# SOCIETY OF DANCE HISTORY SCHOLARS

# PROCEEDINGS

## Topographies: Sites, Bodies, Technologies

**Thirty-Second Annual International Conference**
**held in conjunction with DCA.**

**Stanford University & San Francisco, California.**
**19-22 June, 2009**

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CONFERENCE PAPERS

Marion Kant & Sarah Davies Cordova, compilers

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19-22 June 2009
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***PAPERS***
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# e-Dance: using digital cartography to map the choreographic process

***Helen Bailey***

This paper considers how creative, embodied, performance space(s) have been radically reinterpreted, represented and des/in/scribed through the e-Dance Project[1]. e-Dance is a twoyear[2]interdisciplinary practice-led research project bringing together academic practitioners from the fields of Dance and e-Science. It involves researchers from four UK universities[3], as well as artists from the UK professional independent dance sector. The research is funded by three UK Research Councils: AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council), EPSRC (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council) and JISC (Joint Information Systems Council), forming the *Arts and Humanities e-Science Initiative*[4] and the Arts Council of England through Grants for the Arts.

*e-Dance* repurposes the Access Grid (AG), as a context for telepresent, distributed performance and hypermedia documentation of this practiceled research. Through this convergence in network technology and the visualization of spatio-temporal structures and discourse, the project has developed a rich, structured data repository, for choreographic reflection in/on the creative process and the opportunity to construct hypermedia research narratives from this data.

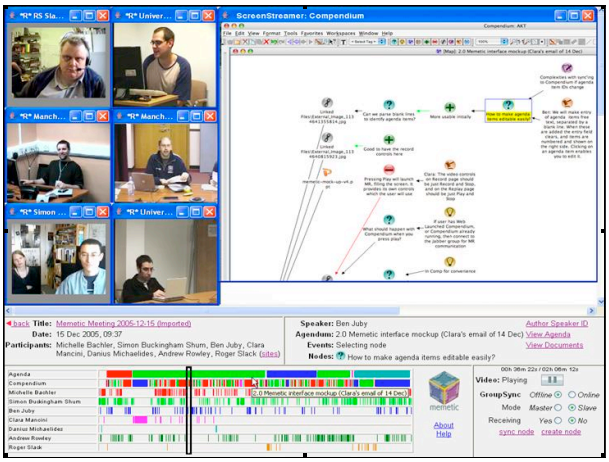


Figure 1: Screenshot of Access Grid video conference session with *Memetic* and *Compendium* software to record and annotate the meeting.

The e-Dance Project builds on existing software developments – namely *Memetic*[5] and *Compendium*[6]. Figure 1 shows the standard usage of AG to facilitate multi-location videoconferencing meetings. The lower part of figure 1 shows *Memetic*, the system that was developed to record and annotate online AG media streams. The top-right side of figure 1 shows *Compendium*, a dialogue-mapping tool that can be used in conjunction with *Memetic* to visualise the meeting dialogue.

The aim of the e-Dance Project is to facilitate and interrogate networked, distributed choreographic processes and consider the ways in which these processes can be documented. Alongside this, the project also has an aim to develop software tools to support this. The research team has focused on establishing a common set of methodologies and working practices across the disciplines involved. In order to achieve this, it has been necessary to engage choreographers, dancers, visual interface designers and computer programmers in an experimental, practice-led laboratory, providing the context to develop strategies for capturing and documenting the creative process. Through a dialogical, iterative cycle, the research team has evaluated technical and software developments in a meaningful, userled environment. The need to establish a common vocabulary has led the group to revisit fundamental trans-disciplinary concepts such as space, place and embodied experience of space reconsidering their disciplinary inflections and specificities.

This paper will argue that the notion of ‘mapping’, as both concept and metaphor, has been the central conduit for this disciplinary exchange. Various outputs from the research project will be discussed as exemplars of this. The first part of the discussion will focus on practice-led performance outcomes from the project and will explore the mapping of this digital topography. The final part of the discussion will focus on the documentation system currently under development, as a form of knowledge cartography. The transdisciplinary - *graphy* - the suffix to *choreo-*, *carto-* and *topo-* provides further epistemological common ground and locates the discussion within the visuo-spatial domain.

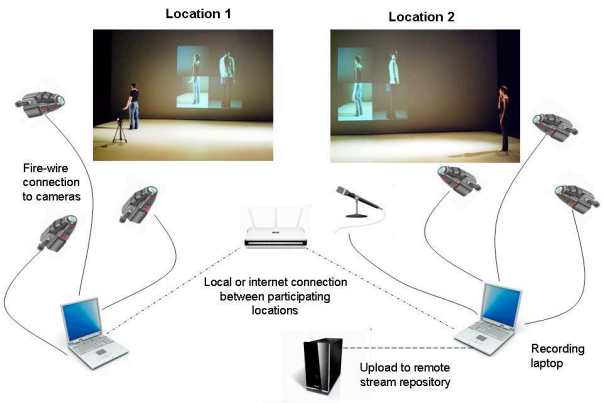


Figure 2: Diagram of technical set up for an Access Grid distributed performance

Performance within the AG environment has been conceptualised and practiced within the e-Dance project as a 'live' phenomenon. Performers and spectators can be co-present, sited, in physical *places* and simultaneously share multiple, virtual spaces (see figure 2). Within an AG performance node, performers engage in live performance, which can be relayed in real-time to them and to other remote locations through streamed, audio-video media. Video cameras are used to provide a multiperspectival view of the performers and the performance space.

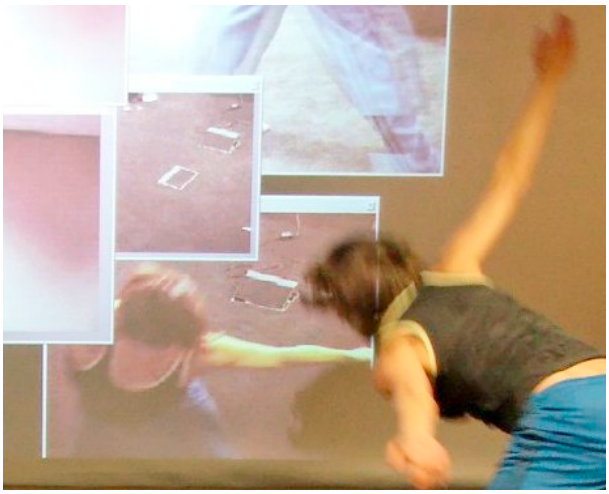

Figure 3: Improvisation within Access Grid environment, performer Catherine Bennett, University of Manchester, UK, 2008.

This streamed media can be recorded and redistributed to remote locations synchronously or asynchronously. This provides a network topography that radically departs from those previously encountered in the telematic dance context in terms of both aesthetic complexity and technical functionality.

As a distributed, collaborative environment, AG offers new creative possibilities for dance. This has required a radical review of choreographic/compositional methods and processes, as well as understandings of the experience of embodiment within this technologically mediated environment. The multi-perspective nature of the environment throws into question the co-dependent relationship between space and time as understood from a live choreographic perspective. The possibility of being simultaneously situated both 'here' and 'there' offered by this telepresent system challenges notions of the kinaesthetic, embodied experience of *place*. As Jeff Malpas suggests – "The appearance of place as a central if problematic concept is clearest in discussions that touch on aspects of human existence and experience – physical theory alone seems to have no need for a concept of place beyond the notion of simple location. In this respect, the emphasis on place as experiential…is instructive. …the connection between place and experience is not that place is properly something only encountered 'in' experience, but rather that place *is integral to the very structure and possibility of experience.* "[7] The initial research undertaken within the project explored the AG environment as a context for *sited* performance at this intersection between place and experience. This initial activity involved software development in order to facilitate the compositional approaches under consideration. The software developments were concerned with increasing the functionality of the windows that presented the video streams. This involved the optional removing of the standard frames (see figure 3), providing arbitrary resizing of the windows and the option to reproduce multiple versions of video streams. The *Space/Placed* (2008) duet was the first choreographic output from the project. It was a co-located live performance in which both the two performers and the audience shared the same location. The aim of this first work was an exploration of the multi-perspectival image space generated by the AG environment.

