techniques and narrative symbolique gestures. This dance has a strong didactic function and requires a specific knowledge and practice, through many years of training on physical resistance, an infallible notion of rhythm and a certain gestural expressivity which cannot be acquired in a few

months as each gesture, each step, each movement is learned and applied until the moment when the pupil reaches a level of aesthetic pleasure transferable to a public at large.

Interpretation

As a resultat, we identify certain choices in the construction of *kathak* knowledge before transmission in France. We have to develop two types of didactic options: (1) Macro didactic which involves the global organization of a complete curriculum of *kathak* and (2) Micro didactic choices which describes the local organization of a standard lesson. This also leads to the definition of operational options directly applicable to students in France. From the original teaching contents, we distinguish (1) The avoidable part (related to the social organization in India) and the rigid hierarchical professor-student relationship and decontextualization (temple, clothing) and (2) The inevitable part (related to the construction and the transmission): curriculum, temporal determinants and devices necessary for *kathak* knowledge. Thus didactic engineering takes care of the process of transposition of *kathak* knowledge in the cultural and institutional field in France. In this procedure of transfer of the technical object *kathak* which is put under control, it is necessary to supervise the way of teaching it away from its original culture, with the new measures and with the pupils undergoing the process of cultural integration, in order to reach the optimal transmission without deforming the formal knowledge and the original practices.

Conclusion

Firstly, we realize that the Western audience must be initiated to this art, from the artistic point of view, for a better appreciation of *traditional kathak*. Secondly, we conclude that the teaching of *kathak* in a different cultural context, must adapt itself to the non-Indian pupils through transposed transmission of knowledge. We also observe that the French students are more attracted by the symbolic codes rather than the technical contents of this dance. The stage of transpositive manufacture in France, functions under epistemological monitoring where the structure of transmission of the knowledge *kathak* to be taught (chronogenetic, topogenetic and mesogenetic) and

the contents of the taught knowledge *kathak* (the global and local course) must take into account the public aimed in France without losing the original value of knowledge and practical institutional reality of *kathak*. This study describes the characteristics of the pupils in France by underlining the principal difficulties which we will have to overcome to avoid dilution of transmission. Our principal question will be now to know to apply these solutions, in our new protocol of teaching adapted to the French public. We have thus reached the stage of defining the “transposed *kathak*” for a non Indian public, without losing sight of the principle of articulation between narrative significances and body techniques. The transmission of *kathak* knowledge in France, not only refers to the transfer of objects and way of doing, but also the exchange of culture.

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In anticipation of the 25th anniversary of CenidiDanza

Anadel Lynton

Mexico's José Limón National Center for Dance Research, Documentation and Information was founded in 1983 under the initiative of Patricia Aulestia and Guillermo Arriaga, as a part of the Dance Department of the National Institute of Fine Arts. It will celebrate its 25th Anniversary on José Limón's birthday (January 12, 2008). Thus it is an appropriate moment to look at its activities in retrospect as well as at present, particularly in view of the theme of this ground-breaking joint dance research conference on the theme of Rethinking Practice and Theory, International Symposium on Dance Research.

As a co-founder of what is now known as CenidiDanza, I will attempt to analyze and evaluate our efforts to join practice and theory in seeking to understand our beloved discipline as practiced in Mexico and in the world.

Our Center was a sequel to the ephemeral Mexican Dance Archive (early 70s) which had been a part of the Mexican Dance Council, a federal government initiative to create parallel institutions which might lead to the elimination, bit by bit, of the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA) founded in 1946 under the leadership of the great Mexican composer Carlos Chávez. Over the years the INBA has become known for its rebellious and active union leadership which frequently opposed the ongoing efforts to install neoliberal principals in the conduction of government support for the arts. The Archive, founded by Patricia Aulestia (former dancer-choreographer and a tireless initiator and promoter of dance institutions), contained a collection of donated historical and recent programs, posters and newspaper clippings along with the results of a survey carried out with Mexico City choreographers about their lives and an choreographic productions. However, the Archive was never given a budget or permanent place of residence and when the Dance Council was abolished shortly after a new government administration came into power it ended up in the hall way in front of

the INBA Dance Department where anyone could consult and even borrow or keep parts of its contents. No one was in charge and the protection of an incipient "memory" of professional dance activity was not an administrative priority at the time. However, some 10 years later, political changes again permitted Aulestia and dancer-choreographer Arriaga (then head of the INBA Dance Department) to recuperate the material still in existence and create a small center dedicated to "research" on dance. I was invited to join them as I had collaborated with Aulestia on other projects earlier and had studied social anthropology in Mexico and social sciences at the University of Chicago. However, I had dedicated most of my time to dance as a performer and teacher with several of Mexico's principal companies and the cultural extension services of two major public universities.

The three of us were concerned by the lack of documentation and thus the deficiencies in our "memory" about the principal participants in Mexico's professional dance scene and their activities. We felt that this was part of the problem which troubled many dancers, the lack of attention and prestige that was routinely given to dance as compared to visual arts, literature and music. Our art was not usually recognized by historians and the general public as an important part of Mexico's cultural patrimony although in certain periods it has played a major role in historical cultural processes and social identity. Among practitioners of rural and urban popular dance and academically transmitted folklore, the discussion had become very bitter and divisive around issues of "legitimacy" of the academic folklore taught and performed in schools and professional and amateur urban folklore ballets. Dancers' education in Mexico's conservatory-style and technique-based schools gave only a perfunctory glance to the social context in which dance was produced at

present and in the past. Students were generally expected to be disciplined and hard working, even obedient (virtues which stand many of our excellent dancers in good stead in México and other countries). But critical thinking and questioning by students or professors was not encouraged and dance was taught principally by imitation and faith. On the other hand, dance had inherited from the Mexican Revolution and the cultural policies of Mexico's first Secretary of Public Education, José Vasconcelos, a strong mystic and the conviction that artists and teachers were cultural missionaries whose vocation was to educate and thus elevate the population as well as learning the roots of Mexico's social and political identity from "the people". It was assumed that the themes for art would come from the "people" and the forms from a strict education in current Western European techniques. From the beginning, these postulates contained many contradictions: revolutionary ideals and political realities, art for the people determined by the taste of public functionaries who controlled the subsidies for art, Indian crafts and danced ceremonies as both symbols of national identity and embarrassing backwardness, exploitation and expropriation of lands from indigenous people (the Indians of 500 years ago were the heroic creators of major civilizations while present-day Indians were often seen as, alternatively, rebels, drunks or loyal servants). These cultural postulates, still espoused verbally by many educational and cultural authorities, did not correspond with their actions. Dance students were educated hardly taking into consideration the realities of professional and nonprofessional practices

Thus the founders of CenidiDanza were extremely eager to find answers to the many questions that plagued us as we tried to explain (to ourselves, in the first place) what were the causes and what kind of actions could take to raise the status of our discipline, improve the lives of dancers and their communities and record our many histories.

Without yet having a name for what we felt urged to do, we were eager to do research that could help us take actions that might improve our practices and their social insertions (what

we now know as action research). The logical place to begin so it seemed to us, was with other dance practitioners like ourselves, to record their histories and collect their programs, photos, press mentions and other documents, in order to have information on which to base our histories. We needed to get together with others to discuss the many aspects of dance and to exchange points of view and locate problems and achievements, try to interest professionals from other academic fields such as medicine, history, social sciences and esthetics in turning their attention to dance. We also tried to introduce new ideas culled from international contacts into our dance practices (somatics, postmodernism, improvisation methods, critical pedagogy and critical theory, among many others).

Among our first activities were efforts to bring attention to dance and find some funding via offering a variety of institutions illustrated lectures and interviews on Mexican dance to try to legitimate our very existence as a research center (people often questioned us as to "what could be researched about dance?"). Our next efforts were directed to creating major events to bring dancers from the capital and the provinces together, along with specialists from other countries and academics from other disciplines. We tried to discuss different dance practices with a sense of equality related to their importance and value which was unusual at that time as it confronted the usual hierarchical high arts or *bellas artes* emphasis which is in the name of our mother institution.

We sought to put research to the service of dance practice in Mexico but none of those who joined us in our first year had any experience in dance research or in trying to apply academic theory to dance. We began with a kind of empirical diagnostic of the needs of our field and to organize events to discuss possible solutions. One area that seemed particularly urgent was that of health and injury prevention among professionals as well as in dance for the general population. Therefore we organized a large colloquium on dance and medicine. Many sports medicine doctors participated and became interested in

dance along with practitioners of somatic techniques, yoga, movement therapists and, of course, dancers and dance teachers encouraged to reflect on their practices from the point of view of health as another kind of esthetic value.

Our next step was to organize dance research conferences or encounters every six months, as after the first one, the demand became large. Teachers and dancers from almost every Mexican state asked us to co-organize a conference with them as this seemed like an original way to show their bureaucratic superiors (public education and university administrators) that dance was important enough to be the subject of “research”.

My first paper in our first research encounter in 1984 consisted of three pages of questions. We were questioning everything and not taking anything for granted as “natural” or inevitable (such as high injury rates, low incomes, and problematic status on the social and academic scales, among others).

These events offered an invaluable format for getting to know each other, sharing solutions to problems and resources, breaking the isolation in which many dance professionals worked, as well as connecting with other professionals interested in dance such as anthropologists, psychologists, pedagogues or philosophers of esthetics. Next we sought to meet dance researchers from other countries through international research encounters. The first was at the National Anthropology Museum in 1985. Many of the researchers who attended had worked in Mexico but were unknown to us. We organized other international research encounters in 1987, 1990 and 1995 and will celebrate a special colloquium for our 25th anniversary celebration in January 14-20, 2008.

We also began to organize a cycle of events under the title *A Life in Dance* where we combined oral history interviews, the publishing of brief biographies and an honors ceremony dedicated to preserving the histories and experiences of our elders.

We were soon separated from the Dance Department and united with the research centers in visual arts, music and theatre

belonging to the INBA. The research model for art historians as non artist theoreticians was highly legitimated and problematic for us as our need for a studio, desire to organize ongoing education courses for dancers and teachers to introduce new techniques and ideas, or to continue practicing as artists, was under question.

Our proposed work required sustained efforts toward meeting and trying to understand the possible collaborations by specialists in multiple fields of science and humanities as we sought to promote multi and transdisciplinary collaborations with peers from other fields who at that time often knew as little or nothing about dance as we knew of their work.

We also began publishing a bimonthly bulletin and a series of short and longer books, mostly on historical themes at first, but later including analysis of techniques, philosophy of the technology of movement, choreographic analysis of works of major choreographers as well as anthologies of dance critics writings and the Memoirs of all the dance performances presented in the Palace of Fine Arts in celebration of its 75th anniversary, an invaluable source of information about the chronology of works, companies and performances. We have also published some translations. Unfortunately, most of these activities have slowed down or stopped completely as neoliberal economic policies oblige a constant decreasing of government funding for the education and the arts. We are now publishing CDRoms where, if you bring us a blank CED, we will copy the “book” that interests you.

Patricia Aulestia described our goals in the Dance Encyclopedia of Oxford University Press (1998, Vol. 4, p 400) the following way. rescue, compile, document, investigate, preserve and archive everything related to the dance, its history, traditions, theories and values in an institution that sponsors, promotes, experiments, criticizes, informs and disseminates the daily activities of the dance and makes the patrimony of the art of dance accessible and closely tied to national identity.”

Currently, we have 24 researchers exploring themes such as the poetics of dance teaching, copyrights for dance, performing arts critics in late 19th century Mexico, Spanish dance in Mexico City, the life and works of choreographers Raúl Parrao, Graciela Henríquez, Raúl Flores Canelo, Tulio de la Rosa, Patricia Aulestia, and pioneers in traditional Mexican dance on stage, programs to introduce dance in TV closed-circuit classrooms of the National Center for the Arts' Channel 23, esquizoanalysis of choreographic processes, the mature body in dance, 50s Mexican modern dance, Mexican dance education from 1919-1945, physical theater in Mexico, dialogue of perceptions between artists and audiences, Ballet Concierto, dance and pain, and myth, ritual and custom in the process of the transformation of traditional Mexican dance into an school-taught practice, among others.

We offer free courses and seminars on themes such as movement, expression, and communication, psicomotricity for children, creativity and language of movement, Jooss-Leeder technique-and video dance production, among others. I conduct a monthly dialogue between choreographers and performers and audiences where works are presented and discussed in a supportive atmosphere that tries to make those on both sides of the theatrical space feel free to express what they have seen, felt and thought. Frequently, many of us are asked to teach or give conferences in dance festivals and on-going education programs all over the country.

On trying to make a balance of our efforts to answer the many questions, doubts, criticisms and hypotheses we began with, and to improve the situation of dance practices through increasing knowledge, conserving memory, collecting documents and testimonies and attempting to generate theories that explain and might influence policies, how have we done?

At first glance, it might seem that little has changed. Teachers continue to be authoritarian, dancers poor and feeling left out of the prestige given to other artists, as well as suffering from unnecessary injuries. The younger generation is looking desperately for

opportunities to present their works and be noticed, the theaters seem nearly empty, street performances have almost no financing, and, above all, we still have not managed to transcend the conservatory style education for one that recognizes the reality that almost all dancers teach to make a living and that we need to educate dance professionals to analyze and reflect, to question and doubt, to investigate and organize our discipline in such a way as to include and legitimate a variety of ways of doing things. Perhaps our early ambitions were ingenuous. Perhaps research and theory can't change the world or at least not yet...

However, pioneering studies such as my work (published in SDHS Proceedings) on *Mujeres* (Graciela Henríquez 1971-72), one of the earliest feminist choreographers on record, and Margarita Tortajada and Patricia Camacho's work on dance and gender, Amparo Sevilla's book on dance, culture and social classes (1990) and Hilda Islas' books on body technologies and dance cultures, have opened many themes for thought.. Another initiative by Islas and Javier Contreras led to a four volume anthology for undergraduate dance students. The many dance programs for closed-circuit Channel 23 and the large production of CDRoms soon to include three volumes of texts on movement analysis, have all been important.

I believe that the theoretical and practical work of Laban gives us a wonderful model for integration of theory and practice as does Noverre and the great writers and thinkers from the Orient on the essence of performing. Western culture relegated dance and the body to a marginal corner of the Academy but dance and dancers continue to emerge in full regalia and perhaps we will be able to contribute positively to the current life and death struggle for survival against the forces of annihilation that threaten life on our planet.

One small example of how a history and analysis of the problematics faced by presenting contemporary dance in the streets during the decade that followed the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City has led to the experimental proposal of *Romerías Tours* was exemplified in the presentation with a 5 min

video. This itinerant street piece revives moments of dance from the histories of spaces and places in one set of centrally located urban blocks which form part of the Colonia Roma, founded in the early 20th century. The 50s Swing Club was momentarily recalled in front of its former location, a 60s rock joint, one of the first in the city, was remembered where it had been, the 40s bolero was danced in front of the building where one of its best known singers lived and died, a 30s mass ballet originally performed by 3000 normal and high school students plus professional leads before two Mexican presidents, was evoked by three contemporary dancers where the National Stadium was once located and we passed a XXIst century Goth hang-out on our way. The solidarity of neighbors rescuing neighbors in the aftermath of the quake and the striking examples of art deco and functionalist architecture surviving in the neighborhood are celebrated. Four CenidiDanza researchers and dancers of very different generations took part in this effort to combine local history, dance, tourism, identity, memory and public art in November 2006. The Tour began and ended at the Union of Neighbors and (earthquake) Victims 19th of September (date of the quake) which had co-sponsored the festivals of contemporary dance in the streets during close to 10 years in many organized neighbors that belonged to the Popular Urban Movement. A 7 minute video with scenes from the neighborhood past and present and interviews with its current and former residents were presented along with an exhibition of posters and photos from the period when the Colonia Roma was devastated by the quake and from its periods of former glory. The walking tour becomes a kind of carnivalesque parade where the public participates along with the previously prepared “actors” and tour guide. At the end of the Tour neighbors, visitors and performers share refreshments and conversation about the future of the neighborhood and what its residents and those who frequent its many caf  s, restaurants, churches and cultural, social and political institutions, might do to help maintain its characteristic architecture and ways of life. We are now beginning to work with dancers,

actors, musicians and community members on a variety of ways to reflect on the needs of particular communities through the creation of site-specific works which combine different means of expression.

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La théorisation de l'improvisation chez William Forsythe en tant qu'outil pédagogique singulier: la création du CD ROM "Improvisation Technologies"

Biliana Vassileva Fouilhoux

1. Le CD Rom Improvisation Technologies : étapes de création

A/ L'origine du projet : « une école du visuel »

L'enjeu du développement de la créativité des danseurs, qui est la base de la méthodologie d'improvisation inventée par Forsythe, est aussi à l'origine du projet de la création d'un outil pédagogique unique – le CD ROM *Improvisation Technologies* (Technologies de l'improvisation).

Le CD Rom *Improvisation Technologies* constitue l'aboutissement d'un processus en plusieurs étapes dans un laboratoire de production et de recherche pour applications multimédias, créé à l'institut allemand ZKM des Medias Visuels en 1993-1994 par Seth Goldstein et Paul Kaiser. Le premier projet réalisé dans ce nouveau laboratoire, est ce CD Rom, une co-production de William Forsythe et du corps de ballet de Frankfort. En 1994 le nombre croissant d'opérations d'improvisation au sein de la compagnie oblige le chorégraphe à réfléchir sur la création d'un support pédagogique adapté pour les nouveaux danseurs. Voilà pourquoi le CD Rom a été conçu comme une sorte de manuel :

Les horaires de travail sont actuellement tels à la compagnie que nous ne pouvons plus à la fois répéter le répertoire et travailler en profondeur les bases de l'improvisation. Cela désavantage les nouveaux danseurs. Le CD-Rom leur permet donc de se rattraper rapidement.

(Forsythe,

1999;113)

Selon la définition du chorégraphe, l'objectif pédagogique du CD-Rom est d'enseigner une façon d'observer le mouvement à partir des traces laissées par

celui-ci et que cela permet une compréhension aisée de certains principes. Cette idée d'observation des traces du mouvement dansé surgit dans la rencontre entre William Forsythe et Paul Kaiser, qui avait déjà créé des archives multimédias pour l'œuvre théâtrale de Robert Wilson :

William Forsythe a essayé de me transmettre la façon dont il obtenait des mouvements inattendus à partir du vocabulaire du ballet classique. Alors qu'il décrivait ses méthodes, il se mit à dessiner des formes imaginaires dans l'espace, en utilisant toutes les parties du corps (non seulement les pieds et les mains, les coudes et les genoux, mais aussi le crâne, les épaules, les fesses et même les oreilles et le menton). Il parlait et bougeait rapidement, façonnant une géométrie de danse complexe et invisible que je n'étais pas capable de visualiser ni de suivre. En tant que non danseur, je n'avais que peu conscience de la kinésphère du corps (le volume total du mouvement potentiel d'un corps humain). Plus tard, j'ai suggéré à Billy d'utiliser des animations numériques pour rendre ses explications visibles. En superposant la traduction informatique des lignes et des formes dessinées et les enregistrements vidéo sur lesquels il les effectuait, il pouvait montrer ses visualisations mentales aussi clairement que ses mouvements physiques.

(Kaiser,

1999;15)

La suggestion de Paul Kaiser est reprise par une équipe, Christian Ziegler, Volker Kuchelmeister, Mohsen Hosseini et Seth Goldstein,¹ qui expérimente un prototype sur la base de la pièce *The Loss of Small Detail*. Le

documentaire montre les 14 dernières minutes de la représentation, filmés sous 3 angles différents, permettant au spectateur de les alterner à sa guise. Il est possible, à divers moments, d'obtenir des informations supplémentaires sur la performance : les prises de la même scène filmée lors de différentes répétitions et représentations sur plusieurs années, par exemple. Le CD-Rom qui en résulte présente, en première partie, le final de *The Loss of Small Detail*, tandis qu'en deuxième partie, William Forsythe expose divers principes essentiels de sa conception du mouvement et de la danse. Dans la partie théorique, les présentations d'éléments isolés de mouvements, commentées par Forsythe, sont illustrées par l'ajout graphique de lignes blanches traçant la séquence des mouvements dans l'espace. Astrid Sommer de ZKM-Institute for Visual Media s'avoue fascinée par cette nouvelle invention :

Il devint possible de percevoir le mouvement physique différemment ou sous une perspective nouvelle, et l'imagination des danseurs devint visible pour la première fois. Ce fut le premier pas vers une école de danse qui allait devenir une école du visuel.

(Sommer, 1999;

11)

Cette visualisation des traces des mouvements improvisés est étroitement liée à la conception de Forsythe de la danse en tant que géométrie dynamique. Le CD Rom enseigne une forme particulière de discipline. Il apprend à constituer des objectifs pratiques qui s'inscrivent dans une géométrie, explique-t-il pour définir le but pédagogique de cette « école du visuel » (Forsythe, 1999;117). La visualisation géométrique montre aussi d'une manière claire et lisible les racines de l'improvisation chez Forsythe, qui puisent dans la danse classique :

(...) j'ai travaillé avec des danseurs du ballet. On parlait en termes de cercles, de lignes, de surfaces et de points. C'est habituel pour un danseur de ballet, et mon système utilise pour l'essentiel un

bagage de connaissance qui leur est familier.

(Forsythe, 1999;113)

Ainsi dans les cours théoriques du CD Rom le chorégraphe montre comment un rond de jambe devient un cercle qui peut être transposé dans un mouvement de l'épaule selon le principe d'isométries cinétiques. Le tendu qui trace une ligne imaginaire sur le sol est réinscrit avec le coude, la chute devient une spirale réversible dans l'espace. Le chorégraphe part d'un code classique pour le transformer en autre chose, sans se soucier des règles de la doctrine académique :

Ce système postule qu'on peut, sans perdre en rigueur, étendre ces idées à la totalité de l'espace ou du corps. Habituellement, tu fais des cercles avec les bras ou les jambes- pourquoi alors ne pas essayer avec l'épaule par exemple ? Détermine des figures et applique-les autrement et ailleurs que d'habitude. Il y a mille façons de générer du mouvement.

(Forsythe, 1999;117)

B/ La création d'une « école de danse interactive »

Inspiré de l'expérience acquise avec le prototype du CD Rom, William Forsythe a alors un nouveau but en tête : le développement d'un instrument d'entraînement professionnel pour les danseurs du Ballet de Francfort, qualifié par Astrid Sommer d'une école de danse interactive qui rendrait transparentes les nombreuses années de recherche de Forsythe ainsi que les principes de bases de sa méthode de travail (Sommer, 1999; 11). Une nouvelle version pour un disque dur est destinée à être utilisée par les danseurs comme un outil pédagogique pour s'entraîner seuls. Elle assure une initiation systématique aux fondements d'enseignements techniques d'improvisation développés par le chorégraphe.

En 1994, Nik Haffner, Christian Ziegler, Volker Kuchelmeister, et Yvonne Mohr élaborent la nouvelle version. Ils conservent le double concept de « théorie et documentaire » présent dans le prototype ; Volker

Kuchelmeister et Christian Ziegler relient les deux sections avec des interfaces clairement structurées. Emanuele Quinz explique la notion d'interface :

Traditionnellement l'interface est définie comme la surface qui met en contact et en relation deux (ou plusieurs) systèmes hétérogènes. Techniquement, l'interface est un dispositif assurant la communication entre deux systèmes informatiques différents et exécutant essentiellement des opérations de transcodage et de gestion de flux d'informations.

(Quinz, 2003;12)

Mais elle insiste sur le fait que cette notion peut s'étendre au-delà des domaines spécifiques et que plus généralement, on peut appeler interface toute surface de contact, de traduction, d'articulation entre deux espaces, deux espèces, deux ordres de réalité différents... (Levy, 1990 ; 205) en tant qu'une structure liminaire/limen (seuil) comme structure (Quinz, 2003;12). Elle compare le fonctionnement de l'interface à celui d'une membrane osmotique :

L'interface en réalité n'a pas de forme, elle est dynamique, permet aux systèmes qu'elle sépare/unit des relations réversibles, mutuelles, des interactivités.

(Quinz, 2003;12)

Dans les interfaces du CD Rom *Technologies Improvisation* les éléments théoriques sont reliés avec les démonstrations visuelles qui leur correspondent. William Forsythe a filmé de courtes leçons où il explique les principes les plus importants de sa méthodologie d'improvisation. Ces séquences vidéo sont numérisées et, comme dans le prototype, graphiquement corrigées/éditées pour leur ajouter des lignes blanches animées et autres effets traçant les séquences de mouvements et autres figures. Nik Haffner a ensuite structuré et groupé par sections et chapitres la centaine de courtes séquences obtenues de cette manière.

La première de *Self Meant to Govern* en juillet 1994 à Francfort, conçue comme une démonstration de la mémoire collective d'improvisation des danseurs, a servi aussi comme illustration de ces courtes séquences, tirées de la méthodologie de Forsythe. La pièce est enregistrée avec quatre caméras, filmant sous des angles différents. Ce montage vidéo est ensuite numérisé et ajouté à la version du disque dur. Dans cette documentation complète sur la représentation le spectateur peut continuellement modifier les angles de prise de vue : plans éloignés de face et plans éloignés de dessus, plans moyens suivis par des plans rapprochés. Un curseur donne une vue d'ensemble chronologique et permet d'accéder à la séquence désirée. Les sujets traités dans la partie théorique sont reliés à des séquences de démonstration qui peuvent être visionnées en boucle et au ralenti. Des séquences vidéo des répétitions de *Self Meant to Govern* sont également utilisées.

Le CD Rom *Improvisation Technologies* est présenté au public en octobre 1994 à l'occasion du 10^{ème} anniversaire de Forsythe en tant que chorégraphe du Ballet de Francfort. Il gagne un prix au concours de New Voices- New Visions digital art competition à New York en 1996. La version pour disque dur a depuis été utilisée par Forsythe et sa troupe comme instrument à usage utilisé individuel pour étudier ou répéter.

En 1999 une nouvelle version du CD-Rom apparaît, sous le nom de *Improvisation Technologies : An Analytical Tool for The Dance Eye*, spécialement conçue pour le large public. Plus synthétique, elle comprend 64 opérations d'improvisation présentées par William Forsythe. Les opérations sont organisées en quatre grands chapitres –« Lines » (Lignes), « Writing » (Ecriture) , « Reorganising » (Réorganisation) et « Additions » (Compléments). Chaque cours théorique dure environ une minute et demie et l'explication du chorégraphe est accompagnée par une démonstration. Le lecteur peut aussi retrouver les mêmes exemples de démonstration présentés par quatre danseurs de la compagnie. Un enregistrement du *Solo* (1995), dansé par William Forsythe, est ajouté pour illustrer l'exposé sur « Complex Operations » (Opérations complexes).

Le projet est accueilli avec beaucoup d'intérêt dans le monde entier. Il est présenté dans le cadre de plusieurs festivals, colloques et expositions en Europe, aux Etats-Unis et en Asie.

2. Le CD-Rom Improvisation Technologies : mode d'emploi d'une école de la perception

Selon William Forsythe l'objectif principal du CD-Rom est de présenter au danseur une façon de ressentir et de percevoir l'espace (Forsythe, 1999;117). Les questions principales dont il traite sont celle de ce moment très important qui précède la création du mouvement en expliquant des concepts simples, celui de l'inscription et de la clarté d'écriture et celui de la façon de développer une perception physique entre les mouvements. Alors il ne s'agit pas d'indiquer comment inventer du mouvement selon la méthode d'improvisation en danse mais d'apprendre au danseur à sentir l'empreinte du mouvement, à développer la conscience des processus d'articulation du corps. Le chorégraphe explique le besoin de ce type d'apprentissage spécifique à travers sa propre expérience de l'improvisation et les questions qu'elle a fait surgir comme, par exemple, comment à la fois danser et dire ce qui s'est passé ? (Forsythe, 1999;117);

C'est bien sûr une approche de l'improvisation mais elle enseigne surtout une façon d'analyser celle-ci au moment où elle se déroule. (...) Cette technique donne la possibilité de noter mentalement immédiatement une improvisation. Mon propre corps bouge naturellement très vite ; je présume qu'une grande part de cette technique s'est développée à partir de la nécessité où je me trouvais de pouvoir m'observer à grande vitesse ; j'avais besoin de pouvoir analyser ce qui se passait. En soi, cela ne relève pas de l'écriture chorégraphique, on a ici plutôt un outil d'analyse, d'où le titre du CD-Rom : *An Analytical Tool for the Dance Eye* (Un outil d'analyse pour l'œil de la danse).

(Forsythe, 1999;117)

Dans cet outil d'analyse les idées d'opérations d'improvisation de Forsythe sont présentées sous la forme de cours théorique, présentés un par un, ce qui, effectivement, facilite la compréhension de la pensée chorégraphique complexe du chorégraphe. Mais d'un autre côté Forsythe lui-même fait remarquer que quand on danse, il est très rare qu'un principe apparaisse comme cela, isolément et suggère au danseur de combiner deux ou trois chapitres théoriques du CD-Rom afin qu'il se retrouve en train de faire du mouvement. Ce principe de combinaison et de superposition de différentes procédures d'improvisation est sous-jacent dans tous les algorithmes chorégraphiques² de Forsythe que nous avons examinés dans notre thèse de doctorat.³ Pour élucider ce principe, le chorégraphe a établi une progression logique dans le CD-Rom :

Il commence avec des exemples très statiques, quasiment des exposés, puis l'on passe à des illustrations plus dynamiques – avec les quatre danseurs, pour finir dans la mobilité extrême de mon solo.

(Forsythe,

1999;117)

Le *Solo* de Forsythe où le chorégraphe exécute une danse rapide et complexe illustre cette progression des cours théoriques vers une combinaison des principes d'improvisation, impossibles à dissocier à partir d'un certain moment.

3. Le CD-Rom Improvisation Technologies : une nouvelle conception de travail

La création du CD Rom *Improvisation Technologies* sous la forme d'un système ouvert et interactif reflète aussi la conception du rôle de Forsythe en tant que chorégraphe dans le processus d'élaboration des spectacles ; j'offre aux danseurs seulement ma réflexion, mais pas les résultats", explique-t-il (Forsythe, 1994;36). Le chorégraphe ne fixe pas des règles mais fait des propositions pour plusieurs raisons :

Dans les structures que je développe, chaque interprète peut donner forme à sa propre danse. Si mes danseurs veulent pousser leur corps ou au contraire le retenir, ils doivent pouvoir y parvenir. Le stress lié à l'âge et à la condition physique est évacué: on développe ainsi sa danse en fonction de ses besoins, à l'intérieur de différentes structures. Et on peut en changer. Tous mes danseurs ont cette liberté en regard de ma méthodologie. En même temps, cela favorise un très bon esprit car chacun devient responsable.

(Forsythe, 1998;25)

Antony Rizzi décrit le fonctionnement de cette structure ouverte d'improvisation avec la métaphore d'un squelette que chaque danseur doit compléter avec sa chair:

Finalement le travail vient des danseurs...peu importe comment, même si en réalité Billy créé un solo uniquement pour cette personne, à un certain moment il laisse le travail afin que le danseur se l'approprié. A plusieurs occasions Billy dira... quand quelque chose ne marche pas et que le danseur n'a pas développé le travail, surtout aux nouveaux qui ne comprennent pas :Je t'ai donné un squelette, c'est toujours un squelette ...maintenant c'est à toi de le remplir.

(Rizzy, 1999)

De la même manière, Forsythe offre sa réflexion et pas les résultats au large public. Le CD Rom dévoile la méthodologie d'improvisation élaborée par Forsythe, selon ses mots, sous la forme d'une « archéologie » culturelle :

La danse recèle en elle tant de choses extraordinaires ; ce CD Rom est un des moyens de les révéler, et aussi une façon de montrer de l'intérieur la densité d'un produit de notre culture.

(Forsythe, 1999;118)

Un aspect de ce produit culturel, dans ce cas particulier de danse, est par exemple le langage inventé⁴ au sein de la compagnie :

Nous sommes seulement trente personnes, alors vous pouvez nous comparer à une tribu de l'Amazonie. Nous sommes à Francfort à la fin du monde dans la plus profonde et sombre Allemagne. Nous sommes ici en train de parler ce petit langage, dérivé du ballet.

(Forsythe,

2004)

L'usage du CD Rom en tant qu'outil pédagogique en dehors du Ballet de Francfort manifeste selon Forsythe une conception très nouvelle du travail :

Ce que je veux dire, c'est qu'il n'y a rien de secret dans le travail. Imaginer qu'il faille garder ses méthodes secrètes, c'est vraiment de l'ordre de la superstition. C'esune attitude primitive – et nous n'en sommes plus là. En cette fin de vingtième siècle, le travail n'a plus besoin de secret.

(Forsythe, 1999;118)

Le chorégraphe déclare aussi que par l'exposition de son travail il est prêt aux confrontations, au changement et à un nouveau départ si nécessaire :

Ce n'est pas parce que nous communiquons que notre travail va soudain être anéanti. Ce qui pourrait se passer, c'est que cela nous déstabilise en quelque sorte et que nous soyons obligés d'abandonner nos méthodes, mais ce ne serait pas forcément une mauvaise chose.

(Forsythe,

1999;118)

Et il ajoute qu'il espère que les gens qui utilisent le CD Rom en fassent quelque chose de très différent des spectacles du Ballet de Francfort;

Les utilisateurs doivent avoir de la curiosité, du désir. J'aimerais que, partis

pour comprendre notre langage, ils découvrent en route leur propre langage.
Ce serait le plus intéressant
(Forsythe,
1999:118)

Conclusion :

L'approche pédagogique de l'improvisation de William Forsythe qui se révèle à travers la création du CD Rom *Improvisation Technologies* consiste surtout à une observation du mouvement et des son potentiel. Les propositions qu'il fait à ses danseurs sont toujours une incitation à la créativité personnelle et non pas des recettes toutes faites. Le CD Rom *Improvisation Technologies*, conçu pour aider à rentrer dans les détails des techniques d'improvisation élaborées au cours de la collaboration entre le chorégraphe et la compagnie, est structuré sous la forme de petits cours. Il s'agit d'une initiation détaillée à la manière dont Forsythe pense et conçoit la danse. voit de l'intérieur l'élaboration d'un langage unique (les cours théoriques) et la construction des chorégraphies à partir de là (les démonstrations des danseurs). En tant qu'héritage de l'expérience de l'improvisation accumulée au sein du Ballet de Francfort, le CD Rom conserve l'«eidolon», pour reprendre les termes de Forsythe, d'une mémoire collective.

Invité à son tour à expérimenter cette méthodologie d'improvisation, le danseur qui ne fait pas partie de l'histoire de cette aventure en commun, se rend compte à son tour de la richesse d'invention. Les possibilités de combinaisons et de collisions entre les diverses opérations sont infinies ; nous pouvons partir de chaque point dans le corps et dans l'espace pour inscrire des lignes éphémères, des courbes, des spirales, des images à notre gré comme un enfant qui joue avec le sable.

Plus qu'un résultat fini, le chorégraphe nous offre une approche nourrie de sa réflexion sur les recherches de Laban, la géométrie inhérente du code classique, les théories des philosophes et architectes contemporains. Le CD Rom *Improvisation Technologies* est une invitation à la danse, à la création de ses propres règles pour les transgresser ensuite.

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Notes

- 1 Christian Ziegler, Volker Kuchelmeister, Mohsen Hosseini et Seth Goldstein
- 2 Rappelons ici l'affirmation par Umberto Eco de l'existence d'« une activité onirique de l'ordinateur, si l'on entend par activité onirique humaine la réélaboration de fragments d'expérience antérieure, suivant des séquences illogiques. » Umberto Eco, « Freud et l'ordinateur » in « Nouvelles technologies. Un art sans modèle ? », *Art Press*, n.12 spécial hors série, op.cit., p.210
- 3 Biliana Vassileva Fouilhoux, thèse de doctorat "L'improvisation chez William Forsythe: une approche singulière", soutenue le 7 mai 2007, Paris III-La Sorbonne Nouvelle
- 4 Il s'agit de la terminologie des diverses opérations d'improvisation.

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The Theory and Practice of ‘Experiencing’ Dance

Dr. Olive Beecher

‘... the world is nothing but the field of our experience’

(Merleau-Ponty, in Zaner, 1971, pp.550-551).

Introduction

In an attempt to explore the corporeal and phenomenological nature of practice and theory within dance a heuristic proposition is advanced in this paper. This proposition asserts that ‘experiencing’ is the heart of the matter in both the practice and theorizing of dance. The hypothesis is based on a number of premises, namely,

- the experiencing of dance is connected to the present moment
- that the sensori-neuromuscular mechanism is the basis of knowledge
- mind/body theories as a perspective in movement and dance
- embodiment

This paper will attempt to address the question ‘what do dancers do when they practice, what do they do when they theorize?’ The title “The Theory and Practice of ‘Experiencing’ Dance” could also be phrased as “The Experience of Theorizing and Practicing within Dance”. I will argue that ‘experiencing’ is fundamental to the practice of dance and that it is also fundamental when theorizing about dance. Moreover, it is this experiential dimension to the theorizing of dance which grounds the theory in practice and keeps it in touch with reality. The investigation of the hypothesis is informed by dance studies, phenomenology, mind/body theories and Piaget’s cognitive theory. Before, setting out on this thesis I wish to make a distinction between different forms within art, in this case the art of writing and the art of dance composition. While art forms such as dance, writing, painting and music sharing common elements, they are distinguishable in having their own forms,

structures, syntax, vocabulary, techniques and aesthetics peculiar to each singular art form. I bring your attention to this in order to clarify my argument here and to state that I am not proposing that practice and theorizing in dance are one and the same, rather the thesis aims to propose that a mutual and fundamental element of the practice and theorizing of dance is ‘experiencing’, that is a mind/body ‘experiencing’.

While I perform a short dance movement phrase, I would like you to ‘experience’ the movement through your whole being, mind and body rather than analyze or reflect on it. (Dance Movement Demonstration)

Traditionally, the professional dancer’s experience was very different from that of the dance academic. Professional dance training involved no books, no libraries and no essays. Knowledge and experience of dance was based on ‘knowing by doing’ and the trainee dancer’s entire day was spent in the dance studio. Times have changed and now dance students study for degrees while simultaneously training to be dancers. The symbiotic and reciprocal relationship of theory and practice within dance has gained currency among practitioners and academics alike. Practice is indeed informing theory and theory informing practice within dance. This reciprocal relationship of theory and practice is evidenced in college courses which combine both theory and practice. In practical classes this relationship is evident in, for example, working out dance phrases, through the body, while learning labanotation; incorporating the reconstruction or physically working through of dance phrases from video recordings within the dance history lecture. In theoretical classes, such as, dance criticism or aesthetics, references are made to specific dance works and recordings and integrated into the class. In addition, cross-disciplinary connections are made by the dance teacher in, for example, practical classes with references to anatomy, kinesiology, physics and spatial theory. The marrying of theory and practice within dance is

exciting and continues to be so as new relationships are uncovered resulting in some instances in new knowledge.

Choreography, improvisation, learning dance movement phrases and performance itself all constitute the practice of dance. Practice or practical derives from the Greek 'praktikos' pertaining to action. Theoretical aspects of dance include dance history, anthropology of dance, the language and vocabulary of dance as an art form, physiology, anatomy, mind/body theories, somatics, notation, composition, pedagogy and philosophy. Theory comes from the Greek word 'theoria' meaning viewing, speculation, contemplation and is defined as a set of propositions which provide principles of analysis or explanation of a subject matter. Ethnographic and phenomenological research methods illustrate how practice informs theory and theory informs practice within dance. Phenomenology as a research method is concerned with uncovering essences within the dance experience while ethnography involves the researcher going into the 'field' and documenting the entire or real life situation. In a phenomenological dance study with five teenagers with physical disabilities, cerebral palsy or spina bifida, a number of characteristics were uncovered as a result of continued observation during their participation in a dance movement programme, over a period of one academic year. These included engagement, vitalisation, enjoyment and creativity. Subsequently, these characteristics became part of a conceptual framework for analysis (Beecher, 2005).

The phenomenology of the practice and theory of dance

The first premise of the hypothesis outlined in the introduction is that of 'experiencing' dance in the present moment. 'Experience' is defined as 'the apprehension of an object, thought or emotion through the senses or mind: a child's first experience of snow. Phenomenology, a branch of philosophy, is concerned with describing experience as it is and suspending theoretical perspectives. Thus, phenomenology as a research method involves observing, documenting and uncovering essences within the experience. Edmund

Husserl's radical way of doing philosophy, pioneered in 1900, brought philosophy and empiricism or experience together for the first time. It is this Husserlian approach which I refer to here. Dance phenomenologist, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone explains how detailed documentation and description can assist in illuminating the dance experience (Sheets-Johnstone, 1984). French philosopher, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, in his phenomenology of the body refers to pure description of 'lived experience' (1962). Indeed, Sheets-Johnstone's in depth exploration of the lived experience of dance emphasises the experiencing of the dance in the present moment and it is here, she proposes, that the true meaning and essence of the dance is revealed (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999). The present moment or the 'now' of the dance are of central importance in the choreographies of Erich Hawkins and, indeed, in the work of Merce Cunningham from the perspectives of both dancer and viewer. Somatics, mind/body practices in dance and eastern theories on movement and the body also focus on experiencing the 'now' of the movement or being present in each movement, in each moment. Such presence, I suggest, is also significant in the theorizing or writing of dance. Being 'present' in the act of writing in dance allows the writer to integrate and assimilate all previous knowledge and experience of dance. Such knowledge is embodied and combines many different ways of knowing. Indeed, according to Merleau-Ponty, knowledge of the world is embodied and is experienced in and through the body (1962). Furthermore, he asserts that committed consciousness or *conscience engage* constitutes the very meaning of our existence (ibid). Therefore, the thesis or argument here suggests experiential knowing, a knowing or learning that is dynamic and involves movement. Thus, experiencing is important for the viewer, (as well as for the performer), who may later reflect and theorize about the dance.

Kinesthesia

Kinesthesia is the feeling of motion or movement in the body. Kinesthesia is of central importance in the practice or experiencing of dance. It is a way of knowing, a way of

knowing through the body. We are familiar with such expressions as 'knowing in my bones', 'knowing by doing' and 'knowing in my body'. Ruth Foster, in *Knowing in My Bones* explains that we are in the world through our body, and that the basis of knowledge and learning lies in the sensori-motor experience, the most intimate mode of knowing (1976:13). Furthermore, Foster contends that what we know in our bones is knowledge that has been absorbed into the fabric of our being. It underlies our attitudes, our awareness of ourselves, and of the world that we inhabit (ibid:112). In reference to Merleau-Ponty's writings, Foster states that: "my body is ... the general instrument of my comprehension" (ibid:13). In dance, we feel and learn directly through bodily sensation. Experts in neurophysiology, Ruch et al, contend that all knowledge comes to us through our sense organs (1965:302). While visual, auditory and tactile senses are engaged in the experience of dance, the kinaesthetic sense is fundamental to dance. Within the 'experiencing' of the dance, kinesthesia or the feeling of motion or movement in the body differs from emotional feeling which is generally related to context or environmental affects. Best explains that a feeling of empathy is evoked in the spectators caused by watching the performers movements and that they experience similar kinesthetic sensations to those of the dancer (Best,1974). Best emphasizes the critical relation between movement and the kinesthetic sense:

The dancer experiences certain kinesthetic sensations as she moves and these constitute the aesthetic meaning of the dance. Communication of this meaning is effected by a feeling of empathy in the spectators, caused by watching the performer's movements. Their own bodies thus experience kinesthetic sensations similar to those of the dancer (Best: 1974:144).