Figure 4: *Space/Placed* (2008) Performers: Catherine Bennett and James Hewison, University of Bedfordshire, UK

Each of the five cameras used in the piece provided live streamed video from fixed points within the performance space. However each shot was chosen to provide radically different perspectives in terms of proximity and orientation to the performers. This resulted in extremes of scale as well as a fragmentation of the performers' bodies. This live video material was then projected across various surfaces that constituted the performance space (see figure 4). Significantly from a choreographic perspective this mediatised visual landscape provided a non-Euclidean space, the topography of the threedimensional performance and compositional space became literally marked and delineated by multiple facets, parameters, borders and edges in which these radical perspectival shifts were signalled and therefore impacted on our conceptual and embodied mapping of the space during the generative process.

A further software development made during the project and that was crucial to the choreographic research concerning the representation and negotiation of space was the capacity to create composite images through providing degrees of transparency for the live video streams[8] in order that they could be layered onto one another in real-time. Figure 5 shows this increased functionality being deployed in the distributed performance - *Touching Duet I* (2009). This practice-led research output was a screen-based composition that provided audience participants with a degree of interactive engagement, in that they could control the organisation of the four video streams that constituted the work. The audience participants could view the video streams separately or layered to create composite imagery and the video streams could be organised in any spatial relationship to one another on the screen. This work was experienced by the audience participants as a live online distributed performance event that each participant generated a different version of in real time as a screen-based activity.

The compositional material was created across two locations, with a performer in each. Two video cameras were used in each location. The work made use of the software development that allowed the overlaying of live video streams with different degrees of transparency to allow the dancers to literally share the same frame space, albeit in a virtual, telepresent context.

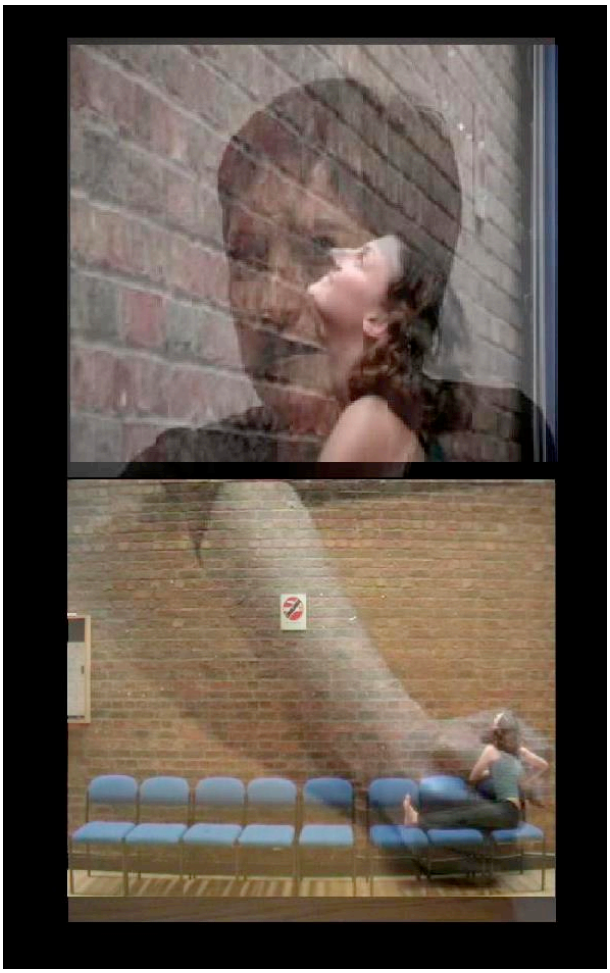

Figure 5: *Touching Duet I* (2009) Screenshot of composite images in the screen-based distributed work. Performers: Louise Douse and Sita Popat, University of Manchester, The Open University, UK

This provided the opportunity within this work to explore the causal/affective relationship of virtual touch within the duet form within the telepresent context. The use of radically different ratios of scale provided a further counterpoint to this – resonating imagery that shifted between the physiological and the poetic utilising both movement and text to construct the material.

The next practice-led choreographic research example to be considered in this paper is the trio *Situate/Resituate* (2008). This trio involved performers and audience distributed across two locations. In the first performance space two dancers, Amalia Garcia and River Carmalt performed a combination of both choreographed and improvised live material. A single video camera placed above the stage space provided a live video stream that was projected onto the back wall of the performance space. The image provided a 'to scale' representation of the live performers in realtime from an overhead perspective (see figure 4).

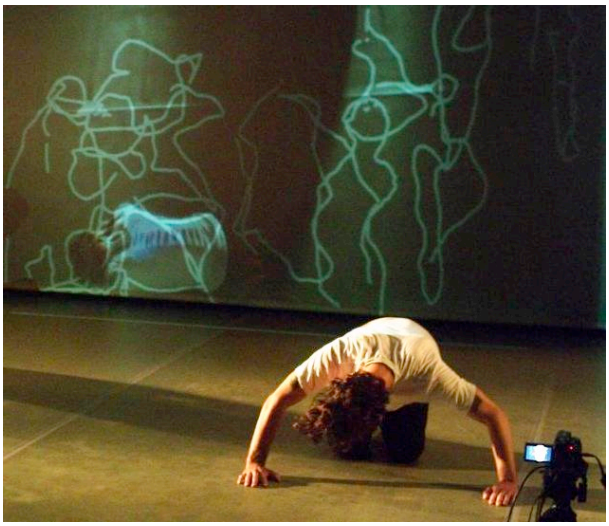

Figure 4: *Situate/Resituate* (2008) Performers: River Carmalt and Amalia Garcia, University of Bedfordshire, UK.

A third performer, Catherine Bennett was located in a second performance space. The live video stream from the first location was projected in this second performance space, providing a real-time projected image from an overhead perspective of the duet taking place in the first space.

In the second space, performer Catherine Bennett, was seated at a table facing the projected image and in full view of the audience. She had an ACECAD *DigiMemo* pad[9] on the table. This commercially available device had been integrated into the technical set-up of the performance. The *DigiMemo* pad provides the ability to write or draw on ordinary paper, whilst leaning on the specialised surface of the *DigiMemo* pad and utilising a pen that although it utilises real ink, relays an electromagnetic signal to the board beneath the paper.

This allows the paper-based inscription to be digitised in real-time and stored, and in this context to be simultaneously projected within the distributed AG performance environment. Utilising the software developments made within the e-Dance Project the *DigiMemo* pad image was made semi-transparent and directly overlaid onto the live video stream from the first space and projected in both locations synchronously.

This set-up provided the capacity to inscribe remotely and in real-time: directly inscribing both the space in which Bennett was located but also the non-co-located space of the other two performers. Bennett's first role within *Situate/Resituate*, was to capture or map in realtime the borders, inter-relatedness and location of the performers, Garcia and Carmalt in the first space, whilst they performed their duet. This part of their duet was constructed in such a way as to include moments of stillness, providing opportunities for Bennett to map their position. Audience members, co-located with Bennett and in the first space, were able to see her drawing directly onto paper, whilst also seeing the simultaneous results of this remote digital mapping represented through a large projected image within the performance space.

Once this phase of the trio was completed, the digital topography that had been mapped by Bennett provided a visual document of not only spatial information from the performance, but an imprint of the temporal absence of the performance. A visual evocation of *'what had been'*. This map then provided a visual score for the second part of the trio. Carmalt and Garcia used it as an improvisation score in which they attempted to *re*situate themselves within the graphical representations of their previous performance.

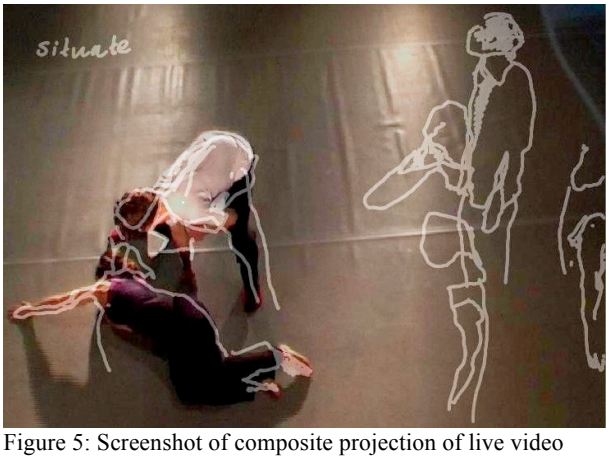


Figure 5: Screenshot of composite projection of live video stream and digital mapping in *Situate/Resituate* (2008),

University of Bedfordshire, UK

Invariably they failed to fully achieve this, highlighting the tension between presence and absence within this context. Bennett, in the second space, provided a verbal commentary on this process, providing feedback to Carmalt and Garcia on their progress and simultaneously foregrounding the 'liveness' of performance. This served as a performative engagement with the spatio-temporal parameters of mapping as a conceptual as well as practical endeavour, whilst also problematising any "telepistemological"[10] certainties in the context of networked performance of this type.

The final practice-led research example to be considered by this paper is *Composite Bodies* (2008). This quartet integrates aspects of the previous two examples. It is a hybrid work that can be viewed as a live networked performance, in which audience and performers were distributed over several locations and as a screen-based interactive work. The set-up for the piece involved four locations, with a solo performer in each. In each of these locations a single video camera was positioned to frame half of the dancer's body. The four live video streams were then projected within each location in a grid formation (see figure 6) in which mixed gender 'composite bodies' were created. The grid provided the geometric compositional frame from which a quartet was constructed that explored the choreographic potential of this nexus of corporeal identity, embodied telepresence and mediatised multiple spaces.

The first phase of the quartet focused on the recuperation of the coherence of the movement potential of these distributed bodies. The horizontal axis between the upper and lower frames was constructed to coincide with the centre of the torso. This axis became the focal point of the movement material and of the performers' *tele-kinaesthetic* engagement with one another. The second phase of the quartet explored this horizontal axis as a point of departure from the morphology of the analogue body. This borderline allowed for the exploration of a digital body that could literally move beyond the constraints of our physiology. Exploring increased joint flexion, extension and rotation into impossible embodied terrains. This resulted in movement material that, although still 'connected' at the torso, provided new live movement possibilities. The final phase of the duet integrated the first two ideas whilst also exploring the possibility for a 'duet' between the two composite bodies – focusing on the vertical axis as the point of physical, albeit virtual, connection between the two.

Figure 6: *Composite Bodies* (2008). Performers: Catherine Bennett, River Carmalt, Amalia Garcia and James Hewison. University of Bedfordshire, UK.

Alongside developing the AG environment as a performance context, the e-Dance Project has also deployed Grid-based hypermedia and semantic annotation tools as a means of capturing and rendering visual the embodied/dialogic practices that constitute the examples discussed so far in this paper.

Figure 7 shows a map generated as part of the process of developing *Situate/Resituate* using *Compendium* as a form of "knowledge cartography"[11]. This software provides a nodal structure, in which maps can be embedded in maps and a variety of media included and transcluded from and between nodes and maps.

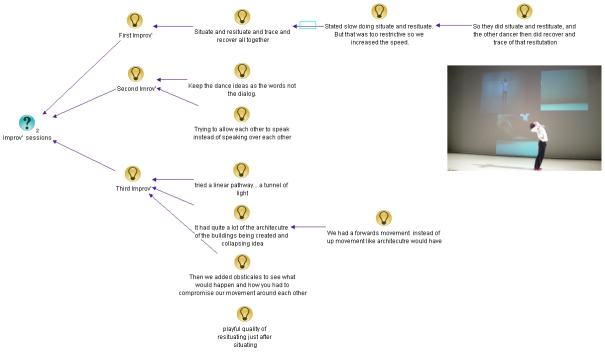


Figure 7: Compendium dialogue mapping tool used to document and visualise the choreographic process associated with *Situate/Resituate* (2008).

The software was initially developed as a transdisciplinary system to support dialogue within collaborative processes. The example above is a map generated collaboratively of the processual dialogue between the three performers,

Choreographer, Helen Bailey and documented by Research Assistant, Michelle Bachler. Although this visual interface provides a multi-layered, non-linear representation of process, more aligned with the characteristics of the creative process itself, it is still largely dependent on a textual engagement with the cognitive processes being undertaken.

The e-Dance Project research team are currently developing the functionality of *Compendium* in order to allow hypermedia maps to be embedded in video. Figure 8 shows how multiple video streams can be played simultaneously in order that comparative analyses can be made. Time-stamped nodes can be embedded in the video; they appear and disappear as the video streams play.

Within each node, resources can be embedded that connect to the practice-led research process such as pre-recorded video streams, research materials, hyperlinks and other media files. Thus provided a rich spatio-temporal map of embodied, cognitive experience within the creative research process. The centrality of video in this new interface design recognises the significance of the visual and the time-based in practice-led dance scholarship.

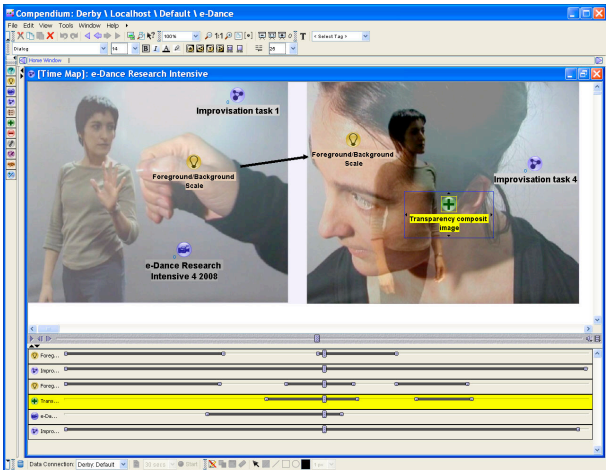


Figure 8: *Touching Duet II* (2009) Spatio-temporal mapping of video streams using the Compendium e-Dance visual hypermedia tool. Performers: Helen Bailey and Sita Popat

This digital reiteration of process is not simply a static archival document, but a dynamic source that can be redeployed in a range of contexts. Our interest, therefore, is in how this *reflective* tool can transition into a *creative* tool, generating a hypermedia archive from which the choreographic artist-scholar can not only reflect but also respond generatively. At the time of writing, researchers on the e-Dance Project are about to begin the conclusive practice-led research intensive of the project in which a final performance outcome will be produced and documented in order to fully test the project developments and as a means of disseminating the practice-led research outcomes of the project.

## Endnotes

1 e-Dance Project website www.ahessc.ac.uk/e-dance
2 The project runs from 2007 – 2009.
3 University of Bedfordshire (Helen Bailey), the lead institution with partners University of Leeds Sita Popat), Manchester University (Martin Turner) and The Open University (Simon Buckingham Shum).
4 AHRC ICT Scheme website http://www.ahrcict.rdg.ac.uk/activities/escience/awards_2007.htm
5 Memetic http://www.memetic-vre.net/
6 Compendium http://compendium.open.ac.uk/institute
7 Malpas, J (2007) Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography, Cambridge University Press. pg 31-32
8 Bailey, H., Bachler, M., Buckingham Shum, S., Le Blanc, A., Popat, S., Rowley, A. and Turner, M. (2009) "Dancing on the Grid: Using e-Science Tools to Extend Choreographic Research" in Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences. Vol. 367 No. 1898
9 AceCad DigiMemo pad http://www.acecad.com.tw/dma502.html
10 Goldberg, K (Ed) (2000) The Robot in the Garden: Telerobotics and Telepistemology in the Age of the Internet, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press
11 Okada, A., Buckingham Shum, s. & Sherborne, T. (Eds) (2008) Knowledge Cartography: Software Tools and Mapping Techniques, London: Springe

# The Human Analogue in Mixed-Reality

*Mike Baker*

I would like to discuss possibilities for investigation into transformative embodiment through human analogue potential.

At the end of my presentation, I would like to hear any questions, feelings and observations from the floor on the following: What do people understand about analogue capabilities and the existence of enabled or embodied surfaces or 'living screens' which become the receptacles for present and past inscriptions? How might these reflect/transpose human desires or interpretative potential in the generation of dance work? Also please ask any questions or pursue trains of thought that you might have.

Video 1 - Embodying surfaces - the Human Analogue - In the Company of Strangers

The theorist Jacques Ranciere describes 'surface' as a paratactical space - a site of exchange, where language, images and actions collide and transform one another - a place of slippage between spaces. Stephane Mallarmé has defined dance as a form of writing on the surface of the floor with the intent to transpose this mark-making to the written page - transformative embodiment across surfaces.