Alwin Nikolais and Murray Louis¹ both proposed in their teaching and philosophy of dance that the body has its own intelligence. While all the other senses are much discussed in

education, human development and arts literature, the kinesthetic sense is sometimes omitted. While everybody possesses this kinesthetic sense, including a new born baby, dancers kinesthetic sense is more developed because of their training. In education Howard Gardner identifies bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, alongside others, for example, spatial intelligence, linguistic intelligence, musical intelligence and mathematical intelligence in his theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner:1985).

A principle objective of creative dance education is awareness and, in particular, body awareness through experiencing. Dance educator and theorist, Margaret H'Doubler asserts that

Dance education must be emotional, intellectual and spiritual as well as physical, if dance is to contribute to the larger aims of education, the developing of the person through conscious experience (1972:62).

Doubler's notion of 'conscious experience' resonates with the dynamic or active characteristic of experiential knowing proposed in this paper. Sensing, feeling and moving are fundamental to Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen's somatic approach to dance entitled *Body/Mind Centering*. Cohen's experiential knowing involves sensing and experiencing through the skin, organs, tissue, fluids and cells of the body. Philosopher, Thomas Hanna, (1928-1990) created the word 'somatics' in 1976 to name approaches to mind/body integration. According to Tom Hanna, somatics is a field of study dealing with somatic phenomena involving the human being as actively experiencing. Sensing and moving, he explains, are at the heart of the somatic process (1988). Kinesthesia is about awareness and sensing and is fundamental to the practice and experiencing of dance; sensations, feelings and memories are stored in the body and may be restored in the theorizing of dance through 'kinesthetic memorization', that is, the recalling of memories stored in the muscles and body.

Cognition and Ways of Knowing

There are many ways of knowing or cognition. How do we know what we know about dance? Is it through first hand experience, that is, the practice of dance itself? Is it from watching dance performances over many years in the theatre or watching dance on video? Is it from studying, analyzing and discussing dance or from reading reviews of dance works. Or is it a combination of all of these? Yes, there are many ways of knowing or cognition, all of which, it is argued here involve 'experiencing', that is, the active absorption of knowledge through mind and body. Such knowledge has a distinct subjective, as well as objective, dimension to it. Reason and Rowan outline three criteria in their concept of knowledge in human inquiry. These criteria are subjectivity, participatory and holistic knowing, and knowledge in action (see Payne 1993). Participatory and holistic knowing refers to knowing based on participation. Knowledge-in-action is concerned with a practical, grounded approach to knowledge while critical subjectivity, denotes an awareness by the researcher that consciously incorporates one's own primary subjective experience as part of the inquiry. Thus, the 'knowing' proposed here is experiential, subjective as well as objective and dynamic, as opposed to fixed. This experiential process of learning highlights the interactive nature of theory and practice and indeed blurs the gap between these traditional polarities. The connection between movement and cognition has already been established in the literature, particularly in developmental psychology. Jean Piaget's developmental research concerns the inter-relationship and interactive nature of the cognitive and motor aspects of the individual. Payne and Isaacs discuss the significance of Piaget's theories on human development and state that his cognitive theory is still the most widely accepted today (2002:30). Cognitive development, according to Piaget, incorporating perceptual and motor skills, takes place through a process he termed *adaptation*. Adaptation is the adjusting to the demands of the environment and the intellectualization of that adjustment through two complimentary acts, assimilation and accommodation. *Assimilation* is a process by which young children, for example, attempt to make sense of and interpret new experiences

based on their previous knowledge. This simultaneously involves accommodation where knowledge is constantly being reviewed and changed in the light of these new experiences. Cognitive and motor development interact continually throughout the life span as they reciprocally inhibit or facilitate each other (Payne and Isaacs, 2002). Perceptual motor development involves integrating information from the senses, usually through movement activities or through the manipulation of objects with young children. Indeed many scholars have identified our bodily experiences to be the primal basis for all that we know, understand, think and communicate (see Piaget 1952; Montessori 1964; Dewey 1917; Sheets-Johnstone 1984; and Merleau-Ponty 1962). More recent thinkers such as Lakoff and Johnson are also convinced of the holistic or embodied view of the person :

Because concepts and reason both derive from and make use of the sensorimotor system the mind is not separate from or independent of the body; each experience is an embodied experience (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:562).

Mind/Body Perspectives

The proposition advanced here, that 'experiencing' is the heart of both the practice and theorizing of dance is based on the assumption of a mind/body perspective. The separation of mind/body is to some extent the legacy of René Descartes dualism in his theory of mind which was outlined in his text *De Homine* in 1662. In this Cartesian perspective, thought is essentially disembodied. Thought consists of ideas unrelated to external reality. Contemporary epistemology, philosophy of mind, philosophy of language and Western medicine are, even today, influenced to some extent by Cartesian dualism. The natural holistic state of the human being is not so easily regained given the enduring and omnipresent mind/body split or dualistic perspective prevalent in the Western World which appears to be embedded in our consciousness. Contrary to dualism a holistic perspective postulates that there is an intrinsic unity between mind and body and that this unity is inseparable. In this holistic consciousness the integration of mind

and body is such that every mental activity has a corresponding somatic or bodily activity. A growing number of theorists in the West support a holistic perspective with regard to human existence. William's asserts that:

... as human beings we exist as an integral part of an energetic, energy filled universe. Within this universe our mind, body and spirit are merely different manifestations of the same life force and consequently cannot be considered separately (1996:12).

Davenport, recognizes the intermodality and integration of brain function when he states that:

Sensory modalities of most human adults operate in concert as an integrated system of systems. Information received via one modality is co-ordinated in some manner with information from other modalities, and much of adaptive behavior ... presumably depends to a large extent on this intermodality integration. (Davenport, in Hanna, 1979:59).

Neurobiologist Dr.Candice Pert's research has proven the existence of neuropeptides which are the chemicals triggered by emotions (see Myss:1996). Caroline Myss confirms that Dr. Pert no longer separates mind and body because:

The same kind of cells that manufacture and receive emotional chemistry in the brain are present throughout the body; ... sometimes the body responds emotionally and manufactures emotional chemicals even before the brain has registered a problem (Myss, 1996:35).

Zaner views the body as an instrument of knowledge and base for the senses and discusses the interconnectedness of the body, senses and nervous system when he argues that:

A lesion in the nervous tissue does not destroy the sensuous content, but rather it makes the differentiation and

organization of them increasingly uncertain. Sensory processes in this sense become significative of something other than themselves i.e. they are more than purely physiological processes (Zaner, 1971:122).

Embodiment

Through the theory and practice of dance we express who we are, how we feel, or what we know and understand at a particular point in time. Our life experiences are inscribed in the body, in our posture and gait, in our walk, gestures, smile, and in how we communicate and reach out to another. Feder contends that:

... the language of the body never ceases, even in repose. It betrays our innermost though (Feder, 1981:166).

In dance, the thinking body is a body that senses, feels, acts and memorizes. Merleau-Ponty's notion of the body and consciousness lead to his development of an approach to phenomenology which proposed the embodied nature of human existence (1962). According to Merleau-Ponty knowledge of the world is embodied and is experienced in and through the body. We exist through our body and the experience of our own body has its basis in our existence, that is, in our mode of 'existing our body'. His existential analysis deals, first, with the spatial and motor patterns of the body and second, the body as a being, expressing itself in gestures, speech and language, of which again the body is experienced as an integral component (ibid).

From a philosophical and phenomenological point of view Lakoff and Johnson claim that the embodiment of reason via the sensori-motor system is of great significance. The embodied mind, they explain, leads us to a philosophy of embodied reason and it is the involvement of the sensori-motor system in the conceptual system that keeps the conceptual system very in touch with the world (1980, pp.43-44). Research demonstrates that all mental acts, including perception, involve specifically patterned activity of the neuromuscular system (see Feder, 1981:160). The central argument here is that theory is grounded in the practice or dance experience. The dance theorist is open to the

flow and flux of ideas, assimilating these energies and transforming ideas into written words not unlike the alchemist. Moreover, it is the presence within the experience of both dancing and writing which connects the dancer and dance theorist to the 'now' of the dance. Past/present/future come together within the presence of this experiencing, facilitating integration, kinesthetic memory and embodied knowledge.

Lakoff and Johnson propose that:

... what we call mind is really embodied; there is no separation of mind and body. These are not two independent entities that somehow come together and couple. Mind isn't some mysterious abstract entity that we bring to bear on our experience. Rather, mind is part of the very structure and fabric of our interactions with the world (Op.cit:266).

Furthermore,

... the body is the besouled (animated) embodiment of consciousness. Consciousness is not the body, nor is the body consciousness from any point of view; consciousness is embodied by its body, the body is besouled by consciousness (Zaner,1971:122).

While viewing two video clips, one of Murray Louis from the USA, the other of Daghdha Dance Company, from Ireland, I would ask you to absorb the dance movement directly through your body and to suspend any analysis or preconceptions. (Showing of two video extracts).

Conclusion

The argument proposed here is that 'experience' is the heart of the matter in both the practice and theorizing of dance. This notion is based on the premise that knowledge is embodied. In early education, knowledge is learned experientially, through the senses and through the body. We continually build on and integrate subsequent knowledge combining knowing how, knowing what, knowing through,

knowing about, and thus deepen our knowledge and understanding further. Within a phenomenological and ontological perspective, then, it is the 'now' of the dance and the 'now' of the writing which reveal the essence of dancing and writing. To answer the question 'what do dancers do when they practice, what do they do when they theorize this paper concludes that the dance experience is fundamental in both the practice and theorizing of dance and that this 'experiencing' is about being present in the act of both dancing and writing. It is the dance experience which brings practice and theory together, practice informing theory and theory informing practice. The theory allows for reflexivity and analysis, the practice grounds the theory in reality, in space and time that is now.

I would like to finish with a quotation from Irish poet, William Butler Yeats:

Oh body swayed to music, oh brightening
glance
How can we know the Dancer from the
Dance

W.B Yeats

(Among School Children)

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Endnotes

¹ While the Nikolais/Louis Modern Dance School in New York City was concerned with practice and the training of professional dancers, both Nikolais and Louis frequently imparted their particular philosophy of Modern Dance during the daily technique, improvisation or choreography classes. They both considered the body as having its own intelligence in, for example, the body leading (rather than the brain) in dance improvisation.

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Videography:

- Murray Louis, Journal (1972) Princeton Publishers, NJ, Daghdha Dance Company, Limerick, Ireland; *Im Fait* (2003) Choreography: Michael Klein; Dancers: Davide Terlingo, Nicole Peisl.

“Just As It Comes to You”: Choreographing Alternatives to the Lacanian Self

Annie Arnoult Beserra

I can't escape my body. My feet swell. My eyes itch. When I walk, I feel like my left side is squashed up under my rib cage and the rhythm of my gate is slightly uneven. I have a hard time standing on one leg to put on my shoes. I have a scar on my left cheek from a stealthily thrown pinecone. On my left shoulder, I can still see the trace of a persistent chicken pock. My left breast bares the mark of a surprise shot from a pellet gun at close range. My body holds me – a collage of past and present experience and sensation embedded in my skin, my muscles, and my bones.

Jacques Lacan's linguistic development of the human self neglects to recognize the power of this deeply familiar and idiosyncratic corporeality. Lacan situates language – its lexicon and its grammar – in the Freudian father's central tower, imposing its binary worldview on all who enter its kingdom. In Lacan's grand narrative, we enter the kingdom, submitting to its rules and conventions in an effort to connect, to share, and to engage in community. By dismissing the relationship between being and body, however, Lacan ignores the human self's immanent potential to subvert the rules of language and transcend its binaries.

Contemporary choreographers Meredith Monk, Mark Dendy, Joe Goode, and Ohad Naharin pose a compelling threat both to the throne of language and the power structures on which it rests through their presentation of an articulate embodied self. Through the use of the body as source, site, and medium of experience; the incorporation of personal story; a recontextualization of self in relation to other; and the direct engagement of audience members as participants in, rather than observers of, the performance experience, Monk, Dendy, Goode, and Naharin offer alternative visions of a non-discursive self that moves alongside, rather than within, the discourse of Lacan's big Other, language.

Employing a hybrid performance form that merges animated text with a highly expressive physicality, these dance-theater artists offer what Luce Irigaray calls “a new *poetics*” (Irigaray,

Ethics 5), a socio-cultural-aesthetic vision that exceeds the limits of conventional language. Their works operate outside of Lacan's discourse of the symbolic¹ self, shrouded in myth and dualism, and embrace in its stead a dynamic, complex, contradictory, and idiosyncratic sense of self² that by its nature eludes fixed representation.

Often delighting in the slipperiness of signification and the impossibility of articulating concrete meaning, Meredith Monk, Mark Dendy, Joe Goode, and Ohad Naharin turn away from the attempt to fix the unfixable, embracing movement, music, images and words as thoroughfares through which meaning can travel, but in which it never rests.

Meredith Monk: A Non-Discursive Self

In “Mercy,” a collaboration between Meredith Monk and Ann Hamilton, suspended time, polyphonic vocal music, layered imagery, and mediated perspective create a liminal, dreamlike performance space that attempts to elude the limitations of “the discursive mind.”

“I hope that my work is immersive for an audience, that they can just drop down into it, and that they can let go of the chatter of the discursive mind for a short period of time,” [Monk] explains. “What I'm trying for is the kind of direct experience that we can't filter out. In a sense we filter our experience by labeling it; we have a kind of verbal screen that filters out direct experience, and I think that the power of music is that you can get past that to direct experience of the present moment.” (Varty)

Monk's deliberate effort to move beyond the verbal filter expresses her desire to bypass the reifying <subjective I> and engage her audience's affective selves. Monk wants her audience to enter the piece, suspending for the duration of the performance the tendency to label and categorize, the linguistic “need” to decode and master.

Towards this effort, Monk and Hamilton repeatedly deconstruct the written and spoken word in "Mercy," calling attention to and subverting its captivating power. In the opening of the opera, Ann Hamilton sits in profile alone at a desk, writing: "These are 12 stories of mercy." The penciled letters appear to the audience one-by-one on a giant-sized projection – first as a movement impulse, then as a dark line or curve on a white background, and finally as the recognizable symbol of a letter that stands with other letters to form a single meaningful word. The deeply sensual act of Hamilton's writing – the pencil rubbing against the paper, leaving traces of grainy lead in uninterrupted curves – carries as much, if not more, meaning than the words themselves.

In a later scene, a giant open mouth shakes from side to side, suspended in extreme slow motion. First hinting at a smile and then relaxing its heavy lips, the mouth echoes the deep round tones of Monk's densely layered vocal score. Just as the mouth becomes familiar, we are drawn into the space of a video that flies us over the surface of a text. We move, in the most literal sense, through the lines on a page in a book. Isolated words rush briefly to the forefront: "stepmother... infant... fantasies... structure... means... authority... anger... author..." The kinetic activity of the structuralist script amplifies the affective force of its double-coded signifiers.

A man and a woman look at each other. Slowly, they turn their focus to the audience. They are singing, repeating "help" over and over again, calling out to us with rhythmic breath accents in between each song-cry. A second woman enters and carries away the chair that stands between them. As the chair recedes, the man and woman shrink into almost-nothingness, cowering into heaps of isolated selves on the floor, their collapse echoing the failure of their sung plea to spur us, the audience, to action.

In the environment constructed by Monk and Hamilton, we read Hamilton's written text in relation to the image of her isolated profile; the swinging lips, in relation to the haunting vocal score; and the pleas for help, in relation to the collapsed bodies of their criers. In Monk and Hamilton's non-discursive world, an infinite number of kinetic, visual, aural, and tactile

associations fill the space with a virtual symphony of subjective meaning.

As audience members, we know ourselves in the world of "Mercy" through direct sensory experience. As the layers of sound, imagery, and movement accumulate, we learn the rules by which the piece operates and claim our place within its structure. Arguably, in the case of Monk and Hamilton's work, we constitute ourselves in relation to an anti-structure, a framework built on fluidity and difference. By subverting our limited, conventionally language-based understanding of the world, Monk and Hamilton suggest the possibility of a new subjectivity, a subjectivity with the expressive agency and the interpretive capability to move seamlessly between Lacan's real (kinesthetic), imaginary (visual), and symbolic (linguistic) orders.

Mark Dendy: Meeting the Other on a Bus Ride to Heaven

Language means by virtue of agreement, a conventional acceptance of certain relationships between signifiers. Luce Irigaray questions the self/other binary that pervades the Lacanian symbolic, a dualism which she believes privileges one side of the binary, male, at the expense of the other, female – (Irigaray, *To Speak* 227). Challenging these reductionist conventions in the contemporary symbolic, Irigaray asks:

What if women were not constituted on the model of the *one* (solid, substantial, lasting, permanent...) and its base of contradictions, both effective and occulted within a proper hierarchy. What if women were always 'at least two,' without opposition between the two, without reduction of the other to the one, without any possible appropriation by the logic of the one, without the autological closure of the circle of the same? (Irigaray, *To Speak* 231)

Anchored in the space between the Real and Imaginary orders, a fluid nexus where form and matter engender each other (Irigaray, *To Speak* 232), Irigaray's Feminine Symbolic offers a fluidity that allows for the diversity of contemporary experience.

In “Bus Ride to Heaven,” Mark Dendy performs Irigaray’s “what ifs,” disputing the self/other binary and its social and political ramifications by assuming the genders and personalities of a transvestite prostitute, a televangelist super star, a young gay student, and a Southern grandmother. As he realizes each new character, Dendy accepts Irigaray’s challenge and “plunges back into undifferentiation” (Irigaray, *To Speak* 233), violating the laws of Lacan’s linguistic order by quenching the “insatiable” desire to reunite with the other by becoming her and him.

Dendy chases the discourse of the other to the bus stop of Christian fundamentalism. The grandchild of a closeted Southern Jew who became a Presbyterian minister’s wife, Dendy was raised to believe that the only thing worse than being a homosexual was being black. “You learn to hate yourself before you know what you are,” (Dendy) says Dendy of his childhood experience of homosexuality. In “Bus Ride,” Dendy confronts fundamentalism’s rejection of the other with a down-to-earth spirituality of inclusion and tolerance. “Jesus’s best friend was a hooker,” (Dendy) he quips in an interview; and when we meet Pawnie, we understand the attraction. A transvestite prostitute stuffed into a too-tight sliver of black lingerie, Pawnie sits with legs open wide on a delicate wire chair, glancing into the faces of audience members as she might glance into a mirror, a mirror which in Irigaray’s words offers “no specular doubling through simple surface reflections in the face-to-face, but rather the illusion of a possible translation of one into the other through repetitions in mirrors of all kinds” (Irigaray, *To Speak* 142).

Binaries dissolve in Pawny. She dresses like a woman, but sits like a man. She uses feminine intonations with a deep voice. She has an illicit occupation, but is more forthcoming about her life than any other character. She is a foul-mouthed hooker in full get-up on her way to heaven. Presenting these contradictions as empowering rather than debilitating, Dendy establishes inclusive alternatives to the rigidly defined linguistic order. Employing what Susan Kozel has called an “aesthetics of distortion” (103), Dendy challenges the exclusivity of Lacan’s patriarchal dualism through transgressive humor, playing to

preconceptions and stereotypes even as he breaks them down.

Joe Goode: Felt Performance and the Feminine Symbolic

Since the early 1980s, San Francisco-based choreographer Joe Goode has been creating “felt performance” based on personal, emotionally charged material approached and understood through a sensual, tactile theatricality that parallels Irigaray’s Feminine Symbolic. Goode makes a deliberate effort to subvert the constitutive power of social convention in his choreographic and performance practice, attempting to enter the material from “a precipice on which I can stand and risk seeing myself or my material in some new light” (Goode), a liminal space that recalls the nexus between the Real and the Imaginary where Irigaray situates her Feminine Symbolic. Goode’s music-dance-theater performances challenge audiences to enter this same in-between space. “Have you ever stood outside yourself, only it wasn’t you?” he asks in “Remembering the Pool at the Best Western,” beckoning his audiences into their own metaphysical realities, where language and corporeal experience collide and transform.

In “What the Body Knows,” Goode addresses the comparative signifying potential of the body and language directly. While dancer Liz Burritt *tells* us over and over again about the nice, sweet, good little girl she was as a child in overly exaggerated, saccharine sweet tones, her intensely focused, wide-open eyes and disturbing, gelatin smile *show* us something else. The strain in her facial muscles, the plasticity of her posture, and the affectation in her voice reveal the dishonesty in her words and hint at a story that lies hidden in her bones. In this context, Goode exposes the spoken text as artifice. Her body communicates the truth; and we, as audience, the embodied other with whom she is engaging, understand it. Goode pushes a view of the self that is more solidly aligned with the reality of the body than with the dissociative potential of any words that body may articulate.

In the same piece, a wildly athletic tango filled with sex, desire, and primal urges shifts the thematic focus to the role of the body in relationships. Can two bodies really know each other? The question is multilayered for the dancers in the piece. The profound physical trust between

the performers reveals itself in one daring lift, throw, and catch after another. These partners know every contour of each other's frame. Through Goode's process, their own ideas, stories, or experiences have been incorporated into the work. These are their own relationships they are dancing, even if only obliquely. The dancers are engaged in an intensely physical present within a world constructed by them, through abstractions of their own experience.

California performance artist Tim Miller,³ known for his deeply physical autobiographical work, writes that "finding a way to be more present in our bodies and open to the narratives we carry in our flesh and blood is the quickest route to the revelatory material about what it means to be human" (Drukman). The body knows desire. The body knows a partner's ambivalence. The body knows feeling trapped. The body knows dishonesty. The body feels. The body remembers. The body cries out. What does the body know? "[I]t's about being present with what is,"⁴ says Goode (Scherr).

Ohad Naharin: The Self in Real Time

Ohad Naharin builds on this concept of self as an embodied presence in "Minus 16," a piece which stresses a relevant *nowness* through the attention paid to clock time, the use of improvisation within the structure of the dance, and various levels of corporeal entry of the audience into the performing world. Staging one dancer directing a string of intimate gestures towards the audience in front of the curtain in the midst of intermission, Naharin begins the piece in our world and our time without the distancing effects of theatrical lighting or music. Only the dancer's costume distinguishes him from the otherwise noisy crowd milling through the aisles towards restrooms and wine, echoing the dancer's animated body language and facial expressions. Intrigued by the anomaly of this performative being in our midst and seduced by the flirtatious energy of his directed gaze and the suggested "meaningfulness" of his movement, we migrate towards our chairs and grow mostly quiet. We watch as the dancer pulls the traces of our own embodied present onto the stage, transforming our physical reality into his own by mimicking our gestures and impulses within the context of his own idiosyncratic movement vocabulary. The

immediacy of the dancer's improvisation vibrates pleausurably through our own bodies. We witness, feel, and participate in his present moment. We identify with the dancing self who has transformed our movement into his own, bringing us, as audience/other, into his physically engaged <being I>.

After sixteen minutes, our dancer/self is joined by others – displaced mirror images, dressed in the same clothes and moving in the same idiosyncratic style, challenging our assumptions about the improvised nature of the last sixteen minutes. Was our dancer-friend performing set choreography? Are these dancers who are joining him improvising now? Naharin and the dancers continue to play in this deliberately confused space between dancer and audience, performer and self, improvisation and choreography, through collisions of obviously authored, intensely athletic feats of unison dancing and explosive departures of the individual dancers from the shared group space and movement.

In one section, the dancer's recorded voice calls its embodied counterpart out of the unison group who stand shoulder-to-shoulder in a line, marking time in deliberate, directed steps – a chain of dancers splitting the stage in half as they walk back and forth from one side of the stage to another. The individual dancers improvise to the accompaniment of their own voices speaking about themselves, playing with moments of suspension and stillness against bursts of technical virtuosity, physical challenges that highlight the dancers' engagement in the act of the attempt.

We witness again the intensely focused self that surfaces in the risky partnering of the Joe Goode Performance Group, and again the question arises: *Where is the <I>?* Is the dancer's self in the story she is telling us? Is the story we hear present in the body we see dancing? Yes. Both/and. It is impossible to separate ourselves from our stories of self, from the concept of <I>, the *cogitatum* that we form through a language limited by its own assumptions and structures. We are as present within the attempt to communicate through language – in the placing of the pencil to the page, the rubbing of the grainy lead onto the smooth surface of paper – as we are in the attempt to throw ourselves through space. We cannot *be* in the words, themselves, but we are present within the act of speaking them, the act of writing them.

Once articulated, the story and the memory of the dance become part of a shared history, the traces of embodied acts, the remainders of the fluidity of our being selves.

In a passage that could easily have been written into any one of the four performances presented, Luce Irigaray playfully charges her readers to confess the “unconfessable:”

Speak. Say everything that comes to you. Just as it comes to you, right here, now. Don't omit or exclude anything. And don't worry about contradictions or conventions. Don't organize what you say. (Irigaray, *To Speak* 137)

We cannot articulate the present moment, because the moment has passed. We can never say what comes to us *now*. We cannot *be* in language. But we can be in our bodies, as we have been in our bodies since we were born: present in their polyphonic vibrations, in their metaphoric potential, in their visual spectacle, in their otherness, in their remembering, in their knowing, and in their inescapable commitment to “being present with what is” (Goode qtd by Scherr).

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Endnotes

- ¹ A self constituted in relation to Lacan's symbolic order.
- ² I use “sense of self” to hint at the humility, unanswered questions, and experiential investigation with which these choreographers approach the presentation of self in their works.
- ³ For a description of Miller's dance-based performance *Live Boys* by David Gere visit http://www.artistswithaids.org/artforms/dance/full_intr_o.html. For more on Tim Miller visit <http://hometown.aol.com/millertale/timmillerbio.html>.
- ⁴ Goode is speaking here about “Hapless,” a piece created three years before “What the Body Knows.”

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Movement as a Bodily Process – on dancers' concerns, awareness and sensing

Susanne Ravn

Movement is at centre of this paper, that is, how the relations of movement and body are experienced and structured and how movement gives birth to any experience and understanding of relations, separations, connections and distances in lived experience (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Sheets-Johnstone, 1999; Gallagher, 2005). The project is based on the understanding that dancers, as experts in movement, offer important experiences to be described and analysed. The paper constitutes a small part of a bigger research project¹. The key research questions to be dealt with here are

- What are the relations of body and movement in dance?
- What kind of techniques do the dancers use to cope with the materiality² of the body? Weight is understood as a specific aspect of the materiality of the body and the question more specifically focuses on how (the) dancers experience and handle the weight of their bodies.
- What do the descriptions related to the first two questions – about body-movement relations and movement techniques – reveal about sensing as part of movement?

The selected sample of dancers in this study is located in different cities in Europe in the following dance environments.

The Royal Danish Ballet (4 dancers); *Magpie Music and Dance Company* – working with performances based on improvisation. These dancers are also to be considered as independent freelance dancers primarily working in improvisation and modern/new dance (4 dancers); *Individual freelance dancers* working in modern/new dance (3 dancers); and *post-butoh* (2 dancers). All together, 6 male and 7 female dancers.

Method

I worked with the dancers using anthropological methods in short periods, spread out in time and place over 30 months (Hastrup, 2003; Hobbs & Wright, 2006). The methods included my participation, that is, I used my background as a dancer actively, joining

workshops and training with the dancers, though not at the Royal Ballet. My participation formed an important part of my observation and was both part of and a basis for the semi-structured interviews I carried out with the dancers.

Framing of body and movement

The analysis of the generated data revealed that the dancers have different concerns when coping with and structuring movement, these concerns being *Music; Space; Weight; Body*. The concerns change for different dancers and concerns described as concepts and factors might also take on very different kinds of meaning. What will be the focus of this presentation, to answer the research question, is how the dancers are concerned³ (or not concerned) especially with *weight and the body*.

The dancers train and perform in different kinds of environments and settings which include that the dancer's pre-understandings, expectations and experiences of what is valued in a performance situation differ. The dancers are therefore expected to frame body and movement in different ways where framing according to Gregory Bateson (1977) denotes how the metacommunicative aspects of any situation is handled. This also means that the dancers experience and understanding of body and movement form part of a variable and polymorphic relation of context and content (Bateson, 1977, p. 153 ff.). "The actual physical frame is added by human beings" (Bateson, 1977, p. 187) and functions as a kind of active construction of figure-ground relations to make any social setting meaningful.

The dancers are understood as 13 different lived experiences. However, to be able to cope with the amount of generated empirical data they are grouped according to how the relation of body and movement is framed in the environments and performances they worked in during the period I worked with them. The three groupings are

1. The body framed as object of movement. This group contains ballet dancers and one of the dancers from modern/new dance.

II. The body framed as object and subject of movement. Focusing on how the body is framed as subject of movement, these dancers are further divided in two groups, where ‘the body as subject’ primarily refers to

a. the function and logic of the musculo-skeletal body including the senses. This aspect of the body is, also described by the phenomenologist, Drew Leder (1990, p. 36), as “the physical surface of the body from where powers of perception, motility, and expression project.” Dancers working with improvisation and new/modern dance are placed in this group. They work for instance with Alexander technique, different variations of release techniques as well as techniques inspired by martial arts.

b. the transformative powers of imagination and the corporeal depths of the body, where the latter refer to internal organs and processes. Two dancers are placed here, both working with post-butoh techniques. Post-butoh is here used as a unifying concept for their work inspired and based on different variations of butoh techniques and German expressionistic dance as well as body mind centering.

In the following sections, each group of dancers is described according to how they experience and structure movement, to answer the first two questions.

The body framed as object

The dancers in different ways describe or refer to how ballet requires an ideal (ballet) anatomy to be controlled and manipulated in movement to create the ideal lines and elongations from the body. For these dancers the mirror functions and is described as the important tool in training and preparation. Movement by these dancers is compared to an ideal external to the body. As one of them describes:

“...the biggest base is how the body is ‘put together’. There are certain specific criteria which are necessary to become a classical ballet dancer and if these criteria are not fulfilled then you are not able to achieve that goal.”

Rather than talking about the weight of the body the dancers talk about control of vertical balance and use notions like “alignment”, “to be centred”, and describe how the lines of their segments are arranged in relation to their centre. In short, weight is handled to keep the body balanced and in control.

The sense of sight is of major importance to the dancers. It is through seeing that the dancers evaluate and judge their performance in movement compared to what one of the dancers describes as “the picture in my head.”

These elements of the empirical data described ‘above’ underline how the body in ballet – as expected – is framed to be this object, to be controlled and trained. However, in practice, when the dancers describe how they deal with movement experience, while moving, it becomes more complex. Again and again, the ballet instructors, as well as the dancers themselves, underline that the outside look as it appears in the mirror is not enough. To sense from the inside is key to being a good dancer – the instruction repeated several times from the instructor “don’t dance from the outside in but dance from the inside out. You have to know your positions from within”. In rehearsals the dancers several times refer to, if the choreographed steps “feel right”, or if a specific combination “doesn’t feel right”. Dealing with movement experience the “inside feeling” becomes an important guide for the dancers. The positions and lines of the body are checked in the mirror but, as one of the dancers explains, she first understood what dancing was about, when she recognised that “it was about sensing the sequence of movement instead of positions. To move from A to B in a way where the path between became important.”

The body is framed as an object of movement, handled as an entity to be held in control and the sense of sight is at the forefront to be able to evaluate the movements according to an external ideal. However, in the lived experience – focusing on movement – the body-movement relationship appears more complex. The body is not just an object, but it is also handled and coped with, anchored in what the dancers describe as an “inside sensing of movement,” – which underlines an awareness of proprioceptive sensing. The outer appearance of movement coupled to seeing is

anchored in what the dancers describe as an inside sensing of the body.

The body framed as object and subject – the subject primarily referring to the musculo-skeletal body

For these dancers, any structure or logic of movement in different ways is understood to be investigated from the body ‘itself’ primarily taking off from the musculo-skeletal system and the related senses. As one of the dancers describes, his motivation in and ambition for his dance training is about, “going deeper into an understanding of his body – not to achieve greater virtuosity, but to investigate the materiality of the body from a physical logic.”

These dancers in different ways base and accentuate their training on sensations of balancing the skeleton, releasing muscle tension and/or giving in to gravity. One of the dancers explains that he uses “gravity to come to the movement itself (...) beyond psychology and drama”. He also compares his dance technique to a question of “how to build canals” and compares movement to sending out water in a given direction in these canals, the flow guided by gravity.

Weight is handled as a source of energy and as a way to become present. One dancer describes how the sense of weight for him is a neutral access, to be able to listen to the body before “he says something” where “to say something” refers to his choices and contribution in an improvised performance. He further describes the importance of weight this way:

...for my person – for my body – the sense of weight, that’s the most important thing. Because that gives you timing, access to space, access to partnering with other people – and access to actually find something that comes from a rest, rather than weight being pushed up and moved around.

Another aspect that takes up a major focus, for more of these dancers, especially the four dancers working with improvised performance, is the investigation of different kinds and combinations of how they focus their sense awareness and how

different kinds of sense awareness affect movement and the creation of relations. Playing with and investigating sense awareness formed part of all the workshops I joined with these dancers. The body appeared as a subject of movement guided by an inside sensing of body movement, but what was in focus at the same time, was how different kinds of awareness from exteroceptive sensing (hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, tasting) created different kinds of relationship to the environment initiating different kinds of movement.

What the dancers also describe is how this playing with sense awareness brings in the memory of former experiences and how they use these memories as an active part of the relations created in and during movement. The sense experiences trigger different kinds of memories to be used for and in movements. For instance, one dancer describe how smell might trigger the memory of specific sense experiences from his childhood, and another dancer, how specific movement situations suddenly adhere to “traces” within his body of a former choreography. Memory in different ways becomes an active player in the dancer’s investigation of and improvisation with movement.

For all the dancers in this group, movement ideals are sought from the body itself. However, the body is at the same time part of something else, for example, partnering gravity; what is present in space; and what comes forth in memory. The body is not experienced as an enclosed entity but experienced and handled as part of or intertwined with something else.

The body framed as subject and object in movement – the subject primarily referring to corporeal depths and transformative powers of imagination

For these dancers, movement and choreographies are focused on energies related to presence and direction of awareness. As one of the dancers explains, “there is nothing to see in a conventional understanding of dance movement.”

When working with and investigating transformative powers of imagination and the corporeal depths of the body, the two dancers, though in different ways, describe, how they work with different states of consciousness. They both

underline that this is not to be understood as “a personal thing.” As one of them describes, “I have to make myself transparent to what might come from outside or from the inside.”

This transparency is described by the other dancer as a need to move “past layers of psychology – culture etc. and not to go for the psychology but to go for the plain stuff...” As part of this way of working with movement, she further describes it as “a constant challenge to both await and accept what comes (to the imagination) and to decide when to investigate the landscape (given in imagination) to go for the investigation and experience of movement.”

In observation and in the first interviews with these dancers, their technique appeared primarily as one specific state of mind which they then use as an entrance to different imaginative work. It was because of my participation, that I became aware and able to understand the technique as based on a variety of states of mind – a variety of kinds of consciousness coupled to their technique of transformation.

Memory came up again as an active part to be used in and for movement, although, in a different way, compared to the dancers described in the former group. One of the dancers, in one of her choreographic works, focused on evolutionary memory deposited in the body. She describes her work on this choreography “as a kind of archaeology into places of my body where I have never been before.”

Weight is described both as a fluent aspect of the body and as a specific quality of the materiality of the body that can be transformed as the body is transformed. One of the dancers describes weight as part of an organic condition – an organic presence and this organic presence of weight will shift according to movement quality, for example the quality of the fog or the quality of a stone.

The fluent aspect of weight comes forth for example when weight is given a special focus in training. Instruction might be directed at an imagination and sensing of how weight is poured from one place to the other in the body – from one cell to the other.

Seeing is not primarily described in relation to the specific modality of the eyes, but as an active part of the imagination. Imagination is referred to and described as inner landscapes or as to “enter

another room” and this landscape or these rooms are then to be seen and sensed. It is from these imaginations that movement springs. For these two dancers, seeing is not focused on the ability to measure distances or establish relationships but on establishing a transparent presence of the body. This transparency is of major importance to the dancers to be able to work from imagination and corporeal depths of the body. Sensing is anchored or coupled to imagination and movement at the same time. As one of the dancers states “I dance with my mind as well as my body.” For these two dancers there are no movements without imagination, and one might further add, no imagination without memories of the body and from within the body.

Sensing and sense awareness

Dance anthropologist, Cynthia Cohen Bull (1997) and sociologist, Helen Thomas (2003) have shown how different sense modalities can be linked to different kinds of dancing. Bull suggests seeing characterises ballet, hearing characterises African dances and touching characterises contact improvisation. Thomas adds to this description by characterising *Water Study* by Doris Humphrey with a specific internal feeling of flow inside the body.

Movement, as well as sense awareness, is framed through and in the different techniques of the dancers. However, to move and cope with this framing of movement – and sensing – is a more complex undertaking. I find it important to ask, what do these different kinds of sense awareness described in former studies, as well as in this study, reveal about sensing and sense awareness as part of movement?

From two distinct philosophical discourses Elizabeth Grosz (1994) emphasises throughout her book, *Volatile Bodies - Towards a Corporeal Feminism*, the complex condition of being this body. How the body is formed and always appears in a complex relation to and in the world. What is inside always includes the outside and vice versa – as is the case in the specific character of the Möbius strip.⁴ Based on phenomenology, neurology and related works on body images and corporeal mappings, Grosz reveals what she denotes as the *inside-out*. The inside-out is concerned with the physical inscriptions and coding of bodies, pleasures, sensations and

experiences and refers to how the perception of reality is based on relations reflected and shaped by the reality of others. Based on the work of Nietzsche, Foucault, and Deleuze and Guattari, Grosz describes, through the notion the *outside-in*, the body as an inscriptive surface and how tracings of pedagogical, juridical, medical and economic texts, laws and practices on the flesh carve out a social object (Grosz, 1994, p. 117).

The inside-out and outside-in both reveals the complexity of sensing. What seems to be the inside of a body always also mirrors a cultural Otherness – and vice versa. This study reveals that the framing of movement and the body mirrors an ideal of movement and related techniques. This ideal seems to be characterised by a preference of specific senses. However, in the lived experience of the dancers the complexity of sense awareness reveals and resonates the inside-out as well as the outside-in – the complexity of being both in this body and in the world.

Linked to sensing and movement, memory in different ways comes up in the dancers descriptions. Memory is only briefly touched on here, but forms a another section of my research – that part informed by the theories of Henri Bergson (1911) as well as Shaun Gallagher's work on body-schema and body-image (Gallagher, 2005). To understand the complexity of sensing, especially as displayed by the post-butoh dancers, will necessarily include a further analysis of how memory forms an integrated part of sensing in the lived experience of the dancers. The dancers in different ways reveal how former experiences are placed as memory in all layers and depths of their corporeal being. This corporeal memory is trusted and adjusted but also pops up unpredictably to be discovered and investigated. Corporeal memory appears intertwined with (the invested) sense awareness of the dancers to be included in an ongoing investigation and experience of movement.

Conclusion

The 13 dancers in this study exemplify how movement experience is structured in very different ways. Weight as a characterization of the materiality of the body is not just handled but also experienced and sensed differently.

Movement is experienced depending on how the body-movement relationship is framed, and

not least how the dancers focus their sense awareness as part of movement. This involves various relationships to the body as 'subject' as 'object' and as both. Sensing is key to this. Framing of the senses guides the ideal of movements. However, when coping with movement, sense-awareness reveals the complexity of being both in this body and in the world. The dancers' lived experience concerning sense awareness importantly suggests that memory also directs and informs movement and sense awareness in other ways which I am currently investigating.

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Endnotes

- ¹ The paper draws on a Ph.D. project to be finished by the end of 2007
- ² 'Materiality' refers to the body as a de facto physical being and thereby addresses the corporeal aspect of the body.
- ³ Concerns are understood as important for the structure of the lived experience of movement of the dancers. It is to be noticed that the analysis in relation to these concerns – often stated by the dancers as factors and concepts of movement – aims at a pre-objective analysis since I am well aware that no analysis will ever reach a pre-cultural level (Csordas, 1999) or reach 'the' ontological essence of either movement or dance (Rothfield, 2005).
- ⁴ Grosz refers to the Möbius strip based on the work of Lacan, (Grosz, 1994 , p. xii).

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The Sallé-Camargo Opposition: Fact or Fancy? (Abstract of the joint presentation)

Nathalie Lecomte and Rebecca Harris-Warrick

Ah, Camargo, how brilliant you are! / But Sallé, great gods, is ravishing! / How light are your steps and how sweet are hers. / She is inimitable and you are new. / The nymphs gambol like you, but the Graces dance like her.
(Voltaire)¹

Voltaire's oft-quoted verses have had an enormous influence on the way we see the two great French ballerinas of the early 18th century, Marie Sallé (1709²-1756) and Marie-Anne Cupis de Camargo (1710-1770). The implicit differences both of technique and of style—Camargo as the brilliant technician, Sallé as lyrical and expressive—have found echoes in other anecdotal accounts from the 18th century, ones that have been used by more recent scholars to construct a picture of the two dancers as representing opposing aesthetic poles. Emile Dacier, who made the rivalry of the two dancers the organizing principle of his influential biography of Sallé (1909), even went so far as to claim that whereas for Mlle Sallé music served as a pretext for ingenious pantomimes, Camargo “did nothing more during her entire career but dance for the sake of dancing.”³

Such a stark opposition, which has dominated the historiography surrounding the two dancers ever since, seemed to beg for reexamination. We set out to test the claims made by Dacier and his followers by examining the repertoire the two dancers actually performed on the stage of the Paris Opéra. This theater is where both of them spent most of their working lives: Sallé's career extended from 1727-40, with gaps during the years she spent in England (1730-31, 1733-34)⁴; Camargo danced at the Opéra from 1726-35⁵ and again from 1742-51 (during the intervening years she did not dance in public). No choreographies survive for dances performed by either of them, but Nathalie Lecomte's research drawing upon the cast lists printed in the librettos of the operas and ballets performed during those years has

established a complete list of the roles in which each was cast, when she appeared as a soloist, in a *pas de deux*, or as part of a group, with whom she danced, and how many times she appeared within any given work. By comparing this data with the musical scores of the operas in question, Rebecca Harris-Warrick has been able to identify much of the music to which each danced and thus to establish the specific dramatic contexts for their appearances. From these two perspectives it becomes possible to construct a much more nuanced picture of the dancing lives of the two artists, to enter into the sound world that enveloped them, and to discern not only what separated them, but what they had in common.

Our research shows that whereas Sallé and Camargo did have different qualities in their styles of dancing, the repertoire they performed had a great deal of overlap. Both danced in many of the same type of divertissements, especially those in the pastoral realm, and it was not uncommon for the two of them to appear in the same scene or even to dance a *pas de deux* together. More often they appeared in different divertissements within the same opera; in some of these cases, their roles might still be similar, whereas in others, a choice seems to have been made to feature their differences. If, for example, the opera had dancing roles for female sailors (*matelottes*), Camargo was the one chosen. Maritime scenes often feature the lively dance known as the tambourin, and it is clear that Camargo excelled in dancing them. But the scores reveal that Sallé also danced tambourins, if not as often. She, on the other hand, was more often cast in roles that suggest pantomime (or in some instances, she seems to have developed such roles herself), but Camargo, too, engaged in narrative dancing, such as the comic *pas de trois* set to music by Jean-Féry Rebel that she danced with Blondy and one of the Dumoulin brothers at the Opéra in 1729, and she performed character roles, such as an old woman in revivals of Lully's *Thésée*. As further evidence of overlap, there are examples of a role created by

one of the two later being danced by the other; the most famous case in point is the Rose in the *fête persane* of Rameau's opera-ballet *Les Indes galantes*, a role requiring a great deal of pantomime that was created by Sallé in 1735 and danced by Camargo in 1743. Given that both dancers were so admired during their lifetimes, in it is not surprising to find both of them cast as Terpsichore, Muse of the dance, although Camargo danced this role in more works than did Sallé. Throughout their careers, both were cast in divertissements that required rapid changes in character within or between pieces of music. It is clear that both dancers had extremely wide expressive ranges.

Our interwoven talks presented the general characteristics of each dancer's performing profile and examined specific divertissements in which one or both dancers appeared.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Published in *Le Mercure de France*, January 1732, 146.
- ² At the conference "Marie Sallé, danseuse du XVIIIe siècle: Esquisses pour un nouveau portrait" (Nantes, France, June 19-20, 2007), Françoise Rubellin presented two documents she had recently discovered: the wedding license for Marie Sallé's parents and a document from Sallé's lifetime stating that the dancer was born in 1709 (not in 1707, as has heretofore been thought). The proceedings of this conference will be published in the *Annales de l'Association pour un Centre de Recherche sur les Arts du Spectacle aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, No. 3.
- ³ Emile Dacier, *Une Danseuse de l'Opéra sous Louis XV: Mlle Sallé (1707-1756)* (Paris: Plon, 1909), 47.
- ⁴ Sarah McCleave has written numerous articles about Sallé and the music to which she danced, especially during her sojourns in England.
- ⁵ Camargo made her debut at the Opéra on June 16, 1726 in a revival of *Ajax*, under the name of Mlle Sophie.

Women dancing out norms in 16th century Italy

Marina Nordera

In the reconstruction practice of Italian early dance, the authority of normative sources has never been challenged. By normative sources I mean the prescriptive texts, these organizing a practical and technical knowledge and ruling it. Most of the choreographic forms reconstructed and shown to the contemporary public have been and still are the ones danced centuries ago by a social elite, which was able to pay for the services of a dancing master. This kind of dance does not reflect the practices of the entire society.

At the same time, dance historiography sought causalities and genealogies throughout the treatises in order to tie the erudite forms one to the other in a chronological and progressive sequence. Faced with the discontinuity of history and of the sources, historiography imagined, drew and generalized a certain kind of continuity in normativity.

The growing need of giving a ruling norm to technical and practical knowledge emerged with Humanism. It aimed at constituting a corpus of precepts, which could be useful to various aspects of individual and social life. This need is at the origin of the production of dance treatises in early modern Italy. From an anthropological point of view, the organization and the regulation of technical knowledge intervene in the process of transmitting dance through imitation, when the context for passing on dancing loses its force of cohesion. This change is caused by social phenomena as the recombining of social structure and the differentiation of the tasks inside the community. This is particularly true for the early modern Italian society characterized by phenomena such as urbanization, economic growth of the craft-guild and proto-bourgeois groups, and cultural predominance of local courts.

In spite of this process, and at the same time, at each level of society, the dance practice continues to be passed on by imitation, emulation, competition, embodiment, from a generation to the

following one, inside the community. Sometimes the transmission task was given to one or several individuals who developed specific skills, but who did not become at all dancing masters.

From mid 15th century on, dance is the object of these early technical texts (which however had a very limited circulation), thanks to the function that the rising urban elites attribute to this bodily practice as a distinctive representation of the individual within the community. In this precise context the Italian dance treatise is not a didactic tool in itself, but it is connected to the specific teaching of the dancing master, whose professional status is thereby affirmed progressively.

But then, if the standardization operated by the masters and the treatises act only on a restricted circle of people, how did all the others dance? What about peasants, urban population, craftsmen? And especially, how did the women dance in the public balls, far from the court and the noble palaces?

Any historical methodology aware of the researcher's subjectivity, of the instability of the theoretical factors, of the archive's history and of the difficulties in organizing and ordering the sources in a coherent hierarchy should not be trapped by the illusion of authenticity in reconstruction. The analytical tools drawn from cultural and gender studies, and from critical theory help in recognizing as sources some texts which are not normative, not institutional, not attributable to a genre, and sometimes marginal. This process reveals some new and undoubtedly complex aspects of embodiment, which are useful to historical research on dance not only as a theatrical art or as an elite body practice, but as a social activity shared by a greater number of people.

Starting from this methodological basis, I'm presenting here a case study, concerning female solo dances performed in public balls around mid 16th century, using as evidence what is unsaid or inhibited by normative sources and what is described by some literary

non-normative sources. In fact, these dances are not described as such in the treatises of the time. Other sources (in particular literary texts, journals, personal or official correspondence, travel books and moralists' discourses) inform us that women launched their bodies in lively dances, full of jumps, technically complicated and rich in vocabulary, as for example the galliard.

According to dance treatises and to the galliard variations' collections published in Italy towards the end of 16th century,¹ the very rich dance vocabulary nourished an almost exclusively masculine way of dancing. All along the XVI century the vocabulary of the steps of the elite dance attested by treatises grows rich by the contributions of dancing masters and the contamination with traditional forms. Variations proposed for the man and for the woman, however, do not have the same complexity. Feminine vocabulary is poor. The performance of femininity described in detail by Caroso and Negri in the texts of introduction of their treatises has to do with manners and etiquette, instead of dance technique.

There are 16th century evidences attesting dance competitions in Tuscany,² in Veneto and in the Mantua area in which women showed a distinctive way of dancing. As an example, in 1515 Isabella d'Este organized a dance competition in one of the summer residences of the Mantua court, in order to arrange the visit of her uncle, the Cardinal D'Aragona, who himself had expressed the wish to see people dancing "alla lombarda".³ Isabella wrote several letters to the court officers and to the members of ducal family who were dispersed throughout the territory, requesting them to recruit the best "ballarine" for that special occasion.⁴ These recruitments were organized by some women in charge of this task and probably rewarded for their work.⁵

The context of these competitions was that of communitarian dance, which implies the mixed participation of men and women, young and old people, all belonging to different social groups. An individual dancer detaches from the group and performs a sequence of variations more or less inventive, improvised, spectacular or athletic. In the meanwhile, the

rest of the group looks at those performing bodies, recognize steps and gestures and could even dance the basic sequences. The selective and competitive aspect of the active participation in these social gathering justifies a growing level of variety and of complexity in the vocabulary, and an astonishing virtuosity in the execution.

In Italian language of the time, women displaying technical dexterity in dance were termed "ballarine", "ballatrici" or "saltatrici". Nevertheless, in the first edition of the *Dizionario della Crusca* (1612) the word "ballarina" does not appear at all. One can find the masculine "ballarino: maestro di ballo" for the dancing master and the feminine "ballatrice" simply defined as the one who dances, but in a negative connotation. In fact, the only example of use provided by the *Dizionario della Crusca* for this term refers to the female dancer's behaviour as contrary to Church sacraments.⁶ If the professional acceptance is evident for the masculine word, the definition of feminine in its deverbal form becomes the pretext for a heavy moral judgment.⁷ Only in the 1866 edition of the *Dizionario della Crusca* does "ballatrice" lose its negative connotation, and the term "ballarina" is introduced with its double significance of professional dancer and "the one who dances with ability and dexterity". It is interesting to note that for this second meaning the example given comes from *La Nencia di Barberino*, a 15th century poetic text attributed to Lorenzo de' Medici.

Nencia is a peasant girl. She is a "ballarina" because she has a high level of technical competence in dance, and as such she attracts the attention of those with whom she shares familiarity with this practice. Historical "ballarine" thus, these dancing women who, without having any professional recognition, used to liven up the balls and the competitions, provided the pretext, the context and the elements of identification (or of identity) for the construction of a imagined character. I will follow here the fortune of this literary figure in the second half of 15th century, through the analysis of five texts. These are, in chronological order: a passage from the erotic work *Sei giornate* by Pietro Aretino,⁸ the

description of a feminine dance in the (ironically) moralistic booklet *La Pazzia del Ballo* by Zuccolo da Cologna,⁹ the vernacular apology of a “ballerina” called Ziralda by Giacomo Morello,¹⁰ a sonnet by the poet Magagnò¹¹ and a letter by the actor Andrea Calmo.¹²

These texts not only share the same geographic (Veneto) and chronological (1534-1566) provenance, but also a literary game alternating the use of classical composition, the construction of metaphors, the introduction of erudite references, an accumulation of commonplaces and the use of the low dialectal register. The result provokes an effect of desecrating irony. As an example, the text by Morello is constituted by antiphrastic structures, which, in making reference to the classical models, reverses them: it produces a strong alienating and parodistic effect. This writing procedure is already present in the Italian literature of the Tuscany area and in particular in the Florentine vernacular poetry of the 15th century to which the *Nencia* belongs and it was widespread in the Veneto area during the following century. At least in its origin, this literature is produced for a learned public, able to understand the literary strategy applied.

This ambiguity between realism and parody could allow us to use these texts not only as literary sources, but also, with the due cautions, as historical ones. For the construction of the imagined character of Nencia, Ziralda, and Cavriola the authors look to a way of dancing in use in north central Italy in the early modern period, in urban and rural contexts. When transposed in literary frames, these “ballarina” are used to represent the upsetting of a feminine image constructed on the ideals and the norms of the court culture on one side and of the Christian morality on the other.

Here is Ziralda’s portrait. She is not very tall, her flesh is firm, fresh and well formed, she has bountiful breast and very well toned muscles in her strong arms and her well proportioned legs. Her ability in dance is compared to her ability in love. Her dance has a power upon the spectators who by it cure diseases, but especially is contagious, inviting

everyone to dash themselves and join her in the ball area. Having the musical measure in her belly, Ziralda gives the opening bar to the musicians. Her dance is made of turns, of rebounding jumps at various heights, of speed and precision in the feet, in the “capriole” and in the “capriole intrecciate”, of freedom of the waist, and extreme lightness.¹³

As shown in the table, I chose five texts of this type and I carried out a compared analysis concerning the context of execution, the use of technical terminology, of similes and metaphors, the qualities of the movement, and so on. Starting from this preliminary work, I observed how the imaginative, sensory, muscular, rhythmic, gestural and physiological experience caused by the reading and the analysis of these texts, can become a useful tool in the historical and performative reconstruction. I tried to cast a choreologic glance on these literary texts, while when necessary getting closer to the descriptions of the steps in the treatises which standardize a vocabulary, supposedly contemporaneous. In particular I was interested in asking if the dances of these women are differently written and if this writing presupposes or involves a different perception of the body and of the space, or of the body in the space.

These two levels of analysis successively nourished a form of reconstruction seeking to give a body and some kind of movement to all these women who did not have them in the normative sources. I built a dance¹⁴ which I transmitted to Laura Brembilla, an Italian professional dancer based in Paris, who has polyvocal dance/bodily education (ballet, modern, contemporary, traditional, baroque, yoga), and currently dances with the baroque dance company *Fêtes Galantes* directed by Béatrice Massin. Laura learnt a succession of steps, but not only steps. She also read the texts and did by herself the embodiment work. In executing the sequences of steps, she tried to think at literary metaphors instead of technical definitions she already knew. She also imagined a particular way of using eyes in order to construct an intense relation to the public and to obtain the effects of surprise. All along the rehearsals I was stroked by her way of assimilating what I was passing on. In an

extremely concentrated attitude and without moving, Laura was looking and listening to me. I was showing her a sequence of steps or/and explaining related technical or theoretical matters. After having walked in silence for a few minutes in the dance space, she asked for music and she danced without saving energy. The result was absolutely personal and at the same time completely consistent with the sources and with my proposition. This was not a merely practical exercise.

The results of this work of embodiment shows a body lacking the normative uprightness of the posture, shaken by a vital impulse, playing with gravity, running and rushing, interacting with space and with the surrounding public. This theoretical and practical exercise gave rise to some observations, doubts and interrogations.

1) The historian that I am brings into question the epistemological statute of the sources while choosing and comparing them. To make this theoretical work interact with on one hand the reconstruction practice and on the other hand the creative process of the choreographer and of the interpreter, makes it possible to activate at the same time historical imagination and improvisation process.

2) A certain theory of the body emerges by looking at this dance in a kinaesthetic and participative way. It is not a body constructed to be upright and good mannered, but trained to be inhabited by an explosion of vitality and seduction. These are signs or demonstrations of a certain female identity not negotiated and non-subjugated to the moral norms, to the civilization process, to religious prohibitions. This body however is not outside history, neither marginalized, nor transgressive if included and understood in its context, which is not a minority one.

3) This kind of methodology makes it possible to discuss not only the hierarchy and the authority of the sources in dance historiography, but also the myth of fidelity or infidelity to these on behalf of the historian and/or the reconstructor.

4) This practical proposal of embodiment is at the heart of a theoretical approach of deconstruction of the male normativity (the

authors of the treatises and the dancing masters are men, their readership as well). The female body of the "ballarina" certainly does not escape from cultural and social construction of femininity and from male domination. Nevertheless the theoretical filter of gender studies has taught us how to flee ideological generalizations and normalisations, and to seek more complex answers elsewhere.

5) Why did I ask Laura to dance instead of dancing myself? By joining together the body of the historian and the body of the dancer in one and the same body, would my approach have been more effective? And by doing that, could the necessary articulation between theory and practice have been made completely obvious in my theorizing body who dances? Where am I positioning myself to make theory interact with practice? I think that what I'm trying to do is to practice the work of dance historian, while passing through an embodiment of the sources which does not treat them on a hierarchical basis. After having located, sorted, organized, and analyzed them according to the rules of the historian's activity, I seek to embody them or to let them be embodied. In doing that I'm making choices starting from my own body, with the freedom of a choreographer who assembles her/his materials, making explicit the formerly hidden subjectivity of my artistic sensibility and of the female dancer I used to be.

Acknowledgements

I'm deeply grateful to Linda J. Tomko for the linguistic revision of this text, which also helped in clarifying my thought. Still, I'm responsible for any error left.

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AUTHOR	Aretino	Zuccolo	Morello	Magagno	Calmo
TITLE	<i>I RAGIONAMENTI</i>	<i>LA PAZZIA DEL BALLO</i>	<i>LE LALDE ... DELLA ... ZIRALDA</i>	<i>A LA ZIRALDA</i>	<i>LETTERA A CAVRIOLA</i>
DATE	1534-6	1549	1553	1558	1566
PLACE	VENEZIA	PADOVA	VENEZIA	PADOVA	VENEZIA
CONTEXT	Private performance in a convent	Open-air public ball	Open-air public ball in a village	Open-air public ball in a village	Open-air public ball in a town
NAME OF THE DANCER	<i>Ballarina ferrarese</i> (coming from the Ferrara town) without name	Young women without name	Ziralda Her name comes from the root of the verb to turn (Italian: <i>girare</i> ; Veneto vernacular: <i>zilar</i>)	Ziralda	<i>Cavriola</i> Her name comes from the root of the name <i>capra</i> : goat. Jumping as a goat. (“ <i>capriola</i> : the jump that is made in dancing, rising straight from earth with changing feet”, <i>Dizionario della crusca</i> , 1612)
ACTIONS	To fold the left leg, to catch it with the hand, and to turn: the dress balloons	To move the foot To turn the leg	“To grip” with the point of the feet To go on with several jumps To turn To stir up the waist.		Fast movements of the legs Jolts of the waist Turning jumps To advance and move back
DANCE TERMINOLOGY	<i>Cavriole</i>	<i>Trotti</i> <i>Salti leggiadri</i> <i>Artificiosi fioretti</i> <i>Velocissimi rivolgimenti</i> <i>Rimesse</i> <i>Continenze</i> <i>Dar del piè a terra</i>	<i>Salti</i> <i>Giravolte</i> <i>Pizzicati</i> <i>Passi intricati</i> <i>Scambiatti</i> <i>Rimescolare di vita</i>		<i>Salti a torno</i> <i>Cavriole</i> <i>Balar s’un pe solo mez’hora</i> <i>Represe</i> <i>Scambiatti</i> <i>Ganzi</i> <i>Zurli a piè zonti</i>
SIMILES	To fold the leg like a crane To make <i>capriole</i> like a deer	Young mare	Housewife who cuts the <i>tagliatelle</i> A dashing impulse which could tear an iron cord	Light as a spring breeze	As if she was tickled
METAPHORS	Windmill		Sprint of the tracked hare. Bounce of a ball To burn her hair with the sun (height of the jumps) No traces in the <i>ricotta</i> or the <i>polenta</i> (lightness of the jumps) To dance on the blade of a knife without cutting herself To dance on the water without wetting herself	Her dance gives birth to flowers under her feet even during the winter (image drawn from Petrarch) Dancing on water without wetting (evoked image: birth of Venus)	
BODY			Normal height Beautiful figure		Fleshy Waist well drawn

			Firm flesh Abundant breast Muscular arms Round and muscular buttocks Proportioned legs		Beautiful proportions Glamour Rosy face
QUALITIES AND DYNAMICS	Dexterity and grace Kindness	Lasciviousness	Ability in rotational movements (mill, wind vane) Elasticity Speed Height and precision of the jumps Constant breathing		Measure Intention Grace Agility Speed Modesty Prudence Honesty Pride Force Dexterity
WHAT ONE SHOULD NOT DO			To trample To turn always in the same direction To lose balance Not to jump enough Not to leave the ground		
TIME			To embody the rhythm (measure of the dance in the belly) To give the rhythm to the musicians To anticipate the musical opening bar		
RECEPTION	Astonishment of the public	The public incites her with rhythmic howls and words	Astonishment Recovery from stomach diseases and fever Contagious desire of dancing Muscular tonicity (kinaesthesia and sexual ambiguity: the members tighten themselves and frisk like fish)		Astonishment Amazement Confusion Carnal reaction

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 Simeon Zuccolo da Cologna (1549) *La Pazzia del Ballo*, Padova, Iacomo Fabriano (reprint Forni, Bologna 1969), pp. 19 v-20 r.
 Giacomo Morello (1553) *Le lalde e le sbampuorie della unica e virtuliosa Ziralda: ballarina e saltarina scaltretta Pavana: destendue in tuna slettra scritta in lengua pavana per lo argutissimo Messier Iacomo Morello da Padoa: non più venuta in luce: cosa bellissima et ridiculosa*, Venezia, Stephano Allessi, *passim*
 Giovan Battista Maganza (known as Il Magagnò) (1659) *De le Rime in lingua rustica Padovana di Magagnò, Menon e Begotto*, Venezia, Gio. Battista Brigna, partie I, p. 9
 Andrea Calmo, *Lettere* (1888) edited by Vittorio Rossi, Torino, Book IV, Letter 18, pp. 293 et segg.

Endnotes

- ¹ Lutio Compasso, *Ballo della Gagliarda*, Firenze 1560; Fabritio Caroso, *Il Ballarino*, Venezia 1581; Prospero Lutij, *Opera Bellissima nella quale si contengono molte partite, et passeggi di Gagliarda*, Perugia 1589; Fabritio Caroso, *Nobiltà di Dame*, Venezia 1600; Cesare Negri, *Le Gratie d'Amore*, Milano 1602; Livio Lupi da Caravaggio, *Libro di Gagliarda, Tordiglione, Passo e Mezzo Canario e Passeggi*, Palermo 1607.
- ² Montaigne speaks about them in his *Voyage en Italie*, but see also Scipione Bargagli, *I trattenimenti*, Venezia 1587.
- ³ Desiderando lo Ill.o et Ex.o S.r Card.le de Aragona di vedere ballare alla lombarda havemo deliberato de fargli una festa Domenica al nostro palazo di Porto con diversi pretij", letter by Isabella d'Este to Luigi Gonzaga, 13 june 1515, Mantova, Archivio Gonzaga, busta 2996, F - II - 9 - 32.
- ⁴ "Volemo che facci intendere a quelle ballarine che se trovano sotto il suo Vic.to che ogni modo se ritrovino domenica nel ditto loco di Porto", letter by Isabella d'Este to vicario of Sacchetta, 13 june 1515, Mantova, Archivio Gonzaga, busta 2996, F - II - 8 - 32.
- ⁵ Isabella wrote a member of the family living in the countryside: "che la voglia ordinare alla sua Maria che como capo di bandiera delle bone ballerine voglia invitarne più che la potrà, et insieme ritrovarsi alla festa", letter by Isabella d'Este to Luigi Gonzaga, 13 june 1515, Mantova, Archivio Gonzaga, busta 2996, F - II - 9 - 32. This request is reiterated the day after to another officier: "dovessi fare spendere a quelle balerine che venessero ogni modo", letter by Isabella d'Este to the "Pretore delle acque di Marmirolo", 14 june 1515, Mantova, Archivio Gonzaga, busta 2996, F - II - 9 - 32.
- ⁶ *Dizionario degli Accademici della Crusca*, Venezia 1612, *ad vocem*
- ⁷ Tommaso Garzoni does not include the "ballarina" among the professions he describes, although he dedicates a long and detailed description to male professional dancers (*La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo*, Venezia 1587).
- ⁸ Pietro Aretino, *Sei giornate*, Venezia 1934-36. The context is the final scene of the first day in which Nanna tells about a farce on adultery played for a public of dissolute monks and nuns. The dance opens this play.
- ⁹ Simeon Zuccolo, *La Pazzia del Ballo*, Padova 1549, pp. 19v-20r. At a first reading, this text is a condemnation of the degeneration of the dance, but, if submitted to a more careful literary analysis, the rigid polemical apparatus and the austere tone of the moral sentence reveal openings to parody and to the ironical upsetting.
- ¹⁰ Giacomo Morello, *Le lalde e le sbampuorie della unica e virtuliosa Ziralda: ballarina e saltarina scaltretta Pavana*, Venezia 1553. The author, chaplain of the Dome of Padova between 1557 and 1558, worked for a famous lawyer and wrote other vernacular texts.
- ¹¹ Giovan Battista Maganza (known as Il Magagnò), *De le Rime in lingua rustica Padovana di Magagnò, Menon e Begotto*, Venezia 1559, part I, p. 9. This sonnet was first published in the collection of the *Rime* published in

Padua in 1558, together with vernacular versions of some poems by Petrarch.

- ¹² Andrea Calmo, *Lettere*, Venezia 1566, book IV, letter 18. The author was an actor who used to play the texts he composed as monologues. His letters parody literary epistolography. Letters of book IV are addressed to Venetian prostitutes of the time: Cavriola was probably one of them.
- ¹³ Some authors hypothesize that Ziralda may be identified as a young woman possessing dancing who actually existed in relation to the above-mentioned sonnet by Magagnò (Patrizia La Rocca, *L'"unica e virtuliosa Ziralda": ritratto di una ballerina pavana del XVI secolo*, in: Alessandro Pontremoli e Patrizia La Rocca, *La danza a Venezia nel Rinascimento*, Venezia 1993). I agree with Alessandro Arcangeli who defines Morello's pamphlet "un testo di lingua e testimonianza di una modalità di scrittura, piuttosto che un documento a cui ci si possa affidare per la costruzione di una realtà esterna" (Libri: fra novità e rarità, "La Danza Italiana", n. 8-9, inverno 1990, p. 180 -182), but I would add that actual dancers of the type of the Ziralda have supplied the elements for the construction of the imaginary and literary character.
- ¹⁴ Music, selected in an artistic rather than reconstructive aim, is a *Saltarello* of popular origin from the second half of 16th century, published by Zanetti in 1645. A record of Laura Brembilla's performance (24 June 2007) is available in archives of the Médiathèque at the Centre national de la danse in Pantin (France).

Aspects and problems of approaching historiographical dance research from the perspective of a modern dancer

Riikka Korppi-Tommola

My thesis, *Transition in Finnish Free Dance and Modern Dance during the 1950s and 1960s*, is a historical study of Finnish modern dance and free dance.¹ I am at a stage in my PhD studies where I must choose the final point of view for my thesis. However, at the same time I am re-examining my own approach especially critically. I have noticed that I continually approach my research material with my dancer identity. Is my dancer identity and experiences as a dancer from the 1980s to the 2000s at the Helsinki City Theatre Dance Company excessively governing my choice of dance study material of the 1950s and 1960s? Am I able to add something to my research subject as a consequence of my personal perspective, or is my own experience perhaps leading me to make some unwarranted conclusions?

As Susan Leigh Foster notes in her article *Choreographing History*, the historian's own body is involved when making selections of past bodies and histories:

Throughout this process historians' own techniques of the body – past practices of viewing or participating in body-centered endeavors – nurture the framework of motivations that guide the selection of specific documents. -- In evaluating all these fragments of past bodies, a historian's own bodily experience and conceptions of body continue to intervene.

(Foster 1995: 6)

In my thesis, the focus is on 'an anonymous dancer' as agent, who works during the 1950s and 1960s in the Finnish dance field.² Quite often dance histories are reviewed according to the choreographers and performances. The voices of dancers are seldom in focus in canonical history narratives.

In this paper, I briefly introduce my dance background and thesis and then present an example of a history writing process I was involved in last semester. This example works as an evidence to support my assertion that the voices of dancers have

often gone unheard, unseen and unread and therefore uninterpreted in the narratives of dance histories. This experience also evoked suspicions in me about the processes by which historians make their selections and conclusions. In fact, how much does the historian personally interact with the research result by choosing one item instead of another?

The Dance Background

I belong to the generation of Finnish modern dancers who started working in the profession at the beginning of the 1980s. In my youth, dance education was given in a variety of dance schools. The Dance Department of the Theatre Academy, however, was only founded in 1983.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the role of the Union of Finnish Dance Artists (UFDA) was significant. To be a member of the Union meant that you had a professional standard as a dancer and you were guaranteed a proper salary for your work. The Union also supported dance education with diverse dance course activities.

At the beginning of the 1980s there were only a few professional dance groups besides the National Ballet where you could aspire to find work as a professional dancer in Finland. I was lucky to get a permanent vacancy in 1982 among the ten dancers at Helsinki City Theatre Dance Company.³ My choreographers and directors at the Company during my career were: Jorma Uotinen (1982-1991), Carolyn Carlson (1991-1992), Marjo Kuusela (1992-1995), Kenneth Kvarnström (1996-1998), Ari Tenhula (2000-2002) and Nigel Charnock (2003-2005, visiting choreographer already in the 2000). Thus, I practiced different modern dance techniques, and also classical ballet has always been trained in the Helsinki City Theatre Dance Company.

Infrastructure, Agents and Dance Techniques

The period of my thesis is marked by the changing conception of Finnish free dance (or

early modern dance) to modern dance. According to my view, major changes in the dance field occurred in infrastructure, dance aesthetics and techniques during the time in question. The free-dance tradition still played a major role among dancers and choreographers, but new dance techniques from abroad were emerging. The educational and performing abilities of dancers were increasing and the influence of theatre, television and entertainment were strongly involved. The specific period appears, to my understanding, as polyphonic in its actions and agents. The development does not appear as a linear progression (as in the canonical history narrative versions), but instead with several intersections where several contradictory phenomena and overlapping events interact in a decentralised field (Jenkins 1997: 19). At the moment, my work consists of the following sections: infrastructure, agents and dance techniques.

In my thesis, the infrastructure – a wide conceptual structure on which wider and more manifold action is based – includes the changes in the dance field that took place in the 1950s and made possible the further actions among dancers later. Included among these were some of the progressive developments that happened within the Union of Finnish Dance Artists, and within a dancers' scholarship system of the state. These changes were not yet visible in the 1950s. According to an earlier Finnish dance research, the 1950s appear very quiet in the dance field. However, my claim is the contrary: the activity is significant when account is taken of the growing organisational activity, which provided the basis for the professionalism of the modern dance activities of the latter 1960s. In the section on the infrastructure, I also include the increase in working opportunities for dancers and choreographers in theatres and television. These employment venues made the practise of dance a viable profession.

The individual agents, in my research, bring to light the “invisible information” of the dance world. I examine – also with interviews – how dancers practiced their activities and how dancers with very different backgrounds and dance educations (from classical ballet schools, free dance schools and women's gymnastics to jazz dance and varieties of modern dance techniques) worked together in the field. It is noteworthy that dancers practiced several different dance techniques simultaneously.

While examining the working conditions and professionalism, I am considering the following definitions of professionalism in arts. Bruno Frey and Werner Pommerehne presented them in 1989 in *Muses and Markets – Explorations in the Economics of the Arts* in the context of the economic conditions of artists. They responded to the question “Who is an artist?”

with the following definitions:

- 1) The amount of time spent on artistic work; 2) the amount of income derived from artistic activities; 3) the reputation as an artist among the general public; 4) the recognition among other artists; 5) the quality of the artistic work produced (which means that artistic ‘quality’ must be defined somehow); 6) membership in a professional artists' group or association; 7) professional qualifications (graduation in art schools); 8) the subjective self-definition of being an artist.

(Frey-Pommerehne 1989: 146–147)

Can I apply these definitions to processes happening in the 1950s and 1960s while the definitions are actually from the late 1980s and relate more to the time of my own working conditions in the dance field?

Case-study

Last semester, while struggling with the approach of my research topic, I was involved in another project: writing a history of the Helsinki City Theatre and its Dance Company, my own past. For the history, I wrote an article about the import of the theatrical elements for a dance group that works in close connection with a theatre. My colleague, Aino Kukkonen, from the University of Helsinki, wrote an article about the period that related to my first ten years in the Helsinki City Theatre Dance Company during the 1980s while Jorma Uotinen was leading the Dance group. The title of her article was: *Tanssi valokeilassa – Jorma Uotisen aika Helsingin Kaupunginteatterissa (Dance in the beam of light – The period of Jorma Uotinen in the Helsinki City Theatre)*.⁴ My ambivalence towards the history writing process grew even

more since now I could situate myself in the context of the historical article and at the same time examine Kukkonen's selections as a historian.

Kukkonen approaches the period from the perspective of the choreographer, Jorma Uotinen. In this article, I could barely recognise my own dancing history, my own dancing body and distinguish the time from her writing. For during those years, I did not pay attention to all of the written texts and critics, i.e. the public discourse of the period. The source material of her article is based on newspaper articles, magazines, some minutes of the City Theatre and some earlier studies on Uotinen. Uotinen was – and still is – considered *the* phenomena of that time. The history presentation is written through his statements, and the texts of the history are focused on his interesting persona. The other contemporaneous "sounds" are missing. In my opinion, another analysis could also be derived from the source material but that material was not selected by the historian.

For example, one of the issues Kukkonen is dealing with in her article is how the creations of the performances were a result of co-operation among the team:

Uotinen began his works intuitively, seeking material through improvisation. In his directing and choreographing, he didn't hold up a 'model' to be followed and he didn't over-explain. Instead, many things were born of his personally confronting with people. Important for him was a cohesive atmosphere. When the end result was achieved, there was no more room for chance: expression and movements were rigorous and precise. The logic of a work dawned on him only later. The place for analysis was after the work had become completed.

(Kukkonen, 2007. Referring to Pyysalo, Riitta: "Tholla kosketeltavaa asiaa" SK 23/1985: 58–59)

Accordingly, at the creation process several elements fitted in together – the dancers were also involved, not just the choreographer, especially in the improvisational process. The work was done with a co-operation with the dancers (and obviously also with the others, like the light designer, Claude Naville, and musicians.) It was not a one-piece

puzzle. Dancers appear in texts – both in history and in the present – as the tools of a vision, as a means for a choreographer, as objects. In the actual improvisational process in the rehearsal room, dancers are rather co-creators of movements, characters and expression, the whole work. Still, the process is viewed most often solely from the perspective of the choreographer. The credit goes only to him.

Conclusions

It is not the case that the article by Kukkonen is one statement of past. As Keith Jenkins states in *Re-Thinking History*: the narrative of the historian is merely one of the readings over space and time (Jenkins 1991: 8). The landscape Kukkonen has constructed with her selections just turns out to be different than the landscape I would construct with my past. The selections of material that the historian makes are already a step towards the final conclusions.

The matter could also be represented in terms of the persona of the historiographer: choosing the "I" for the text, as Lena Hammergren observes in her article *Different Persona: A History of One's own?* (Hammergren 1995: 185–192). The historiographer could consciously choose to emphasis her own selected aspect.

Despite its fragmentary nature, I see the development of Finnish modern dance from the 1950s to the 1980s on a continuum. The conditions in which I worked in the 1980s were part of a continuum carried over from the previous decades: there was the significance of the Union of Finnish Dance Artists, the increase in jobs and, from the 1970s, the birth of small dance companies outside the National Ballet in the field of modern dance. Overall, there were real, concrete opportunities to do modern dance work in the 1980s. If my insider's view entitles me to assess the situation in the field of modern dance as it was during my own time, how should I adjust my view to draw conclusions out of that from the two decades that came before my time? At least the conclusions need a different approach.

Written texts of the contemporary period are someone else's views of the object, for example, a spectator following a performance on

the stage. The workaday reality of the dancer appeared differently to me than texts (e.g. critical reviews, other source material) that have been written about the period of the 1980s. Workdays involved hours of training, rehearsal periods, and one's own artistic experiences and – above all – ordinary, everyday experiences. This, common everyday life of a professional dancer, is largely absent from the public discourse.

Related to performances, even in a spatial sense, the dancer is within the enclosed space of the stage, constructing with her own body and her dancer-identity inside of the performance, as a part of its totality, together with the others. The dancer's body has been trained with some specific techniques (e.g. Alvin Nikolai and classical ballet); however, this takes place also through the dancer's own uniquely lived/danced-in body. Thus, the dancer's figure, character and movements have been internalised as the dancer's own interpretation, though through the aid of the choreographer, who at that stage is no longer present. Some of the materials that have created the dancing figure have come from the dancer's own personal life, which might be quite remote from the thematics of the work and where the choreographer is coming from. Nevertheless, the dancer's own persona is also present in the final outcome. My identity as a dancer for the period in question is part of a broader picture, subsumed here under the heading "Uotinen's Period with the Helsinki City Theatre". The constituent parts compose a whole from which different narratives may be formed.

At the moment, it seems to me that it is more fruitful to consider multiple aspects while doing research, especially when one's own approach seems to follow one specific line. In my case, the voice of my dancer identity guides the approach strongly. Therefore, I have to question my own assertions as a historian. With multiple choices, the focus could be lightened further. At least, I should be aware of this and recognise my own attitude and my own 'sound' in the polyphony. The agent, an anonymous dancer from the contemporary period, should be presented with the sound of contemporary dancers, not mine, even though my dancer identity might enable me to realise those 'sounds' easier. Documents that have already been written should not be the sole source material, but their reinterpretations and the new voices of the period – any period.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Following concepts are used in this paper: *Finnish free dance*, while in question dance art - not classical ballet - during the period of app. 1900-1950; *Finnish modern dance*, at the beginning of the 1960s. Finnish free dance developed during the first decades of the 20th century and one of the pioneers was Maggie Gripenberg. Women's gymnastics was later strongly involved in free dance. In Finnish dance discourse, *free dance* -conception is more used than *early modern dance*.
- ² In my study, in the field of dance is included a dance practice besides classical ballet and the actions of the Finnish National Ballet.
- ³ At present *the Helsinki Dance Company*.
- ⁴ Translation by R. K-T.

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La théorie – une nécessité pour la pratique?!

Reflets sur la Collaboration du couple danseurs et chorégraphes Pia et Pino Mlakar avec Albrecht Knust, danseur, notateur et moteur-développeur de la notation labanienne

Vesna Mlakar

I. Survol sur l'histoire et l'évolution de la notation

La problématique entre « théorie » et « pratique » dans le domaine de la danse n'est point un phénomène de nos dernières décennies, mais elle existe – plus qu'en ses tendances – déjà à partir du début du 20^{ème} siècle. Si nous reculons encore dans l'histoire, en retraçant le développement de la notation de la danse du 15^{ème}, 16^{ème} et 17^{ème} siècle jusqu'à la fin des années 1920, nous pouvons observer une évolution des premiers « notations verbales » (p. ex. Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchesographie*, 1588) aux notations plus complexes comme p. ex. *Chorégraphie, ou L'art d'écrire la Danse par caractères et signes démonstratifs* par Raoul Auger Feuillet, publié en 1700 et utilisant des signes qui décrivent les pas de danse en montrant également le trajet à effectuer par chaque danseur.

Au cours du temps, la prise de conscience du détail pour l'exécution du mouvement – non seulement des pieds, mais du corps entier et du corps dans l'espace – se perfectionne. Vers la fin du 17^{ème} siècle, le vocabulaire chorégraphique est déjà d'une grande richesse. La notation permet – à un certain degré – de lire, écrire, analyser et penser le mouvement et par conséquent elle sert à la préservation et la transmission d'un répertoire.

II. Développement de la cinéto-graphie au début du XX^{ème} siècle

Dans la première moitié du 20^{ème} siècle – une époque marquée par deux courants significatifs : le ballet classique (à la suite de sa révolution déclenchée par les Ballets Russes en 1909) et la danse allemande expressionniste (*Ausdruckstanz*) – le rapport avec la « théorie » (en fonction de la « pratique ») atteint en Allemagne une nouvelle importance et dimension par la collaboration de

1. **Rudolf von Laban** (1879-1958) avec **Albrecht Knust** (1896-1978) et d'

2. **Albrecht Knust avec le couple Pia** (1908-2000) et **Pino Mlakar** (1907-2006).

III. Le couple danseurs et chorégraphes Pia et Pino Mlakar

À la croisée des influences et des styles, mêlant danse moderne d'expression, ballet classique, danses historiques et danses de tradition balkanique, Pia (1908-2000) et Pino Mlakar (1907-2006), avec leur ballet *Un Amour de Moyen Âge* lauréats du concours chorégraphique des Archives Nationales de la Danse organisé par Rolf de Maré à Paris en 1932, poursuivent leurs carrières en Allemagne, en Suisse, puis en Yougoslavie.

Tout deux de 1927 à 1929 élèves de Rudolf de Laban – d'abord à l'école Laban à Hambourg, puis à l'institut chorégraphique à Berlin – Pia et Pino Mlakar comptent parmi les premiers à reconnaître la valeur d'avenir de la cinéto-graphie (Labanotation) lancée par Laban et élaborée par Albrecht Knust. Ils exercent ensemble leur activité de danseurs, chorégraphes et maîtres de ballet successivement à Darmstadt (1929-1930), Dessau (1930-1932), Zurich (1934-1938) et à Munich (1939-1944 et 1952-1954) et puis à différents endroits en Yougoslavie (surtout à Ljubljana en Slovénie, à Zagreb en Croatie et à Belgrade en Serbie). En 1940/41, lors de la création du ballet *Verklungene Feste* (Musique : Richard Strauss d'après François Courperin) pour le ballet de l'Opéra de Munich, ils consultent entre autres les anciennes notations de Feuillet – tout en reconnaissant la portée, mais aussi certains défauts de cette notation de danse pour les lecteurs contemporains. En 1939 ils seront les premiers à engager avec Albrecht Knust un notateur de danse à fin qu'il se charge de la notation de leurs propres ballets.

IV. Albrecht Knust : premier notateur professionnel du système Laban

Albrecht Knust – lui aussi élève de Rudolf de Laban et onze ans plus âgé que Pino Mlakar –, danse dès l'âge de 16 ans, pratiquant à ses débuts la danse populaire et devenant meneur de groupe de danses dans sa ville natale Hambourg (1912-1921). De 1921 à 1923 il suit (avec Kurt Jooss, dont il notera plus tard le ballet *La Table verte*) l'école de danse de Laban. A partir de 1922 il est également membre de la « Tanzbühne Laban ». En 1923/24 il enseigne à l'école Laban à Hambourg, école qui lui est finalement confiée et qui reste – marqué par quelques interruptions ponctuelles – sous sa direction jusqu'en 1934. En 1930, à Hambourg, il ouvre en collaboration avec Azra de Laban, la fille aînée de Laban, le premier Centre de notation de danse, la « Hamburger Tanzschreibstube » (bureau de la notation qui sera transférée à Berlin en 1935 et jusqu'en 1936 : « Berliner Tanzschreibstube »). Ce sont alors les débuts essentiels de son activité reliée à la notation de la danse. Le centre prépare et diffuse des exercices de lecture pour l'apprentissage de la cinétographie. En même temps les premières partitions de « chœurs de mouvement » y sont écrites : C'est un premier essai d'utiliser la notation pour préserver des chorégraphies de Rudolf de Laban. Cette utilisation de la cinétographie dans le domaine chorégraphique fut une réalisation marquante de Knust. Par la suite, il explorera dans une série d'articles des questions d'ordre théorique qui surgissent durant cette période d'activité intense et déjà tout à fait concentré sur le développement de la notation labanienne (occupation que Knust poursuivra jusqu'à sa mort). Knust les discutera souvent et en profondeur avec Rudolf de Laban, le créateur du système. Mais aussi avec ses multiples élèves – parmi lesquelles se trouve Pino Mlakar. D'autant plus il reproduira sur scènes des danses diverses, entièrement remises d'après la notation.

Durant la saison 1926-1927 Knust est nommé maître de ballet au Friedrichstheater à Dessau (poste qui va être repris trois ans plus tard, en 1930, et grâce à son aide intermédiaire par son élève Pino Mlakar). C'est là, où il crée, dès 1926, ses premiers chorégraphies : *Der Prinz von China* (*Le Prince de Chine* ; musique : Chr. W. Gluck) et *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* (*Les Créatures de Prométhée* ; musique : L. v. Beethoven). De 1928 à 1929 il travaille à Berlin, où il est co-fondateur de l'école centrale Laban (Zentralschule Laban) :

une école au rôle majeur pour l'émergence du nouveau courant de danse dite « danse libre » européenne.

En 1934, Knust déménage à Essen pour y prendre – suite au départ de Kurt Jooss pour l'Angleterre – la direction du département de danse de la « Folkwang Schule ». Peu après, en 1935 et âgé de 39 ans, il quitte (à quelques exceptions) la scène pour se consacrer pleinement à la notation : la même année il note les danses pour grandes groupes chorégraphiées par Laban pour l'opéra *Rienzi* de Richard Wagner. Il travaille (1935/36) avec Irmgard Bartenieff dans une bibliothèque de Berlin pour transcrire en cinétographie des danses du XVII^e siècle préservées en notation Feuillet (des danses historiques d'après Feuillet, Pécour et Taubert) et – de retour à Hambourg – il achève, en 1937, sa première version de l'*Abriss der Kinetographie Laban* (*Manuel de cinétographie*).

Knust autant que danseur, chorégraphe et pédagogue, qui d'un côté pratique et enseigne la danse, et qui de l'autre côté se charge comme chercheur avec acharnement et constance à perfectionner la notation labanienne (toujours en étroite relation avec la pratique) est donc un bon exemple pour un artiste faisant le lien entre « pratique » et « théorie ». Tout au long de sa vie les deux domaines principaux de son activité resteront les mouvements de groupe et la notation de la danse. Il reste ainsi constamment en prise directe avec l'art chorégraphique.