Post-modern thinking has sought to erode the paradigm in the modernist separation of surface worlds by challenging the sturdiness of the boundaries between these surfaces. In my current Masters in dance and video project, 'In the Company of Strangers', one of the strands of my work has been to explore that the concept of spaces and their content be perceived as surfaces, which possess the potential to be enabled, inscribed or embodied.

I have been investigating this concept in Real Life through structured improvisation movement modes in commuter rush-hour crowds, in Wellington Railway Station in New Zealand, Aotearoa.

I have also constructed a simulacrum of this station on the NZ eduisland of Koru in the Multi User Virtual Environment of Second Life and I am bringing the videos of my Real Life dance into this Second Life railway station - at one level of perception an enabled, embodied surface meeting another, equally enabled, embodied surface. When I began this project, I began to investigate the basic premise that the 'real' is influenced by the virtual, all the time and everywhere in Real Life; that we experience moments which could be described as 'virtual' every day which, through our human analogue properties, we either remain oblivious to, ignore, or assimilate and transform, rendering those virtual moments as real. Within this context, Second Life as a fully-immersive environment manifests as an extended 'virtual' event in which we may reside for a longer period of time; an extended layer of the Real. This means that Second Life itself, like so many aspects of Real Life, becomes another screen - not only literally, but a surface construct which may be encountered, left and re-encountered, manipulated and inscribed, ignored or selectively dismissed by our analogue facility in the pursuit of transformative embodiment.

Mark Hansen, in Bodies in Code, (2006) sees the embodiment of function manifesting through the human body, acting as a kind of seismographic wand - Hansen, (p5-6). He maintains that: '… all reality is mixed reality', Hansen talks about the existence of the analogue as a transformative entity:

> Always on arrival a transformative feeling of the outside, a feeling of thought sensation is the being of the analog(sic). This is the analog(sic) in a sense close to the technical meaning, as a continuously variable impulse or momentum that can cross from one qualitatively different medium into another. Like electricity into sound waves. Or heat into pain, Or light waves into vision. Or vision into imagination. Or noise in the ear into music in the heart. Or outside coming in. Variable continuity across the qualitatively different: continuity of transformation. (p.135)

We are all movement practitioners subject to time and as such, through our internal analogue we possess the innate capacity to perceive, transform and combine continuously, the many real and virtual realities of which our existence is comprised. Hansen maintains that the reason why so many of us now operate in so-called virtual worlds with apparent ease, is because we have

always done so. Davin Heckman in empyre - undocumented worker, turbulence.org, has this to say of issues relating to capturing the present:

> I think of the question of "presence." Whenever we enter into the problem of representing a particular event, we take the "present" and repackage for a different or deferred experience ... It's like taking a drug to have the experience of dreaming while awake, of looking at a snapshot to have the experience of being with someone who is absent, etc. ...

For me, Heckman is voicing here the very transformation process to which I am referring - the analogue transformation of snapshot into remembered experience ... it is the analogue`s role to bridge that gap of difference between present and past, event and representation.

My intention through my analogue being-in-change (Henri Bergson) where resides an embodied 'becoming' between worlds, is to explore how this dual identity - this 'difference' may evolve into a single, blended reality. To use Brian Massumi`s phrase, the body`s 'potential to vary' suggests an alignment which juxtaposes, yet does not necessarily subordinate the Cyberbody to the Realbody while analogue capabilites are present in both. When we take these video traces into Second Life, our Human Analogue assimilates this corporeal activity and transforms it into cyber configurations of avatar embodiment, across real-digital interfaces.

With the aid of my avatar, Rollo Kohime, I have constructed screens which have evolved into a simulacra of commuter crowds flowing through the Second Life station. A crowd-screen or surface with its subjective associations. One could say that the surface or ‘stage’ for my work, rather than two descriptions of Wellington Railway Station at rush-hour, is equally accurately, the moving body itself - the body as a roaming transformative screen - the human as Analogue. This body identity travels and transits in place and time from one description of the Real to another. In my dance enquiry, I am concerned with the investigation of what I will call the spaces 'between recognized content’ in our lived experience. Within the video playing here is an expression of an intimate, small-conversation between the Real Life dancers, Mike and Fiona, these same dancers (due to their videoed separation from their original present-tense performative context) perceived as temporally-based Real Life avatars and then the Second Life avatars, Rollo and Sonja - these personna in their different descriptions perceived as surfaces, upon which can be written and overwritten layers of feeling, present and future intent, dialogue, past traces or residue. Equally, the Real Life crowd is a moving screen upon which through my movement, I may make marks - subtly intervene in the rushing flood of crowd-intent with unsettling movement and interaction, with questions which for them, may outlive the journey home, to be recalled over the evening meal, or perhaps next year in a reflective moment.

In 'Maintaining the Digital Embodiment Link to Performance', Andrew Bucksbarg suggests a positive extension, rich with possibilites inherent in metaverse environments like Second Life; 'Are networked simulated worlds much more similar to our dreams and imaginings than to the clunking improbability of a physical world? Unlike traditional media forms, do video games, simulations and other newer media perform the opposite of the suspension of disbelief?

Do they encourage an extension of the imaginable? If the utopic promise of humanity is creative imagination, then it makes sense that methodologies for communication and content creation, which form a blank screen onto which this imagination can occur, are the ideal medium-the metaverse or meta design system.' Potentially, then, imagination itself becomes a screen and if we recognize a process of surface activation and embodiment through the medium or surface of imagination in Real Life, we have a meld of what once were descriptions of Real and Virtual screens existing in this Blended Reality that we inhabit, everyday. For Susanne Langer, a dancer`s body must transcend the energetic, physical body while performing - the performing body must project the illusion of 'virtual force' to fully constitute a work of art. For me this force is not virtual and it is not an illusion. I am seeking in my own work, to bring together various embodied aspects of the Real which may ultimately constitute a composite description of this force.

# In the Company of Strangers - Negotiating the parameters of Indeterminacy

## A study of the Roaming Body and Departure in Urban Spaces

*Mike Baker*

This paper scrutinizes Indeterminacy as a mediating force impinging upon our behaviour and its subsequent impact on the nature and constituency of engagements and dialogue between people in selected urban spaces. Concepts centering on the dynamics of departure, temporality and embodiment are being investigated in both Real Life and the Multi User Virtual Environment, Second Life.

My research-practice posits the formation of a new Urban Myth: Experienced through the vehicle of the Roaming Body, our meetings and encounters with people frequently manifest as disjunct mis-communiqués and dis- engagements. I am asserting that this is due to the inevitability in our existence of indeterminacy acting as a significant governing factor in the articulation of our relations with others, reinforcing our description as time-based entities traversing the passage of the everyday. I maintain that this is evidenced in us through the occurrence of a continual, pre-emptive state of departure. Indeterminacy implies motion and emerges, as Massumi so ably asserts, through '… an unfolding relation to its own nonpresent potential to vary …'.[1] We, as humans, are constantly being drawn away – always either approaching or embracing involuntarily, a state of 'Leaving' which co-mingles with and unerringly erodes our efforts to stay engaged with another in the here and now.

In my research/practice, which underpins the concepts in this paper, interventionist dance strategies are being used to prompt and interrogate the constituents of encounters and departures in designated public places. Experimental movement frameworks employed are informed by the discipline of Contact Improvisation Dance and Authentic Movement. The working process is being documented using a range of video narrative.

Certain forces are examined here, which give rise to the concept of the human body witnessed in the context of contemporary, urban environments, as a roaming entity. This particular description of the body which I would like to present, defines as a reality for us as humans a compelling, involuntary movement away from people and places with which we come into contact. Our roaming I maintain, is responsible in our behaviours for pre-emptive departure and the involuntary pursuit of the next moment - an inexorable, unfolding momentum into the omnipresent future, now past. I am reminded of a sign on the wall of a dance studio in Melbourne, Australia in 2008 during a Contact Improvisation Dance performance of, 'Excavate: A two-man dig' by David Corbet and Jacob Lehrer which stated enigmatically, *'The missing are here, the gone and the taken are with us'*. Within the context of my work this becomes reversible and suggests the presence of the aforementioned pre-emptive state of departure; 'Those still here have left, the present and the given have departed and are no longer with us'. This notion is supported in Brian Massumi`s exploration of the ''indeterminacy' of the body – the realities facing the body which are incomplete without the recognition of another, constantly simultaneously-generated virtual description of 'now'.' Massumi posits that 'this body' is here, but also, 'this presence and essentially when in motion, they are no longer with us, here, but 'over there', now ...'