V. La correspondance (1928-1973) d'Albrecht Knust et de Pino Mlakar

La correspondance d'Albrecht Knust avec Pino Mlakar, qui date de 1928 à 1973 contient plus de 300 lettres, dont à la fois les documents envoyés et ceux reçus par Knust. Elle est conservée aujourd'hui au Centre National de la Danse à Paris et nous donne une approche exemplaire aux idées, aux problèmes et à la réalisation de la cinétographie.

Les premières lettres datant de 1928, la correspondance commence à une époque où Knust n'a pas encore fondé son premier bureau de la notation. Il enseigne à l'école de Laban et Pino Mlakar est son élève. S'étendant sur 45 ans, les écrits, parfois de plusieurs pages, témoignent d'une amitié et d'une relation profonde entre les deux artistes qui échangent leur expériences. Au

fur et à mesure que les années s'écoulent Knust lui-même y exprime son attachement croissant à la « théorie » qui devient sa passion de vie : le développement, la mise en fonction et la diffusion de la notation. Mais malgré tout le temps qu'il passe derrière son bureau, Knust sait pour la nécessité de rester toujours « auprès de la pratique » pour vraiment réussir. Il est bien évident qu'un système conçu pour conserver, transmettre, restituer et réinterpréter des œuvres d'art chorégraphiques doit suivre et accompagner l'évolution intrinsèque prise par cette art.

Knust exercera donc à la fois la reconstruction des pièces notées et la notation des danses nouvelles.

En ce qui concerne les Mlakars, ils ont pu éprouver personnellement l'importance des cours de notations pour leur métier de danseurs et chorégraphes lors des études à l'institut chorégraphique berlinois. D'après Pino Mlakar : « Les cours de cinégraphie destinés à l'apprentissage de la notation labanienne ont forcé les élèves de remanier clairement dans leur conscience les facteurs corporelles, temporaires et d'espace de la danse. S'occupant partiellement de la notation des danses (p. ex. pendant un voyage de recherche en Yougoslavie), Pia et Pino Mlakar voient pourtant leur priorité dans la « pratique », c'est à dire la création de nouveaux ballets. Jusqu'à leur retraite vers la fin des années 1960 ils poursuivent alors premièrement leurs carrières autant que danseur et chorégraphes à une époque charnière entre la danse moderne et la danse classique (par la suite ils écrivent une chronique en deux tomes, *Unsterblicher Theatertanz*, entièrement consacrée à l'histoire du ballet à l'Opéra de Munich, dès ses débuts vers 1650 jusqu'en 1967.) – toujours conscients de l'importance du travail effectué par Knust pour leur propres créations, mais aussi pour la danse et ses artistes en général.

Dès les débuts de leur connaissance la correspondance témoigne du fait, que Knust envoie la plupart de ses articles et de ses cinégrammes à Pino Mlakar. Celui-ci, en revanche, les commente. Ainsi le discours entre les deux hommes reste ouvert, même si la distance les sépare. Leur discussion, qui tourne d'abord autour des principes et des outils de la notation labanienne et puis – avec une tendance croissante

dans les années 1940 – autour de la séparation des deux filières divergentes : la

- « cinégraphie » en Allemagne et dans les pays latins, et la
- « Labanotation » dans le monde anglo-américain –

est ainsi partiellement conservée grâce à leur communication par écrit soigneusement rangé par Knust lui-même.

Pourtant : leur correspondance est aussi exemplaire, car les deux collègues – Albrecht Knust et Pino Mlakar – s'intéressent à la fois à la formation pratique de la danse comme à la formation théorique reliée à l'art chorégraphique. Ils poursuivent selon leurs moyens et parmi les gens avec qui ils travaillent l'intégration des deux à l'enseignement des danseurs : Leur but est le développement, l'utilisation et l'établissement de la notation de la danse pour la pratique de la danse. Et encore un trait marquant réuni les deux personnalités : La persévérance et constance, avec laquelle ils poursuivent leurs objectifs – chacun pour soi, mais aussi en travaillant ensemble.

En les aidant où il peut, Albrecht Knust devient dans la première étape de la carrière des Mlakars leur « bras » en Allemagne :

- Il procure Pino Mlakar le certificat dont il a besoin pour entrer dans l'institut chorégraphique de Laban à Berlin.
- A la recherche d'un engagement il leur propose de contacter Kurt Jooss.
- Grâce à ses multiples relations il est bien informé sur la situation des postes libres – une information qu'il partage volontiers avec Pino Mlakar pour lui procurer une bonne place pour son carrière d'avenir : entre autres le poste du maître de ballet à Dessau.

VI. Albrecht Knust : notateur professionnel à l'Opéra de Munich sous la direction des Mlakars

En 1938 la direction de l'Opéra à Munich invite avec Pia et Pino Mlakar deux anciens étudiants de Laban à créer un nouveau ballet. Avec leur production de *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* (*Les Créatures de Prométhée*) en 1942 ils montrent bien comment la relation artistique entre la danse libre (utilisée avant tout pour les danses du couple principal, de Prométhée, d'Apollon et de

Bacchus) et la danse classique (mise en jeu pour les danses de l'ensemble) peut fonctionner. L'année suivante le ballet d'Opéra dans la capitale bavaroise confie à Pino Mlakar le poste de maître de ballet. Une condition pour que celui accepte est l'engagement d'un notateur professionnel, « afin que chaque danse et chaque ballet, que nous faisons ici sera noté et rangé ». Leur choix tombe sur Albrecht Knust, chargé également de la direction d'un chœur de mouvement d'environ 20 hommes.

Knust s'installe à Munich. Il débute sur son nouveau poste le 1. septembre 1939, officiant jusqu'en automne 1945 comme notateur de la Bayerische Staatsoper. Il y notera les chorégraphies du répertoire, parmi lequel se trouvent les ballets *Der Teufel im Dorf*, *Taler oder Geige*, *Danina oder Joko*, *der brasiliansiche Affe* et *Verklungene Feste* du couple Mlakar.

Knust sera toujours fier d'avoir été parmi les premiers à transcrire un ballet en entier, favorisant ainsi sa reprise ou sa transmission. En effet, Knust était le premier notateur professionnel du système Laban et manifestement responsable pour le développement du système d'écriture du mouvement d'après les principes fondamentaux exposés par Rudolf de Laban autant que système praticable et compréhensible. En partie, cet développement c'est effectué auprès du travail chorégraphique de Pia et Pino Mlakar et avec leur soutien financière et mentale.

Tout en laissant noter leurs ballets par Knust, les Mlakars rendent, pendant une période de laboratoire avancé, la mise en épreuve et le perfectionnement de la notation labanienne possible. Et il font cela dans un cadre professionnel et en lien étroit avec la pratique. En revanche, ils peuvent observer à vif et détecter des résultats comme des problèmes du système. Leur travail en coopération leur permet également d'avancer dans leur abilité d'enseignants et pédagogues : Fait remarquable qui leur servira plus tard dans leurs fonctions scolaires et universitaires à Essen et en Yougoslavie.

Dans la correspondance, l'ancien élève reprend alors à ce moment la place de l'employeur. Mais tous deux, Mlakar comme Knust, reconnaissent les possibilités s'ouvrant à la notation par ce poste et agissent tout en la renforçant autant que possible dans une époque difficile d'avant-guerre. Dans une lettre adressé à Martin Gleisner (1940-1977),

datant du 31 juillet 1949 Knust reflète ce temps : « Quand j'ai pris cet engagement j'ai réfléchi, si je ne deviendrai pas fou par ce travail. Mais tout marchait mieux que je ne l'avais pensé. Évidemment, j'étais d'abord obligé à convaincre les Mlakars du fait, qu'il s'agit d'une surcharge terrible et d'une entreprise quasiment impossible de tout rédiger lors des répétitions. Plus tard on m'envoyait toujours les solistes et les danseurs seuls d'une groupe dans ma chambre et ils devaient ensuite me montrer précisément leurs parties. »

Dans les années suivantes Pino et Pia Mlakar se servent souvent des partitions écrites par Knust pour reprendre leurs ballets ou pour instruire des remplaçants. Connaissant la base de la notation grâce à leur enseignement de départ et ayant suivie et observé Knust lors de son travail de notateur, tout deux arrivent à déchiffrer bien la cinétographie.

En effet, Knust approfondira en ce même temps à partir du vocabulaire chorégraphique des Mlakars – et en secret, car le régime Nazi avait interdit l'enseignement de Laban, y compris la cinétographie – dans son petit bureau situé en haut de l'Opéra de Munich la rédaction de l'*Abriss der Kinetographie Laban* (de son *Manuel de cinétographie*). Ainsi la seconde version de cet ouvrage important est achevée en 1942 et une fois de plus distribuée par copies, car l'impression tombe sous les mesures d'interdiction par le régime Nazi. Le livre ne sera publié qu'en 1956 et traduit en anglais deux ans plus tard.

Malheureusement, les successeurs de Pino Mlakar à l'Opéra de Munich – à l'inverse de celui-ci – ne s'intéressent point à la notation. Knust n'est donc pas confirmé dans ses fonctions et traverse des années difficiles. Malgré les circonstances Knust achèvera après la guerre, entre 1945 et 1950, son *Handbuch der Kinetographie Laban* (sa *Encyclopédie de la Cinétographie*) – un travail majeur en huit volumes, apportant une importante base empirique et rassemblant vingt mille exemples de mouvements notés, issus de mouvements quotidiens ou de différents styles de danses. Cette *Encyclopédie*, dont Pino Mlakar confirme l'achat d'un premier exemplaire, n'était jamais publié et seulement quelques copies et microfilms du manuscrit existent.

En 1951 Kurt Jooss (ré)invite Knust à se charger des cours de cinétographie à la «

Folkwang Schule » à Essen (école pluridisciplinaire, avantgardiste, qui deviendra plus tard la « Folkwang Hochschule ») : Jusqu'à sa mort Knust (qui prit sa retraite de l'enseignement en 1962) y dirigera autant que directeur du Kinetographisches Institut le « studio pour la cinétopographie » (« Studio für Kinetographie »). Il fut nommé professeur en 1974. Parallèlement il travaillait comme notateur des Ballets Jooss. Son dernière ouvrage, le Dictionnaire de la cinétopographie (*A Dictionary of Kinetographie Laban* (2. volumes)), fut publié posthume en 1979.

Un demi-siècle plus tard, après une véritable evolution de moyens nouveau pour conserver et « rejouer » musique et danse/sous et mouvements, nous nous voyons encore confronté avec les difficultés discutées dans la correspondance d'Albrecht Knust et de Pino Mlakar : De retrouver les intentions du chorégraphe et de les faire revivre à partir d'une notation.

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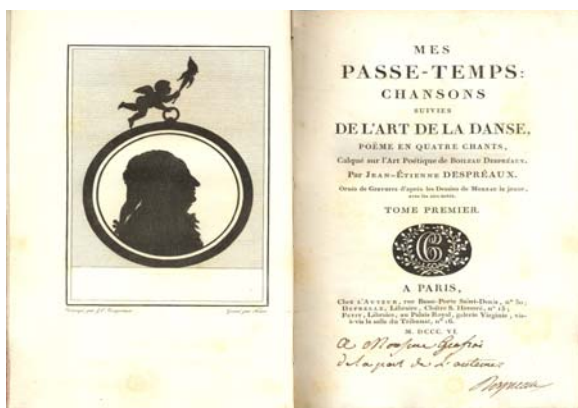
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Danse écrite ou La Terpsi-choro-graphie ou Nouvel Essay de Theorie de la danse: manuscript dated 1813 by Jean-Étienne Despréaux kept at the Bibliothèque of the Paris Opéra

Flavia Pappacena

Although he is remembered only as the husband of Marie-Madeleine Guimard, whom he married in 1789, and as the author of the little poem *Mes Passe-temps: chansons suivies de l'Art de la Danse* Jean-Étienne Despréaux is one of the many creatures of the Paris Opéra and a character who left his mark on history (Ill. 1).



Ill. 1: Title page of Despréaux's *Mes Passe-temps*. 'Découpé par J. E. Despréaux. Gravé par Friere.' F. Pappacena Collection.

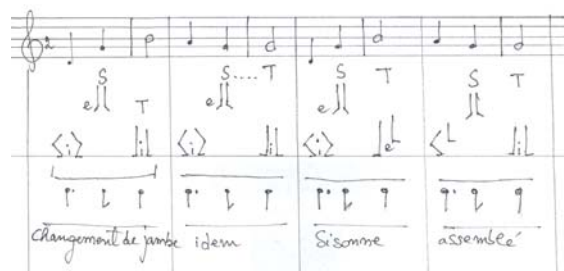
As we read in the text by Firmin-Didot containing memoirs of Despréaux, the latter was born in Paris in 1748 and died there in 1820. The fourteenth child of Jean-François Despréaux (a musician at the Opéra), he studied with Maximilien Gardel and, between 1764 and 1781, he made his career as a dancer at the Opéra, albeit in roles that never exceeded the range of *seul et double*. At the same time, he covered the important post of *maître de ballets de la Cour* from 1775. In this role, he created numerous choreographies performed by prominent artists of the Opéra such as Pierre Gardel and Marie-Madeleine Guimard. Under the Napoleonic Empire, he achieved considerable fame, becoming the personal dance master of Eugène de Beauharnais and of Napoleon's wife Marie-Louise, and was given prestigious appointments such as Inspecteur de l'Académie Royale de

Musique, and Inspecteur général des spectacles de la Cour et répétiteur des cérémonies de la Cour in 1815.

The various drafts of the manuscript text kept at the Bibliothèque of the Opéra (Fonds Deshayes) go back roughly to this period. Indeed, a sheet used as a title page bears the date 1813, while on another sheet the date given is 1817.

The manuscript, which contains about 250 pages of various formats, is very fragmentary, but sufficient to deduce the layout, content and aims of the text. Besides three very detailed summaries, the chapters that have survived concern the three basic aspects tackled by the text: 1) dance notation, 2) analysis and classification of steps and movements, 3) theoretical and aesthetic principles. From the continuity the author gives to the summary and from the title itself (*Danse écrite ou La Terpsi-choro-graphie ou Nouvel Essay de Theorie de la danse*), these aspects can be seen not as belonging to different, separate environments, but as forming periods of a single line of thought.

His kinegraphic experiment, which I have presented on more than one occasion,¹ is of major importance, since it is the first document that has come down to us on notation as a vertical view of the body translated into horizontal script, parallel to the musical stave (Ill. 2), as was usual during the nineteenth century.²



Ill. 2: Despréaux's kinegraphic method. Paris, Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra. Drawing after the original illustration.

With this system, he abandons Beauchamps' approach, based on a projection on the ground of the trajectories of leg movements and on a synthesis of dance components – space, tempo, dynamics – and, taking his inspiration from the words of a song written below the musical stave, breaks down the steps into parts, using the same procedure as the breakdown of words into syllables. This method, in which we can even recognise the inspiration of poetic metre, is the final stage of a logical organisation based on concepts and principles affirmed by the encyclopaedists and maintained by the Neoclassical movement. From the names of the men of letters and philosophers cited by Despréaux (Plutarch, Plato, Horace, Batteux, Boileau, Du Bos, Milton, Rousseau, Newton etc.) and also from his references to the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and d'Alembert, we can see that Despréaux's education was wide-ranging, thorough and perfectly grounded in the literary and aesthetic culture of the French eighteenth century and, in particular, in harmony with the classical school. This explains why the themes dealt with by the text are the ones that dominate the second half of the eighteenth century: art as the imitation of nature, aiming at ideal beauty; the affinities between the arts, deriving from the classical comparison of painting and poetry as theorized by the Greek poet Plutarch and the Latin poet Horace in his *Ut pictura poesis*.³

Despréaux applies both these concepts to the dance, just as Noverre did in his *Lettres* of 1760 and, before him, in 1746, the philosopher Charles Batteux, the first, in the eighteenth century, to establish the equality of the dance with the other fine arts ("imitative arts"): poetry, music, painting and sculpture.

Unlike Noverre, however, who prefers to investigate the comparison between the dance, painting and poetry,⁴ Despréaux develops the theme of the "similitude of the arts", emphasising the link between dance, poetry and music already maintained by men of letters such as Claude-Joseph Dorat, who, in the fourth edition of his book *La Déclamation théâtrale*,

allegorically represents Dance, the sister of Music, by a young girl (maenad) holding a cithara⁵ (Ill. 3).

In 1806, in his poem *L'Art de la danse*, quoting Plutarch, he wrote 'Dance is silent poetry, and poetry a spoken dance' (1806: 172), whereas in 1813, still referring to the famous Greek poet, he would write, 'Just as sounds belong to music, all movements of the limbs and body belong to the dance' (1813: 81).



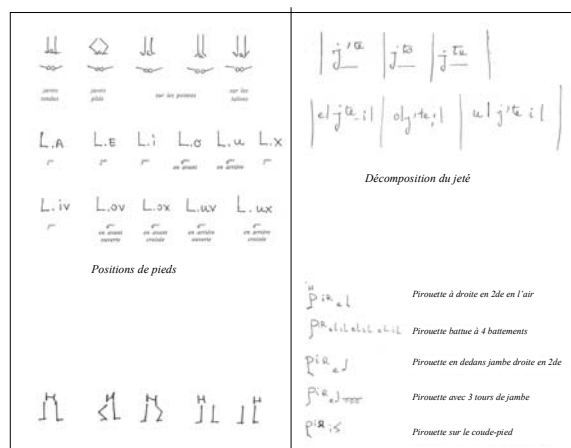
Ill. 3: [Dorat's *La Déclamation théâtrale* \(1771\)](#). Frontispiece of the forth "Canto" ([La Danse](#)). Drawing by Ch. Eisen, engraving by E. De Ghendt. F. Pappacena Collection.

All this also explains the meaning Despréaux gives to the term 'theory' (*Théorie de la danse*) – which is in harmony with the prevailing theoretical ideas of the second half of the eighteenth century. In Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*, in the paragraph headed *Theory and practice of an art* under the headword *Art*, Diderot had written '[...] every art has its theory and practice: the theory is none other than a non-operative knowledge of the rules of the art; practice is the habitual and unreflecting use of such rules. It is difficult, not to say impossible, to improve one's practice without the theory, and – vice versa – to understand the theory without practice' (Diderot, d'Alembert, 1751-80: I, 714).⁶

This concept must have been a pivotal point in the mentality of the time, since it is also stated clearly in the book on dance published by the Neapolitan Gennaro Magri in 1779⁷ and nearly forty years later induced Carlo Blasis to retitle his *Traité élémentaire théorique et pratique de l'Art de la danse* (Milan, 1820) “Theory of Theatrical Dancing”, when he included it in the Second Part of *The Code of Terpsichore* (London, 1828).

For Despréaux, this concept appears to have been a nodal point, which he uses to interpret the term “Théorie” as “grammar”. As at school, Despréaux conceives of “theory-grammar” as a support for practical study, based on a methodology of analysis and breaking down movement, which assumes familiarity with the etymology of the terms, understood as structural definitions. Like studying a language, it is split into classificatory lists, comparative tables, and explanatory diagrams (Ill. 4) and some of its concepts and rules (i.e. feet positions) must be studied before practice.

Considering dance as a “language”, Despréaux maintains that the “grammatical” theory of dance cannot exclude writing. This means – Despréaux adds – that writing is itself a form of knowledge. In short, for Despréaux, writing is the necessary assumption for considering dance as an art.⁸



Ill. 4: Despréaux's kinegraphic method. Paris, Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra. Drawing after the original illustration.

His script, he adds, is a universal method that can be used to analyse any movement. This

idea calls to mind the concept of universal language, much in vogue in the eighteenth century in various sectors, such as painting and – consequently – dance and pantomime, as shown by the propositions of Noverre and Dauberval. The concept of dance script as a “universal” method⁹ and its observance of rigid rules – Despréaux goes on to say – explains why dance notation can only take the *technical part of dancing* into account and cannot transcribe *pantomime*, which can only be handed down by oral tradition, even if such a process inevitably implies its gradual corrosion. Here, Despréaux appears to answer the critical expressed by Noverre on the validity of notation,¹⁰ clarifying once and for all why academic dance notation cannot tackle the mimed expressions of the dance, which are subjective and not limited by rules, unlike the steps, which constitute the codified supporting framework of the dance.

Despréaux's “theory” does not merely concern the rules governing dance transcription, but implies and includes all the principles – aesthetic, dynamic and anatomic – on which the art is based. With regard to aesthetic principles, we have already mentioned the mimetic and idealising concept of the art, in accordance with the dominant theories of the time. As a child of the Enlightenment, Despréaux cannot evade the theme of “grace”, much debated in the first half of the eighteenth century and still in vogue at the onset of the nineteenth, as shown by the *Traité* of Blasis in 1820¹¹ and the Bournonville text (*A New Year's Gift for Dance Lovers or A View of the Dance as Fine Art and Pleasant Pastime*) of 1829. In 1806, drawing his inspiration from Montesquieu,¹² he wrote: ‘Grace is a point of perfection [...], is almost impossible to define [...], the graces are that “je ne sais quoi” that nature gives to so few people’ (1806: II, 264). In 1813, in the chapter “De la Grâce et des Grâces”, he gives his personal, poetic interpretation of it, acknowledging that grace has a function that is similar to that of inspiration in Pantomime. Extending his comparison to poetry and music, he refers to the opinion of François de La Rochefoucauld, according to whom Grace in dance can be compared to Melody in music and Inspiration in poetry. Grace, he maintains, concerns all aspects, from the body's appearance, to postures and movements, the

ideal models of which must be the masterpieces of classical painting and sculpture. Movements, he adds, possess a range of nuances and vibrations, which he poetically compares to those of all musical expression.

The harmony of movement, on which grace is based, arises out of natural law, of which he cites as examples the oscillation of a pendulum, a man walking, the harmony of the stars. It is with this vision that, while starting from the principles codified under Louis XIV, he tackles anatomical analysis, the rhythmic and dynamic analysis of movement. In the latter, he sometimes even uses - though without Noverre's precision and thoroughness - some of the principles of the emerging science of biomechanics, such as the use of the big toe as a lever, or the cushioning of a fall after a jump.¹³ This explains the attention he gives to the weight of the body (Ill. 4: left-bottom) for body alignment (*aplomb*) and for the way in which the trunk acts as counterweight to the legs, whose primordial movement is to push the bust forward in running.

He pays similar attention to rhythmic analysis. Here, Despréaux establishes a close relationship between dance and poetry and - more particularly - between dance and music, which - as stated above - he also explores from an aesthetic standpoint. In this connexion, we should think of his translation of feet positions using the vowels of the alphabet, and again, his analogy, for rhythm and construction, of the breakdown of words into syllables and the breakdown of dance steps into "temps", taken from poetic metre. He also appears to be influenced by recent experiments in structural word analysis, as emerging at that time in stenography with the experiments by Samuel Taylor (1792) and Jean-Félicité Coulon de Thevenot (1803).

Conclusions

As André Jean-Jacques Deshayes explains in 1822 in *Idées générales sur l'Académie Royale de Musique et plus spécialement sur la Danse*, Despréaux's kinegraphic experiments take place in a period of great unrest, when the technical and stylistic innovations in the dance led many masters (Louis Milon, Didelot, François Coulon, Anatole, and later Albert) to seek some way of

replacing the now obsolete notation system invented by Pierre Beauchamps at the time of Louis XIV and published by Raoul Auger Feuillet in 1700.

The Despréaux system, however, goes beyond being a mere tool for preservation and transmission, as Diderot's *Encyclopédie* declared concerning Beauchamps' *Chorégraphie*, since it expresses a complex and original method of analysis in which the technical exploration of the movement intertwines with valuations of an aesthetic kind according to a global, totalising vision, so typical of ancient and eighteenth century classical culture. The same vision that would - shortly afterwards, in 1820 - inspire Carlo Blasis to draft his treatise on the art of the dance.

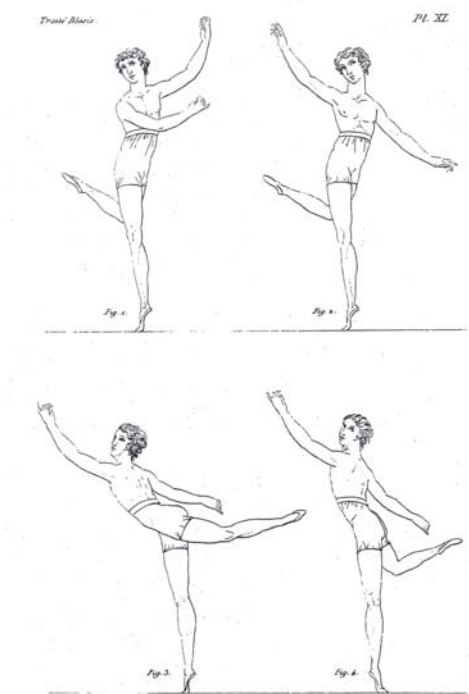
As evidence of the transition of dance from the taste of the *ancien régime* to the new school, and consequently of the technical and stylistic development of the dance at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Despréaux's manuscript is highly important for a proper interpretation of the later "academic" works (on technique and notation) by Carlo Blasis, by August Bournonville (1829), as also by Théleur (1831), Saint-Léon (1852), Adice (1859, 1868-71), and later Enrico Cecchetti (1922), which reproduce to a great extent the aesthetic concepts and pedagogic rules of the end of the eighteenth century, as laid down by Despréaux. To give an example, we may cite Enrico Cecchetti's Italian translation of the *Sténochorégraphie* by Arthur Saint-Léon, in which *Théorie* is translated by the term "grammar" (Saint-Léon, sd: 3). Yet again, the texts at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries by the German master Friedrich Albert Zorn (1887) considers, like Despréaux, *temps* as a synonym for syllable. Again, the analogy between the five positions of the feet and the five vowels of the alphabet, and again the classification of steps ("pas") into five different forms may be considered as a forerunner of Bournonville's theory of the number five.¹⁴



Ill. 5: Decorative frieze with mythological subject from the hôtel of the rue de la Victoire (end of XVIII century). Musée Nationale de Malmaison (Paris).

I shall conclude by emphasising that the Despréaux manuscript is also a major source for understanding terminological innovations - such as *aplomb*, *épaulement*, *obliquement*, *croisé*, *effacé*, *ballon*¹⁵ and *sissonne* - with the exception of the transgressive term *arabesque*, of which he makes no mention.

Indeed, the term *Arabesque*, introduced during the Revolution, was a sign of the Greek fashion (Ill. 5) and of the “revolution” to which dance was subject at the end of the eighteenth century.



Ill. 6: Plate XI of Blasis' *Traité* (1820). Drawing by Casartelli, engraving by G. Rados. F. Pappacena Collection.

Arabesque took its inspiration from the excavations at Herculaneum and Pompei and at the beginning of the nineteenth century and during the Napoleonic era had become synonymous for “deviation” from traditional academic canons, as the figures in Plate XI from Blasis' *Traité* show us (Ill. 6).¹⁶

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Endnotes

1. In this connexion, see: Pappacena (1996), Saint-Léon (2006), and Pappacena, Flavia, “Despréaux Notation System (1813): a Revolution in Dance Notation and Analysis”, *Reading Dance or Two. Recording and Passing on Dance through Time*, Conference EADH, The University of Hull, York 29-30 Oct 2005 (forthcoming in the Proceedings edited by G. Poesio).
2. In this connexion, see: Théleur (1831), Saint-Léon (1852).
3. “As is painting, so is poetry”. The affinity between painting and poetry was dealt with for the first time by Simonides of Ceos (VI century), then by the Greek poet Plutarch and by Horace in his *Ars poetica*. In XVI, XVII and XVIII centuries was dealt with by many philosophers.
4. In the letter VII, Noverre writes: ‘The ballet is, following *Plutarque*, a dumb conversation, a speaking painting that is animated and expresses itself in movements, forms and gestures’.
5. This iconography was taken up by the famous sculptor Antonio Canova who produced his version of it in 1811, reproduced in print in Blasis' *The Code of Terpsichore* (1828).
6. ‘Spéculation & pratique d’un Art’. It should be noted that in the eighteenth century, the term “spéculation” is used in such contexts with the meaning of “théorie” and, in this case, is compared to “pratique”. See also *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française* (1787).
7. A similar concept gave the title to Denis Ballière’s famous *Théorie de la Musique*, published in Paris in 1764.
8. For Noverre, dance is an art only when has the capacity of “painting” the passions. And this aspect is a characteristic quality of the pantomime.
9. Despréaux defines his system: “Dansographie universelle” with which the dances of all countries can be drawn’ (1813: 3v).
10. See 1760 edition, letter XIII.
11. On this subject Blasis dedicated an entire chapter (“Le Grazie e la Grazia”) in *Studi sulle arti imitatrici* (1844).

- ^{12.} See Charles-Louis de Secondat Montesquieu's headword "Grace" in Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie* (1751-80: VII, 805-806).
- ^{13.} I refer to *De Motu Animalium* by Giovanni Alfonso Borelli, quoted by Noverre concerning the comparison of human movement with the levers.
- ^{14.} See, in this connexion, Bournonville (2005).
- ^{15.} This theme is widely discussed in Pappacena (2005, 2006).
- ^{16.} For an in-depth discussion of the term *arabesque* and its derivation from the grotesque decorations invented by Raphael at the beginning of the sixteenth century, as well as its application to dance between the end of the eighteenth and outset of the nineteenth centuries, see Pappacena (2005).

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Les « théories » de danses nouvelles en France dans l'entre-deux-guerres : quelles sources ces documents constituent-ils pour la connaissance des pratiques dansées ?

Sophie Jacotot

Dans le domaine de la pratique sociale de la danse, l'entre-deux-guerres (1919-1939) représente, en France, l'entrée dans une ère nouvelle, qui touche au départ certaines couches sociales aisées et avides de nouveautés, avant de se diffuser rapidement à l'ensemble de la société urbaine dansante. Les trois aspects de ce renouveau sont : la multiplication numérique des lieux de danse à Paris, associée à un renouveau du bal public, notamment à travers la naissance du dancing – établissement caractérisé par la présence d'orchestres de danses nouvelles et de danseurs professionnels – ; la « dansomanie », c'est-à-dire un accroissement quantitatif du nombre de danses et un engouement assez général pour la pratique sociale de danse ; enfin, une révolution qualitative, avec l'introduction de rythmes et de formes chorégraphiques inédits, originaires dans leur quasi-totalité des Amériques, notamment des États-Unis (fox-trot, shimmy, charleston, black-bottom...), de la zone caribéenne (biguine martiniquaise, « rumba » cubaine...) et de certains pays d'Amérique du Sud comme l'Argentine et l'Uruguay (tango) ou le Brésil (maxixe, samba).

La ferveur pour les danses de société, portée par ce renouveau musico-chorégraphique, a pour conséquence la formation, en France, et dans le reste de l'Europe, de réseaux de professionnels, qui mettent en place diverses structures d'encadrement pour soutenir, diffuser et contrôler la pratique des danses de société. Les « théories », telles qu'elles sont définies alors (1^{ère} partie), participent de ce dispositif et l'enjeu de cette étude est d'analyser comment ces documents éclairent, par leurs dits (2^e partie) et leurs non-dits (3^e partie), la question des pratiques de danse.

Que sont les « théories » de danse de société ?

Ce que l'on nomme théorie dans la période étudiée est une leçon écrite qui met en mot et constitue un corpus de figures définissant une

danse. Le lien est immédiatement tissé avec la question de la pratique puisque le lecteur est censé effectuer les pas de danse en même temps qu'il en lit la théorie : celle-ci lui dicte sa pratique : « Glisser le pied droit en avant », etc. Héritières des traités de danse édités depuis le XV^e siècle, les théories connaissent néanmoins un changement d'échelle considérable dans l'entre-deux-guerres. On assiste en effet à un véritable boom éditorial en lien avec le contexte de dynamisme chorégraphique : les publications de théories se multiplient, soit sous la forme de manuels d'apprentissage, qui en rassemblent un certain nombre, soit au sein de revues spécialisées, ou encore en accompagnement des partitions de musiques de danse. Pour cette étude, j'ai travaillé sur un corpus d'une vingtaine de manuels, publiés en France, en Grande-Bretagne et aux États-Unis entre la fin du XIX^e siècle et les années 1950, ainsi que sur un vaste ensemble de théories éditées dans la presse française de l'entre-deux-guerres (*Dansons, La Tribune de la Danse, Femina*, etc.).

Jusqu'à la Belle époque, les manuels compilaient des théories de toutes les danses de société connues, aussi bien les danses tournantes et les quadrilles du XIX^e siècle, que des « danses anciennes », qui n'étaient pourtant plus pratiquées depuis des décennies, voire des siècles : la pavane ou la chaconne figurent ainsi dans le traité de Giraudet en 1890, le menuet et la gavotte dans celui de Lussan-Borel, réédité juste avant-guerre. De plus, on y trouvait les bases de la danse classique, puisque celle-ci forme, jusqu'à la Grande Guerre, le soubassement technique (les cinq positions, l'en-dehors, les pointes tendues, etc.) et terminologique (glissé, chassé, assemblé, jeté, coupé, etc.) des danses de société. Ces éléments disparaissent presque complètement dans l'entre-deux-guerres, et paraissent surtout des théories de danses nouvelles, autrement dit les

danses des Amériques dites alors « danses modernes ».

Les théories sont, dans de rares cas, introduites par une brève description de l'origine – plus ou moins phantasmée – de la danse et de son évolution récente¹. On y trouve le plus souvent une indication de la mesure musicale, parfois du type de rythme, suivie d'une description des pas du cavalier – et éventuellement de la dame – ainsi que de schémas des pas et des figures. Plus ou moins complexes – et lisibles –, ils indiquent, sous la forme de traces de pas, le trajet et parfois la durée de ceux-ci. On trouve parfois des dessins figurant les danseurs ou, plus souvent à cette époque, des photographies, peu convaincantes dans une perspective pédagogique puisqu'elles montrent des épaulements ou des pas de marche qui, sur des images fixes, sont presque identiques pour toutes les danses. Au-delà de l'aridité de leur contenu, quelles connaissances les théories nous apportent-elles sur les pratiques de danse, mais aussi sur les pratiques de transmission ou encore sur les pratiques sociales associées à la danse ?

Qu'est-ce qui est transmis par les théories ?

Les théories apparaissent comme un moyen de transmission parmi d'autres : leçons données par un professeur ou transmission par imprégnation, démonstrations proposées dans les lieux de pratique de danse ou démonstrations filmées, sans oublier la pratique, précisément, qui constitue non pas un moyen de transmission, mais la phase essentielle de l'apprentissage et de l'assimilation d'une danse de société. On va voir que la théorisation, telle qu'elle est alors entendue, c'est-à-dire comme une mise en mots et non comme une notation symbolique, constitue un moyen de transmission insuffisant, mais néanmoins une source précieuse.

On dispose de peu d'informations quant à la diffusion des manuels théoriques et à leur efficacité en tant qu'outil d'apprentissage. Destinés à un lectorat masculin et bourgeois, ils servent vraisemblablement, pour les danseurs amateurs, de complément aux cours de danse. Comme le soulignent Boucher et Gaffet dans leur manuel², « seul on peut apprendre les danses faciles, les autres seront apprises à la leçon pratique, et ce petit livre servira alors de

vade-mecum. » Stéfani souligne quant à lui que les pas qu'il présente sont « peut-être un peu difficiles pour ceux qui n'ont jamais dansé »³, reconnaissant implicitement la difficulté de la mise en pratique à partir de ces seules théories. La question du rôle de l'écrit dans la transmission soulève le problème de l'écriture du mouvement dansé et de sa pertinence dans le cas d'une pratique populaire. La fixation par écrit peut sembler contradictoire avec le caractère même de ces danses, évolutives et dont l'innovation est une dimension intrinsèque. Cette tension entre codification et spontanéité a toujours été présente dans l'histoire des danses de société mais on sait l'intérêt de la notation comme outil pédagogique qui, loin d'être un carcan, peut devenir un support de travail irremplaçable. Les systèmes de notation chorégraphique les plus élaborés, comme ceux créés par Laban, Benesh ou Conté, permettent une transcription symbolique fidèle à la complexité des mouvements du corps, mais une écriture aussi précise implique une complexité dans le déchiffrement propre à décourager les danseurs amateurs en quête de distraction. On va donc voir que d'autres choix, pas toujours probants, ont été faits par les auteurs des théories de danses.

Au lieu d'étudier les mouvements fondamentaux, dont certains sont propres à toutes les danses de la période (comme la marche en avant et en arrière) et d'autres propres à une danse en particulier (comme le *corte* pour le tango, les pieds en dedans pour le charleston, etc.), les auteurs séparent, compartimentent les danses, ce qui provoque de nombreuses redites. Même si chacune a ses propres défauts et qualités, les théories sont dans l'ensemble peu précises en matière d'effort musculaire, comme en matière de musicalité⁴. La direction des appuis et le contact au sol sont les seules choses à peu près claires. Le positionnement des partenaires l'un par rapport à l'autre – fondamental puisqu'il s'agit de danses de couple – fait l'objet de rares mentions, souvent confuses du fait que la terminologie n'est alors pas définie comme elle l'est aujourd'hui. Quant à l'orientation du couple dans la salle de danse, très peu d'auteurs en font mention alors que c'est un élément essentiel dans l'évolution des pratiques : l'orientation nouvelle est face (ou

dos) ligne de danse, alors qu'elle était face (ou dos) au mur (ou au centre) jusqu'à la Grande Guerre.

Si les théories sont assurément un mauvais outil de transmission⁵, elles nous renseignent cependant sur les pratiques sociales au bal, dans la lignée des ouvrages de bon ton du XIX^e siècle. La période considérée voit ainsi se réduire comme une peau de chagrin le chapitre consacré aux conseils de bonne tenue, témoignant d'une évolution des mœurs à laquelle les milieux les plus conservateurs sont obligés de se plier, avec un léger décalage temporel. Certains conseils de bienséance semblent néanmoins anachroniques, ainsi l'usage des gants ou du carnet de bal, abandonnés au dancing et progressivement aussi dans les salons bourgeois dans ces mêmes années. Les théories sont également porteuses d'informations originales sur le contenu des pratiques dansées, et permettent notamment de conforter des hypothèses nées de l'étude d'autres types de sources, comme les témoignages ou les films de l'époque. Ainsi, la comparaison, à partir des théories les plus précises, entre la morphologie des danses à succès et celle des danses des périodes antérieures permet d'éclairer la véritable révolution kinésique qui débute dans les années 1910, au moment de l'introduction du tango et de la maxixe à Paris, avant de s'affirmer dans l'entre-deux-guerres. Sans même parler des quadrilles, les danses de couple du XIX^e siècle, constituées de pas glissés, de tours et de petits sauts, sont formées soit d'une répétition du pas de base à l'infini (cf. valse ou polka) soit de la combinaison, fixée au préalable, de certains de ces pas (cf. scottish = 2 pas de polka + 4 pas glissés ou 4 sauts, etc.). De multiples variations autour des mêmes thèmes sont possibles, et tout le monde dans la salle de bal fait la même chose au même moment. Si l'on considère les ragtimes animaliers comme une parenthèse médiatique, peu suivie dans les pratiques, on peut en dire autant des danses de la Belle époque (valse lentes, boston...). Certains des principaux éléments distinctifs des danses en vogue dans l'entre-deux-guerres sont repérables dans les théories : leur caractère improvisé (enchaînement libre des pas et figures)⁶; la mobilisation de parties du corps qui ne l'étaient

pas jusque-là, comme le bassin (ondulation des hanches dans la biguine ou la « rumba »), ou le buste entier et non les seuls membres supérieurs (vibrations du shimmy) ; et aussi un rapport particulier au temps, avec une alternance de « vites » et de « lents » et une utilisation des contretemps de la musique – possibilité offerte par une musique syncopée comme le jazz ou les rythmes de habanera, du tresillo cubain, etc.

Qu'est-ce que les théories nous révèlent en creux sur les pratiques ?

Les théories ne sont pas le reflet exact de la manière dont les gens ont pu danser à une époque donnée, en témoignent les plaintes répétées des professeurs, dans les revues ou les manuels, à propos des danseurs qui font n'importe quoi par rapport à ce qui est prescrit. On peut toujours imaginer que des élèves studieux et obéissants ont tenté de conformer leur pratique aux théories des enseignants, mais on va voir que la richesse historique de ces documents se situe aussi ailleurs, si on les interroge autrement qu'en leur demandant de nous aider à reconstituer les danses du passé.

Il faut souligner tout d'abord la portée idéologique de la théorisation des danses. Les théories manifestent une volonté, de la part des professeurs français, de légitimer les nouvelles danses, du fait de leur transcription écrite, de leur impression sur papier et de la dénomination des figures. Témoignant d'une volonté d'appropriation, les théories peuvent apparaître aussi comme une tentative de figer les danses exogènes, de leur imposer des limites, un cadre strict dans lequel tout nouvel apprenti a le devoir de se mouvoir, sous peine d'être accusé d'immoralité. Ainsi la conga, danse carnavalesque cubaine, est-elle ramenée, dans les théories⁷, à un simple dérivé de ce qui est alors nommé la « rumba » en Europe et aux USA (c'est-à-dire le *son* cubain). Loin d'une notation des pas de danse tels qu'ils sont pratiqués par les danseurs – ni dans leur contexte d'origine ni dans leur contexte de réception –, on est bien face à des documents normatifs. On peut mesurer l'écart entre ce qui est théorisé et ce qui pouvait être pratiqué, grâce à la confrontation avec d'autres sources et à l'analyse des non-dits. Pour la biguine par exemple, on dispose de plusieurs témoignages⁸, aussi bien détracteurs

que louangeurs, décrivant la manière lascive dont elle était dansée dans les dancings parisiens, bien loin de la théorie très policée proposée dans le manuel de Charles. Si l'on prend l'exemple du tango, plusieurs films⁹ montrent des couples enlacés dans le style « milonguero », c'est-à-dire proche, alors que la plupart des théories ou des photographies de professeurs insistent sur la distance à maintenir entre les partenaires. On peut aussi percevoir incidemment, dans les théories, la mise en tension avec les pratiques des danseurs : ainsi, à propos de la scottish espagnole, les auteurs Boucher et Gaffet prennent-ils la peine de préciser, à plusieurs reprises, que « cette danse se fait sans mouvement des épaules »¹⁰, laissant supposer que les danseurs font l'inverse. De même, on peut lire que « le fox-trot doit être dansé correctement » et que « les danseurs éviteront les mauvaises positions, les déhanchements qui ne servent qu'à nuire à la danse et à la discréditer »¹¹.

La théorisation est aussi une lutte acharnée entre professeurs qui souhaitent attacher leur nom aux théories, en en faisant leur propriété, afin de bénéficier du monopole de leur enseignement. C'est vrai pour des danses inventées par ces professionnels, appelées des « créations » (le rouli-rouli, le balancello, etc.), dont on trouve les théories dans la presse et qui, significativement, ne sont pas rééditées dans les manuels, faute de succès. Mais c'est vrai aussi pour les théories des danses américaines introduites dans les dancings parisiens, parfois uniformisées lors de congrès professionnels¹². En reprenant les problématiques soulevées par Christian Dubar dans sa thèse de doctorat¹³, on peut dire que la « théorisation » donne aux professeurs la légitimité pour enseigner les nouvelles formes chorégraphiques, du fait qu'ils sont détenteurs d'un savoir théorique à leur sujet. De plus, elle rend nécessaire (en théorie) le passage par la leçon (pratique) de danse, du fait même de l'existence d'un « savoir danser » codifié auquel il faudrait se conformer.

Un dernier élément à prendre en compte pour étudier ces documents est que, dans l'entre-deux-guerres, les danses de société vont se scinder en deux types de pratiques aux objectifs et aux contenus de plus en plus distincts : à côté de la danse comme pratique sociale de loisirs,

dans les bals ou dancings, s'institutionnalise en effet la danse dite sportive, c'est-à-dire une pratique professionnelle et compétitive, dans le cadre de championnats. L'Anglais Victor Silvester, vainqueur du championnat international de 1922, auteur d'un manuel, publié pour la première fois en 1927, et de nombreux articles dans la revue *Dancing Times*, est à l'origine du mouvement de standardisation de la technique des danses de société dans un but compétitif. À partir des années 20 et surtout dans les années 30, on assiste donc à une évolution parallèle du style anglais, dit international, tandis qu'en France, les théories semblent s'adresser de plus en plus aux danseurs qui font de la compétition, comme l'indiquent certains indices : l'apparition de la cadence (nombre de pulsations par minute ou nombre de battements à la noire), ou le fait que la théorie se pense désormais en langue anglaise : « side chassés », « reverse pivot turn », « swivel et double cross », etc.¹⁴

Bien souvent, les écrits portant sur la période concluent à une codification généralisée des danses et à un appauvrissement des pratiques par rapport à ce que seraient ces danses américaines – souvent afro-américaines – dans leur contexte d'origine. Une telle interprétation me semble en partie fondée sur une lecture non distanciée des documents que sont les théories, sans nier la part nécessaire de transformation à l'œuvre dans tout processus de transfert culturel. Les théories publiées témoignent bien évidemment d'une volonté d'uniformisation et de codification, avec des leçons parfois interchangeables pour des danses ayant pourtant des caractères très distincts¹⁵. Mais le bilan de l'acculturation des danses des Amériques serait bien sombre si l'on interprétait les normes souhaitées par certains professeurs comme des faits véridiques. Le sectarisme persistant à l'égard de ceux qui ne dansent pas selon les règles et l'insistance sur la question des codes à respecter révèle la grande liberté d'interprétation par les danseurs sur la piste, au moins au dancing. Les efforts de

codification et de normalisation, imposées d'en haut par des professeurs dont c'est le gagne-pain, ne pèsent pas lourd face aux principes fondamentaux de la danse de société que sont l'adaptation, la réinterprétation ou l'improvisation. De nombreuses sources font référence à la liberté des danseurs, qui mélangent différents pas selon leur bon vouloir, la dimension de plaisir étant première¹⁶. En ce sens le dancing est l'héritier du bal public du XIX^e siècle, et non des salons mondains ou des bals de société où règnent une discipline et une pression sociale plus grandes¹⁷. De plus, on l'a dit, l'improvisation et la spontanéité caractérisent particulièrement les danses de société qui plaisent à cette époque, à la différence des contredanses, quadrilles ou danses tournantes du passé qui laissaient moins de place à l'initiative personnelle des danseurs. Il y a donc véritablement adaptation des danses des Amériques, au sens où l'on parle d'adaptation littéraire ou cinématographique, mais celle-ci se fait de manière plus spontanée qu'on ne le croit. Comme le dit si bien Peter's, un célèbre professeur des années 20, lors d'une controverse sur l'unification des enseignements, « le souci d'une épuration soignée ne doit pas aller jusqu'à transformer la danse, car ce n'est pas lui [le professeur] qui commande mais le public, c'est-à-dire le dancing »¹⁸.

Les « théories », induisant une pratique historienne spécifique – qui passe par une pratique de la danse –, sont une source nécessaire mais pas suffisante pour étudier les pratiques dansées de l'entre-deux-guerres. Leur fonction sociale est avant tout de maintenir le pouvoir des professeurs, qui sont aussi les producteurs de ces outils de transmission : un pouvoir sur les corps, mais aussi un pouvoir sur les éléments musico-chorégraphiques importés d'autres cultures. Deux stratégies coexistent face à cette vague de danses nouvelles qui submerge la société parisienne : résister, en créant des danses toujours plus « correctes » (mais sans succès), ou bien s'approprier les danses, en les

codifiant et en les transformant pour le public bourgeois des salons mondains. À la fin des années 30, les théories semblent désormais destinées principalement aux danseurs de compétition, signe peut-être de la perte définitive du pouvoir que constituait, pour les maîtres de danse, l'encadrement pédagogique des danseurs de la haute société.

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Notes

- ¹ Cf. Boucher & Gaffet, 1928, p. 30 (à propos du fox-trot) : « D'importation américaine et date de la guerre. Les « Sammies » le mirent en vogue dans tous nos bals et dancings et les salons même les plus rebelles finirent par l'adopter. Le fox-trot est une danse d'une grande originalité, au rythme relativement facile. Les musiques populaires et vite en vogue en font une danse très agréable. »
- ² *Ibidem*, p. 99.
- ³ Stéfani, 1936, p. 8.
- ⁴ Cf. Bertrand, s. d., p. 19, souligne que pour la majorité des professeurs et des « auteurs de danses », « la musique et la mesure sont choses transcendentes. »
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19 : « Il existe des musiques de danse accompagnées de théories. Quelques-unes de ces théories, nous le reconnaissons, sont bien faites ; mais hélas ! la plupart n'ont ni queue ni tête. Les journaux techniques eux-même que je reçois, les Bulletins corporatifs, sont pitoyables sous ce rapport. »
- ⁶ Cf. Castle, 1914, p. 108 : « you do the steps as they occur to you ».
- ⁷ Cf. *La Tribune de la danse*, juin 1934.
- ⁸ Cf. Brigitte Léardée et Jean-Pierre Meunier, *La biguine de l'Oncle Ben's. Ernest Léardée raconte*, Paris, Éditions caribéennes, 1989 ; ou encore de nombreux articles de la revue *Jazz-Tango*.
- ⁹ Voir par exemple un court film d'actualités Gaumont, datant vraisemblablement du début des années 1920, inclus dans le montage d'archives « Bals » réalisé par le Centre National de la Danse en 1996 ; ou encore les films *Fait divers* de Claude Autant-Lara (1923), *Prix de beauté* d'Augusto Genina (1930), *Jalousie* de Jean de Limur (1936), etc.
- ¹⁰ Boucher et Gaffet, *op.cit.*, p. 32.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.30.
- ¹² Cf. *Dansons*, n°7, 1^{er} mai 1922, p. 1 : « Congrès annuel de l'Académie des maîtres de danse les 4 et 5 juin 1922, Hôtel Lutétia, programme : démonstration

- des danses nouvelles et révision des danses modernes ».
- 13 Christian Dubar, *Danse : sport, culture ou éducation ? Le problème de l'enseignement des danses de société en France*, thèse de Sciences de l'éducation, sous la direction de Rémi Hess, Université de Paris 8- Saint-Denis, 1999.
 - 14 *La Tribune de la danse*, n°1, décembre 1933, p. 6 : « Variations dans le Fox-Trot ».
 - 15 Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 7 : la « théorie de la Rumba », par Georges Lefort et Alex Lubarsky, présente des descriptions techniques très normalisées, voire identiques pour des danses différentes, avec pour seule distinction la mention « ces pas doivent être accompagnés d'un léger mouvement de hanches ».
 - 16 Cf. Dansons, n° 74, août 1926, p. 85 : « Entré en maître dans nos salons et nos dancings, le charleston a subi la loi commune de toutes nos danses en vogue : il a évolué avec le tempérament et l'individualité de chacun de ses adeptes. Dans les salons, il est resté le Charleston modeste et calme que Robert Sielle et Miss Annette Mills présentèrent au Claridge au début de l'hiver ; Au dancing, il a repris une teinte d'origine qu'il convient de noter, car dans de nombreux établissements, les couples (...) exécutent un Charleston du plus beau noir, qu'un nègre lui-même ne saurait désavouer. »
 - 17 Giraudet le soulignait déjà en 1890.
 - 18 Peter's, *Dansons*, n°72, juin 1926, p. 52 : « Le Congrès de l'UIC » [Union Internationale des Chorégraphes].
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The Practice of Dance at the Crossroad between Pragmatic Documentation, Artistic Creativity and Political Reflection: Sources of the Theatrical Dance of the Early 19th Century

Stephanie Schroedter

In the first half of the 19th century the theatrical dance was characterized by a particular creativity, not only in the field of the dancing's choreographic practice but also in the field of the development of theories, for the latter of which Paris (at first) proved to be the focal point of the reflections: Against the backdrop of the experiences they had gathered at the Paris Opéra or rather the former Académie royale de musique, acknowledged dancers and choreographers like Jean-Étienne Despréaux (1748–1820),¹ André Jean-Jacques Deshayes (1777–1846),² Carlo Blasis (1797–1878),³ (Charles-Victor) Arthur (Michel) Saint-Léon (1821–1870)⁴ and Giovanni-Léopold Adice (?–?)⁵ developed theories of dance including dance notations. First and foremost these theories were meant to serve the improvement of the practice but as further consequence also to establish a science of dance in its historical, aesthetical and political dimension. Although initial attempts in this respect go back to the late 17th century, the claim for establishing the art of dance as being both an artistic and a scientific discipline got a new impetus at the beginning of the 19th century – although at this point in time the Royal Dance Academy had already terminated its activities (since approx. 1780). Thus the call for a new institution or rather ‘institutionalization’ of the development of theories in order to make them officially usable for being put into practice grew louder again.⁶

The different attempts at approaching the dance are fascinating here. It seems that the common denominator is that they have all been developed against the backdrop of practical experiences, thus turning practice and theory into an inseparable unit. The following basic tendencies of these arguments can be detected:

1. The endeavour for a ‘pragmatic’ documentation of the dance – often combined with the demand to record fundamental,

universal and principal issues, which inform also about aesthetical intentions

2. artistic sketches for one's own use, often referring to separate ballets as concret examples for artistic creativity,
3. ‘political’ reflections on the current situation as well as on the future of the art of dance – in connection with the attempt to put an end to the deplorable state of affairs.

Pragmatic documentation

What becomes evident in the course of the attempts at a ‘pragmatic’ documentation of the dance, are the new approaches to the formation of a universally binding dance notation. In this context the unmistakable orientation towards the Feuillet notation is remarkable. On the one hand it shows in the combination of melody in relation to dance movements, on the other hand in the undertaking of making first notation exercises in ‘old’ dances or rather dance melodies – as illustrated by Despréaux's notations of a *Menuet de la Cour*, *Figure du Menuet ancien*, *Menuet d'exaudet*, *Contredanse*, *Air de la Camargo*, *Air de Malboroug[h]*, *Folies d'Espagne*, *La Forlane Danse ancienne* etc.⁷

Here innovations are made on the basis of traditions, particularly as the latter prove – at least partly – to be still practical and to offer rewarding starting points for new notation drafts. In Arthur Saint-Léon's *Sténochoregraphie* this older history of dance ‘only’ revives in the facsimiles of Louis-Guillaume Pecour's *La Conty* (from his *Receuil de Dances*, Paris 1700) and *Folie d'Espagne* (from the *Receuil de Dances*, Paris 1704) as appendix following the notation examples (as well as in a separate depiction of *Portraits et Biographies des plus célèbres Maîtres de Ballets anciens et modernes*). But the fact that Saint-Léon resumes with his notation system a younger tradition, namely Despréaux's notation draft, shows the

continuity of a long development, which reaches here a 'classic' high point and temporary end.⁸

Among Blasis' and Adice's (as well as E.A Théleur's)⁹ notation approaches and extensive verbal descriptions concerning, amongst others, issues like movement techniques and choreography, stand Léon Michel's or Michel St. Léon's (*1767 or 1777, † ? in Paris) 'notebooks' with exercises and single choreographic numbers in combination with melody indices which refer to the complete violin tunes in the appendix.¹⁰ Although these 'notes' seem to have been meant for private use only, they constitute a significant source of dance practice of the early 19th century due to their endeavours at giving (relatively) exact and extensive details, which make them a 'pragmatic' documentation of movement sequences.

Blasis and Adice though address a wider public, elaborating on fundamentals of a general nature: Although Adice may be sceptical about the publications of Blasis, he nevertheless builds upon them by endeavouring to eliminate their deficits and flaws. His own publication from the year 1859 with its almost 200 pages seems rather modest in comparison to Blasis' manuscript, which consists of more than 1.000 pages, partly illustrated.¹¹ Sandra Noll Hammond's valuable work on the deciphering of these manuscripts (as well as on the deciphering of the general developments of dance techniques at the beginning of the 19th century) does not only contribute to the reconstruction of the dance practice in question, but also aims at the comprehension of the tense relation of theory to practice in that very period of time. It shows that the endeavours of those theories to obtain a 'pragmatic' documentation are especially confronted with the problem of the dance's complexity and transience, both of which continuously make their attempts seem inappropriate: The fact that in the end Arthur Saint-Léon's polished notation system failed to gain broader acceptance and Adice's extensive manuscript stayed unpublished speaks for itself.

Artistic creativity

Another approach at fixing fleeting formations of movement can be seen in the notes and graphic sketches of separate ballets by

Despreaux and Deshayes, which were probably meant for private use only.¹² Here is still a whole host of material waiting for its analytical decoding. The notes consists of a combination of abstract recordings of choreographic formations and floor movements (from bird's eye view), verbal hints at costumes and props or rather decoration objects as well as of sketches regarding the scenery and group formations (frontal view). They impress due to the vividness and dynamics of the way in which movement is depicted. Instead of a pragmatic documentation, the artistic intention or rather creativity stands in the foreground here, which is sketched in a much more individual-subjective fashion¹³ than in the 'Musterbücher' (sample volumes), which are related to these sources, since they also focus on decorative group formations. Examples are the 'Musterbücher' by Alfons Klab¹⁴ and Franz Opfermann¹⁵ or the 'Livrets de mise-en-scène' by Henri Justament¹⁶ and Joseph Hansen¹⁷, which depict or rather develop in their strictly stylized graphic representations primarily 'stereotypes' and are thus structured more 'pragmatically'.

Political Reflection

I would like to focus here on a form of 'documentation' that follows above all 'political' intentions by mentioning the deplorable state of affairs in the dance practice with special emphasis on the dance instruction and the everyday routines at the theatre in order to cause changes: An exemplary comparison between J.-J. Deshayes' *Idées Générales sur l'académie royale de musique* (published in 1822) and A. Saint-Léon's *De l'état actuel de la danse* (released in print in 1856) shall investigate what conclusions concerning the dance practice at that time can be drawn by this kind of theoretical reflections.

The title of Deshayes' publication already makes one understand that his explanations focus on the Paris Opéra. Beforehand he had already developed 'ideas' for a professional theatrical-dance instruction in Vienna.¹⁸ The outstanding position of the Paris *Sanctuaire des Beaux-Arts* is repeatedly emphasized at the beginning. At the same time he stresses the necessary attempt to make *quelques nouveaux essays* on the basis of venerable traditions to

prevent falling into a routine that extinguishes every *Génie* (p. 7f). And although the Opéra had just moved into the Salle de la rue Le Peletier in 1821, Deshayes demands already in his first chapter (*De l'Edifice, de la Salle, du Théâtre, et de l'Eclairage*, pp. 7–13) the erection of a new *Edifice monumental* that meets international standards and has a big stage with enough space for spectacular sceneries and stage machinery at its disposal, since *l'Opéra [...] est en partie le spectacle des yeux; il est donc utile de ne rien négliger pour les satisfaire* (p. 8).

Especially informative is Deshayes' advice concerning the instruction of prospective dancers as well as singers (*Des Ecoles de Chant et de Danse*, pp. 13–15), for whom he emphasizes first of all *qualities* or rather *dispositions physiques* as fundamental preconditions, [... parce] *que les dons de la nature sont des avantages essentiels à la scène* (p. 14). At the same time he warns about having educated especially the talented too hastily, without giving them enough time for the necessary foundation of their dance technique, which is essential for a long-term success.¹⁹ After all, it would contribute to the profitability of a dance education that is subsidized by the state, if every successful graduate was offered an engagement of several years so that he could present his talent and at the same time pay back the education that his country had invested in him. An important precondition for the success of an education was first of all the selection of competent teachers, on whom the development of the art or rather the budding artist essentially depends.

In the context of this instruction process the establishment of a theatre school could function as a helpful institution (*De la création d'une Ecole théâtrale*, pp. 15–18), for which Deshayes had already been speaking out since 1816 to no avail, as he points out: There the students should work under professional conditions before performing in public (*une scène secondaire, mais première dans ses principes*, p. 17) and graduate with an *examen* before a *jury dramatique* (p. 17).²⁰ Just as vehemently Deshayes propagates the resurrection of the former Royal Dance Academy as the authority that ensures the quality of the theatrical dance (*Du Rétablissement de l'ancienne Académie Royale*

de Danse, pp. 18–24). Comparable with the founding statutes of the original Académie, it would be in charge of determining the principles of the art of dance, of classifying the steps and their terminology as well as of developing a dance notation.²¹ Finally, national and international artists should be members of this academy to encourage an international exchange.

I would like to sum up the following chapters even more briefly than the previous ones, focusing especially on Deshayes' statements on the features of the productions of the Opéra (*Genre caractéristique de la scène lyrique et mimique de l'Académie Royale de musique*, p. 25f), on the dance genres (*De l'avantage des genres dans la danse*, pp. 39–42) and on his propositions for a hierarchical structure of the dance ensemble (*Du mode qu'on devrait suivre pour accorder les places aux artistes dans tous les emplois*, pp. 43–45).²²

Characteristic of the productions of the Académie royale de musique were *le merveilleux et la magnificence*, for the realization of which especially mythological and historical stories, fairy tale dramas, 'high comedies', pastorals and poetry from all over the world should be brought in. Deshayes considered *Légères productions* from a less respectable genre as unworthy of the Opéra:

Dans cette terre classique du merveilleux, les plaisanteries de mauvais goût ne doivent jamais avoir droit de bourgeoisie. Montons-nous sévères dans le choix des ouvrages, et ne souffrons jamais qu'un acteur soit plaisant avec bassesse, gai avec trivialité, et noble avec une fausse dignité (p. 26).

In his discussions of the different dance genres²³ he puts special emphasis on the various physiognomies of the dancers, who respectively are more or less suitable for the genre sérieux, demi-caractère or comique. Unfortunately, this principle would be neglected far too often: Despite their different dispositions, dancers would be used in one or the other genre, as if they were equally talented in all of them. Thus the dance as well as the dancers were severely harmed, since the actual strength of the

theatrical dance was exactly this distinction between the genres. The mixing of the genres up to their complete absence had resulted in the contemporary monotony, which could only be counteracted by clearly distinguishing the genres again.²⁴

In view of the formation of a fixed hierarchy of the ensemble in the course of the 19th century, the very next chapter is of special interest, since there Deshayes gives pieces of advice regarding the organisation of an ensemble or rather its structure: He recommends an international competition to fill the ranking order or rather to decide over single positions within the ensemble to ensure a first-class cast.

It seems reasonable that Saint-Léon knew Deshayes' *Idées générales* and that with his report *De l'État actuel de la danse* he wanted to present an update of the explanations of his older colleague from his personal point of view. Thus the object is to identify especially the differences between Saint-Léon's discussion in comparison with Deshayes' explanation in order to detect against this backdrop a possible change of the dance practice. This comparative 'reading' also has to detect the gaps and blanks – the things not mentioned – so that one can draw conclusions with regards to possible changes. Due to the necessary brevity here, this approach of the interpretation of a source can only be made clear exemplarily: Thus Saint-Léon does not look exclusively at the Opéra at the beginning of the first chapter, rather he praises the variety of theatres in Paris (*17 principaux théâtre* [sic], p. 3): Including the circus halls, suburban and small theatres without specializations, there were altogether 24 stages with an average of about six theatres for each genre. Hence Saint-Léon does not distinguish between 'venerable' theatres or rather genres and less 'serious' ones like Deshayes, but he adds them all up and calculates an average which results in a fascinating variety of forms that Saint-Léon praises insistently. But that is not all: He emphasizes that the competition among the theatres was especially stimulating for the dance, thus he rather propagates the vivid exchange instead of the strict dissociation or rather stylization of an isolated temple of the muses that stands out within the theatre landscape. Nonetheless Saint-Léon regrets that the dance

was painfully neglected, since only the Opéra had a permanent ensemble, whereas other theatres had to be content with *Divertissement[s]*, *spectacle[s]* *choregraphique[s]* *stérile[s]*, *dénué[s]* *d'intérêt*, *monotone[s]*. Everything is directed at the Opéra but

le ballet ne s'adresse t-il donc pas à toutes les classes de la société, n'est-il donc pas aussi bien compris par la généralité du public que par celui de l'Académie Imperiale? (p. 4)

– the discrepancy to Deshayes is clearly audible. In addition to this, the overwhelming props, which Deshayes had pointed out as a great feature of the Opéra, seem to have turned into a risk: Saint-Léon criticizes that a lack of choreographic content and monotony was often concealed by the excessive luxury of stage scenery, decoration and costumes.

In his discussion of the dance instruction (*Des Conservatoires de Danse*, pp. 7–10) he also refers to the absolutely necessary dispositions of prospective dancers, as there were *la force, le don d'imitation, la grâce naturelle, l'esprit meme [...] le physique, la conformation et l'oreille* (p. 8). Thus he differentiates and completes Deshayes' vague references to *dons de la nature* (pp. 13f).²⁵ In this listing of the preconditions of dancers, Saint-Léon wrongly puts the ears last though, considering that music is of particular importance to him: *la musique est l'âme de la danse, elle est à la danse ce que l'organe est au langage* (p. 8). Therefore he provides in his draft for a dance instruction with special musical training for dancers (see below).

Finally, Saint-Léon also stresses the necessity of the development of a special language, *figurée, écrite et remplaçant la parole* (p. 9), in order to counter the ephemeral character of the art of dance. In this context he refers to his *Stenochorégraphie*, which he intends to introduce as compulsory subject at dance schools, since it can only be of benefit, if it is used on a wider base. Deshayes' call for the resurrection of the Académie royale de danse is thus replaced by Saint-Léon's suggestion of the curriculum of a dance instruction that directly combines theory and practice:

1. *Classe préparatoire – dispositions des membres (travail our ainsi dire anatomique)*
2. *Classe de principes, avec adjonction à cette classe d'une leçon de solfège*
3. *Classe intermédiaire et de Sténochorégraphie, avec obligation pour l'élève de lire et d'écrire cette langue de la danse* (p. 10)

Deshayes' demand for a 'revival' (*régénérer*) of *principes fondamentaux* (p. 20) in the context of the future dance academy corresponds with Saint-Léon's demand for obeying the *règles, méthodes* and *exercices* within this dance instruction, but here they are completed by less dogmatic *résumés d'expérience* (p. 9).

And: Whereas Deshayes already suggested an improvement of the organization of the ensemble, Saint-Léon spends one of his altogether only four-chapter long discussion on the structuring of the Corps de Ballet – it could not be more obvious how the status of the structuring of the ensemble has increased in the course of the first half of the 19th century. But Saint-Léon fiercely criticizes the lack of discipline in contemporary ensembles: Only in the children's ballets of the Vienna ballet master Josephine Weiß and her Munich colleague Friedrich Horschelt he sees that precision of the movements, perfect formations of lines, squares, circles and diagonals which one could usually only find in the military. Saint-Léon's numerous allusions to military formations are clearly not only subjective associations, but reflect the influence of political everyday life on the theatrical dance: The various forms of political references in the ballets of the 19th century would be worth an analysis of its own. It is remarkable how consequent Saint-Léon is in this respect with the development of an own aesthetic which he intends to support with rules:

Il faut donc établir des règles pour cette partie de la chorégraphie de même qu'elle existe pour les manœuvres militaires, et à cette théorie joindre la pratique. (p. 12).

That is not all though: A separate *classe de corps de ballet* should be established, the

organization of which should be *quasi militaire* (p. 12). In this context he suggests for example that all positions in the ensemble should be numbered consecutively and each dancer should get a fixed place to make the organization of the *manœuvres linéaires* easier. At the same time, jealousy among the dancers would be avoided, which could jeopardize the line movement and result in a *cacophonie chorégraphique*.²⁶

In his final chapter *Du Genre actuel de la Danse, des Danseurs, des Danseuses, des Maîtres de Ballet, de la Danse de Salon* Saint-Léon complains about the obvious loss of quality in all fields of the art of dance. Even the audience was no longer able to spot dance talents, was only paying attention to empty virtuosités and was thus triggering the wrong development among the artists.

Therefore it is not astonishing that there did no longer exist any outstanding soloists who were embodying different styles or rather 'genres', let alone develop them. In this context Deshayes' differentiation of the genre *sérieux*, *démi-caractère* and *comique* is replaced by Saint-Léon's detailed description of the different styles of dancing by Marie Taglioni, Fanny Elßler, Fanny Cerrito and Carlotta Grisi. Finally, Saint-Léon regrets the low status of male dancers in the contemporary theatrical dance, with Perrot being an exceptional case. Deshayes, in turn, had praised various dance and choreography colleagues without mentioning one single female artist. Despite the deplorable state of affairs, which Saint-Léon turns to in great detail in his closing remarks, he can only spot a new originality in the ballroom dance, the latter having been completely ignored by Deshayes: *La joyeuse jeunesse [...] a créé une espece de fantaisie semi-séria [...]*. And since there had been always an exchange between the theatrical dance and the ballroom dance, Saint-Léon speculates: *On verra peut-être sortir de ce caprice choregraphique un nouveau genre caractère.* (p. 19) Thus Saint-Léon's discussion opens the view not only towards other theatres in Paris – including a comparison between the French provinces and the capital as well as other European theatres up to St. Petersburg –, but it also turns its attention to the various levels of cultural trade, the interaction between theatrical and ballroom dance as well as that between the

practice of dance and that of music. As a result, the theatrical dance is embedded in a broad cultural context that makes it appear to be a reflex to social phenomena. Deshayes, in turn, was first of all aiming at adoring the Paris Opéra in the form of a monumental *sanctuaire des Beaux-Arts*, far away from social realities.

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Endnotes

- 1 Compare his hand-written draft of a dance notation: *Danse-Ecrite ou Terpsi-c[h]oro-graphie ou nouvel Essai de Théorie de la Danse*, Paris 1813, which is stored in the Fonds Deshayes of the Bibliothèque/musée de l'Opéra (Pièce 4 and 7bis).
- 2 Compare the hand-written *Travail sur l'art de la danse, considéré sous tout ses portées, avec un projet d'organisation pour une école de Danse, demandé au sieur Deshayes, par la cour de Vienne, Autriche* and the outline of a *Projet d'une Ecole Impériale de Danse pour le service du Théâtre de la Cour de Vienne* in the Fonds Deshayes (Pièce 5) as well as his printed *Idées générales sur l'Académie royale de musique*, Paris 1822.
- 3 Compare among others *Traité élémentaire, théorique et pratique de l'art de la danse* [...], Mailand 1820, which Blasis had started to write in Paris, his *Manuel complet de la danse, contenant la théorie, la pratique et l'histoire de cet art* [...], Paris 1830 (newly edited as *Nouveau manuel complet de la danse*, Paris 1884) as well as his *Code complet de la danse*, Paris 1830 – just to mention his French publications (or rather translations).
- 4 Compare his *Sténochorégraphie ou l'Art d'écrire la danse*, Paris 1852, and his *De l'état actuel de la danse*, Lissabon 1856.
- 5 Compare his *Théorie de la gymnastique de la danse théâtrale*, Paris 1859, as well as the manuscripts of the Bibliothèque/musée de l'Opéra: *Arabesques* [B.61(4)], *Essai sur l'origine, les progrès et la décadence de la Danse théâtrale* (13. février 1873) [C.5426(1-6)], *Grammaire et théorie chorégraphique/composition de la gymnastique de la danse théâtrale* (17. mai 1868–17. juillet 1871) [B.61(1–3)] and *Notes sur la direction E. Perrin* [B.61(5)].
- 6 Deshayes, *Idées générales* (see endnote 2), p. 18ff, compare further down.
- 7 For a detailed discussion of Despreaux' notation system, compare Pappacena 1996 as well as Pappacena's contribution to this congress.
- 8 For Saint-Léons dance notation compare Hammond 1982, as well as Hutchinson Guest 1996 and the wonderful new facsimile reproduction of Saint-Léons *Sténochorégraphie* with detailed commentaries by Pappacena 2006.
- 9 Théleurs (pseud. for Taylor) *Letters on dancing*, London 1831, were ignored here due to their British

- provenance. Compare the reprint, commented and edited by Hammond 1990 as well as Hutchinson Guest 1995.
- 10 Michel Saint-Léons notebooks are also kept in the Bibliothèque/musée de l'Opéra aufbewahrt (*Cahier Exercices des 1829*, Rés. 1137, and *Cahier d'Exercices Pour L.L.A.A. Royales les Princesses de Wurtemberg 1830*, Rés. 1140), although they originated at the Court of Württemberg in Stuttgart. Nevertheless, Michel St. Léon was able to fall back on his experiences as dancer and choreographer at the Paris Opéra from 1803 to 1817. Compare Hammond 1992a and 2006.
- 11 Compare Hammond 1984, 1992b and 1995.
- 12 They lie in the Fonds Deshayes der Bibliothèque/musée de l'Opéra (compare endnote 13). Flavia Pappacena publishes in her article La 'Terpsi-choro-graphie' di J.-E. Despréaux (see endnote 7) two sketches going back to Deshayes (*groupe d'Adagio* and a scene from *Le Maure de Grenade*, 1820).
- 13 Correspondingly they are also called Croquis de la danse (Pièce 6) and Croquis de ballet de Despréaux (Pièce 7bis).
- 14 Stored in the Austrian Theatermuseum Wien, compare Oberzaucher-Schüller 2000.
- 15 Stored in the Tanzarchiv Köln and the Derra de Moroda Dance Archives Salzburg, compare Jeschke 2007.
- 16 Compare Bibliothèque/musée de l'Opéra Signatur B. 317 (1–17) (another part of the manuscript lies in the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library). Compare also Jeschke 2003a and 2003b.
- 17 Compare Bibliothèque/musée de l'Opéra: „Chorégraphies identifiées et non identifiées. Esquisses au crayon ou à l'encre avec nombreuses annotations Signatur B. 905 (1-37)
- 18 Compare endnote 2.
- 19 Also compare chapter *Des débuts en general*, pp. 37–39.
- 20 For further details of the dance instruction at the Paris Opéra, especially the training, compare Chapman 1989.
- 21 In a footnote covering two pages, Deshayes comments on the current state of the dance notation, which for him (other than for Noverre) is absolutely essential. He classifies it as being still in its infancy. In this respect, he mentions approaches by Despréaux, Milon, Didelot, Coulon père and Anatole and regrets that they had never been published. Deshayes also complains about the long- overdue new edition of Charles Compans' *Dictionnaire de la Danse*, Paris 1787. In addition to this, a detailed discussion of the „Chiromanie or rather art of gestures should be approached, especially since Johann Jakob Engel's *Ideen zu einer Mimik*, Berlin 1788, were primarily addressing actors. At this point Deshayes emphasizes that the Italian (dance) pantomime had produced much more variety than the French one. And he refers to the necessity of a discussion of a specific dance „Chirolgy, that is the art to communicate through signs. Finally, he complains that Dauberval's great

- successes (in the field of the pantomime or rather the mimic dance) were only kept alive through his few students – and might probably be forgotten soon. At the backdrop of this, written documentation was the more important. But one would need *des hommes dont la brillante pratique et la théorie supérieure*, which could overcome the difficulties of the project he had presented: Practice and theory are thought of as inseparable.
- 22 His references to the development of repertoire (*De la reception des Ouvrages*, pp. 26–28; *De la fixation du nombre d'opéra, et de ballets nouveaux à mettre chaque année*, pp. 28–30) to the *Régisseur général de la scène* (pp. 31–34), to the deplorable state of affairs among the painters (p. 34f) and possible improvements among the mechanics (p. 35f), to the entrance examination (*Du Comité décidant les débuts*, p. 36f) or rather the beginning of the artistic career (*Des débuts en general*, ü. 37f) and to other matters of props and organization up to the new regulation of artist salaries in the final *Mot sur le materiel* (pp. 45–49) cannot be reproduced here due to lack of space.
 - 23 In a footnote Deshayes defines genre as *caractères de la danse composée, et non les différentes danses nationales de tel ou tel pays* (p. 39). Thus he distinguishes between the genre sérieux, demi-caractère and comique as superordinate categories and the national dances as subordinate category, being used as interlude dances within the superordinate genres that is.
 - 24 At this point Deshayes outs himself firmly as a traditionalist, who still rejects any routine: *Je ne puis m'empêcher de croire que la réorganisation de l'Académie Royale de danse, n'ait une puissante influence pour réhabiliter les vrais principes et les bonnes traditions, qui, quoiqu'on en puisse dire seront toujours de mode* – and he adds in a footnote: [...] *je suis loin de penser comme ces esprits routiniers, qui n'admettent que ce qui s'est fait autrefois, et qui ne veulent savoir que ce qu'ils ont appris*. (p. 42)
 - 25 To ensure these preconditions, he demands *un examen scrupuleux medico-chirurgical* (p. 9).
 - 26 Apart from drawing parallels to military manoeuvres, Saint-Léon often makes comparisons between the orchestra and the Corps de Ballet, both of which are meant to support the effect of the soloists and thus have to play together properly p. 12).
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A Path between Practice and Theory: Philosophies of The body and Systems of Recording dance

Sue In Kim

Introduction

Korean dance and the influential Eastern theories are the subjects in this study. Particularly, I focus upon the Korean court dance of the Joseon¹ era (1392-1910), *Jeongjae*, using the philosophical notions inherent in Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism to penetrate the meaning behind the symbols. By revisiting Eastern theories, I come near to understand what it means to place my body parts in correct positions.

I focus on language and recordings as a bridge between practice and theory. It is because language and recordings are the means for communication which is core both at practice and theory. To build a theory language and recording are the first step, deciding what things are to be recorded/talked about and how they should be recorded/talked about. At the same time, language and recordings are used to practice a dance (for choreographing, teaching, pre-serving, etc.).

Furthermore, I look at the language and the records because the ways people translate experience of the world into signs reveal how people see the world. An American anthropologist Franz Boas argues that language reflects psychological reality, noting that “each language has a peculiar tendency to select this or that aspect of the mental image which is conveyed by the expression of the thought.”² For the Korean Court, as for Baroque dance, linguistic and graphic recording systems exist from which I attempt to read the codes of the system users. Brenda Farnell, an anthropologist of human movements, argues that a style of thinking restrains researchers of the style to see only what the style allows them to see.³ I attempt to highlight the codes of *Jeongjae* which might be different from researchers’ of today.

Among the various modes of verbalizing, I focus on terminology, i.e. names of dance movements, because I believe that terminology is one of the first steps to translate non-verbal events to verbal labels. I agree with an American communication theorist Marcel Danesi who notes

that words are not just convenient labels for already-existing concepts. According to Danesi, “[words] make specific kinds of concepts available to the members of a culture.”⁴ From Danesi’s remark, I draw a question: what are the specific kinds of concepts available to the members of *Jeongjae* culture as they are revealed in dance movement terminology?

Among a few studies of Korean dance and *Jeongjae*, and even less studies of its terminology, the most influential ones to this study are from two prominent researchers: Judy Van Zile and Son Sun-sook. Although they are from different backgrounds—Van Zile is from anthropological and movement analysis perspective and Son Sun-sook is as an expert in performing and reconstructing *Jeongjae*—both scholars point out similar predicament found in *Jeongjae* terminology. Van Zile writes briefly about “the earliest dance terminology”⁵ by noting that

It is difficult to determine the precise nature and meaning of the earliest dance terminology. Because of the challenges of capturing movement details in words, even when words assumed to mean “dance” are found, little is known about the characteristics of the movements to which such words referred.⁶

Although Van Zile focuses on words for dance in general and specific kinds of dance rather than words for movements, here she alludes to the relationship between words and movement detail or words and the characteristics of movements. Son Sun-sook expresses the same concern: it is difficult to perform *Jeongjae* based on words in the historical documents because the movement details are not recorded in the documents.⁷ According to Son Sun-sook, the dance movements are the most ambiguous factor in reconstructing *Jeongjae* from the original documents.⁸

After exploring the characteristics of *Jeongjae* terminology, I discuss Eastern theories of

language, the body which I expect to find a contingent point with the challenges in *Jeongjae* terminology. The object of the study is *Jeongjae mudo holgi* (정재무도홀기: 呈才 舞蹈笏記) published by The Academy of Korean Studies, which is a compilation of the governmental documents dated from 1893 to 1901. Also, Son Sun-sook's *Dictionary of Korean Court Dance Terminology* lends assistance in analysis of terminology. In addition, for discussing diagrams of *Jeongjae* I include another historical document *Akhakgwebeom* (악학궤범: 樂學軌範), which was originally issued in 1493 by Sung Hyun as the main editor and is a book of music theory with information on music, dance, song, instruments, stage props, costumes, etc.

Characteristics of *Jeongjae* terminology

In this section, I explore how and why there are challenges of capturing movement details in words, as noted by both Van Zile and Son Sun-sook. With a close examination of the listed terms and Son Sun-sook's interpretation, I suggest that the reason for the ambiguity can be found in following factors.

First of all, when reconstruction of *Jeongjae* depends on interpretation of the words, if the literal meanings of the words are too general, it is difficult to perform the terms. For example, terms including *Mu* (무: 舞), which means "dance," are too general to perform in practice. In the *Dictionary*, a hundred and five terms include the word *Mu*. It is easier to figure out how to dance a term which includes the word *Mu*, when it has other movement descriptors as in *Ki-lip-yi-mu* (기립이무: 起立而舞) which means "dance with standing up." The problem arises when *Mu* is used with other general words as in *Su-mu* (수무: 手舞) which means "a hand dance" or as in *Mu-jak* (무작: 舞作) which means "dance making." In such cases, the terms lack information of how exactly one moves his/her body. For *Mu-jak*, Son Sun-sook notes that the literal meaning does not inform the reader whether it is a hand movement or a leg movement.⁹ She suggests that *Mu-jak* should be understood not as a concrete dance movement, but as the whole meaning of "dance."¹⁰ For *Su-mu*, it is a hand movement; however, it is not explicit how to move the hand or hands. Son proposes that *Su-mu* should be understood as

something related to all upper-body movement.¹¹

Moreover, there are terminologies with *Mu* which do not refer to movement (or action). For example, *Su-ack-jul-mu* (수악절무: 隨樂節舞) means "to dance along with the musical process." Son Sun-sook interprets that *Su-ack-jul-mu* does not mean a specific movement (or action), but something embracing the whole movement.¹²

Secondly, general words are not only the terms which combine with *Mu* with other general words. Even for the terminologies categorized as movement (or action), Son Sun-sook views that those do not give exact details of body movements, but general descriptions.¹³ Among the terms which Son Sun-sook lists as movements (or actions), there are some movements for which it is relatively easy to capture movement details. For example, *Il-bi-gu-il-bi-ju* (일비거일비저: 一臂舉一臂低) means "to raise one arm and to lower one arm." By contrast, *Dea-sum-su* (대섬수: 大閃袖) which means "a greatly luminous sleeve" does not give detailed information.

Thirdly, there are terms Son Sun-sook categorizes as metaphorical. Metaphorical terms are figurative and poetic. According to Son Sun-sook, metaphorical terms are highly unclear for inferring movements from the literal meanings. In the historical documents metaphorical terms are written parallel to common terms of actual movements. For example, in *Chun-aeng-jun*, the term *Yun-geu-so* (연귀소: 燕歸巢) which means "a sparrow returning to its nest" is written with *Mu-teo* (무퇴: 舞退) which means "to go back while dancing." Therefore, even though the dance movement (to go back while dancing) is called *Mu-teo* in the other *Jeongjae*, it is called as *Yun-geu-so* when it is danced in *Chun-aeng-jun*. If the purpose of *Jeongjae* terminology is to record the visual structure of dance movement, I ask why metaphorical terms are necessary when there are common terms for that purpose.

In making a metaphor, visual structures are not crucial elements. For example, *Bi-gum-sa* (비금사: 飛金沙) which means "flying golden sand" in *Chun-aeng-jun* is written with *Jin-teo* (진퇴: 進退) which means "to go forward and backward." Again, in terms of the visual structure "flying" and "going forward and backward" have little similarity. However, the emphasis is on the

quality of moving energy of how the movement should be moved as golden sand flies. Similarly, *Gwa-kyo-sun* (과교선: 過橋仙) in *Chun-aeng-jun* literally means “a Daoist hermit crossing a bridge.” The actual movement written besides it is *Jwa-woo-il-dea-jun* (좌우일대전: 左右一大轉) which means “to turn largely once each for left and right.” Considering that there are few bridges in a circular structure throughout the history and the world, to capture turning movements as crossing a bridge is not realistic. I propose that it is the quality or effect of the movement that the metaphor focused on.

Moreover, there are different metaphorical terms for the same movement. *Heo-ran* (회란: 廻鸞) in *Chun-aeng-jun* which means “a spinning bird” is written with *Jwa-woo-il-dea-jun* (좌우일대전: 左右一大轉), as is *Gwa-kyo-sun* (과교선: 過橋仙). Son Sun-sook casts a question about using “*Heo-ran*” and “*Gwa-kyo-sun*” for a same movement “*Jwa-woo-il-dea-jun*.”¹⁴ However, she does not investigate further what this phenomenon signifies. I suggest that this phenomenon also supports the emphasis on the effect and quality of dance movements rather than the visual structures of them.

In addition, while there are different terms for one movement, one term exists for different movements as well. Many of the metaphorical terminologies fall under this category. For example, *Su-yang-su-mu* (수양수무: 垂楊手舞) which means “a willow hand dance” is danced differently in *Hun-sun-do* (헌선도: 獻仙桃) than in *Chu-yong-mu*. According to Son Sun-sook, it is difficult to infer movement detail from the literal meaning. She reasons that because *Su-yang-su-mu* is a metaphorical terminology, it can be interpreted and danced in various ways.¹⁵ From this point, I suggest that visual structures of dance movements link rather loosely to the terms, because of their lack of one-to-one correspondence. In summary, language comes closer to the quality or the effect rather than the visual structure.

Graphic recordings of *Jeongjae*

Now I turn to examine diagrams of *Jeongjae*. The diagrams in *Jeongjae mudo holgi* (정재무도홀기: 呈才舞蹈笏記) shows the first formation and how it progresses. Beside the general

formations, diagrams of *Jeongjae* carry various information. For example, the diagram of *Heon-seon-do* (헌선도: 獻仙桃) includes information of the title of the dance, the kinds of the ceremonial props, the names of the persons who perform with them, the positions of dancers, and the names of the dancers. In addition, one can know in which direction a performer is facing by looking at the direction that the letter is written. This can be more clearly observed with the diagram of *Seon-yu-rak* (선유락: 船遊樂). There are two performers in front of the stage facing each other. There is a letter referring a ship at the center of the circle. Several performers are facing toward the center. Many more dancers are around the circle facing along the circle.