Video: Departed - Movement 1 - In the Company of Strangers

As vitally as food, a life feeds upon such insubstantial yet potent ephemera as habits, memories and tropisms - movement in response to a stimulus. Could it be that an unconscious skillset of which we are largely unaware, exercised through the event of departure is that stimulus? Our leaving. Perhaps today, as never before, is this predilection to locate ourselves in the onward surge of movement away from that previous moment so relevant to our search for both, our collective and individual sense of belonging ... as if we had a choice and were not swept away, regardless ...

The idea and issue of belonging is central to our existence and to our understanding of how we and

others give meaning to our lives. Our sense of identity is founded in our ability to belong, to adhere to those places and people in our world which bring a sense of worth into our lives: founded upon our social interactions; the indicators of our allegiance to particular communities or groups through shared beliefs, values or practices. Yet ultimately, we reside within and our personal cartographies are traversed and reconciled alone. Perhaps never before has the issue of belonging been so under siege; not so much an attachment to those social networks mentioned above, but to that perception of our Self as a lost locus, a place from which once having made forays in the wider pursuit of a sense-of-place among people and spaces of meaning with our autonomy intact, we sometimes cannot find our way back. Despite the frequent dislocation of our time in spaces, has the apparently successful pursuit of our personal freedoms; our ability to navigate inter-personal terrain with fluency and authority, our sense of autonomy in selfhood, robbed us of that cherished sense of belonging to ourSelf and is there still a more subtle, insidious force acting upon us?

Both, past and present definitions of the body`s entity as self have inevitably been swept by that uneasy beat of dark wings - indeterminacy; a climate of indeterminacy has always dominated the terrain which we, as humans have had to negotiate, evident in the ways in which our choices are made, in our actions which appear to prevail, in our relations with others, in the spaces we displace and in the times which we traverse. Through indeterminacy, despite possible desires to stay put, in life the notion of our leaving is central to our existence.

In my research practice I am positing a new Urban Myth. My contention is that all our exchanges, whether they be either apparently resolved engagements, casual encounters or by-passed conversations with people and places, are governed by the agency of departure, evident in these exchanges through the presence of indeterminacy. That is departure experienced by all. I am suggesting that leaving as a point of separation is a phenomenon. The act of leaving as it unfolds together with arrival, is an indeterminant, yet these are uneasy twins in one another`s company and comprise not merely a binary departure/commencement point, but ingredients central to that process we call change. For us, as time-based creatures, movement away seems to be inevitable and this ensures that there are constantly present, small, overlooked dramas with their attendant poignancies expressed within the simplest, most mundane, everyday dynamics between people and places. I am suggesting that this behaviour is involuntary, informs and mediates our respective realities, knows no cultural boundaries and occurs everywhere, all the time, although I am concerned here with its manifestation in urban spaces. I do not consider this notion to be negative or depressing. Rather, I find it compelling, capable of propelling us into re-evaluations of who we are and how, as sentient beings, we conduct our lives through a perceptual reality composite, caught up, despite ourselves in a perpetual state of change which is centred ultimately, in this universal movement away.

One could say that the surface or ‘stage’ for my work, together with two descriptions of Wellington Railway Station at rush-hour, is also the moving body itself; my own and that of my partner - the body as a roaming transformative surface or screen - the human as Analogue. This body identity travels and transits in place and time from one description of the Real to another. 'Place' can be defined here, as simply a point of temporary purchase within change. When I teach CI Dance I interpret or voice this state as 'looking for ledges' - points of momentary pause, stillness or balance - a traveller in temporary residence locating on or against his or her partner for a heartbeat or two.

Video 2: Embodying Surfaces - the Human Analogue - ICS

In my movement enquiry, I am concerned with the investigation of what I will call the spaces 'between recognized content’ in our lived experience. I am interested how indeterminacy located within change and manifest in Leaving, may influence or to a significant extent, mediate the nature of exchanges between people in urban contexts. The video playing here is an expression of an intimate, small conversation between the dancers and avatars - the dancers bodies perceived as surfaces upon which can be written and overwritten layers of feeling, present intent and dialogue now past. I wanted to introduce a sense of small but strong drama - a tableau of clenched feeling which we can sometimes witness in public places; a sense of passion, of despair, of pathos at our fate which is to be swept up in this constant movement away from those places and people which sustain our sense of

belonging. Our conversation through movement is compressed by time - impending departure often narrows our sensibilities and where we had hours to talk, to smile, to share empathy, thoughts, hopes and aspirations, suddenly there is no time. Private, personal dialogue which largely remains invisible in public spaces becomes larger than life - illuminated with undisguised feeling.

The work is mildly interventionist in terms of how it is inserted in the flow of commuters and how this catalyses a response – creating for the people walking past, a private tableau between two people made public, a virtual, half-witnessed-half-remembered-later moment, representative of the myriad of disjunct dialogues and discreet micro-dramas within scenes of departure which may occur in these kinds of public spaces. I am interested in establishing in the minds of those people who notice us, through traces of naturally-occurring incongruity, the opportunity for our bodies and activity to be moving surfaces, redolent with questions, with meaning which may be just out of reach. Equally, the crowd is a moving screen upon which through my movement, I may make marks and leave traces - subtly intervene in the rushing flood of crowd-intent; unsettling movement and interaction, with questions which for them, may outlive the journey home, to be recalled over the evening meal, or perhaps next year in a reflective moment. I am pursuing some participation on the part of the viewer without necessarily, any overt interaction. A witnessing. As witnessed and witnesser we both of us leave traces of our presence which are inscribed on the surfaces of our lives at this point in this place.

If we take these traces into Second Life our human analogue takes this corporeal activity and transforms it into cyber configurations of avatar embodiment, across real-digital interfaces. In 'Networked Performance' on Turbulence.org, Ashley Ferro-Murray comments on Erin Manning`s assertion that: '... where technology is less a tool than an active assemblage of potential techniques that feed from and move with a becoming-body." This is an accurate description of how I perceive, both, my Real station video work and my avatar and station build in Second Life, not so much as tools for my ideas, but an assemblage of feeling and perception which is informed by my desires and intentions. This Second Life station, this Facet of the Real becomes another territory traversed by our Roaming Bodies from which we may depart in that pursuit of the next moment and the next horizon.

To use Massumi`s phrase, the body`s 'potential to vary' suggests an alignment which juxtaposes, yet does not necessarily subordinate the Realbody to the Cyberbody or vice-versa, while analogue capabilites are present in both. Massumi suggests that the body in movement means accepting the body in its occupation of space and time as a paradox: that there is an incorporeal dimension of the body itself. Of it, but not it. Indeterminate, coincident, but real and material. Something apart yet intrinsic and inseparable. Massumi calls this echo a, 'Fellow-travelling dimension of the same reality'. Is this a legitimate interpretation of identifiable alterity or perhaps affirmation of the Roaming Body entity? Zimmerman tells us that, 'Humans are not entities, but the clearings in which entities appear'. In this time-based context, it could be said that the body is present but within its indeterminacy, the time-based embodiment of 'body' has already moved on. In qualifying his argument, Massumi paraphrases Deleuze in saying that the problem with dominant modes of cultural and literary theory is not that they are too abstract to grasp the solidity or corporeal fabric of the real. The problem is that these modes are not abstract enough to grasp the real incorporeality of what we take to be real. Through lived states of indeterminacy and leaving, the Roaming Body perceptual register re-inforces our description of the incorporeality of the real that surrounds us everyday.

Notes

1 Massumi, B. (2002). Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation Duke University Press, Durham & London, (p.5).
Def: 'The Roaming Body' - the body as entity which can never be fully committed to a set position or location in space and time.