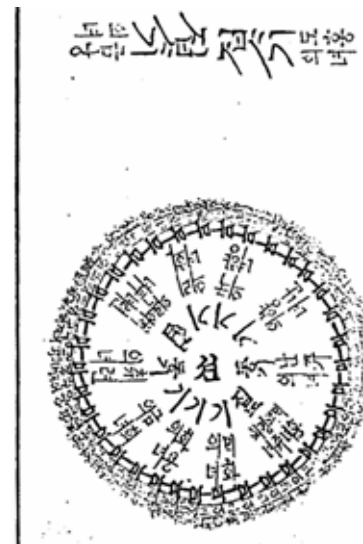


Figure 1. The diagram of *Seonyurak* (선유락 船遊樂)

For *Jang-saeng-bo-yeon-ji-mu* (장생보연지무 長生寶宴之舞), as one of rare cases, a progress of performance is recorded with a series of diagrams. One can see the main dancer is moving forward by looking at the first and the second diagrams. Besides the formation changes, what movement the dancer does while he/she is moving forward is shown too.

These diagrams are inscribed as if one looks down from above. This perspective is also observed in diagrams from *Akhakgwebeom* (악학궤범: 樂學軌範). This perspective is effective for recording overall formations. Still, detailed movements of human body are hardly

picturized. *Akhakgwebeom* provides drawings of stage sceneries, costumes, and musical instruments with detail. It is even recorded how long this drum stick should be. However, bodily movement is not in pictures except in this one which is for showing the crane costume.

Recognizing these modes of *Jeongjae* recordings, I turn to cultural concepts of the body and language in Eastern tradition in order to further the understanding of these recording systems.

Eastern Theory of Language

Rather than unrealistically attempting to excavate the entire philosophies of East Asian history, I focus on the features that closely relate to the characteristics of *Jeongjae* terminology. If the words were not meant to give information about movement details, then what are the words doing?

One of the prominent characteristics of Eastern language tradition is to avoid verbose rhetoric. Regarding the limitation of words, Yanfang Tang contrasts two levels of language: ordinary/concrete language versus extraordinary/symbolic language.¹⁶ Tang elaborates that the thing pursued cannot be described in ordinary language; however, it may be expressed through an extraordinary or symbolic language.

Tang links the emphasis on symbolic language in philosophy to literary traditions that prized meanings beyond words as the highest artistic accomplishment.¹⁷ Lu Xie (261-303), a pioneer in the Chinese critical tradition, wrote

One's ideas may easily be extraordinary when he is free to work in the realm of fancy, but it is very difficult for one to give beauty to his language when he is tied down to the factual details.¹⁸

Liu suggested that extraordinary ideas were hard to capture in language describing factual details. To deliver extraordinary ideas, poets depended on "implicit expression."¹⁹ According to Liu, poetic writing should employ the mode of "concealment" (은: 隱, *yin*), through which "meanings rise beyond words, secret echoes resound, and hidden beauty discharges."²⁰

Examining the characteristics of the songs of *Jeongjae*, a Korean literary scholar Cho Kyu-ick

points out that *Jeongjae* with dance and music takes concrete shape by the language of the poetry/song. Therefore, I suggest that the metaphoric mode of the poetry is also applicable to understand the dance. The connection between the poetry/song and dance terminology is highlighted in one *Jeongjae*, *Chun-aeng-jeon*. The following is the song of *Chun-aeng-jeon* which is sung by the dancer/performer.

娉婷月下步

Beautiful! Walking under the moon light

羅袖舞風輕

Silk sleeves dance lightly with the wind.

最愛花前態

For the attitude in front of a flower is the loveliest,

君王任多情

The king favors it with his heart. (my trans.)

This song reveals a prominent connection between poetry and dance movement. According to Cho Kyu-ick, the first two phrases—娉婷月下步 羅袖舞風輕—are an expression for the twenty-fourth dance movement *Sa-sa-bo-yu-eu-pung* (사사보여의풍: 娉 娉步如意風) which means "to walk lightly as if swayed by the wind." Moreover, the third phrase includes the eighteenth dance movement *Hwa-jun-tea* (화전태: 花前態) as it is. Cho Kyu-ick proposes that the song of *Chun-aeng-jeon* describe the performance of the dancers.²¹ Here, I point out that the language of the poetry is written by the prince who had the highest education of the time and mastered ancient poetry.²² Considering how such language is used as dance terminology, I suggest the pursuit for symbolic language in poetry can be found in *Jeongjae* terminology.

Eastern Theory of the Body

For discussing current issue of "the challenges of capturing movement details in words," I focus on a key word "the achieve mind/body oneness." This key word had two folds of signification. One is that Eastern tradition comprehends that the mind and the body are one, as opposed to mind/body dualism upheld in Western philosophy. Explaining mind-body oneness in Eastern tradition, Lee Seong-hwan draws upon a Confucian theory of the

one-base-of-Chi (기일원론: 氣一原論), according to which everything in the world is revelation of Chi. Also, the mind and the body are phenomena concomitant with the operation of Chi. According to Lee Seong-hwan, Eastern tradition admits different attributes of the mind and the body in the actual world, but does not regard the two as two different realities.²³ Similarly, a salient scholar in Joseon Era Jeong Yak-yong (정약용 1762-1836) noted that “body and mind are so profoundly combined that it is impossible to tell one from the other. To right one’s mind is to right one’s body. Therefore, there are no two different levels.”²⁴ In other words, by righting one’s mind, one can right his/her body and vice versa. Thus, one talks about moving the body to move one’s mind and vice versa. By amending one’s body to right one’s mind and vice versa, one aims for the ideal integration of the mind and the body.

This point leads us toward the second signification of “achieved mind/body oneness” since the phrase “the idea integration” implies that the mind/body oneness is not inherently given. A contemporary Japanese philosopher Yuasa Yasuo contents that “The integration of mind and body is only partial in the average human being.”²⁵ In addition, Yuasa notes that “there can be various stages in achieving this oneness.”²⁶ In Eastern tradition, not only variable, but also developable is the mind/body relationship. According to Yuasa, in Eastern thoughts, “the relationship between the mind and body will gradually change through the process of cultivation.”²⁷ Through various methods of cultivation, one elevates diverse capacities of the mind-body from average normality to an ideal standard.²⁸

The letter of Takuan to a master swordsman suggests multiple stages of physical training which embeds the variable and developable mind/body integration. For the early stage of training, thinking of and concentrating on positions of the body is useful in certain degree; however, to move to the higher level, one needs to overcome the lower level of understanding. After more training, in accordance with his practice, neither the postures of his body nor the ways of grasping the sword occupy in his mind. His mind simply becomes as it was in the beginning when he knew nothing and had yet to be taught anything at all.²⁹ When one reaches the advanced stage, the function

of the intellect disappears. The consciousness as subject does not seize the object body; rather “arms, legs, and body that remember what to do” becomes the subject body. Since the dualism between the mind and the body disappears, one does not know where the subject mind and the object body are. This is a state of No-Thought-No-Mind.³⁰

As for the swordsmanship, Takuan also emphasizes the unfettered mind in dancing. If you think of movements of the hands and steps of the feet, you are captured by the very thoughts. A dancer who thinks about dancing accurately cannot be said to be skillful.³¹ This is because “if you put the mind in one place, the rest of your body will lack its function-ing.”³² When the mind does not stop at one place, the mind stretches throughout the entire body and self.³³

Although the training starts with acquiring the correct bodily mode, one needs to overcome thinking about dancing accurately at the end. In *The Body: Toward an Eastern Mind-Body Theory*, Yuasa notes that in the higher level, the movement of mind transcends the performing technique.³⁴ Mastering dance or martial arts is not simply a matter of placing one’s body, but making the accordance of the mind. A dance gendered with such philosophy contrasts to a dance that is mainly about placing one’s body in a correct position in geometrical space. A dance that aims at transcending the correct bodily mode concerns accurate body positioning as a mean, not as an end.

Conclusion

Dance terminology reflects and affects people’s idea of words, dance movement, and their relationships. By searching for the perspective of speakers of the terminology, I seek the indigenous meanings of words. Rather than analyzing how a set of terminology is NOT like other sets, I try to identify what it is like. As Farnell explains, we can see only what we see. A culturally constructed style of thinking may prevent researchers of the style from seeing beyond what the style allows them to see. I do not deny that our biological nature plays its role in our experiencing the world. We need to be careful, however, not to regard “my way” as the natural or universal way.

To practice historical dances, I imagine myself in the historical setting. My dance becomes embodying the environment of the people of that

time. What it means to place my body parts in correct positions for me is playing-acting: seeking what they felt, what they believed, and what they loved.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Korean romanization follows Ministry of Culture and Tourism proclamation No. 2000-8. Personal names are written by family name first, followed by a space and the given name. For Korean given names containing two syllables in general, the syllables are hyphenated. Because many Korean authors referred to share a common family name, both family and given names are used in in-text and footnotes to avoid confusion.
- ² Franz Boas, *Introduction*, 43.
- ³ Brenda Farnell (ed.), *Human Action Signs*.
- ⁴ Marcel Danesi, *Of Cigarettes*, 70.
- ⁵ Judy Van Zile, *Perspectives on Korean Dance*, 31. Van Zile divides the sub-heading “Early terminology” from that of the twentieth century. From her organization of sub-headings, I infer that what she means by “early terminology” is words created and used before the twentieth century.
- ⁶ Ibid., 31.
- ⁷ Son Sun-sook, “A Study on the Distribution of *Jeong-jea* Dance Movements in the Late Yi Dynasty Era,” 100.
- ⁸ Ibid., 100.
- ⁹ Son Sun-sook, *Dictionary of court dance terminology*, 123.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., 123.
- ¹¹ Ibid., 223.
- ¹² Ibid., 230.
- ¹³ Ibid., 89.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., 74.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 232.
- ¹⁶ Tang, Yanfang, “Language, Truth, and Literary Interpretation,” 1-20.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., 10.
- ¹⁸ Liu Xie. *Wenxin diaolong yizhu*, 155-156.
- ¹⁹ Tang, “Language, Truth, and Literary Interpretation,” 11.
- ²⁰ Liu Xie. *Wenxin diaolong yizhu*, 334-335.
- ²¹ Ibid., 110.
- ²² Cho Kyu-ick explains that the songs written by Prince Hyomyung reflect various ancient poetry. See Cho Kyu-ick, “A Study on the Correlativity of the Akjang and Jeongjae.”
- ²³ Lee Seong-hwan, “Confucian Body and belonged life,” 18.
- ²⁴ Jeong Yak-yong, *Daehakgongui* (대학공의: 大學公議) 3, 29, *sangjwa*. Quoted in Seong Tae-yong, “The Mind and the Body Cultivation in the Theory of Dasan,” in *Dasanhak* (다산학) seoul: Dasanhaksulmunhwajaedan (다산학술문화재단), 2001, 85.
- ²⁵ Yuasa, Yasuo, *The Body*, 9
- ²⁶ Ibid., 70.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 28.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 208
- ²⁹ Takuan *The unfettered mind*, 34.

- ³⁰ Ibid., 36.
- ³¹ Ibid., 56.
- ³² Ibid., 45
- ³³ Ibid., 47.
- ³⁴ Yuasa, *The Body*, 107

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Le Ballet National de Cuba : une théorisation du corps cubain

Pauline Vessely

L'émergence du Ballet National de Cuba (BNC) dans le phénomène danse permet de réaffirmer l'aspect social de l'acte « penser la théorie de la danse ». Cet objet d'étude fascine tant sur le plan historique – création récente, ascension fulgurante (rappelons que cette compagnie créée en 1948 par les Alonso n'est nationalisée qu'avec l'arrivée au pouvoir de Fidel Castro en 1959 (Cabrera, 2006)) – que sur le plan sociologique. Il nous livre une théorie du ballet socialisée, politisée voire instrumentalisée.¹ Cette théorisation de la pratique sert de ciment à celle que l'on nomme aujourd'hui « l'école cubaine » (notion certes controversée mais qui montre la nouvelle légitimité du ballet cubain). A la fin des années 1940 les maîtres de ballet cubains (ou devrais-je dire le maître, Fernando Alonso) ont travaillé à la constitution d'une théorie – ou méthodologie – du ballet appropriée aux Cubains, tant physiquement (F. Alonso parle de « race cubaine » ayant une physiologie propre²) que symboliquement. Cette conception soulève 2 problématiques majeures. D'une part il faut s'interroger sur cette « race cubaine » et le bien-fondé de cette vision du corps. D'autre part il faut considérer l'influence des valeurs sociopolitiques cubaines sur cette théorie de la danse (et vice et versa).

Une brève présentation de la méthode Alonso et ses limites s'impose donc avant d'en discuter les enjeux sociologiques.

La méthode Alonso

La méthode de Fernando Alonso, élaborée dans les années 1950, s'appuie sur 2 principes fondamentaux (De Saa, 2006) :

1/ Le premier d'entre eux est la spécificité des conditions de pratique du ballet à Cuba (température élevée, climat humide qui forcent à prendre des précautions spécifiques lors du travail)
2/ Le second porte sur les particularités physiques des danseurs cubains (muscles plus longs, ouverture de hanche plus grande dont nous reparlerons)

Ces deux points servent à l'élaboration des étapes de l'enseignement dès la 1^{ère} année (y compris dans les actuelles écoles dites « vocationnelles »,

qui forment les plus petits à la danse classique). Cette méthode prend également en compte, peut-être plus qu'à l'habitude, les différences des corps féminins et masculins pour en faire un axe de travail central et accentuer les différences de ces représentations qui sont particulièrement exploitées dans le répertoire classique romantique.

Nous ne détaillerons pas les grandes lignes de la méthode cubaine (Alonso, 1958) car ce n'est pas le centre de notre exposé. De fait l'entraînement des danseurs du ballet cubain se fait dans des conditions particulièrement mauvaises pour une compagnie nationale d'une telle réputation. Le manque de financement pose des réels problèmes de vétusté des locaux (sol), mais aussi du matériel aussi essentiel que les pointes, etc.

Venons-en directement au fondement même de cette méthode d'enseignement qui est, nous l'avons dit, la théorisation d'un corps cubain. Commençons d'abord par rappeler les caractéristiques principales de ce corps défini par Fernando Alonso.

Selon lui, les hanches des femmes cubaines sont plus larges permettant un travail plus accentué de l'en-dehors et reflétant, selon F. Alonso une plus grande féminité (nous pouvons rappeler le passionnant travail sur les hanches des cubaines – dans la rumba – et la hip(g)nosis de Melissa Blanco Borelli).

Fernando Alonso note également une meilleure tonicité musculaire facilitant l'amplitude des sauts, particulièrement chez les danseurs hommes.

Enfin, il parle d'une musculature des jambes plus développée qui offre une plus grande rapidité et meilleure fluidité du travail de « las piernas », les jambes du bas de jambe notamment dans les fouettés, les battus, etc.)

Alicia Alonso, qui est en quelque sorte le 1^{er} cobaye, si j'ose m'exprimer ainsi, de la méthode Alonso, illustre l'aboutissement du travail conceptuel fait autour du corps cubain. Elle même participe à l'élaboration de cette théorie (Alonso, 1986, Gamez 1971 et Guttiriez, 1981). Nous pouvons souligner au passage l'ultra-féminisation de la corporéité, dans 2 registres différents mais

caractéristiques de l'école cubaine à savoir le ballet romantique et le ballet d'inspiration culturelle et traditionnelle hispanique. Les générations suivantes de danseurs et danseuses cubains continuent ce travail de théorisation du corps cubain marquant son efficacité pratique et le rendant visible au plan international. Citons les célèbres « quatre joyas » : Mirta Pla, Josephina Mendez, Aurora Bosch et Loïpa Ajauro (Martinez, 2000).

Les limites conceptuelles de cette méthode

En termes techniques et artistiques, cette théorisation, nous le voyons, a montré son efficacité. Le BNC est admiré pour la virtuosité et la jeunesse de ses danseurs (pour preuve, le programme des étés de la danse 2007 de Paris qui met à l'honneur le BNC et deux de ses grandes œuvres, *Giselle* et *Don Quichotte*). Mais c'est d'un point de vue conceptuel que cette théorie pose problème en termes sociologiques. La légitimité de la théorie scientifique de F. Alonso reste réfutable : comment peut-on parler d'un corps cubain lorsque l'on connaît la richesse ethnique du pays qui a connu de successives vagues d'immigration (Espagne, Afrique, Chine, Russie...) ? Nous sommes loin de l'image uniforme de la « race cubaine » livrée par F. Alonso qui permettrait une normalisation d'un corps.

Le métissage est une des caractéristiques de la population cubaine et il est d'ailleurs revendiqué comme tel. C'est un des axiomes de l'idéologie révolutionnaire actuelle qui s'enracine dans la pensée prérévolutionnaire du 19^{ème} siècle et particulièrement dans celle du poète José Martí, aujourd'hui pilier du panthéon révolutionnaire cubain (Suarez Leon, 2002). Le paradoxe qui se dessine ici est complexe. Les fondateurs du BNC prônent eux-mêmes cette diversité tout en opérant une normalisation d'un corps cubain. Cette affirmation de la diversité se traduit par la volonté affichée de recruter, de donner leur chance à des danseurs de tous horizons géographiques (centres créés en province), sociaux, culturels et bien sûr ethniques. Mais aussi à des danseurs ayant des « physiques » hors-normes pour des danseurs classiques on s'entend. En effet le BNC fait preuve de plus de « laxisme » que d'autres compagnies quand il s'agit de la taille, du poids et de la couleur de ses danseurs et danseuses (ces derniers points

n'étant pas un frein au talent). Ce paradoxe, ne semble pas être vécu comme un paradoxe, au contraire le raisonnement cubain s'articule de manière très cohérente. Nous touchons là une spécificité cubaine qui est au cœur des valeurs populaires nationales. Cette idéologie révolutionnaire qui s'enracine depuis plus d'un siècle dans la pensée traditionnelle cubaine pousse à redéfinir une identité cubaine par différents moyens et media.

Les fondements idéologiques de la théorisation du corps cubain

La théorisation d'un corps cubain correspond à la conceptualisation chorégraphique d'idéaux sociaux. Cette idéologie qui sous-tend la pratique du ballet classique à Cuba et la conceptualisation d'un corps cubain est intimement liée aux valeurs révolutionnaires que nous avons brièvement évoquées auparavant. Il faut ici reconsidérer cette théorisation et son implication sociopolitique et symbolique. Quelles sont donc ces valeurs ? Il faut ici rappeler ce qu'est la notion d'idéologie (notion trop souvent utilisée sans justification conceptuelle). Le dictionnaire philosophique Lalande en donne la définition suivante :

Pensée théorique qui croit se développer abstraitement sur ses propres données, mais qui est en réalité l'expression de faits sociaux, particulièrement de faits économiques, dont celui qui la construit n'a pas conscience, ou du moins dont il ne se rend pas compte qu'elle détermine sa pensée. (Lalande, 1991: 324)

C'est dans ce contexte conceptuel que se fait la théorisation d'un corps cubain. Cette dernière fait écho à l'idéologie cubaine populaire et notamment à l'idéal de *Cubanidad*. La *Cubanidad*, que l'on pourrait traduire par « cubanité » ou « cubanitude », est le terme couramment employé pour définir le sentiment d'appartenance à la nation cubaine, au peuple cubain. Cette notion fut conceptualisée dès le 19^{ème} siècle par le philosophe José Antonio Saco (Morukian, 2003: 1). Elle regroupe l'ensemble des spécificités culturelles et traditionnelles cubaines comme la langue, le folklore, la musique, etc. Cette construction d'une identité nationale se fait en opposition aux cultures Européennes et Américaines principalement

(Morukian, 2003: 1). Cette exaltation du sentiment national se fait ressentir dès le 19^{ème} siècle et conditionne la théorie du ballet. Il faut rappeler que les premières « incursions » du ballet classique et particulièrement romantique sur l'île se font justement au 19^{ème} siècle, dans le contexte colonialiste que l'on connaît, avec la venue d'artistes européennes extrêmement connues comme Fanny Elssler (Cabrerá, 2006). Cette prégnance du colonialisme joue un rôle essentiel dans la construction d'une identité cubain qui se nourrit des apports de ces très longues périodes de domination étrangère (principalement espagnol puis américain) tout en essayant de marquer la scission avec cette période. Ce n'est pas un hasard si les premiers soulèvements contre la domination espagnole ont lieu au 19^{ème}.

La (re)définition d'un corps cubain entre dans ce processus identitaire. Notons également que l'affirmation de la *Cubanidad* est retranscrite par l'apport d'une gestuelle plus « sensuelle » symboliquement associée aux danses latines. Au vocabulaire classique, s'ajoutent des pas folkloriques, des mouvements de buste, de tête et de bassin qui sont autant d'éléments d'une théorisation du corps et de son usage à l'intérieur du cadre théorique rigoureux qui est celui du ballet classique.

Nous avons utilisé le mot « romantique » et cité brièvement José Martí. Son rôle est essentiel dans la construction de l'idéologie révolutionnaire. José Martí exploite la figure du Héros (Suarez Leon, 2003) et on ne peut pas ne pas faire le lien entre sa vision romantique et la figure du danseur/ de la ballerine du ballet classique. Le BNC offre au personnage du danseur cette image de héros national.

Le danseur cubain représente la population cubaine, son héritage socioculturel, en mettant en scène toute sa virtuosité et en se réappropriant un art européen associé à une culture dominante ; il est pensé comme un héros populaire.

D'autre part, penser le métissage dans l'unité d'un corps normalisé est un travail de socialisation important puisqu'il participe à penser la norme, à repenser des catégories sociales. C'est aussi un acte d'engagement politique dans la mesure où ce corps édicté par le ballet cubain reprend les valeurs révolutionnaires qui font l'objet d'une forte propagande. Le BNC participe lui-même de cette propagande. Cette participation est d'autant plus

forte que les médias sont peu nombreux à Cuba rendant ainsi la portée du BNC plus grande. A travers cette théorisation d'un corps cubain, apparaît en filigrane le processus qui lie gouvernement révolutionnaire et ballet classique.

Selon la définition de Jules Monnerot dans *Sociologie du communisme*, « l'idéologie est une pensée chargée d'affectivité où chacun de ces deux éléments corrompt l'autre » (Monnerot, 2004: 12). Cette affirmation prend vie dans la théorisation du corps cubain. L'affection est omniprésente les représentations populaires de l'attachement au ballet, à la famille Alonso, même à Fidel Castro.

Conclusion

Je conclurai en reprenant les mots que Dominique Dupuy prononça en ouverture au colloque « Danse et Politique », « ce corps serait-il alors l'aspect le plus politique de la danse ? » (*Danse et Politique*: 4). La théorisation du corps cubain, son inscription au cœur d'une institution telle que le BNC, contribue à la transmission de modèles sociopolitiques qui participent au maintien d'idéaux nationaux construits autour d'une identité nationale propre. Cette théorisation appuie la politique révolutionnaire et permet la redéfinition de rapports sociaux notamment en termes de genre. Cette thématique est au centre de mes travaux de doctorat. Les rapports sociaux sont codifiés par des idéaux traditionnels cubains. L'influence du ballet classique dans la diffusion des schémas sociaux révolutionnaires est prégnante et mérite à ce titre d'être l'objet d'un plus grand nombre d'études.

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Notes

¹ Cet article reprend une partie de notre mémoire de Master2 Recherche d'Histoire et Sociologie de la Médiation Culturelle intitulé *Ballet Cubain et Révolution : 60 ans de vie socioculturelle et politique commune, entre réappropriation et impulsion* (2006).

² Les différents propos de F. Alonso qui vont suivre ont été recueillis lors d'entretiens avec lui (entretiens oraux réalisés en 2005, et qui par définition, ne figurent pas dans la bibliographie).

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**L'étude théorique et pratique des traités de danse allemands
au tournant des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles : entre théorie et pratique
Pratique et théorie dans la reconstruction de la technique de la danse
française d'après le traité de Gottfried Taubert**

Jean-Noël Laurent avec la participation de Christine Bayle et d'Irène Ginger

Nous entendons présenter ici un programme de recherche en cours de réalisation intitulé *La technique de la danse française à la lumière des traités allemands (1700-1720)*, programme mis en œuvre par l'Association pour un Centre de Recherche sur les Arts du Spectacle aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, subventionné par le ministère français de la culture et réalisé en partenariat avec le Centre National de la Danse, qui nous accueille en résidence. Ce programme doit aboutir à une traduction d'extraits significatifs, traduction élaborée au fil d'une collaboration entre chercheurs et danseurs qui se livrent à une mise en pratique expérimentale des textes. Cette édition d'extraits sera pourvue d'une présentation et d'un commentaire, et s'accompagnera d'un DVD comportant l'exécution de pas caractéristiques et de quelques échantillons de danses.

Nous remercions Christine Bayle et Irène Ginger, qui font partie de l'équipe des danseurs et chercheurs, d'avoir bien voulu se prêter à une présentation de quelques résultats provisoires de ce travail de recherche. Nous remercions également Céline Martel, violon, et Oksana Delaforge, clavecin, qui ont enregistré les extraits musicaux pour l'occasion.

Après avoir expliqué les motivations de notre recherche et la manière dont nous avons déterminé notre corpus, centré essentiellement sur le traité de Gottfried Taubert, nous tenterons de préciser la démarche intellectuelle qui est la sienne, la méthode suivie ainsi que les interrogations que nous rencontrons.

Le but de ce programme est de contribuer à un dépouillement systématique des documents concernant la technique de la danse française théorisée, pratiquée et enseignée par les maîtres à danser du règne de Louis XIV et répandue dans toute l'Europe. En France, le

travail de reconstruction déjà mené à bien, travail considérable, s'appuie essentiellement sur le traité de Pierre Rameau *Le Maître à danser*¹ et sur la *Chorégraphie* de Feuillet². Or *Le Maître à danser* est un traité relativement tardif, bien qu'il nous livre sans aucun doute une tradition. En outre, conformément à l'adage « *Testis unus, testis nullus* », les chercheurs se doivent de recenser les autres traditions existantes pour faire un état des convergences, des divergences et sans doute les évolutions : grâce à un tel recensement, l'idéal serait de constituer un stemma des traités, permettant de dégager des filiations de maître à élève, depuis l'enseignement donné à Paris, et peut-être des écoles et des courants en France et en Europe. En outre, *Le Maître à danser* ne s'attache qu'au bal et ne fait allusion que très fugitivement au ballet, alors que la danse de théâtre est un des domaines où la recherche est particulièrement nécessaire pour la remise à la scène des œuvres des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles. Quant à la *Chorégraphie* de Feuillet, même si elle s'éclaire par le traité de Rameau, bien des points restent obscurs ou équivoques : par exemple, elle définit l'élévé par le fait de d'« étend[re] » les genoux³, ce qui laisse le lecteur perplexe, se demandant si l'élévé se fait donc sur le plat du pied ou sur la demi-pointe ; ou bien, la définition de la cabriole, « quand en sautant, les jambes battent l'une contre l'autre⁴ », ne précise pas dans quelle position les jambes doivent battre ni dans quelle mesure elles doivent être tendues durant le saut.

Or les traités publiés en Allemagne au début du XVIIIe siècle s'inscrivent, comme *The Art of Dancing* de Tomlinson⁵ en Angleterre ou le *Trattato del ballo nobile* de Dufort⁶ en Italie (pour ne citer que ces exemples), dans cette entreprise pédagogique destinée à faire connaître et comprendre la

danse française pour un public auquel elle n'est pas censée être familière. De ce fait, alors que les Français ont en général sous les yeux le modèle auquel il s'agit de se conformer, ce qui fait que le non-dit peut jouer un grand rôle, il est logique que les traités destinés au public étranger visent à être plus explicites. Outre le fait qu'ils doivent être recensés par le chercheur désireux d'établir le stemma mentionné plus haut, on peut espérer qu'ils nous livrent de précieux détails.

Pour ce qui est des traités publiés en Allemagne, ils sont eux-mêmes divers. L'étude de leurs relations a été menée par Marie-Thérèse Mourey⁷, professeur de langue et littérature allemandes à l'université Paris IV, qui malheureusement ne pouvait être parmi nous pour ce colloque, mais à qui notre projet doit, outre l'entreprise de traduction en français, la remise de ces traités dans leur contexte historique et culturel. C'est ce qui est indispensable, en effet, quand on aborde de tels documents. Par exemple, les auteurs de traités allemands, contrairement à ce qui se passe en France, en Italie ou en Angleterre, sont confrontés aux réquisitoires religieux, notamment piétistes, contre la danse : la description théorique et pratique de la danse française tend donc à se doubler d'une apologie et même d'une tentative affichée de moralisation. Par exemple, G. Taubert insiste beaucoup, plus que Pierre Rameau, sur la nécessité pour la dame, dans le cadre du bal, de se tenir dans une contenance modeste, et quand il affirme qu'elle doit tenir simplement sa jupe et s'abstenir de pratiquer le port de bras⁸ (ce que Pierre Rameau ne dit que pour le menuet), on peut se demander s'il ne s'agit pas d'une adaptation propre au contexte allemand.

Un examen global des traités, de leurs buts, de leur caractère plus ou moins détaillé, nous a amenés à fixer notre étude sur le *Rechtschaffener Tantzmeister* de G. Taubert, non sans nous référer à l'occasion au traité de Louis Bonin *Die neueste Art zur Galanten und theatralischen Tantz-Kunst*⁹. Louis Bonin se fait l'écho d'une tradition directement française, mais il est moins précis que Taubert. Ce dernier, en revanche, compile ses prédécesseurs, parfois sans le dire, ainsi que des sources qu'il dit lui venir de Paris. Cela ne

l'empêche pas d'adopter à l'occasion des positions originales, quitte à se séparer de Bonin auquel il se réfère par ailleurs¹⁰. Il est donc très riche en informations, et en même temps le chercheur est évidemment obligé de se poser des questions critiques sur la valeur de son témoignage.

Notre programme de recherche s'était fixé quatre thèmes d'investigation : la courante, le menuet, les ports de bras et l'exécution des cabrioles. Il s'agissait donc de d'étudier, de façon théorique et pratique, un certain nombre de chapitres du second livre du *Rechtschaffener Tantzmeister*. Mais très vite il est apparu que nous devions élargir notre corpus et procéder pour le moins à l'exploration de chapitres en amont et en aval. Par exemple, le discours de Taubert sur le menuet aboutit à un développement sur les variations de menuet, puisque l'exécution de cette danse, dans le cadre du bal, comporte une part de liberté et que le cavalier peut, à certains endroits¹¹, substituer aux pas de menuets ordinaires des pas plus ou moins virtuoses, souvent empruntés au vocabulaire du ballet. C'est l'occasion pour Taubert de décrire ce vocabulaire de pas (pas de bourrée, contretemps, sissonne, etc.) dont font partie les cabrioles. Ainsi, dans cette continuité pédagogique, pour mieux comprendre le contretemps de menuet et les cabrioles, on ne peut pas ignorer, par exemple, le chapitre consacré aux jetés. De la même façon, en amont, étant donné que les deux pas de courante, court et long, font entrer dans leur composition le pas tendu, le demi-coupé, le temps de courante et le coupé, nous nous devons de remonter à la description de ces pas de base, c'est-à-dire à des chapitres où Taubert pose les fondements de la technique de la danse. C'est ainsi que dans le chapitre XVIII du second livre, consacré aux pas simples, il décrit non seulement le pas tendu (c'est-à-dire le pas marché, pour lequel Feuillet ne donne pas de définition spécifique), mais aussi le « mouvement » (c'est-à-dire la succession du plié et de l'élevé). Or ce chapitre est riche d'informations : on y apprend notamment que le pas marché dans la danse, à l'inverse de ce qui se passe dans la marche ordinaire, doit être effectué sur demi-pointe¹², et que le véritable

élevé consiste non seulement à tendre les genoux mais aussi à s'élever sur demi-pointe¹³. On voit par là que ce chapitre vient combler des silences et des incertitudes laissés par les Français.

Plus loin en aval, enfin, un chapitre dont le dépouillement était indispensable est le chapitre XLV, transcription et traduction de la *Chorégraphie* de Feuillet. C'est une véritable pierre de Rosette, puisque nous y voyons les expressions de Feuillet traduites en allemand, et les expressions allemandes sont évidemment celles que, dans les chapitres précédents, Taubert emploie pour décrire les pas. En outre, certaines traductions sont accompagnées de paraphrases fort instructives. Enfin, au fil de ce dépouillement, on se rend compte qu'une même expression française peut être rendue par des expressions allemandes identiques (le vocabulaire technique de la langue allemande, en ce domaine, étant encore à construire à cette époque, d'où ces tâtonnements), ce qui permet au traducteur de conclure qu'il n'a pas à chercher des nuances entre des formulations qui, en fait, sont équivalentes.

On le voit, les chapitres techniques de Taubert constituent un tout : on ne peut guère en explorer une partie sans se référer à d'autres développements et sans la replacer dans une démarche d'ensemble. En effet, dans la progression de son discours il est manifeste qu'il suit Feuillet et qu'il commente, souvent même explicitement, la *Chorégraphie*. C'est ce qu'il importe de conserver dans l'esprit pour comprendre son propos, et en même temps, comme on l'a vu, cela permet de mesurer la valeur des informations qu'il ajoute.

On a vu comment, dans l'esprit de Feuillet, Taubert partait du pas simple (pas tendu, pas glissé, « mouvement », etc.) pour arriver aux pas composés (pas de courante, pas de menuet, pas de bourrée), selon une méthode de construction systématique, proche de la démarche cartésienne. C'est dans le même esprit qu'il décrit les contretemps¹⁴. À travers les développements qu'il leur consacre on saisit la parenté entre le contretemps de menuet et ce que Rameau appelle¹⁵ le contretemps de gavotte (parenté que les descriptions de Rameau ne mettent pas en

lumière) : tous deux se composent de deux pas, deux changements d'appui. Sur ces deux pas on peut placer un certain nombre de sauts. Si on place le saut au début du premier pas, on obtient le contretemps de gavotte, qui d'après Taubert peut s'exécuter sur les deux mesures de menuet ; on peut lui adjoindre d'ailleurs battu et tour de jambe, selon cette démarche d'ornementation progressive que l'on observe dans la succession des vignettes de la *Chorégraphie*. On peut aussi remplacer le demi-contretemps du début par un pas grave et placer le saut après ce dernier, sur le pied droit, au début de la seconde mesure de menuet. On peut aussi placer un saut sur le premier pas (ce qui fait un demi-contretemps) puis un second saut à la fin de ce pas et finir par un posé du pied gauche ; ou bien remplacer le demi-contretemps par un pas grave, sauter sur le même pied à la fin de ce pas grave et remplacer le posé du pied gauche par un jeté. Sans prétendre énumérer ici toutes les possibilités passées en revue par Taubert tout au long de ce chapitre, on voit comment se construit progressivement le contretemps à trois sauts (ce qu'on appelle communément contretemps de menuet), tout en explorant une vaste gamme de substitutions faisant entrer jeté, fleuret, pas grave, sans compter les tours et les battus.

La pratique est ainsi sous-tendue par une construction théorique d'ensemble, par une vision intellectuelle, vision qui se rattache peut-être même à une certaine inspiration néoplatonicienne : en cela le chercheur doit faire le départ entre ce qui vient de l'esprit de Feuillet et ce qui est contribution propre de Taubert, sans doute en relation avec son souci de légitimer la danse comme incarnation d'une harmonie supérieure. Ainsi de son apologie du pas de menuet à deux mouvements¹⁶ (un demi-coupé, deux pas marché, un demi-coupé), qui pour lui est le meilleur et le plus commode parce qu'il est symétrique : la première mesure comporte deux pas sur la demi-pointe et la seconde mesure compte deux pliés. À cette belle construction on pourrait objecter que la seconde mesure comporte aussi deux pas sur demi-pointe et que la seconde ne comporte aucun plié. Néanmoins, il faut reconnaître que le corps des danseurs a constaté que ce pas

était en effet plus commode que le pas de menuet en fleuret, le plus pratiqué, du moins selon le découpage musical que Taubert envisage.

Le chercheur est donc invité à considérer le discours de Taubert comme un témoignage sur Feuillet, non sans adopter un regard critique. Si Taubert comble parfois, on l'a vu, les vides laissés par Feuillet, parfois aussi le fait de le suivre aveuglément provoque des failles dans son discours. Ainsi, il affirme¹⁷ qu'il existe quatre types de petits sauts, les jetés, les chassés, les contretemps et le pas de sissonne. C'est qu'il suit l'ordre des tables de Feuillet (pp. 71 sqq.). Ce faisant, il oublie un cinquième type de saut que Feuillet répertoriait bien plus haut (pp. 26 sqq.), la « mutation des positions », ce que nous appelons changement de pied. Cela l'empêche de comprendre que la « cabriole droite » de Feuillet (*Chorégraphie*, p. 85), qu'il décrit dans son chapitre sur les cabrioles¹⁸, est en fait un changement de pied cabriolé. De même, concernant le compte des temps dans la courante, il donne de l'unique paragraphe consacré par Feuillet à la question¹⁹ une traduction très étrange²⁰ qui doit nous amener à nous interroger sur la tradition représentée par Taubert et sur la valeur du propos de Feuillet.

Quoi qu'il en soit, il est un autre aspect sur lequel Taubert apporte des lumières importantes, tout en suscitant aussi l'interrogation : l'aspect lexicographique. Tantôt il emploie des termes français tels quels (*pas composé*, *tour de jambe*, par exemple), tantôt il emploie des termes français germanisés (*coupiren*, *battiren*), tantôt il traduit en allemand des termes français (*schneiden* semble être une traduction de « couper »). Sans revenir sur le mot *lection*, évoqué par Tilden Russell, nous observons ainsi l'emploi de mots qui devaient être d'un usage fréquent chez les maîtres à danser français et leurs disciples à l'étranger. Nous relevons par exemple le terme « dégager » (*degagiren*) dont nous n'avons pas jusqu'à présent d'autre témoignage pour cette période. Le mot *variation*, employé pour les variations de menuet, nous permet de comprendre la filiation entre la variation au sens musical du terme et ce que sera la variation de soliste dans

le ballet classique. Ces lumières s'accompagnent évidemment de perplexités : ainsi l'emploi *coupiren* ou de *schneiden* concernant les cabrioles et les entrechats, et dont le rapport n'est pas clair avec l'emploi du verbe *coupiren* au sens de « faire un demi-coupé », ou du verbe *frisiren* (germanisation du français « friser »), qui désigne une sorte de battu dont on se demande, techniquement, comment il doit d'exécuter.

Pour élucider tout cela, une procédure est évidemment indispensable : c'est un recoupement des différentes occurrences des mêmes termes, de façon à conjecturer par la confrontation des contextes le sens probable, les divers sens possibles, en tout cas les sens exclus. Plus généralement, il importe de confronter les divers passages du traité qui abordent les mêmes sujets, le contenu de tel ou tel chapitre ou paragraphe s'éclairant par d'autres plus ou moins éloignés. C'est ainsi que la description générale du demi-coupé, du coupé et du pas grave, dans le chapitre XIX, est à la fois confirmée, précisée et même diversifiée en possibilités optionnelles, dans le détail de son exécution, par la reprise qui en est faite, du côté de l'homme et du côté de la dame, dans le chapitre consacré au pas de courante.

Bien entendu, il conviendrait de confronter également les descriptions de Taubert avec celles des autres traités, allemands mais aussi européens. Dans une certaine mesure ils peuvent l'éclairer, mais il faut se garder de superposer hâtivement les unes et les autres. Au moins la confrontation permet-elle de faire surgir les problèmes, à travers les points de divergences. Mais une confrontation systématique restera à faire, à l'issue d'un dépouillement systématique des traités.

Comme nous l'avons dit, le programme de recherche dont nous rendons compte ici est en cours. La démonstration qui accompagne cet exposé est le reflet d'un travail qui permettra de saisir, pour ainsi dire, la recherche en train de se faire. La mise en pratique des textes est pour les danseurs un exercice difficile, malgré tout le métier dont ils disposent, car elle suppose souvent la remise en question d'habitudes acquises de longue main ; elle

suppose aussi l'assimilation de quantités de détails précisés par Taubert (dans l'exécution du demi-coupé, ou de l'élevé du coupé, la place des battus dans le pas de menuet, par exemple). C'est par ce dialogue entre recherche théorique et mise en pratique, au besoin bousculant les certitudes et éventuellement y retournant après mise à l'épreuve, qu'une reconstruction peut progresser, s'affiner et, nous l'espérons, enrichir la création de spectacles.

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Notes

1. Pierre Rameau (1725) *Le Maître à Danser*, Paris, Jean Villette.
2. Raoul Auger Feuillet (1701) *Choregraphie ou l'art décrire la danse par caracteres, figures et signes démonstratifs*, Paris, chez l'auteur et chez Michel Brunet, 2e éd.
3. P. 2.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Kellom Tomlinson (1735) TOMLINSON, *The Art of Dancing*, London, Author.
6. Giambattista Dufort (1728) *Trattato del ballo nobile*, Naples, Felice Mosca.
7. Marie-Thérèse Mourey (2003) *Danser dans le Saint Empire aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles. Eloquence du corps, discipline des sujets, civilité des mœurs*, Habilitation à diriger des recherches, Paris IV-Sorbonne, édition en préparation.
8. Gottfried Taubert (1717) *Rechtschaffener Tantzmeister*, Leipzig, pp. 561-562.
9. Louis Bonin (1712) *Die Neueste Art Zur Galanten und Theatralischen Tantz-Kunst*, Frankfurt & Leipzig, J.-C. Lochner.
10. Par exemple, entre les quatre sortes de pas de menuet possibles il affirme sa préférence pour le pas à deux mouvement (appelé aussi par Feuillet pas « à la bohémienne », *Chorégraphie*, 2e éd., « Supplément des tables précédentes », non paginé, entre pp. 86 et 87, 4e page). De même, concernant le pas de menuet en fleuret, il refuse la répartition de ce pas sur la musique telle que la préconise Bonin (demi-coupé sur la première mesure, pas de bourrée sur la seconde mesure), qui sur ce point est en accord avec Tomlinson.
11. En particulier à la fin de la figure principale, en forme de Z, quand le cavalier tourne vers la gauche en terminant la diagonale.
12. Pp. 505-506. Rameau décrit le pas de la marche ordinaire, qui pose « le talon avant la pointe » (p. 5), mais non le pas marché dans la danse en tant que tel, même si, quand il décrit les pas de danse, il précise en général que les pas marchés sont exécutés « sur la pointe » (par exemple p. 124).
13. Pp. 511-512.
14. Pp. 693 sqq.

15. *Op. cit.*, p. 166.
16. P. 636.
17. P. 723.
18. Pp. 725-726 (cabriole droite que Taubert décrit en tournant).
19. P. 87.
20. P. 878.

Pierre Rameau, quelques clefs et certaines pistes

Christine Bayle

Exemple dansé : Pavane d'Espagne interprétée par deux danseurs et la chorégraphe dans la version décrite par Thoinot Arbeau puis dans celle du premier passage de la Pavane du manuscrit récemment découvert à Darmstadt, Instruction pour danser.

Nous ne présentons ce soir ni une performance, ni un spectacle, mais je tenterai d'évoquer l'écrit de la danse ancienne comme support de l'écriture chorégraphique, en revenant sur l'exemple du style de Pierre Rameau et du matériau de la *Belle-Dance*, puis d'avancer quelques clefs pour percer quelque peu le mystère de cette Belle Dance.