# Just Non-Do It! The Alexander Technique and the Intercorporeal Conference Paper

*Sima Belmar and Shelley Senter*

**METHODOLOGY**

*This lecture-demonstration-workshop-performance-paper begins with a 50-minute practicum on the Alexander Technique, conducted by Shelley Senter, and is followed by a 20-minute paper presented by Sima Belmar, with interventions by Senter (described below in brackets and all upper case text). Both sections of the presentation begin with the setting of a kitchen timer, and are suspended at the sound of the bell. The Senter interventions, and Belmar's gestural and mildly theatrical instructions, do not always occur where indicated in the text; some may not happen at all. This is part of the structure of the presentation. At the Society of Dance History Scholars 2009 Conference at Stanford University, Senter began her presentation in a corner of the Roble Studio 42 with the "audience" seated on the floor, on chairs, on a couch, and on a bench. Belmar then brought the audience into the space so the group could move about or lie down; Belmar alternated between standing, sitting, and moving around.*

**THE PRACTICUM**

*Shelley began by asking the group whether anyone had any experience with the Alexander Technique and to offer a word or a phrase to describe it. The responses ranged from "bringing the chin down" to "optimization of efficiency." Shelley referred back to these responses during her talk. She brought out her mini skeleton and went through basic anatomy. She asked the group to point to where they thought their torsos began and ended. Shelley demonstrated and explicated the Alexander principle of observation in a fair amount of detail, but her time was up before she was able to discuss the principles of non-doing (inhibition) and the means-whereby, which we considered central to our presentation.*

**THE PAPER**

[TAKE NOTES DURING SHELLEY'S TALK IF THAT SEEMS RIGHT. PERHAPS I'LL RAISE MY HAND DURING SHELLEY'S TALK IF THAT SEEMS RIGHT AND SHE'LL CALL ON ME. THUSLY, I BEGIN MY PAPER. DON'T BEGIN WITH STARING. GREET THE AUDIENCE, THANK SHELLEY, ETC. ACT OUT BEING NORMAL. PUT BLANK PAGES IN BETWEEN].

This paper examines the Alexander Technique as practice and as theory at the intersection of somaesthetics and phenomenology. Somaesthetics, an interdiscipline proposed by pragmatic philosopher Richard Shusterman, is "concerned with the critical study and meliorative cultivation of how we experience and use the living body (or soma) as a site of sensory appreciation (aesthesis) and creative self-fashioning. Somaesthetics is thus a discipline that comprises both theory and practice."[1]

Phenomenology is a harder nut to crack. When asked to define it, the usual hold I feel I have on the world begins to slip. Depending on who you talk to--a philosopher, a folklorist, a theater historian, a dance scholar--phenomenology may be defined as the philosophy of phenomena, of experience, of felt experience, of lived experience, of mind, of consciousness. It can be a methodology; it can be an attitude, Because this is new territory for me, I will move forward based on untrustworthy instinct: an irresistible attraction to the philosophy and poetry of one phenomenologist, Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty defines phenomenology as a philosophy that concentrates all its efforts "upon re-achieving a direct and primitive contact with the world" and "for which the world is always 'already there' before reflection begins."[2] [DROP PAPER HERE WITHOUT ACKNOWLEDGING IT]. Following Husserl, Merleau-Ponty goes on to call phenomenology a "descriptive psychology,"[3] a helpful notion for those of us in the business of examining and writing about works of art. In fact, Merleau-Ponty saw the intimate connection between philosophy and art as ways of being-toward-a-world, writing toward the end of his life, "Philosophy will find help in poetry, art, etc., in a closer relationship with them, it will be reborn and will re-interpret its own past of metaphysics—which is not past."[4] For our purposes, then, rather than seek a solid definition of phenomenology, I will extract one fundamental solicitation from Merleau-Ponty: "Whether it be a question of vestiges or the body of another person, we need to know how an object in space can become the **eloquent relic**[5] of an existence."[6] "Between my consciousness and my body as I experience it, between this phenomenal body of mine and that of another as I see it from the outside [LOOK UP AND GET LOOKED AT], there exists an

internal relation which causes the other to appear as the completion of a system."[7] In the words of Jerry Maguire, "You complete me," but how do you do that?

This presentation seeks to rearrange the terms of engagement of a conference paper by inviting the audience to apply the Alexander principles of observation, inhibition, and the means-whereby to their experience of paying attention. We all think we know how to do this. [WORK UP TO THE MILITARY POSTURE]. Stay in our chairs. Try not to fidget too much. Smile politely at the fumbling presenter.

Let's pretend we don't know how to do this. [STAND AT ATTENTION AND THEN SLOWLY, SOFTLY FREE THE NECK...AND THE REST WILL FOLLOW!]. The child approaches the world as the structured improvisation it always already is. When adults do this, we call it madness or performance art. When adults do much subtler things, let a stare linger on a New York subway, leave a hand a second longer than usual on a colleague's shoulder, it becomes a call to action [STARE NEUTRALLY THEN EYE/FACE GESTURE "HOW YOU DOIN'" TO ONE PERSON, THEN, "WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT" TO ANOTHER]. Merleau-Ponty: "What counts for the orientation of the spectacle is not my body as it in fact is, as a thing in objective space, but as a system of possible actions, a virtual body with its phenomenal 'place' defined by its task and situation. My body is wherever there is something to be done."[8] If I don't do what I'm supposed to do during a conference presentation, am I no longer at a conference presentation? [LOOK OVER SHOULDER].

Students of the Alexander Technique frequently describe the sensation of a widening, lengthening, lightening, and, in my experience, dissolving of muscle/tissue/bone as they are touched by the practitioner. For a moment, in attending together to the habitual tightness in the neck and stepping out of the way to let it release, the Alexander student and teacher may experience an intercorporeal moment, a sense of being continuous with each other and the space around them, a different or non-sense of the cutaneous edge. Merleau-Ponty: "Space is not the setting (real or logical) in which things are arranged, but the means whereby the position of things become possible."[9] [SHELLEY BEGINS TRISHA BROWN'S *LOCUS*]. "Since every conceivable being is related either directly or indirectly to the perceived world, and since the perceived world is grasped only in terms of direction, we cannot dissociate being from orientated being."[10] [I WAIT FOR SHELLEY TO FINISH *LOCUS*].

Perhaps you had an experience today, of widening or dissolving, and if you didn't, let's imagine it's possible, even without evidence. Can a similar effect occur in the thinking body, in the body of language, of words, of the silent statements and dialogues we tend to experience as mind apart from body? Can the paradoxical practice of willful non-willing and inhibiting old habits of movement to create new ones, be applied to our habitual interpretive strategies, how we perceive and interpret an event, a movement, a performance? Can we inhibit interpretation, not to act against it in Sontag's sense, but as a method for opening up meaning, understanding, or to simply but with great effort thicken the lived moment? Alexander asked as much, if not more, at the end of *The Use of the Self* written in 1932: "If a technique which can be proved to do this (to combine thinking in activity with a new sensory observation of the use of oneself in the process)...might not this lead in time to the substitution of reasoning reactions for those instinctive reactions which are manifested as prejudice, racial and otherwise, herd instinct, undue 'self-determination' and rivalry, etc., which, as we all deplore, have so far brought to nought our efforts to realize goodwill to all men and peace upon earth?"[11]

Alexander's experiments address habits *as if* they have their abode in thought despite the fact that he, like Merleau-Ponty, regards the body "as a mediator of a world." He does not slip wholly into idealism, offering a "one-sided, rigidly rationalistic view"[12] as Richard Shusterman argues. Through a rigorous investigation of the use of his self, Alexander recognized that his movement habits, his motor intentionality, could not be changed by direct means. Since the body prepares itself, sets itself in motion toward a goal once that goal is idealized, it is only by practicing changing our thought habits that can we influence our movement habits.

Goodwill to all men and peace upon earth. Merleau-Ponty: "...if another's body is not an object for me, nor mine an object for him, if both are manifestations of behavior, the positing of the other does not reduce me to the status of object in his field, nor does my perception of the other reduce him to the status of an object in mine."[13]

*Verfremdung*, *ostranenie*, defamiliarization, Shklovskian, Joycian, Brechtian, modern, postmodern, the artist's wish to shake it up, wake us up, take it up a level or down a notch, we get used to it. It all becomes familiar again because we are built to form habits, action habits and thinking habits. But if we, as artists, as audiences, as scholars, had a trick, a directive that produced the requisite lag between the impulse to do or think and the doing or thinking itself, would what

we sense become strange again? Merleau-Ponty: "If someone is lying on a bed, and I look at him from the head of the bed, the face is for a moment normal. It is true that the features are in a way disarranged, but I feel that I could, if I wanted, walk round the bed, and I seem to see through the eyes of a spectator standing at the foot of the bed. If the spectacle is protracted, [PROTRACT] it suddenly changes its appearance: the face takes on an utterly unnatural aspect, its expressions become terrifying, and the eyelashes and eyebrows assume an air of materiality such as I have never seen in them."[14] Protracting the spectacle of ourselves in action we discover our habits and what has been familiar becomes surprising, terrifying, and subject to change.