La pratique née des écrits des maîtres à danser des différentes époques, depuis le 16^e siècle jusqu'au 18^e siècle est aujourd'hui notre seul guide pour danser les *Entrées*, qu'elles soient de Bal ou de Théâtre. Ces écrits différents représentent encore bien plus pour nous, car ils ont révélé que ces danses forment des langages et connaissent une écriture. Cette, ou plutôt ces différentes écritures méritent toute notre attention comme véritables supports de l'interprétation. Elles nous permettent également d'envisager la composition chorégraphique et donc, la création actuelle.

La danse baroque, je l'ai découverte avec Francine Lancelot lors d'une répétition de plusieurs phrases de la Chaconne de Phaéon montées avec Viviane Serry. Je reçus un choc ; cette danse inconnue, exotique, était fascinante : rigueur et liberté me viennent à l'esprit pour l'évoquer si je pense en même temps à Francine Lancelot. Celle-ci était danseuse et universitaire. Elle était curieuse, elle est devenue chorélogue. On connaît son travail sur la notation chorégraphique et sur les chorégraphies créées sur leurs musiques originales, qui a abouti par la pratique à la redécouverte d'un style, celui de la danse dite baroque, la *Belle Dance*.

Cet art s'est révélé un art savant autant qu'un art de théâtre : le projet de Mersenne « d'imiter » mais aussi de « perfectionner la nature » exigeait une amplification des moyens pour parvenir à

l'*excellence* qui le caractérise - dont Eugénia Roucher a pu éclaircir les conditions sociales dans le mot de *Belle-Dance*.

Cette danse savante, qui, à l'inverse de danses académiques transmises oralement, comme celles de l'Inde du Sud, ne connaît pas de tradition, est nouvelle et son style reconstruit : elle doit donc être pensée selon ce que De Lauze énonce en 1623: «...la Pratique et la Théorie doivent estre deux accidents inséparables».

La seule posture possible aujourd'hui est de faire, de pratiquer et de rendre probable sa forme, c'est-à-dire sa littéralité et sa « physicalité » pour la voir se révéler.

Ma démarche, à l'image des *passages* conçus dans la danse que nous venons de vous présenter et sur laquelle nous travaillons avec L'Eclat des Muses depuis 2001, consiste à reprendre pas à pas les propositions de la marche embellie, et ses différents *matériaux* et à les faire fructifier jusqu'à ce que surgisse la danse : qu'il s'agisse comme ici d'une danse de défilé de la fin du 16^e siècle et du début du 17^e siècle, ou d'une *Entrée*, il me semble important de ne rien tenir pour acquis mais de questionner minutieusement, à chaque fois, un texte qui nous échappe. Je vous invite donc sur les chemins du baroque, à reprendre la voie étroite tracée par Pierre Rameau du plus simple au plus complexe, vers de nombreux possibles à recréer, à découvrir, à inventer.

Revenons donc, à partir de l'écrit dont a pu nous parler Nathalie Van Parys, sur le style même de la danse pour, avec la naïveté de la découverte, suivre les signes de piste offerts par Pierre Rameau.

D'une part, je trouve que ce style représente un véritable système fonctionnel et esthétique apte à la création, où la virtuosité tient autant à une grande économie physique à trouver, qu'à sa nécessaire rapidité en complémentarité avec la musique, elle-même extrêmement complexe. D'autre part, ce style une fois réalisé, éprouvé, essayons-nous d'en trouver le *mouvement* grâce au pas à pas, qui est comme le « note à note » préconisé à son époque par le grand violoniste Menuhin, non dans un travail scolaire

d'annoncement, mais pour en réaliser physiquement l'amplitude et l'énergie entre les poses en équilibre sur la demi-pointe et les prises d'élan en *pliés*, dans le difficile exercice du rebond du poids du corps. Qu'est-ce qui fait danser, où cela danse-t-il ?

Ceci fait, regardons ensuite à travers ce matériau pour découvrir son alchimie intime avant même d'en apercevoir ce qui l'anime des sentiments humains, à lire « comme dans un verre » comme le suggère l'Abbé De Pure. Il est à remarquer que, dans cette *terra incognita* qu'est le Ballet de Cour, où interviennent le chant, la musique instrumentale, le théâtre et les décors, la danse tient une place plutôt de l'ordre de la poésie, du caché, du secret, du non-dit. N'oublions pas que, déjà pour comprendre les tableaux des grands maîtres en peinture, nous devons repasser par leurs codes si nous voulons apprécier pleinement leur *maniera*. Dans le Ballet de Cour où intervient le texte, le *récit*, qu'il soit déclamé ou chanté, la danse prend le relais pour « parler » autrement, autrement même que par la pantomime, même si quelques chorégraphies subsistent qui nous renseignent sur des personnages à « croquer ». Que peuvent donc nous dire les chorégraphies qui, en grand nombre, ne sont pas des pantomimes ? Que disons-nous d'actuel par elles ? Et pourquoi choisir de chorégraphier à partir de langages de cet ordre ?

En revenant sur les principes des codes de bras et de pas dont nous réalisons à la fin des années 70 les principes d'après le texte de Pierre Rameau, et que j'interroge toujours depuis 1983 avec la Compagnie L'Eclat des Muses, il semble important d'en privilégier la sensualité affleurante et l'apparent « naturel » qui est l'apanage de ses origines.

L'*intelligence* du corps dans la *Belle-Dance* passe par la première analyse du mouvement dansé que réalise le texte de Pierre Rameau, à prendre au pied de la lettre, comme ceci : «... pour danser, il n'est que de savoir plier et s'élever». Il nous faut donc comprendre que la gestion du poids du corps dans les simples et les doubles appuis est essentielle à la prise d'élan ou *détente* dans le *plié*. En fait l'élan en vue de l'élévation est rendu possible par la connexion explicitée entre poignets et chevilles, coudes et genoux, l'*aplomb* ou l'*équilibre du corps*, la *pente du corps* - soit le déséquilibre du corps dans ce que j'appelle « la

bouteille saoule » (image d'un corps dans un jeu d'enfant où, les pieds fixés au sol, une personne peut osciller en étant poussée entre deux autres personnes par le haut du corps, qui fait apparaître l'équilibre). Tous ces mots nous indiquent des notions techniques efficaces, à trouver physiquement pour réaliser le *moelleux*, l'*aisance*, la *grâce*, et, on l'espère, le *bel air* et le *bon goût* recommandés.

Nous pouvons déduire que le code de bras de chaque pas, (notamment le principe de l'*opposition* d'un bras à la jambe qui s'avance ou des ronds des poignets à réaliser strictement, les doigts tournant en demi-cercle autour du poignet soit en dessous soit en dessus, en relation avec les pas sur le côté) n'est ni un code de la route ni un *ersatz* du langage parlé : il n'est pas plaqué comme une forme ajoutée, mais il participe pleinement à l'élan même, de façon kinésiologique : il suscite donc le mouvement de la danse autant que sa détente dans les deux sens du terme français, *relâchement* et *tension*. La *tension*, réalisée dans l'action complexe de la chaîne musculaire en vue de l'*élévation* sur la demi-pointe des pieds et du saut, doit être associée à la *tension*, toujours renouvelée en musique, avec laquelle elle joue, dans les contraintes que l'on connaît d'un pas par mesure musicale.

Exemples dansés de pas comme demi coupés, contretemps, coupés de mouvement... avec leurs codes de bras et leur élan grâce à la flexion des jambes comptée dans la mesure musicale.

L'effet esthétique obtenu sera-t-il celui décrit par Rameau, quand il parle de légèreté, grâce à la force du métatarse par exemple, y compris dans les cabrioles et autres battus en tournant, en sautant, sur une jambe ou sur deux ?

Cette intelligence du corps au service de l'*élévation* se faisait à une époque où la distinction entre le corps et l'esprit se doublait chez Descartes de leur complémentarité sans qu'ils soient opposés. Le corps, en quelque sorte, « trahissait » l'esprit à cette époque, ce qui explique l'importance de l'harmonie et de la beauté à acquérir par l'effort comme qualités « en seconde nature », celles de la culture. Nous devons plonger dans cette conception du corps à la fois technique et esthétique pour ressentir la composition chorégraphique.

Rappelons que la volonté d'élévation du corps à hauteur de celle de l'esprit s'accompagne d'un centrage du corps dans un espace géométrique circonscrit autour de lui, à sa taille, fait de parcours où le corps utilise sa propre orientation sur le chemin selon l'«effet» d'optique à obtenir, selon le sens à donner à sa mise de face, de profil, de côté, de dos. Figures, orientations du corps, codes de bras et de pas sont entremêlés pour composer un véritable *discours* au long de phrases structurées en dialogue avec la musique. L'exemple que nous donnerons ensuite fait voir une danse pour un danseur et une danseuse dont nous prolongeons les symétries axiales et centrales en la dansant ensuite à trois danseurs. Car nous fascine la perle fameuse, appelée *barocco* par les Portugais, qui connaît des perturbations «naturelles» qui la rendent elliptique voir protubérante : nous suscitons alors une multiplicité d'illusions d'optique géométriques.

Dans la prochaine interprétation d'une danse de caractère noble qui évoque les *ombres des amants fortunés*, nous suivons à la lettre les recommandations de *naturel, sans affectation, avec modération, négligemment* même, dans cette danse de bal qui perdure jusqu'à la fin du 18^e siècle. Nous travaillons sur le *lié*, le *moelleux* en même temps que le détaché et la précision entre les trois danseurs propice à l'harmonie, à la connivence, aux jeux entre l'immobilité de l'apogée du pas avec son code de bras vers le haut et le mouvement entre les pas et le « retour » des bras vers le bas.

Exemple dansé : Aimable Vainqueur de Pécour, danse de bal dansée à Marly en 1701 «le Carnaval dernier, devant le roi, par le Comte de Brionne et Mlle de Bernonville et par plusieurs autres seigneurs et dames de la cour et dont sa Majesté parut en être très satisfaite» (Hésione de Campra, III, 5 - Second air).

Que peuvent signifier les recommandations ci-dessus citées? Comment agit une danse qui ne doit être ni affectée, ni guindée ni mièvre mais suggère le respect des morts dans un état qui ne serait pas triste puisque le caractère de la Loure se marie au thème des amants heureux ? Chacun sait qu'à la cour, contrairement au théâtre, les grands canalisent leur énergie pour ne montrer d'eux-

mêmes que ce qui était décent, convenable à leur rang, convivial, maîtrisé.

Le panorama d'énergies d'ordre chimique ou physique, mélancolie, colère, joie... les *humeurs*... peuvent devenir des éléments parfaitement théâtraux. « Le ballet n'imité pas seulement les actions, il imite encore selon Aristote les passions et les mœurs, ce qui est plus difficile que l'expression des actions » d'après Ménestrier. Nous devons imaginer et essayer de faire ressentir physiquement ces notions sous-jacentes. Ce qui nous amène vers d'autres pistes de travail dans les évolutions des parcours des *solis* afin de mettre en jeu des énergies variées et riches à l'image des Vents, des Zéphyrs, ou encore des Furies.

Si ce système stylistique décrit par Pierre Rameau fonctionne de façon kinésiologique comme esthétique, il sert en premier lieu l'art, c'est-à-dire la construction du beau : il doit donc et surtout transmettre le *sensible*.

Art de cour, dont nous sommes totalement éloignés, même si nous réétudions son contexte, et nous en approchons esthétiquement par un imaginaire nourri par les lectures et la culture sur l'art baroque, cet art a une force d'abstraction qui nous fascine par son mystère. Que nous livre-t-il qui nous intéresse encore aujourd'hui?

Comme nous venons de l'évoquer, il s'agit d'un art, qui travaille sur ce qui est propre à la représentation, au théâtre, c'est-à-dire l'illusion ; les symétries (dans les deux axes, les cercles, s'ouvrant ou se resserrant en ellipses, s'inscrivant dans un carré, qui devient un rectangle, et aussi tous les cercles des ports de bras), nous font apercevoir une réalité changeante, souple, en miroirs aux reflets multiples. Tantôt claires, tantôt labyrinthiques, elles troublent notre perception optique, nous faisant croire à un monde métamorphosé, incertain, qui nous « transporte » du « terrible » au « merveilleux », à l'*extraordinaire*, de l'ordre du rêve.

La forme provoque ici un effet, véhicule quelque chose, donne une apparence qui joue avec nos sens, et notre subjectivité. Les interprètes que nous sommes peuvent donc se laisser « impressionner » par la forme pour être plus des vecteurs de forces que des interprètes façonnés par la psychologie - ce qui serait par ailleurs anachronique.

Les pistes de travail portent dans le prochain exemple sur plusieurs interprétations d'une même phrase chorégraphique. La question qui nous est posée est de passer d'une danse à la fois majestueuse et relativement abstraite à une version plus caractérisée. Ou, en premier lieu, comment évoquer la noblesse et quelque chose qui a trait à la puissance, en deuxième, comment évoquer l'Espagne, puisque cette danse intervient dans l'acte intitulé *L'Espagne* dans l'Opéra-Ballet *L'Europe galante* de Campra. Nous choisirons, dans la première version, de soigner la netteté des équilibres, leur immobilité, les contrastes d'énergie entre pas rapides, pas suspendus et pas doublés rythmiquement, dans une version pour femme alternée avec la phrase chorégraphique pour deux hommes sur la même musique, en deuxième de pousser les contrastes des changements de directions, des gestes, et des changements d'orientation du corps dans l'espace, pour évoquer une plus grande dureté. Le thème, pérenne, de la chevalerie venu du Moyen-Age, sera poussé dans la joute entre hommes sous le regard de la femme. Pour la femme, je choisis d'utiliser l'éventail comme attribut à la fois *essentiel* et extérieur, mais reconnaissable par le public, même non averti.

Enfin, pour pousser la démonstration vers une évocation plus concrète qui utilise le même matériau, nous exécuterons une troisième version en interprétant trois des personnages de la commedia dell'arte : dans la même alternance des phrases de la femme et des deux hommes, le placement de ceux-ci en avant de la femme, met la joute dans un autre rapport à la femme. Dans l'idée « qu'on garde le caractère de la personne » et « le geste et la posture de la nature de ce qu'on représente » selon De Pure, on utilisera un style grotesque fait, pour le vieux Barbon dansé par Pierre-François Dollé, de genoux pliés, d'un dos voûté, pour Spavento, une sorte de Matamore, dansé par Hubert Hazebroucq, de pas saccadés, de gestes et de jambes très tendus et immodérés, et, pour la femme d'Arlequin ou Colombine, une rapidité de pas, des changements de ports de tête, sans oublier une provocante naïveté dans l'attitude et les mimiques

L'illusion doit faire effet. «Ainsi, l'illusion est à la fois posée et retirée, il y a une vérité spécifique de l'art qui consiste dans son naturel,

par delà son intrinsèque fausseté. Pour comprendre l'essence de l'art, il faut l'opposer à la nature.». ¹

Exemple dansé à partir de la reprise de la phrase A de L'Entrée espagnole pour une femme de Pécour dansée originellement par M^{elle} de Subligny au Ballet de l'Europe galante (1697), Air pour les Espagnols, 2^e entrée, Acte de l'Espagne (Feuillet 1704), alternée avec la phrase sur la même musique pour deux hommes dansée originellement par M. Piffeteau et Chevrier.

Si la forme est forte, nous pouvons en éprouver le fond, car en danse l'image est active, mais aussi agir sur lui. Nous pouvons utiliser le support comme révélateur, de passions, de caractères, de personnages - en relation avec le livret du ballet, en faisant « passer » la conviction dans le corps de l'interprète, qu'il soit du 17^e siècle ou non, ou en empruntant les attributs et le costume -, mais aussi de forces et de sens qui nous dépassent et vivent à travers nos corps. Nous sommes alors des vecteurs. L'envie vient alors de créer de nouveaux modes chorégraphiques qui tiennent compte à la fois des jeux de la « grammaire » comme disait Thoinot Arbeau, mais aussi des procédés en partie découverts ici, qui font partie de l'art ancien de la rhétorique, à utiliser parmi d'autres processus, selon d'autres thèmes, où il s'agit d'aiguiser l'œil du spectateur, de susciter des émotions, de la curiosité, du sens, et de l'imaginaire. N'est-il pas vrai que l'art est fait de différents truchements et transpositions, puisque, comme les hommes baroques, nous ne passons plus par la psychologie ou par la pantomime issue du 19^e siècle ?

Si la *Belle Dance* incarne un âge, une époque, elle révèle peut-être un tant soit peu un esprit qui semble assez universel pour provoquer un voyage, un « transport » aurait-on dit à l'époque baroque, ou ce rapt des sens nécessaire à l'homme actuel. Cet art semble au reste suffisant pour être discuté dans un Colloque de l'importance de celui d'aujourd'hui, de façon la plus sérieuse, et être objet de création dans de nouveaux jeux qui sont laissés à nos imaginations.... Ce qui rejoint l'esprit baroque qui se donnait pour règle d'élever l'homme du particulier à l'universel, mais surtout, sans « esprit de sérieux », comme aurait ajouté Francine Lancelot dans un éclat de rire, car cela lui aurait été odieux. Nous remercions Carol Teten qui

nous a invités pour sa confiance et sa générosité. Nous saluons son grand professionnalisme et son talent, elle qui a su aborder de nombreux styles avec une efficacité que chacun pourra apprécier dans ses publications.

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Notes

- ¹ Inventer l'invention, article de Marine Dumouchel à propos de Cicéron, *De inventione*. Mots Invention et découverte, Gallica

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Driving meaning in dance: Kristeva's account of signification collides with Laban's Effort

Anne Burnidge & Victoria Watts

The following is a transcript of the conversation between the authors as delivered at the conference.

VW: As part of my coursework in cultural studies I took some time to explore Julia Kristeva's work on signifying practices, prompted in part by Ann Daly's assertion that "Kristeva's ideas are especially suitable to the medium of dance, because they take into account the meaning that is generated by the body" (4). My own reading certainly indicated that there are several potentially exciting findings therein for a theorizing of the dancing body. These include insights into the creation of new expressive forms, the way signification operates in an embodied medium, the role of the audience member's body in perceiving and understanding the significance of dance, and the status of dance as a form of language. This work also resonated deeply with my understanding and experience of the theories and practice of Rudolf Laban. Both theorists address embodiment, although in quite different ways, and they both variously engage linguistic or pseudo-linguistic practices in the making of meaning. Although I was excited about pursuing this research further, I knew that it would benefit from the insight of someone with greater expertise in Laban Movement Analysis. Consequently, I contacted Anne and suggested that we work collaboratively on this project.

AB: When Vicki first proposed a possible interplay between the theories of Kristeva and Laban, I was excited. But having very little background in critical theory, I needed to read some of Kristeva's works before I could really start to dialog with her about the connections she saw. The more I read, the more these two theorists seemed to share. Today we will discuss our preliminary findings and where we might want to go further. Part of our challenge here will be that those of you familiar with Kristeva's work might not be familiar with the specialized vocabulary used in Laban's work, and vice versa. So, please forgive us if our explanations are too rudimentary, and please feel free to ask questions if we take too much for granted.

VW: Kristeva posits an alternative account of the subject's entry into the Symbolic order to that proposed by Lacan's psychoanalytic theory: hers grants a foundational role to the bodily interactions between mother and child in earliest infancy. She argues that all processes of signification are comprised of two modalities: the symbolic, not identical to Lacan's Symbolic order, offers propositions, judgment and meaning, and the semiotic realm comprised of the non-verbal and the extra-linguistic. Insofar as the symbolic pertains to the paternal and the semiotic to the maternal, the semiotic prefigures the symbolic, but only as a theoretical supposition. The semiotic comprises rhythm, intonation, vocal timbres, and kinaesthetic senses that regulate the bond between mother and child during early infancy. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Kristeva describes this array of the infant's energies as *drives* (a notion she takes from Freud):

Discrete quantities of energy move through the body of the subject who is not yet constituted as such and, in the course of his development, they are arranged according to the various constraints imposed on this body – always already involved in a semiotic process – by family and social structures. (Kristeva "Semiotic & Symbolic" 35)

Thus, in the first instance these drives are regulated by the mother. Kristeva suggests that these drives articulate what she terms the *semiotic chora*, "a non-expressive totality formed by the drives and their stases in a motility that is as full of movement as it is regulated" (Kristeva "Semiotic & Symbolic" 35) and it is within this *chora* that these same drives enter language. As is clear from above, it is the mother figure who implements the stases that form the regulating order of the *chora*. To anyone with an interest in understanding the expressive potential of the dancing body, the confluence between the drives Kristeva refers to and the notion of Drives that Rudolph Laban and his followers articulate in Laban

Movement Analysis [LMA] is immediately apparent.

AB: Before I discuss the intersection of Laban's Effort Drives and Kristeva's psychoanalytic drives, I would like to very briefly discuss the provocative connections that emerge between Kristeva's semiotic chora and Laban's Space Harmony or "Choreutics." As I read Kristeva, short words and phrases popped out at me that immediately triggered thoughts of Space Harmony. Choreutics, the original name for Space Harmony, comes from the same root "chora" or "chor" as in choreography. In her discussion of the semiotic chora, Kristeva mentions "geometry," "kinetic rhythm," and "rhythmic space." For those of you familiar with Space Harmony, there is obviously a resonance between these words and the movement scales. Laban's scales are physically challenging movement patterns that lead the body in an organized way through geometrically divided space in much the same way that musical scales take the musician through different organized patterns of notes. One could easily use Kristeva's terms of "rhythmic space" or "kinetic rhythm" when considering the body's experience moving through Laban's scales.

This is definitely an area that needs deeper investigation, but for now, I am going to move on to Laban's Effort Qualities and Drives.

Dance sequences are rarely performed with even, unfluctuating, uninflected dynamics. It is dynamic qualities that lend dance its expressive power in a similar way to which rhythm and intonation lend speech greater expressivity. Laban suggested that the "how" of movement—the dynamics, the inner attitude—could be broken down into four Effort Qualities. It is rare to see someone exhibiting only one Effort Quality, instead these qualities interact in a constant ebb and flow depending on the intention of the mover.

Laban observed that movement dynamics could be categorized by four Effort Qualities—Weight, Space, Time, and Flow. These qualities describe the mover's use of energy, which is a direct reflection of his/her attitude toward the movement. Within each of these qualities exists a continuum that ranges from the condensed to the indulgent. For example Flow can modulate between Bound Flow—tight, withheld, ridged, controlled—to Free Flow—loose, easy, outpouring, unbounded. All four Efforts always exist in a movement, but it is the elements

that shine out or are the most important that are "read" or analyzed by the observer.

When two Effort Qualities are exhibited at the same time, Flow and Space for example, Laban termed these "Effort States". States are more effortful, more expressive moments. Flow and Space combine to reveal Remote State. You may be in Remote State as you watch a dance performance. Perhaps you are holding your breath in expectant excitement, eyes glued to the soloist as she executes daring technical feats (Bound Flow and Direct Space.) Or maybe you are easily sitting back in your seat, taking in a general wash of colors and flow of gauzy costumes as many dancers glide and weave around the stage (Free Flow and Indirect Space.)

You may be watching in Remote State, but most likely the dancers are shifting quickly between States and Drives. Effort Drives are very expressive moments when three Efforts shine out together—a Graham contraction (Bound Flow, Direct Space, and either Quick or Sustained Time), a grand jete (Direct Space, Free Flow, and Strong or Light Weight)—moments of greater investment in the inner desire to move. Four Efforts exhibited at the same time is called a Complete Effort. These moments are rare; rage, desperation, or ecstasy might be examples.

So returning to the theme of the paper, there already seem to be similarities between the energies of Laban's Effort Qualities and the energies of Kristeva's drives. It is the regulation of these energies, which we are calling "Laban-Efforts/Kristeva drives," that provides the internal impetus for any movement, in just the same way that the semiotic register of rhythm and intonation provides the foundation for speech and language.

Indeed, it is perhaps even more apparent through bodily movement than through language. Kelly Oliver notes in her introduction to the Portable Kristeva that Kristeva's analysis suggests that "rhythm and tones do not represent bodily drives; rather, bodily drives are discharged through rhythm and tones" (xiv). We could argue that the discharge of Kristeva's drives is both felt and seen through: the rhythm of bodily action (Laban's Time Quality), the tone of the musculature (Laban's Flow), the attention to the environment (Laban's Space) and the forcefulness of physical attitude (Laban's Weight.) We suggest that Laban's Effort Theory in effect defines and quantifies this discharge of Kristeva's drives through the body. Moreover, it seems that

Laban's concepts of Effort and Effort Drives and their alignment to what might be termed "attitudes of mind" could be profitably explored in greater depth in light of Kristeva's ideas of signification.

VW: One of the major reasons why Kristeva's work should be of interest to dance scholars is that, as noted above, she makes a compelling case for the importance of the body in all signifying processes. Another reason is that she acknowledges that written and spoken language does not fully express the full range of human experience, and that the semiotic, while prefiguring the symbolic, also always exceeds it. Moreover, she suggests that if we accept that the semiotic can only reach consciousness when linked with language then we must recognize that we need an "expanded and nuanced rhetoric" ("Sensation" 120) in order to access sensations more generally. She posits a Sensory Cave, akin to Plato's Cave but devoid of the 'shadows', as a means of understanding how lived experience, that might resist the forms of cognitive experience, can still be endowed with form and signification. She stresses the importance of sensory experience for the speaking subject's psychic experience, asserting that word-presentations cannot always convey this, since the sensory cavern is irreducible to language. She explains:

Although everyone has a sensory cave, some of us experience it as a psychic catastrophe (those afflicted with autism being the most extreme example), some attain jouissance from it (hysterics complain that what is felt and what is said are in constant conflict), and some attempt to turn it into a normative discourse generating the coalescence between sensations and linguistic signs that we call literary style. ("Sensation" 123)

She counters the suggestion that the ubiquity of the sensory cave implies that everyone is autistic by asserting that it is part of the heterogeneous and stratified apparatus of the psyche. Even though sensation-perception, an essential part of the psychic experience, cannot be reduced to, or absorbed by, language, "the sensory domain's resistance to being reduced to the cognitive domain is not necessarily experienced through the painful form of autism, for it can also be expressed through perversion, art, or psychoanalysis" ("Sensation" 123).

AB: This desire to create an expanded and nuanced mode of communication that allows kinesthetic sensations to enter the realm of meaning making can be pinpointed as one of the founding impulses of modern dance. Choreographers such as Isadora Duncan, and subsequently artists like Martha Graham and Pina Bausch, attempt to reconcile the gap between sensation and expression with the generation of a normative albeit non-verbal discourse. That is to say, they made their own codified movement vocabulary that eventually became meaningful for the audience. So, over time the 'vocabulary' or movement style they each developed to convey the complexity of sensory and psychic experience has even gone so far as to become conventionalized: the exultation of Duncan's runs, the anguish of a Graham contraction, and the self-abusing obsessive-compulsion of Bausch's repetitive collapsing and falling, have now become choreographic placeholders for meaning, signifiers of emotional-sensory states. That is, it is possible for them to be performed carelessly, without the dynamic commitment, without the full engagement in Laban's Efforts/Kristeva's drives that would be required for true expression of the emotional state, and yet they can still be understood. On the other hand, performed with conviction, these kinds of movement avoid the status of cliché.

VW: This potential for cliché arises when repetition and codification have helped to transform that which was once confined to the semiotic chora into a new symbolic form that is now granted the status of a signifier. Before this codification takes place, the new dance forms can still be understood, but through the becoming of *flesh*, a notion that Kristeva takes from Merleau-Ponty, rather than purely through decoding the process of signification. Kristeva explains Merleau-Ponty's proposition about the chiasmic nature of the senses. She cites his example of looking at a landscape with another person:

[T]hrough the concordant operation of his body and my own, what I see passes into him, this individual green of the meadow under my eyes invades his vision without quitting my own, I recognize in my green his green, as the customs officer recognizes suddenly in a traveler the man whose description he had been given. There is no

problem here of the *alter ego* because it is not I who sees, not he who sees, because an anonymous visibility inhabits both of us, a vision in general, in virtue of that primordial property that belongs to the flesh, being here and now, of radiating everywhere and forever, being an individual, of being an individual, of being also a dimension and a universal. (in Kristeva "Sensation" 125)

His highly poetic description is mobilized by Kristeva in a call for a more embodied understanding of the processes of transference and counter-transference as they occur in the course of psychoanalysis. In identifying with the analysand, the analyst must feel what the analysand feels at the level of the semiotic in order to help him/her bring sensory experience into consciousness and into discourse such that it can be processed. She also suggests that it "would be legitimate to transpose this *interpenetration* and *reversibility* – which operate between who or what perceives and what is perceived and between who or what feels and what is felt - . . . onto the reading of literary texts" ("Sensation" 124). We want to suggest that this connection between *flesh* and the semiotic chora is essential in unpacking the ways in which dance creates non-propositional meaning, and that even once new expressive forms have become highly

codified, an integral interpretive element is lost if the interpenetration that Kristeva puts forward for the reading of literature is repressed or ignored in the appreciation of dance.

AB: So, clearly much of this work is still speculative, but today we've given a small indication of the fertile ground that exists between Kristeva's psychoanalytic criticism and Laban's complex theories for movement analysis. As we take this research forward, in addition to mining critical theory for its relevance to meaning making in dance, we hope to also bring LMA as a dance-based dance theory into a more central position in our discussion.

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Immersive Theatre: Dance practice-based research about the perceptive space of dance within traditional theatre, and new possibilities of perception.

Claire Buisson

This paper is a transcription of the recorded voice emitted along the performative lecture¹ presented at the CND in June 2007.

I, Claire Buisson, assume the various registers of presence required during the lecture: voice, performing body, screened body. This answers some fundamental necessities due to the specificity of this work as dance practice-based research: encompassing theory and practice.

The audience enters the auditorium and takes a seat in front of the stage on which there were only one camera on the right side and one white screen on the back. Darkness comes, and the voice starts.

Beginning of the performative lecture.

“To start with, there isn’t very much: nothingness, the impalpable, the virtually immaterial,” George Perec².

To start with, I state that space does not exist in itself, it is a conceptual construction.

Where are you and what are you doing presently?

You are in an in-between, in darkness, listening to the introduction of my project presentation. This research is about the space of theatre, and how its conception shapes the modalities of perception of dance.

But what is the space of theatre?

The Western conception of the space of theatre has organized it into two main parts. The stage, dedicated to the performance, and the auditorium hosting the audience.

The Western classical conception of the space of theatre has privileged this dichotomy between performer and audience, shaping the perception of the audience into a frontal and visual model.

What is the space of theatre for dance?

First of all, it is a space that originally was

not conceived for dance. It is a space which originally was conceived for drama and spoken word.

In such a conception of space, one could ask where is the space for the kinaesthetic and kinetic quality of the senses, inscribed into contemporary dance.

Is theatre an appropriate space for a dance which would privilege the body?

This presentation is the exploration of a part of my whole argument still in process.

It is an experimental attempt to immerse you bodily into my research, as an echo of my attempt of heightening the perceptive possibilities to immerse the audience into the dance within the space of theatre.

It is inscribed in our contemporary context of the new technologies. It is questioning the virtual possibilities they offer for performance as Johannes Birringer states³. The development of technologies has enhanced our perceptive possibilities, defining larger networks of interrelationships.

With you, and through you, I seek to understand till which extent these technologies could enhance the perception of dance within the space of theatre, challenging its traditional organization.

How can we blur the conventions of this well-known space, and make it new?

It is starting. We are getting closer from the body of this performative lecture.

But be careful: this is not a performance. It is like you are in a theatre, with a dancer on stage; but it is not a performance. The performative presence of the dancer will serve my questioning this space, and your perception.

I will try to explain the limits of this space from the traditional conception of it, in order then step by step to explore, with you, possibilities of incorporating the kinaesthetic quality of dance in the theatre.

You will be actively engaged, asked to take

consciousness of the way this space will shape your perception along the whole process of the presentation.

Lights on, drawing a circle at the centre of the stage, and revealing the performer on stage, who is facing the audience. Progressively I will develop a dance determined by the boundaries of the space and incorporating the conceptual issues enounced by the voice. Movements are mainly improvised.

Be an active audience.

Install yourself properly, free yourself for anything which could disturb your perception.

No coat. No bag.

Nothing but just my voice, myself on stage, this space and you.

The phenomenological body

So how is it for you to be in the space of Studio 3 of the *Centre National de la Danse*?

It is still organized as a theatre space.

It could be called an end-stage theatre, with aspects of open-stage and of proscenium theatre conventions.

An open stage, as there is no arch separating you from the stage; you and I share the same volume.

But there is still a boundary between us, which makes this space a proscenium theatre. You see me through only one direction, as you are seated on these parallel rows facing the stage. And if you look at the floor, look: my space is demarked from yours.

At least these are the traditional conventions applied to this space. And I could decide to not follow them, to challenge them.

What about your perception in this space?

How are you installed in your seat?

Where would you locate your perception through your body: front, back, sides?

Is your perception excluding what is on your back, over your contact with the seat?

Is your perception only proceeding through your vision?

Now, how do you feel related to me on stage?

How do you perceive me, my body?

It is quite a frontal vision, isn't it?

I would like you to go on stage, now, and

walk around me.

Go there, now. And move around me.

At that point, the audience should obey the voice and come on stage. The day of this lecture at the CND, nobody did. Unexpectedly, I had to deal instantaneously with this absence in order to sustain the process of the presented conceptualization and I came to pick up people from the auditorium. Suddenly audience and I were in the same situation of unknown, trying to compose a synergy with the ambient space and to involve them in the dance: a proper performative exercise of spatial and choreographic composition echoing the argument of the lecture.

Merleau-Ponty says that through the vision, we penetrate the object perceived and inhabit it. Because body is not one face, one front, but many faces, matter, a volume.

This is the phenomenological body.

That is the point of theatre. That its frontal organization does not allow so much to inhabit the dancer; it shapes your perception in an uni-dimensional perspective.

And what about you now? Do you feel more related to me? More interactive?

Move around me and access these different points of view.

Does it affect your perception of me dancing?

Problem: we said we are in a theatre space model and so you are not supposed to be here.

What are you doing here? Go back and seat, this is not your space.

This is the space for the performer.

Go back to the auditorium, now.

Go back to the audience space, as you are an audience.

Move back and leave my space free.

But anyway at least now you can try to keep this relation you had while walking around me.

You can perceive this relation even in a distance perspective, why not?

Maybe it is just a question of conception, of being aware of the phenomenological dimension of the body, and of your perception?

Or maybe also I can help you.

How can the dance contaminate the space, and being incorporated within it, without you or

I moving properly from our areas?

Let's try to find a way.

Close your eyes.

The body-image: between choreography and videography

Aperture of the video-projector: my live image from the camera on stage is simultaneously projected on the screen at the back of the stage.

I seek to arouse the kinaesthetic sense of your perception.

According to Merleau-Ponty, I see with my eyes, but I feel by the senses. This *with* and *by* through which I perceive are interlinked into the dynamic of CHIASM.

This dynamic gives the sense of the flesh, brings us to inhabit this body that we perceive.

The body reaches a multi-dimension, is not anymore considered only flat and two-sided. It is matter; and as a consequence, perception is not the privilege of a front face excluding a back.

Open your eyes and look.

But it is not just looking at.

Try to have a look as if ... feeling, not just looking as if watching and being passive in your seat.

Look what is coming through your own body, the sensation...

Feel.

Modernists already refused this conception of theatre where audience is watching the performer on stage as object-body.

Conceptually, you are not separated into body and mind, object-subject, stage-auditorium.

But what about your empirical perception, at this moment? This body-image enhances my presence on stage.

Now you have simultaneously the different faces of this dancing body. You access this phenomenological body you were close to earlier when being on stage.

As Andrew Murphie states⁴, this copresence of the live body and the body-image of the video-projection configure another body, in-between.

It composes a space.

In fact, from the confrontation between my live body, the body-image and your own bodily presence comes a new space of perception.

It disrupts frontality.

It generates a situation of intercorporeality, which is usually reduced by the frontal perspective of the theatre of space.

You access the flesh of the subject perceived.

But it could disrupt the frontality even more.

My final intention is to create a surrounding virtual body through this body-image, being moved into the space from the videoprojector, maybe through different projections in the space.

But yet, theatre can be a very arid space; it is not so easy to blur its conventions.

Presently, I cannot do it with you.

So at least try to imagine.

Being surrounded by the dancing body, live and virtual presence in the space.

The choreography on stage being enhanced by the VIDEOGRAPHY incorporated in all over the space, around you.

How would you feel through it?

Look at me moving.

Close your eyes again. And now listen.

The body-sound: a dance of sounds

Above the voice, it is coming a soundtrack of dancing sounds prerecorded. They serve two dimensions of the argument. On one hand the kinaesthetic dimension of dance coming from its sounding, On the other hand, the spatialization of the dance presence as the sound circulates within the theatre through four speakers located backstage/backauditorium, both on right and left sides.

What does it change? Can you perceive it?

My presence coming out through this SOUNDSCAPE?

How is your perception affected?

Still frontal?

Probably, because theatre organizes your perception in this way.

Didn't an orchestra used to be in front of the audience?

Open your eyes and consider that theatre specifically: there are only two speakers located at the back of the stage.

Nevertheless through this question emerges an interesting possibility for completing the process of perceptive immersion of the audience.

Merleau-Ponty points out the virtual presence of what is behind us and through which we come to inhabit what we perceive, and

reciprocally we are inhabited by it.

It is specifically this presence that is missing in the frontal perspective of the theatre, and it is specifically this presence that could complete the reconfiguration of presence in this space.

Could you imagine being immersed in the soundscape of my dancing?

At that point, the sound spatialization is achieved (the four speakers together) in such a way that audience and the performer are immersed together in the sound presence of dance.

It creates another level of chiasm, which overwhelms the traditional organization of this space. You accede the space and time of the dance through your perception.

Open your eyes.

Look, listen, feel, with, by, in, within.

The whole construction keeps running for about four minutes: video, dance sounds, performer.

Then: general blackout, back to total darkness.

Questioning the audience perception

Back to the initial circle of light on stage. No more video or speakers. I do not dance anymore. My live voice addresses these last sentences to the audience.

But maybe I am wrong.

Maybe you did not perceive anything of what I described to you.

Maybe you do not perceive any difference now, between the space now and the space that I have tried to build up throughout the presentation.

To start with, I stated that through the technological shift we reach a philosophical situation within which we could challenge the traditional perception of dance within the theatre.

Constructing a bodily spatial realm.

But maybe this cannot be reached in the empirical reality.

This practical presentation was a first performative experience, a first step for my research, first confrontation with an audience,

yet in process.

Now: open to questions, critics, feedback.

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Endnotes

- 1 This performative lecture has been originally conceived to complete the writing part of a dance practice-based research entitled "Immersive Theatre", and realized within Claire Buisson MA in Dance Anthropology (Roehampton University-London). That research was an historical and philosophical investigation on the relationship between dance perception and space of theatre (essay available to Claire Buisson). A first presentation of the practical part of the research occurred in June 2006 at Roehampton University. A second version of this project exists, as a proper performance, including new developments on the issues concerned with the video dimension of the research. It has been presented in January 2007 at Rome during the festival *Installer*. The performative part of the original project is currently re-invested within Claire Buisson Phd researches, whose main new dimension is the exploration of the presence of dance in non theatrical space. Still through a methodology encompassing theory and practice. From "Immersive Theatre" toward site-specific performance.
- 2 Percec, George (1997) (originally published in 1974), « Foreword », p.3 in *Species of Space and Other Pieces*, London: Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics Pieces
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Re-creating dances of Harald Kreutzberg

Emma Lewis Thomas and John Pennington

“How many of you have seen Harald Kreutzberg dance?” Three hands go up, two belonging to Ivor Guest and Ann Hutchinson Guest; the third, a distinguished-looking gentleman whom I do not recognize.

“How many of you have taken classes with Harald Kreutzberg?” No hands.

“I had the good fortune to take classes from Kreutzberg in Zurich in the summers of 1954, 1955, and 1956 as well as in Berlin, when he came choreograph a play or present a solo recital from Bern where, assisted by Hilde Baumann, he had opened his own school in 1955. I entered the Mary Wigman School as a Meisterschülerin in September, 1954 and continued to dance and teach in Berlin through 1959.

In the fall of '54, Kreutzberg choreographed “Walpurgisnacht” for a production of Goethe’s “Faust” that was to open at the newly constructed Schillertheater. Attending rehearsals, I was astonished at the mass of writhing bodies, all moving separately, yet creating a total picture that was aesthetically and emotionally satisfying.

When considering the issue of theory versus praxis, one asks the question: “Why reconstruction?” Since making our proposal last fall, I have decided to abandon dance’s two most familiar terms – “re-construction” and “re-creation” – in favor of a new term: **RESTATEMENT**. To clarify:

Reconstruction: creating the dance as exactly as it was executed in the past.

Recreation: creating the dance as close as possible to the way it was executed in the past, supplying movement when it is unknown or missing from the score, film, videotape, or written record.

Restatement [*Réactualisation*¹]: performing a dance work that remains true to its original form and preserves the seeds of its intent, both intrinsic and

interpreted, while allowing the focus to be directed towards experiencing the dance by today’s spectators (audience).

These definitions are based upon the concept that the dance exists outside the dancing body. It is an entity unto itself and as such, it is available for study, analysis, evaluation, and enjoyment in performance – as are other more tangible works of art.

My experience with re-creating dances spans more than thirty years, focusing on European repertory from the eleventh century to the present, both social and theatrical. Since 1971 I have taught dance history at UCLA, specializing in translating from original source materials into movement. Having taught widely in the US, Europe, Australia, Hong Kong and the Philippines, I have become conscious of the necessity of considering the cultural experience of the spectators in every circumstance. When presenting fifteenth century dances in Certaldo, Italy, much less cultural explanation is necessary than when this same program is danced in Los Angeles, California. because in Italy, one is surrounded by the art and ambiance in which the dances were created originally.

My hesitation to tackle the German Expressionist works of Wigman and Kreutzberg related to the original intent of the choreographers; i.e., to allow a *soi-disant* Neo-Platonic spirit to speak through the individual dancer as a “medium” that conveys a completely original and unique way of moving and expressing. During our last visit (Christmas 1972) Mary Wigman said to me: “Don’t re-create my dances.² There is so much new to be said. Create your own.” Kreutzberg had seen his solos taken over by others during his world tours, and both he and Wigman viewed imitation as the sincerest form of flattery.

Still, as she aged, Martha Graham gave up her solos to others, as did Bella Lewitzky, and by the 1990s there were sweeping changes in the way dance was seen and experienced. We

became receptive to developing dance history in movement to preserve its relevance to our contemporary world.