We can defamiliarize perception in two ways. One is through the Alexander principle of inhibition--I notice that I am doing something and choose to stop doing it, for example, I'm trying to follow Sima's discourse, I'm going to stop trying to follow it and notice how my feet touch the floor instead. An alternative approach would be to engage in reflective somatic attention: I simply notice my bodily sensations either on purpose (I perform a body scan. How do my arms feel? My neck? My nose?) or because my body speaks up.

An example: Let's say you feel the urge to yawn during my presentation. You've been paying close attention to what I've been saying, and perhaps what I've been doing, and now you're about to yawn. You probably recognize two choices here: you can just let it rip. Or you can try to suppress it. Either way you are now aware of your body and you've probably stopped listening to me with focused attention. Now that you've dealt with the physical act of yawning, you will probably try to return to paying attention to me and ignore the fact that you've just yawned. Or perhaps you (and those who noticed you yawning) might interpret the yawn, and in one of three ways: You're tired. You're bored. Or Both. Staying with the yawn, you may interpret its appearance with respect to my performance, to what I had just said, or to what I'm saying now. In any case, your body, in its habitual mode of attending a conference paper has been interrupted; you've experienced a break, you've become reflective of your body, for a second or for the duration of this talk. I love that.

The yawn, like a gurgling stomach or a hard-to-reach itch, operates as an interruption in two senses: as both a shifter of attention (from this talk or to whatever else you might have been secretly attending to in your body) and a marker of shift in attention. I'm interested in letting your yawn into my presentation and you doing the same, not so that we arrive at the same meaning (you're tired, I'm boring, you're tired of me, I'm boring you), but rather that we increase each other's affordances as we co-create and are co-implicated by a world. Katharine Young: "As a methodology, intersubjectivity/intercorporeity returns me to an undifferentiated state in which objects are my flesh and others my cohabitants. My private subjective impressions do not matter here, nor do the properties of objects. What matters is the meaning in which you, I, and they jointly participate. And to this, we have joint access."[15]

Deborah Hay via Shelley Senter: "What if every cell in my body (all 380 trillion) at once has the potential to choose to dis-attach from my perception of the continuity of the choreographed body, and I see you practicing what I'm practicing."

I'm interested in the moments that crack open the world, the break that happens when our motor intentionality (what Merleau-Ponty defines as our motility that is "concealed behind the objective world which it helps to build up;"[16] body on autopilot) gives way to representational intentionality (purposeful, conscious motility). As we shelve the mind-body split next to other dusty ideas from centuries past, we are confronted with the conscious-unconscious, subject-object, and theory-practice dualisms that haunt our every move and that our every move produces.

[SHELLEY BEGINS MOVING ME AROUND AND AT THEN END OF THIS PARAGRAPH, INTO OLD MAN POSTURE]. I wrote part of this paper with Shelley's hands on my head, on my knees, and most of it at my kitchen table where I shared mugs of tea and shallow bowls of chocolate chips with Merleau-Ponty, Edward Casey, Jacques Derrida, Alva Noë, and of course, Frederic Alexander. Shelley and I talked, stood, sat, struggled in and out of theoretical cul de sacs in her home and in the trapezoidal dance studio at Mills College. Interdisciplinary academic attention provokes multiple meanings, myriad entries and egresses, a post-modern polyvocality, a riot of palimpsestic observations, historicizations, comments, theories. Amid all of that chaos and insecurity, Shelley and I paused, just long enough for us to make contact and stop the incessant flow of willful thinking that can drive a scholar, especially the emerging scholar, toward the brink of collapse. Among those swirling beautiful theories, I search for method as a scholar of the body and as a scholar-body. Are the pen and the keyboard really the only technologies at my disposal to hook me into my world of study?

[WHILE MOVING AROUND IN OLD MAN POSTURE]. In a solo I performed last year, my character (imagine John Travolta in his lead role in *Saturday Night Fever* as an old man, an octogenarian

disco king) and I spent a considerable amount of time shuffling around in this posture. Every night, before my entrance, I invited myself to let my neck be free, and in so doing, managed to experience this body compression with an expansiveness and mobility.

[READ WHILE SLOWLY EMERGING FROM THE OLD MAN POSTURE]. John Dewey: "...the hardest thing to attend to is that which is closest to ourselves, that which is most constant and familiar. And this closest 'something' is, precisely, ourselves, our own habits and ways of doing things."[17]

The principle of non-doing as method, a willful relinquishing of control, and a way into dissolution; somatic practice such as the Alexander Technique, as a revelation of our intersubjectivity; can these practices provide relief from critical and ethnographic methodological dialectics of objectivity and subjectivity? Can this moment, this room, your bodies and mine, your thoughts, my words form a shared horizon of possibility without worrying that we experience that possibility in exactly the same way? Deborah Hay via Shelley Senter: "Same experiment, different experience."

## CONCLUSION: ON DANCE AND DANCING WITH OTHERS

Dancers are like my 3-year-old daughter: they inhabit a world different from non-dancers, a world whose surfaces afford different modes of traversal, whose other bodies invite different forms of interaction. Susan Foster: "The body is never only what we think it is (*dancers pay attention to this difference*)."[18] Nevertheless, dancers and non-dancers share a world that is a structured improvisation with rules, commands, and instructions given to it by culture and society. Phenomenology, intercorporeity, intersubjectivity, freedom, opening up of choice, opening up to understanding, perceptual awareness: dance forms that owe a debt of gratitude to the practices and choreographies of the Judson Dance Theater, are a privileged site for this sort of philosophical inquiry. Discussing Lisa Nelson's improvisation technique Tuning Scores, Berkeley philosopher Alva Noë writes that Nelson "like Wittgenstein, provides an intellectual technology or prosthesis for bringing the world into focus. Nelson and Wittgenstein offer, in effect, tools for achieving perceptual contact. Nelson enables us not only to see dance, but to understand seeing[19]...Theory depends on practice."[20] In approaching the Alexander Technique as a methodology for understanding and experiencing Merleau-Ponty's notion of intersubjectivity/ intercorporeity and the world as structured improvisation, is my way of intervolving (another Merleau-Pontian term) non-dance audiences and non-dance situations in my creative thought process, an effort to reflectively share the lived, thick, stretchy chronotope that is so often occluded by our habitual modes of being-toward-a-world.



Notes

1 Shusterman, *Body Consciousness...,* 1.

2 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, vii.

3 Ibid, ix.

4 Merleau-Ponty, Notes de cours, 1959-60, 39.

5 Here Belmar had the group repeat the phrase "eloquent relic" with her.

6 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception,* 406.

7 Ibid, 410.

8 Ibid, 291.

9 Ibid, 184.

10 Ibid, 295.

11 Alexander, Frederic Matthias, *The Use of the Self*, 109.

12 Shusterman, 183.

13 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 411.

14 Ibid, 294.

15 Young, Katharine, "Gestures, Intercorporeity, and the Fate of Phenomenology in Folklore," 24.

16 Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception,* 159.

17 Quoted in Shusterman, *Body Consciousness,* 196.

18 Foster, Susan Leigh, *Choreographing History*, 4.

19 Here the timer went off. Then someone in the group asked, "Is that really the end of your paper?" Belmar said, "No," and was asked to finish, which she did, seated next to Senter on a bench, folded over in a grateful bow.