Theory and Practice

Without practice, there can be no theory. Theoreticians cannot exist without the practitioners of dance, labels come after the fact, analysis can, perhaps, help understand the process of creating and/or the process of dancing, but cannot exist without the dancing bodies that give our field meaning. My experience of teaching bodies to dance for more than 50 years bears out empirically that, as Gertrude Stein said, "People do not move the same from one generation to the next." The persons I teach today do not move as the ones that I taught in the 1950. There are fewer cultural definitions of movement; the world has become homogenized in movement as in many other aspects of our existence. Therefore, we must **allow movement to be flexible in order to reach our contemporaries.**

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

As a prelude to showing the dances created by John Pennington, Paul DesMarais and myself, please look at some visuals of Harald Kreutzberg dancing:

1. *Abendfantasie* – an early work
2. *Zeremonienmeister* – in *Turandot*, directed by Max Reinhardt, 1926
3. *Persisches Lied* – with Yvonne Georgi note identical costuming 1927
4. *Symphoniette* – again with Georgi
5. *Drei irre Gestalten* – in training clothes, note sculptural modeling, internal psychological involvement
6. *Der Verliebte Gärtner* – Mozartian influence, pastorale variée
7. *Til Eulenspiegel* - a favorite medieval prankster for HK & composer/accompanist Friederick Wilckens
8. *Königstanz* – note design of headpiece, echoing Delsartian heart and brain coming out.
9. *Kreutzberg and Wilckens at piano* – intimate artistic collaboration that shaped all their works together³

10. *Kreutzberg teaches* – forward lunge on r. foot, arms stretched parallel forward, typical way HK classes began
11. Portrait photo by the Dane, Karl Ivo, of HK in full cloak
12. *Mask for l'Amour* - HK holding mask against his own head, creating three faces

Kreutzberg's solos were short, most lasting three minutes or less. His time was spent in selecting the right gesture, deepening and refining the dance to distill the essence of meaning in a brief time span. Please observe three short dances that make up the suite we entitle "Reflections on Kreutzberg," in which the traditional duet of male and female performers is replaced by the solo dancer, enacting and communicating both male and female reaction through gesture. The dances did not belong together in Kreutzberg's repertory, we arranged the suite by choosing to rearticulate dances that we found particularly relevant today and that have three things in common: **masks, gender identity, and death.**

John Pennington appears as Death in a long black cloak. Death speaks:

I AM DEATH
 AND DAY AFTER DAY
 I DESCEND TO EARTH TO GATHER THE
 HARVEST AS I AM BIDDEN.
 I AM THE MIGHTIEST ON THE FACE OF
 THE EARTH.
 THERE REMAINS ONLY ONE WHO IS
 MIGHTIER THAN I
 WHETHER KING, CHILD, DRUNK,
 WHORE, CRIMINAL, VAIN OR HUMBLE.
 EVERYONE IS EQUALLY ENTRUSTED TO
 DEATH
 WITHIN THE SHADOW OF MY CAPE I
 DRAW YOU TO JUDGMENT IN THE
 ETERNAL CIRCLE.
 IN THE END, YOU ALL WEAR MY FACE

 SO, COME MY GIRL, COME MY WHORE,
 COME DANCE YOUR LAST DANCE
 WITH ME.⁴

John then performs the suite, “Reflections on Kreutzberg.”⁵

**The Wanton [die Dirne] dancer as woman
L’Amour dancer as half woman, half man
Orpheus [Orpheus klagt um Eridike]
dancer as man with mask of woman he loves**

While John changes to present the second suite, “Dances Before God” [Tänze vor Gott], a short *Lebenslauf* of Kreutzberg is recited, interspersed with personal reminiscences of contact with him, impressions of his performances, small choreographic anecdotes that involve the CND audience in reflecting on what they have seen. Example: “Kreutzberg regarded impressions as a file of photographic plates that he carried internally to refer to when he was creating a dance. For the end of “Orpheus,” he wanted to find gestures that would convey the absolute desolation of the dancer after he has transformed himself into his beloved in an attempt to recall her. Noted for his expressive hands, he chooses to show grief by borrowing the gestures of three sacred monkeys statues he had seen in a temple in the Far East: “See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.” These express his final desolation.

Kreutzberg was born in 1901 and died in 1968 of a stroke. The years of his life span were enormously difficult politically and economically for his homeland, yet he rose to becoming recognized as “the second Nijinsky” in the 1930s when his technique and choreographic skills were at their zenith. He toured extensively during that time period, often abroad (to South America and the Far East), completing eleven US tours by 1939 and revisiting the US in 1947. The Suite that he called “dances Before God” consisted of many short solos from which he would choose a few to present on any given dance evening. Note: the National Socialists could not ban the Bible, so expressing biblical subjects was a subversive way to express dissatisfaction with the regime. This is particularly notable in the dances we have chosen to show you:

John then performs the suite, “Dances Before God”⁶ Tänze vor Gott

**Angel of Silence [Engel des Schweigens]
Job Wrestles with God [Hiob hadert mit Gott]
Angel of Revelation [Engel der Verkündigung]**

The session ended with remarks and questions from the audience.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Thank you, Mark Franco.
- ² New to the University of California, I had asked Mary whether she would allow me to re-create some scenes from her 1957 version of “*Frühlingsfeier*” [*Sacre du Printemps*] which premiered at the Berlin *Städtische Oper* in October. Because I performed as one of three “*Mütterliche Figuren*,” female priestesses that Wigman added to the Stravinsky Roehrich score, I knew most of the choreography by heart and wanted to restage some group scenes, using live musicians and the duo piano score.
- ³ See “*Ein Tanz wird Geboren*,” Harold Kreutzberg/aufgez. von Lily von Sauter, *Tanzdrama* Heft 21, 4. Quartal 1992, pp. 20-21. (aus *Der Turm*. Wien, 1/1948)
- ⁴ This text is translated from the film HK made in 1960, “The Eternal Circle,” when the possibilities of film animation fascinated him. I saw him perform the dance on stage in Berlin in 1957 and that version differed considerably from the film. [available through the German Consulate.]
- ⁵ Premiered in September, 2005, this piece won three Lester Horton awards: for John Pennington as best male dancer in a solo role; for Paul DesMarais as best original music composition for dance, and for John Pennington and Emma Lewis Thomas as best reconstruction recreation.
- ⁶ In March 1999, John Pennington and composer/pianist, Paul DesMarais, premiered this suite at the Getty with a new score based on original compositions by Friederick Wilckens. Lewis Segal (*Los Angeles Times*) and Sasha Anawalt (*L.A. Weekly*) included this performance in the top ten dance events of 1999. In spring, 2000, the suite won three Lester Horton awards, the same mentioned in fnt. 5.

Les mots et les gestes, une interaction subtile et profonde

Maurice Courchay

Dans le cadre d'un atelier chorégraphique de 85mn l'enjeu fut de permettre aux personnes présentes de faire l'expérience des interactions qui existent entre le ressenti de différents états de corps et les mots et sons que l'on prononce pour les qualifier. Le propos de cette démarche est de permettre à une personne, danseur-interprète, professeur, créateur, d'élargir la palette de ses perceptions et de ses sensations, tant dans l'acte de danse que dans sa transmission, en conscientisant et développant les registres sémantiques dont elle dispose pour en parler.

Voici ci-dessous la structure de la démarche ainsi que le déroulement de l'atelier proprement dit.

Dans les champs de l'expérience du mouvement dansé et de la pédagogie de la danse j'ai constaté que :

> Les mots que l'on prononce nous renvoient à des états de corps, des expériences kinesthésiques différentes ;

> Le degré de l'expérience kinesthésique associée à un mot conditionne son utilisation et les effets qu'il a sur le geste (facilitateur ou inhibiteur).

Ainsi, le mouvement dansé se trouve modifié, dilaté ou empêché, lorsqu'il s'agit de trouver des mots pour en parler.

Ce qui m'a conduit à identifier trois registres sémantiques génériques relevant de domaines complémentaires car s'inscrivant dans une réalité systémique :

> Le registre relevant de la composante Dynamique (tout ce qui traite de la durée, des accentuations, des modulations d'intensité et de nuance dans le mouvement),

> Le registre relevant de la composante Biomécanique (tout ce qui va permettre ou qui traite de qualifier l'organisation corporelle en vue de la réalisation d'une action motrice),

> Le registre relevant de la composante Métaphorique (tout ce qui traite des associations imaginaires - conscientes ou pas -, des univers poétiques qui viennent donner au mouvement une sensorialité, une qualité, une

couleur, une tonalité, un goût, un parfum ... Une résonance).

Il est à noter qu'une personne puise de manière préférentielle dans l'un ou l'autre des registres lorsqu'il s'agit de « nommer » son expérience, d'accompagner, stimuler l'expérience d'autrui.

Il devient alors évident qu'aider un étudiant, danseur ou pédagogue de la danse, à conscientiser les registres sémantiques qu'il utilise, lui permet d'accéder à ses ressources propres en découvrant ses mécanismes d'action et de formulation. L'accompagner ensuite dans l'utilisation et l'appropriation de nouveaux registres lui offre la capacité :

> de dilater, d'enrichir, d'affiner ses sensations dans les moments de danse;

> d'élargir les champs de sa perception et de sa compréhension en convoquant des outils relevant de l'anatomie-physiologie et de l'analyse du mouvement dansé, de la théorie musicale et rythmique, de la culture chorégraphique et artistique au sens large, des sciences humaines et de la recherche scientifique, ...;

> d'ajuster, de préciser ses stratégies d'apprentissage et de communication;

> de multiplier les approches possibles dans l'acte de création et de transmission.

Démarche de l'atelier :

Construire : Chacun des participants construit un court enchaînement chorégraphique ou séquence gestuelle.

Vivre : Pratiquer afin de développer la sensation que chacun assimile à un moment de danse, puis, regarder la proposition de l'autre (établissement d'un « système de référence » qui permettra de prendre la mesure des modifications et évolutions des perceptions tout au long du processus).

Nommer : Utiliser des mots, des sons, des verbes pour nommer ce que l'on fait et ressent en restant au plus près de la temporalité et intentions initiales :

> Sur un plan dynamique (élans, intentions) en utilisant des onomatopées, en accentuant des respirations, en appuyant des éléments rythmiques ;

> Sur un plan biomécanique en utilisant des vocabulaires spécifiques, des verbes d'action ;

> Sur un plan métaphorique {Plans Visuel – Comme : une image, une vue... -, Auditif – comme : un son, une mélodie... -, Kinesthésique – comme : une sensation, un état, une émotion... -, Olfactif – comme : une odeur, un parfum...-, Gustatif – comme : un goût...-} la séquence chorégraphique peut devenir une courte histoire dramatique ou féérique.

La traversée des plans doit être conduite afin que chacun d'eux soit exploré séparément.

Partager : il est important, durant le processus, de partager avec les autres membres du groupe de pratique ce que l'on perçoit, ressent, comprend au cours du développement de l'atelier. La lecture réciproque de ses propres actions et des actions d'autrui contribue à l'éclaircissement des expériences individuelles.

Identifier :

> les registres préférentiels employés pour nommer, ressentir et communiquer (les mots et registres avec lesquels la sensation dansée a été potentialisée, dilatée, enrichie);

> des registres qui nous ouvrent de nouvelles sensations, de nouvelles perceptions de notre expérience dansée;

Elargir : développer la capacité à voyager entre les registres pour multiplier les perceptions, ouvrir sur divers aspects d'une expérience, dilater des sensations, élargir la possibilité d'aider autrui à construire ses propres stratégies d'apprentissage et à développer ce qui lui permettra de savourer au mieux son aventure dansée (en gardant présent à l'esprit que ce qui est déclencheur pour une personne peut-être inhibiteur chez une autre et vice versa).

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NB : Le texte peut être communiqué en anglais.

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Improvisation as an Embodied 'Practice' of Mallorquin Dance

Linda Dankworth

Introduction

This paper explores the practice of improvisation in traditional dance on the Spanish, Balearic Island of Mallorca. I discuss the processes that are involved in the use of improvisation in the Mallorquin dance repertoires, and analyse the practice from initial composition in classroom contexts to adaptations in social dance events.

Mallorca lies in the western Mediterranean Sea, situated to the east of the Spanish mainland. The island's position in the Mediterranean makes it a popular holiday destination, with 7,473,584 tourists visiting Mallorca in 2002 - 2003. In January 2005, the total population of the Balearics was recorded at 983,131, with 730,778 people living in Mallorca, the largest of the Balearic Islands.

There are two styles of dancing on the island: one is the improvised 'revival' form that is the focus of this paper, which originated at the *Escola de Música i Danses de Mallorca* in the capital city of Palma. The other style is the 'choreographed' European court form, which is taught and performed by the group, *Aires Sollerics* with dances originating in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This school is situated in the small town of Soller in the northwest of the island. The focus of all the *Mallorquin* dances are based on couple dances, and the steps for both men and women are exactly the same like a (*espejo*) mirror image of each other. In contrast to most couple dances, women lead all of these dancesⁱ.

Since democracy was restored in Spain after Franco's demise in 1975, Mallorca's recent autonomous status within the region has allowed the local community to bring about changes to their traditional art forms of music and dance. Tourism has also been crucial in the Mallorcans' pursuit to redefine themselves against the 'other'. This has resulted in a revival of their regional dances, which has thrust Mallorcan identity into

the spotlight. Improvisation in *Mallorquin* dance occurs in both formal and informal dance contexts on the island, and is used to construct specific identities for different audiences. Political and economic change has resulted in two levels of performance of *Mallorquin* dance by the local community.

The first level has evolved as a response to tourism when the *ballada*ⁱⁱ which is a social dance event, was created in the 1980s. A particular emphasis was given to modernising the traditional

music, led by a few musicians who began to play music in the village and town squares, previously not allowed under Franco. It is also in this spatial arena where the local community practice innovative improvised folk dances for themselves, away from the tourist's gaze. The director of the *Escola de Música i Danses de Mallorca* states:

Living on an island you are exposed to all sorts of things that come from the outside, and the young people have reacted in such a way that they want to keep their own customs and traditions that belong to the island; they want to keep them alive and it has become fashionable to do so with dancing at the *ballada* that is scheduled every weekend.

Gabriel Frontera, recorded interview,
Palma, January 2003

The second level revolves around the issue of how popular dance is used by political parties to promote nationalistⁱⁱⁱ sentiment as a move towards separation from Spain with demonstrations for independence.

I explore the complexities of representation in improvisation through

examination of the differences of approach to the Mallorcans' stylistic embodiment of the art form. A brief outline is given of the origin of the revival dances. I then examine the dance and music relationship before moving on to discuss the improvised *Mallorquin* repertoire.

Origins of the Dances

Mallorquin dance is taught formally in the context of dance classes. The reason for this paradigm of formal teaching practices in Mallorca is due to the lack of transmission of the dance form, from one generation to another during Franco's dictatorship of Spain, from 1939-1975. During this period, the *Sección Femenina* (Women's Division of the Falange Party) took control of dance, enforcing Catholic and militaristic values, as puritanical structural influences on the art form. Estrella Casero-Garcia (1999, p.79) has written extensively on this subject and suggests, "the Feminine Division functioned as a specialized agent in the indoctrination of women during the entire Franco period". The method in which the Feminine Division instructed these women was through their itinerant classrooms. Michael Richards (1998, p.67) also discusses how there was a need within the Falange institutional ideology to control 'all bodies that move within space'. The *Mallorquin* dancers, however, acknowledge that if it were not for the *Sección Femenina* a majority of their dances would have been lost.

Mallorcan folklorist, Bartomeu Enseñat^{iv}, founded the *Escola de Música i Danses de Mallorca*, and has been the sole protagonist who collected the traditional *Mallorquin* dances in the 1950s, for their eventual reconstruction in the 1980s. He interviewed the old people from the villages about their customs and experiences of dancing before Franco, eliminating any previous artistic influences of the *Sección Femenina*. Most of the local dance community argue that, the *Sección Femenina*'s choreography was organised around overtly stylised elements for spectacular displays in the national dance competition circuits of the 1950s. Enseñat's investigation revealed that improvisation, as a mode of dancing, was well established in rural Mallorcan society before Franco's reign, but for particular dances, such as

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the *bolero* there are conflicting views within the local community as to the authenticity of this practice. It has been suggested by a Mallorcan dance historian that "Enseñat took the example of improvisation from the *jota* and applied it to the *bolero*", and created many new steps. It is in the various contexts of performance, which now determines how the dancers demonstrate improvisation. A dance teacher explains:

The main radical difference lies in a *ballada*, because everything is improvised. In a performance part of it is not improvised to demonstrate the steps with more detail and how to execute them.

Biel Hernandez, recorded interview,
Palma, February 2004

Music and Dance Relationship

As a result of the dance revival, the dances are now taught in classes throughout the island. All the different names of the *Mallorquin* dances usually refer to specific songs, and are designed around the melodies apart from the music of the *xeremiers* (bagpipe players). *Mallorquin* dances generally have three or four *turitos* (verses). For instance, in the *jota* while the verse is being sung particular steps are chosen to perform, but in-between during the musical refrain it is always the *primer* (first) step that is repeated taken on the spot or crossing over with the partner. The improvised compositions are to a certain extent limited by the music phrases and dance motifs. For instance, one of the specific step motifs in the *Mallorquin jota* is the stamping step - *punt seguit*, which is always performed at the end of the dance before the final closing *volta* (turn).

During the verses of the *bolero*, the *puntas* (step motifs) are performed, but during the instrumental interlude and final cadence, a step called *volta* (turn) is performed throughout the dance. This step closes every musical phrase and leads into a position known as *bien parado*^v (good stop) when a brief pause occurs. In the past, this position was considered to show the dancer's skill in being able to stop gracefully. The Mallorcan dancers, however, when asked why the dances always finish in this position, responded by saying that there is no particular reason, but they think of

this position as making a pretty picture at the end of the dance. The only dance out of the *Mallorquin* repertoire that does not finish in this pose is the *mateixa*^{vi}. In the choreographed European court style of dancing, this pose is performed in a more upright stance to reflect the values of Mallorcan society in the eighteenth century.

I have given an example below of a *bolero* that is constructed of a nine bar vocal melody, followed by a three bar instrumental phrase. During the final cadence of the instrumental phrase, the closing step of *volta* is performed and repeated throughout the dance to the end.

Bolero Dance: (3/4 time signature)

The 9 bar vocal melody of the *bolero*. (3 bar instrumental interlude not shown).



***Mallorquin* Revival Repertoire**

The basis of the *Mallorquin* 'baile popular' (popular dance) is the *ball de bot*, which consists of dances that feature small jumping steps and includes dances such as, *jotas*, *boleros*, *fandangos*, *mateixas* and the *bullanguera*. Students learn first of all to improvise in dance classes, where they build upon the rhythm of the *castanyoles*, and add the artistry of the step pattern combinations and arm positions. As a transfer from the classroom situation to the *ballada* takes place, a test of the dancer's competence is revealed as they try out the steps with their partner and friends.

The lady decides the steps at all times. It's a matter of knowing all the steps in order to be able to choose one for the right moment. She does this by concealing future steps as much as possible or by complicating simple steps. The man must try to avoid being teased and predict the

right moves. This demonstrates the partner's courage, or can ridicule them, seduce them, or make friends.

Edgar Ginard i Mateu,
Personal Communication,
Palma, November 2005

At the *Escola de Música i Danses de Mallorca*, the individual improvised dances are taught in specific classes depending on the type of dance, and the student's ability and experience. For instance, students would have learnt both the *jota* and *bolero* before they are allowed to participate in the *mateixa* or *fandango* classes. I have given an example of the intermediate class of the *bolero* to show how improvisation is taught. This class is divided into four sections, and commences with the teacher demonstrating to the students how to play the *castanyoles*. In order to simplify the simultaneous practice of performing steps while playing the *castanyoles*, the students initially only perform the first step of the *bolero* known as *primer* (first). This step is usually danced on the spot, or when travelling in a circle it is called *colze*. Its literal translation means elbow, but in Mallorcan dance terms it alludes to the relation of the position of the elbow held out rounded in front of the body, leading the dancers in a particular direction.

Primer (first) step

- Preparar (prepare) by stepping on the Left foot and hop, lifting the Right leg out in front of the body. The Left arm is high rounded above the head, and the Right arm opposite the waist (count 1). The arms stay in this position until a different direction is taken, and then they change overhead.
- Step on the Right foot and hop on the Right foot, lifting the Left leg out in front of the body (count 2).
- Two small steps Left foot (count 3) and Right foot (count &)

After a period of fifteen minutes, the *castanyoles* are put away and the students carry on dancing in a circle. The teacher then calls out the

names of the different *bolero* steps, such as *obri i tancat* (open and closed). The 'calling' of the names gives the order of the step motifs to be performed, and requires the students to respond simultaneously.

The next stage of the class is to make *parejas* (pairs) to dance as couples, and take turns to lead the partner in the improvised dancing. The teacher continues to call out the motif changes in the music phrases, so the students know when to perform the closing *voltas*^{vii} (turns) repeated throughout the dance. The final stage of the class consists of forming small circles of six or more people, who decide amongst themselves who is to lead each circle^{viii}.

The *Mallorquin* improvised dance steps are developed to create intricate and extensive variations on the basic theme. The names of the steps describe directions, such as *davant i darerra* (forwards and backwards), or specific parts of the body like *espatlla* (shoulder). My orientation through the *Mallorquin* improvised dance repertoire was guided by a certain amount of knowledge of the pre-existent steps and by responding on the spur of the moment to either my partner's lead, or the directions called out by the teacher in the classes. Susan Leigh Foster (2003, p.3) argues that "the improvising dancer tracks back and forth between the known and unknown, between the familiar/reliable and the unanticipated/unpredictable". This was certainly true for me on almost every occasion of dancing, and having to think quickly on my feet in unpredictable moments, when taken by surprise of my partner changing the steps and directions. Although all the revival dances are taught to enable improvisation in class contexts, the main mode of improvisation is in a participatory context at the *ballada*. Catalina a teacher from the *Escola de Música i Danses de Mallorca* in Palma, states,

I do not prepare myself for improvisation, but practice helps. First I listen to the rhythm to figure out which dance I will perform, then I decide the steps as they come to mind and feel inspired by the music.

The dancers consider that the dances are more planned for presentational contexts and each couple will present a dance with steps learnt in the classes. The director of the school in Palma states, "in the theatre if the dance is in couples, it's always improvised but if it's a group dance it is structured". When they perform in a large group, one person is in charge of each dance and leads the others who follow her. The group formations of couples are never the same, because the director considers that "it's essential that they constantly change partners, so that the men in the group can adapt to the women's movements and not be surprised by them". This statement is a contradiction in terms of the very nature of the spontaneity involved in improvisation, especially in the Mallorcans' perceptions of dancing in the socially constructed environment of the *ballada*.

One step that is performed in both the revival form and European choreographed repertoire with an equal amount of enthusiastic spontaneity is known as *espatlla* (shoulder), which is similar to the *Bolero School's* '*Paso del Beso*' (kiss step). The basis of this step is the *primer* (first) step, but while executing this step, the dancers move towards each other until they are close enough to be able to either feign kissing their partner's lips in theatrical presentations, or in a social context at the *ballada* when they actually kiss before moving away. This action requires that the couple's shoulders be placed opposite one another, side by side with their faces looking into each other's eyes.

Conclusion

Improvisation is taught in classes as an embodied practice, but its theoretical use is as a choreographic tool to construct particular identities. The main body of dance improvisation takes place at the *ballada*. As part of this process, different artistic elements of *Mallorquin* dance, such as the steps are introduced gradually in a classroom context according to the student's ability. The limits to improvisation are first of all set by the music/dance relationship between the

sections of vocal verses and instrumental interludes. Secondly, it depends upon how competent and experienced women are in performing the *Mallorquin* repertoire. Recently, men when dancing at the *ballada* have challenged this custom of women leading the dances by taking the initiative themselves. Whether this will lessen the importance of the role of women leading all the dances remains to be seen. The values attached to improvisation are represented through the dancer's individual artistic expression in different contexts of performance. When dancing at the *ballada*, the Mallorcans present a contemporary identity for themselves, whereas, in theatrical contexts a more structured and traditional identity is created for tourists.

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Endnotes

- i In other European countries like Hungary, men lead the dances. György Martin (1980, p.396) argues, dance is always directed by the man's dancing skill and initiative, while the woman either helps or restrains the dance.
- ii In terms of defining a dance event, the (1988) Conference Proceedings, "*Dance Event: A Complex Cultural Phenomenon*" gives a comprehensive collection of articles exploring the phenomenon of dance events.
- iii *Mallorca's Independència Partit* is one of the leading proponents of this nationalist fervour, along with *Union Mallorquin*. In line with Catalonia, these parties want independent rule from Spain and solidarity with other Catalan speaking regions, specifically Catalonia, Valencia and the rest of the Balearics.
- iv Bartomeu Enseñat (1975) has written a handbook on *Mallorquin* dance called *Folklore de Mallorca*.
- v For instance, Marina Grut (2002, p.116) cites from Rodríguez Calderón's *Bolerología*^v, which states that "the crux of the *bolero* was the holding of the final position to end the dance", which was inherited from the *Seguidillas* and called *bien parado*.
- vi The *Mateixa* is regarded by the Mallorcans as being authentic to the east and north east of the island, in particular the town of Arta. Enseñat believed that its origins were derived from the *jota*, in contrary to others who suggested it developed as an offshoot of the *fandango*.
- vii Two steps right and left {and 1}, lifting alternate feet up in front on the spot, step right foot forward crossing over left foot and hop lifting left foot up at the back {2}, step behind on the left foot and hop lifting right foot up at the front {3}, two steps right and left turning in a small circle on the spot {4,5}, bring right foot across in front of left

on the ball of the foot (*bot*) {6}, right arm high, the same arm as the front foot, left arm held out curved in front with the upper body leaning arched backwards.

viii It was the *Sección Femenina* who began the custom of dancing in circles, which is one of the main modes of dancing at the *ballada*.

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Ethnic Dance: Cultural Identity or Global Imagination

Hwan Jung Jae

Having spent three years in America, I have often encountered assumptions about my ethnicity and identity. The most general assumption is that since I came from Korea, I have a cultural identity as a Korean. However when a choreographer demanded that I show my “ethnic identity” in her modern dance, I reconsidered others’ assumptions about me as an exotic other. What I discovered is that first, my territorial origin distinguishes me from the Western culture; second, I represent a certain ethnic culture; and third, as an agent of Korean culture, I express my inherent ethnicity through my speech, behavior, costume or dance.

The same assumptions are applied in the understanding of ethnic dance. Based on the idea that every regional community has its indigenous and distinguishable culture, ethnic dance is popularly considered an expression of national and ethnic identities. However, when an ethnic dance is detached from its indigenous setting, and performed in a Western theater setting, does it really represent the cultural identity of the dance’s territorial origin? Or is ethnic dance a form of the global imagination? As Erlmann discusses about world music, is ethnic dance a way of capturing the present historical moment in favor of Western(ized) taste? (Erlmann, 1996:475) Further, what role should ethnic dance play? Does it represent a civilization’s heritage, tradition, and a way of living, or reconfigure space and cultural identity around the globe?

In this paper, in order to deconstruct the assumed associations of space, identity, and authenticity in the discourse of ethnic dance, I examine prevalent notions surrounding ethnic dance. First, by exploring the ambiguous boundary of ethnic dance, I examine the politics of difference and otherness embedded in the discourse of ethnic dance. Second, I examine the prevalent notion that ethnic dance represents the identity of its origin culture in an authentic way. In this globalized and multicultural era, the

association of territorial origin and cultural identity need to be reconsidered; however, my aim in this paper is to rethink the alleged association of ethnic dance, identity, and authenticity, not to deny the cultural differences in ethnic dance.

Ethnic dance as a category

In order to take ethnic dance as a topic of academic discussion, there are many complex issues to consider. Most of all, there is the issue of categorization. Richard Duree, the director of *the Dunaj International Dance Ensemble*, shows an example of the public notion of ethnic dance. He defines ethnic dance as “any dance form which can be identified as originating with an ethnic culture and expressing the movement aesthetics of that culture.”¹ Duree includes wide range of dances in the frame of ethnic dance from village folk dance to urban popular dance (Swing, Tango) and to classic dance (Kathak, Bharat Nayam). However, considering numerous forms of dances around the world, it is hard to establish the criteria to distinguish ethnic dance from non-ethnic dance. The critic Deborah Jowitt mentions her difficulty in encountering ethnic dance in the Western theater setting without its contextual background; a dance with expression of locality could be a traditional dance, or a modernized traditional dance, or a cross-cultural fusion dance. Jowitt mentions:

In writing about dancing that is not ballet and not modern dance in one of its various guises, the Western critic often feels not up to the job. Is what we're seeing a village ritual or a highly evolved theater form? Or both? Is it "authentic"?...I've known critics to describe an event as they'd seen it with their own eyes, when in fact, although it was mentioned in the program notes, it was dropped from the plan somewhere...

(Jowitt, 1985:

241)

Also, the politics of politeness hinders the discussion of ethnic dance. As a norm, Western society's "political correctness" prevents people from an active discussion regarding the value of "ethnic" dance. In Western civilization, criticizing or evaluating one's ethnicity is taboo, so articles and reviews tend to deal with the superficial characteristics of a dance such as an exotic atmosphere. For instance, the advertisements of many African performances usually start with some typical expressions such as "joyful, happy, vibrant, and ancient." By emphasizing a show's traditional authenticity, they suggest that watching this "authentic traditional art work" will be a valuable experience for a civilized citizen in this multicultural and globalized society. As a result of ignorance of backgrounds, lack of criteria, and the politics of politeness, ethnic dance performed in the Western theater is not one of favorable topics for both dance scholars and critics.

Also, there is a tension between two different prevalent notions about the ownership of ethnic dance. Some argue that dance is a global language that everyone can understand, whereas some argue that the peculiarity of local dance can be understood only by a cultural insider.

Dance is frequently used in advertising a culture (e.g. tourism), because dance efficiently shows the characteristics of a culture. Dance synthesizes music, costume, movement style, and aesthetics within its form. Also, the universality of dance as non-verbal activity enables outsiders to access dance. On the other

hand, there is a notion that "national qualities" of local art can be comprehended only by a cultural insider. This notion stresses the ownership of heritage, which many counties and communities claim. David Hollinger argues that claiming cultural products and resources as one's ethnic heritage is exclusionary, because it hinders access to these products and resources to those who do not belong to the ethnic group (Hollinger, 2000:127).

However, these two arguments have deficiencies. Ethnographic research suggests that every dance should be interpreted in its own cultural context. In other words, the universality of dance does not mean that every dance shares a universal cord or meaning. Also, although cultural objects, ideals, and arts might belong to a group in particular, the idea that its interpretation can only be available to those who share the same ethnicity does not explain numerous accomplishments of ethnographers.

In the process of globalization and localization, many scholars point out the problem of using Western aesthetic as criteria in the appreciation of ethnic dance. The critic Deborah Jowitt warned about the risk of misunderstanding of non-Western arts. She mentions, "We critics—often unknowingly—use our own traditions as a yardstick...while no one is so unsophisticated as to wonder why a Kabuki performer does not point his toe, we may apply our Western sense of theatrical pacing to an Asian performance" (1985:241).

In fact, many ethnic dances have been studied using Western methods such as Labanotation or narrative deconstruction. However, is it best to use words like "space" and "time" to describe non-Western ethnic dance? Or should critics and scholars try to employ the words used in different cultures in describing these dance? Since the concept of art, history of dance, and aesthetics of dance vary according to cultures, ethnic dance needs to be appreciated in the context of its own aesthetics and cultural value.

Although many scholars suggested the non-hierarchical treatment of every dance, the one-way communication between Western art and non-Western art has created an unsymmetrical position on ethnic dance. Criticizing the institutionalization of European art, art historian

Shelly Errington insists that Europeans thought that they possessed art, whereas “others only aspire to it” (Elkins ed., 2007: 420). She mentions that the hierarchies of art, ranging from high art to primitive art, were reified by European institutionalization and framing through museums and art fairs in spite of its peculiar characteristic and demands (2007:420).

For the last several centuries, ethnic dance has been used as a raw material by Western artists to enrich their dance vocabulary. From Ruth St. Denis to current choreographers, there has been a group of artists who appropriate other cultures’ dance heritages to remold their “modern dance” through romanticization and ethnicization. However, these indigenous dances were merely regarded as rituals or tribal dances (non-art) rather than a refined form that perpetuate and reflect social norm in their civilizations.

The politics of “difference” and “otherness”

Etymologically, the word “ethnic” once indicated people who are not Christian.² Although the meaning has changed, the politics of the difference in the term “ethnic” is still apparent in the discourse of ethnic culture. Robert Young’s book, *Colonial Desire* (1995:50), offers explanations as to how the meaning of “culture” has been transformed and how language shapes perceptions of people. Young argues that “culture” always takes part in antithetical pairs such as culture versus nature, culture versus civilization, and culture as high culture versus anthropological culture. According to his view, the term “culture” frequently signifies the “differences” that distinguish non-Western culture from Western culture.

Considering European/American’s reluctance to be considered as ethnic, the real problem here is the hierarchical dichotomy of Western art and non-Western art. In *Culture, Power, Place*, Gupta and Ferguson problematize the politics of otherness embedded in the term ethnicity. They point out that the issue of “the West” and its “others” are produced in power relations and the cultural difference has been conceptualized with the “cultural critique” of Westerners who dichotomized “we” and “the others.” Therefore, the idea of “difference” in

the term “ethnic” is taken at the first place, not as an outcome (1997:48).

Arjun Appadurai explains the interesting connotations of the term “ethnicity” and “culture.” Appadurai argues that although ethnicity was regarded as “the primordial idea of kinship,” ethnicity is “the conscious and imaginative construction of difference as its core” (1996:14). Also, he points out that the term “culture” has to do with its implication that culture is some kind of object, thing, or substance whether physical or metaphysical. In this context, ethnic dance, as a concrete form of dance differentiating itself from Western theater dance, represents a realm of difference, contrast, and comparison to Western culture.

In the discourse of dance, there has been a clear transference from the study of dance as culture to that of dance as social production, and this change caused non-hierarchical treatment of all dance practice in dance scholarship (Buckland, 1999: 3). In the groundbreaking article “An anthropologist looks at ballet as a form of ethnic dance,” Joann Kealiinohomoku criticizes the Eurocentric categorization of dance. Her argument is based on the anthropologists’ critique of Western hegemony that never considered the Western civilization as “culture,” but as a standard of other cultures. Through the cross-cultural comparison of European ballet and the Hopi dance culture of Northern Arizona, Kealiinohomoku argues that although ballet reflects Western heritage, Westerners are afraid to call it an ethnic dance (1983:533).

Thanks to Kealiinohomoku’s legacy and scholars’ critiques of social evolutionism, it is clear that the elite values of European art should not stand as the pinnacle of human endeavor, but all cultural practices should be appreciated according to the aesthetics of indigenous communities (Buckland, 1999: 8). In using the term “ethnic dance,” dance scholars seem to arrive at one agreement at least: “ethnic dance does not mean non-white.” However, in spite of scholars’ being careful as to how they use this term, the dichotomy between Western theater dances—notably ballet and modern dance—and other types of dance is still valid in dance field. For instance, in many college curriculums in the USA, the terms “World dance” or “Non-Western

dance” are popularly used as an indicator of ethnic dance.

Identification of ethnic dance

Richard Duree, the director of the *Dunaj International Dance Ensemble* mentions that the primary criterion of ethnic dance is “simply identification with an ethnic culture of origin.” Although his definition might not correspond with the concept of the dance academy, his definition reflects the public notion of ethnic dance. It was popularly believed that ethnic dance represents the cultural identity of a specific territory. However, this assumed association of the territory and its culture has been questioned in current anthropology literature.

In *Modernity at Large*, Gupta and Ferguson argue that the essential connection between one’s cultural identity and its territorial boundary get blurred in this “generalized condition of homelessness”(1997:37). Also, the essentialist definition of a certain nation or culture such as *Englishness* is an imagined state rather than a bounded identity because the experience of space is always socially constructed.

Further, according to José Medina, identity is a collective and performative production, not a definite and essential one. He argues that the association of ethnicity and identity is “ritualistically constructed institutional space” (2004:94). On this view, it should be reconsidered that a dance derived from a certain area inevitably represents the cultural identity or nationality of the space, because the sense of identity or ethnicity of dance is created in the process of interpretation, rather than inscribed within its form or style.

In *Fragile Tradition and Contested Meaning*, Shelly Errington argues that meanings are not intrinsic to objects or practice, but are attributed to them in the course of human thought and practices(1980: 49). Therefore, unlike the popular notion that a certain dance has definite and unchangeable meanings within it, the meanings of dance are changing on the courses of their physical existence.

Furthermore, identity and meanings became more fragile when the practice is relocated in the outside of its origin space. Errington argues that

when the object or practice travels a long distance and leaves its community behind, it can be “absorbed into the discourse of its new community”(1980: 49-50). Therefore, when an indigenous dance is deterritorialized and relocated from its original setting and space, its meanings and format are changed, altered, and reconstructed to adjust its new environment. Since dance has an ephemeral form which is transmitted by human contact, the “preservation” of exact form and meanings is an unfeasible task.

Moreover, if a dance is rediscovered and reappreciated by a different community or by the same community with a significant time gap, the issue of a dance’s identity and meanings cannot be separated from the question of “who controls their movements and who has the power to control and stabilize their meanings?” When a local dance is relocated and performed in a Western theater setting, it tends to be influenced by the aesthetic of Western dance.

For instance, Korean traditional dance was not designed as a proscenium dance. However, with the influence of Western dance, notably university education which strongly upholds Western dance training methods and aesthetics, many indigenous dances have been modified and performed as a theater dance. As a result of this globalization and westernization, what Korean dancers perform now as a succession of tradition is significantly different from what dancers did a hundred years ago. The Korean dance *Salpuri*, derived from its shaman ritual, became a representative Korean theater dance, and its movement, choreographic structure (floor pattern, and spatial composition), and even emotional expression became modified adjusting itself to the theater setting.

Fragile authenticity

In many countries, it has been argued that ethnic dance should be “preserved” as an impalpable heritage in order to preserve a community’s root. For instance, in 1962, the Government of South Korea legislated *the Law on the Protection of Cultural Properties*, a law intended to preserve and transmit an important intangible heritage(Van Zile, 2001: 52).

As Kealiinohomoku mentions, there is a prevalent idea that dance “grew out of some spontaneous mob action and that once formed, became frozen”(1983: 536). However many scholars argue that culture’s categories are never essentialist, and the idea of authenticity is another global fantasy. As culture is “a mercurial process of displacement (Young, 1995:30),” dance also transforms according to time and space.

Interestingly, the role of ethnic dance as an “authentic” representative of its culture becomes clearer when dance is performed in the outside of its indigenous space. In many festivals and shows, ethnic dance frequently performs the role of an agent of its culture, corresponding with audiences’ expectations of its “authenticity.”

However, many anthropologists argue that tradition is actually invented, constructed, and formally instituted. In *Theorizing Heritage*, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett points out the fragility of heritage. She argues that “heritage is a value added industry,” and “a key to heritage is its virtuality, whether in the presence or the absence of actualities”(1995:317).

Dance is historically distinctive and constantly changing with adaptability. Local dance is dynamically transforming its form and meanings corresponding with the globalization of Western dance methods, the commodification of locality, and power relations and hierarchy. Therefore, the question “what is the real thing” might not be answerable in the case of ethnic dance. Leona Wood, *Director of Aman Folk Ensemble*, indicates the fragility of heritage and its authenticity. She mentions:

In ethnic dance, nothing is completely authentic except the real thing. Anything else is a copy, an adaptation, an imitation, or a creative work based on ethnic material. But what is the real thing? Where do we draw the line between the evolving change natural to any art form and the disruptive innovations that corrupt more than they enrich?

(Wood, 1982: 11).

Ballet and Ethnic Dance

In this paper, through the deconstruction of associations between space, identity, and authenticity in ethnic dance, I argue that there is no essential association between ethnic dance and space, identities, and authenticity. Here, I discuss two possible ways of mapping ethnic dance.

First, every dance is an ethnic dance in its initial emergence before it goes through the process of “refinement,” adjusting to a specific group of audiences’ tastes. Pointing out ballet’s ethnicity, Kealiinohomoku mentions that all forms of dance reflect the cultural traditions within which they developed. Further, Luke Kahlich argues that if every dance is a genetically ethnic dance in its birth time, the term “ethnic dance” refers to the time period rather than a genre of dance.³ In fact, ethnicity is not a new concern of academia, but the motive power of historical research. Art historian James Elkins argues that nationalism and ethnicity have been the explicit impetus in art historical research from their origins. According to him, the current interest in transnationality, multiculturalism, and postcolonial theories has not altered that basic impetus but “only blurred it by making it appear that art historians are now free to consider themes that embrace various cultures”(Elkins, 2007:9).

On the other hand, one might argue that ballet is not an ethnic dance because ballet is “too” refined and has lost its original locality. If an ethnic dance has lost its locality “a lot,” should it be called another name? In my opinion, the transformation from an ethnic dance to another dance form (if it is possible) does not depend on the amount of locality it might have lost, but the level of globalization in terms of form, style, and popularity in the “Western” society.

The next possible hypothesis is that ethnic dance can be called “ballet” depending on its level of globalization. In spite of imperialism and Eurocentrism, the communication of European art with non-Western art was not absolutely one-sided. Post colonialism, globalization, and power relations of cultures did not only enable ethnic dance to be westernized, adjusting its form and style to Western theater setting and westernized taste, but also influenced the concept of dance itself. In other words, as the

term ballet came to broaden its definition, from the stylized Western theater dance to theater dance in general, many ethnic dance companies started to use the term “ballet” to call their dance (e.g. *Les Ballet Africains*, *Ensembles Ballet Folklorico de San Francisco*, *Ballet Warraba*).

The politics of difference or a celebration of pluralism

In spite of the politics of difference and otherness, ethnic dance is not against Western culture or cultural imperialism. On the contrary, many ethnic dances shown in Western theaters articulate international intimacy through the celebration of differences. *The Ethnic Dance Theater* declares the democratic value of ethnic dance in its mission: “In a society where racial tensions are prevalent, we believe it is vital to promote and project the inherent beauty, dignity, and integrity of all peoples.”⁴

Celebrating diversity, the primary message of ethnic dance in the Western theater seems to be “we are different, but all connected.” In this context, the popular presentation of ethnic dance at festivals or concerts can be an attempt by the West to “remold its image by localizing and diversifying itself (Erlman, 1996:470),” through an association of otherness and in celebration of pluralism.

In this paper, I examine the alleged associations between ethnic dance, space, and cultural identity in order to deconstruct the essential definition of ethnic dance. Although I examined a few of ways of mapping of ethnic dance, I avoid suggesting any replaceable concept of ethnic dance. Rather, I think that the attempt to shovel every non-Western dance into a single concept caused this ambiguity of the term itself.

Therefore, the answer of my initial question, “does ethnic dance really represent the cultural identity?” depends on each dance. Some ethnic dances might represent the cultural identity; some ethnic dances might be a global imagination that reconciles the politics of otherness to remold the West’s image; and surprisingly, some ethnic dances might be a code of postmodern art that provides a postmodern experience of the universal marketplace alongside neotraditional codes.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Richard Duree. “Folkdance vs. Ethnic dance.” From The official webpage of Folk dance Association. http://www.folkdancing.org/folk_vs_ethnic.html
- ² Newace English-Korean Dictionary, (Korea: Kumsung Publishing Co., Ltd., 1990).
- ³ Dr. Luke Kahlich brought up this idea in his class, *D601: Problems in Dance Research*. I quote this idea with the kind permission of Dr. Kahlich.
- ⁴ The mission of the *Ethnic Dance Theatre*. www.ethnicdancetheater.com

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