20 Noë, Alva, 127.

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# How the West Was Waltzed: The Legacy of the Waltz in American Country-Western Culture in the Early Nineteen Eighties

*Kathaleen E. Boche*

As a social dance that has endured across the world for over two centuries, the waltz is unique. Social dances often fade from common practice within a few years of an initial craze, but the waltz remains a part of American popular culture. Even when the waltz was considered scandalous, it was popular. As Ruth Katz says, "Indeed, everybody seems to have been dancing the waltz," (1983, 522). Since the last half of the twentieth century, many American scholars have referred to the waltz as a dance that has become obsolete, looking back on it with nostalgic fondness and a touch of pretension. I argue that Americans do, in fact, continue to waltz, and with more technique and frequency than contemporary scholars suggest. The ambiance of the ballroom and the flavor of the music have changed, but the waltz remains. Through the country music genre in particular, the waltz continues as a popular social dance. This study will focus primarily on the early nineteen eighties, though waltzes can still be found in current country music and dancehalls. This time period of the early eighties is particularly important to the continued nation-wide popularity of the waltz because popular music, movies, dance, and fashion were all influenced by a country-western craze.[1]

Dance reflects the world views of the people who create it and perform it; it is a product of its locale and time. Even though Americans did not create the waltz, they participated in and commented on the dance from its early years to the present day. While many scholars have studied the waltz, there has been little research on the significance of country music to the continued popularity of the waltz as a social dance. Part of the reason for this lack of study may be the current conception of the waltz as an elegant, aristocratic dance. Contrastingly, country music has a hillbilly, "redneck" stigma, which may explain why many scholars ignore its significance to the history of the waltz in America. Contrary to the modern elitist image of the waltz, it was originally a dance of the middle-class, though all classes danced the waltz eventually (Katz 1983). Taking this into consideration, the country-western waltz is not a contradiction in terms. The country-western waltz is a part of the evolution of the waltz over time and across continents. Rather than dismissing a large part of the history of the waltz, we should study the country-western waltz in order to understand more about its context in American history and culture.

As with many dance forms, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact date of the birth of the waltz, but *Music Educator's Journal* celebrated the one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary of the Viennese Waltz in the spring of 1962 ("Viennese Waltz," 126). The journal credits Joseph Lanner and Johann Strauss Senior as originators of the waltz as a musical form. The composers turned the "easy going 'Laendler' into the faster, graceful waltz through rhythmic accentuation" ("Viennese Waltz," 126). As a dance, references to the waltz had been made during the eighteenth century, but its widespread popularity exploded in the next century (Aldrich 1991).

Despite early attacks on its morality, the waltz survived and flourished in the nineteenth century, arguably becoming the most popular dance of the era. In *America Learns to Dance*, Joseph Marks quotes Allen Dodworth, a successful dance instructor of the nineteenth century. In 1885, Dodworth looked back on the enduring success of the waltz, stating, "We have now arrived at the culmination of modern society dancing, the dance which has for fifty years resisted every kind of attack, and is today the most popular known," (Marks 1957, 75).

Stretching across social and moral barriers, the waltz reflected an overarching ideology of romanticism in the nineteenth century. In "The Egalitarian Waltz," Ruth Katz explains how many of the tenets of romanticism can be seen at work as class barriers began to weaken. "Along with nationalism, then, the newly-awakened concern with sensibility, the throwing off of traditional standards and the rise of relativism all cut across barriers to create an ideology of romanticism," (Katz 1983, 527).

Nationalism, a part of this romantic ideology, elevated folk dancing to a place of greater importance. The waltz came into being partially due to the development of the nation-state and a focus on national pride. The result of increased interest in folk dances as representations of cultural identity, the waltz was a blend of whirling German folk dances that eventually spread across Europe and the United States (Katz 1983).

After the French Revolution, relativism gained popularity as a part of the Romantic Movement. Rejecting the idea that objective rules existed that could be used to determine the value of art, post-revolutionary romanticism stressed individual expression and personal preference in art. Taste in art was considered relative and contextual. The same ideas held true for the popular round dances. Relativism played out in the waltz by means of an emphasis on individual expression and personal interpretations beyond the basic steps.

The waltz and other round dances signified what was happening in industry as well as society. According to Marks, "They [round dances] were less formal than the minuet; they were wild, reckless, daring, and above all, fast, as was this new age of faster transportation and modern machinery" (Marks 1957, 76). The fast, wild abandon that Marks refers to is an important part of the obsession with sentimentality and emotional expression that marked the period.

Katz refers to this freedom of emotional expression as "the 'letting go' function of the waltz" (1983, 528). The sensual contact of the waltz provided an escape from reality. Elizabeth Aldrich's research on dance and etiquette manuals helps explain why nineteenth-century Americans might need an escape from reality. She says, "A new kind of embarrassment and sense of shame fed upon the uncertainties of status, of belonging, of living up to admittedly ambiguous and conflicting standards of social performances," (Aldrich 2008). As the rigid courtly society of the minuet faded, the confused, displaced individual found emotional release in the expressive waltz.

Prior to the waltz, the lower classes did not practice the intricate dances of the elite such as the minuet. But the waltz cut across social boundaries. It was relatively easy to learn the basic steps, so extensive dance instruction was not necessary. However, as the lines between classes blurred, an understanding of the value of dance education for children in learning proper posture, grace and composure spread to the middle class. By the turn of the century, the benefits of social dance training were no longer exclusive privileges of wealthy aristocrats (Ruyter 1979). According to Nancy Lee Chalfa Ruyter in *Reformers and Visionaries: The Americanization of the Art of Dance*, "As this country democraticized, aspirations once held only by the select few filtered down and became of some value among the growing middle class" (1979, 84-5).

Nineteenth-century critics of the waltz took issue with the close embrace of the dancers, the wild abandon with which the waltz was danced, and the dangerously dizzying effect of spinning on women. In his book *Revolving Embrace: The Waltz as Sex, Steps, and Sound*, Sevin Yaraman notes the importance of the two simultaneous revolutions characteristic of the waltz. Each couple turns around itself on its own axis, while at the same time progressing in a circular path around the room. According to Yaraman:

> The social implications of this feature are two-fold. First, partly as a result of the pattern of the dance, the waltz required dancers of sufficient experience—not training—to withstand the constant whirling. This appealed to the nineteenth-century bourgeois' desire for sophistication; and, indeed, the waltz became synonymous with the bourgeois life-style.
>
> The second, and more dramatic, social effect of the waltz—what made it truly a revolution in Western social dancing—was the position in which it placed a couple relative to the other dancers. (2002, 5)

Here, Yaraman refers to the individualism of the waltz. While relationships between couples had been elaborately choreographed in court dances such as the minuet, the waltz focused on the relationship between the couple, and even more so on individual expression.

Many nineteenth-century critics of the waltz disapproved of the revolutionary close embrace of the waltz that put men and women face to face, staring boldly into each other's eyes (Yaraman 2002, 6). As a result of facing each other, the couple turned their backs on all of the other dancers in the room. Relationships between the dancers became much less important than they had been to previous social dances like the minuet. The waltz is considered a social dance, but not a group dance.

In the closing paragraphs of *Revolving Embrace*, Yaraman says, "Waltzes continue to be danced (albeit rarely if ever with the grace and abandon that made the atmosphere in the 19th-century ballroom so highly charged), and they continue to be composed," (2002, 143). The most striking part of this sentence is the parenthetical caveat. Yaraman finds it necessary to note a perceived lack of grace and abandon in today's waltzes. It is also assumed that this statement is common knowledge, because Yaraman provides no reference or support for it. The music scholar is certainly not alone in making this assumption.

Famed choreographer Agnes de Mille makes a similar statement in her book *America Dances*. In reference to the popularity of the dances performed by ballroom dancers Vernon and Irene Castle, De Mille states, "The old social dances—the waltz, the German, the schottische, and the polka—rapidly lost popularity until today they are obsolete as handmade buttonholes or plackets. Very few people in the United States can waltz well, not even highly trained performers," (De Mille 1980, 16). De Mille's statement is a prime example of the distinction between highbrow and lowbrow culture.

The focus of De Mille's career was Americana and western-inspired stage choreography; so of course, her omission of the country-western waltz is not a matter of ignorance. Taking a "purist" stance, De Mille does not acknowledge that the highbrow waltz could be assimilated by lowbrow country music culture. She overlooks the fact that the waltz was indeed being danced by a large portion of the American public in 1980, the year that *America Dances* was published.

According to a 1982 *New York Times* article, "For two years, Texas Chic swept the country. Cowboy dress, cowboy music, and cowboy dancing became the rage from New York to Los Angeles," (Stevens 1982, A16). Americans were waltzing at dancehalls like Gruene Hall and Gilley's Club in Texas to contemporary waltzes such as Willie Nelson's "My Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys," (Nelson 1979)[2]. Popular movies such as *Urban Cowboy*, *The Electric Horseman,* and *Coal Miner's Daughter* spurred on a veritable country western craze in 1980. Americans who had not previously been fans of country music waltzed to Anne Murray's Grammy-winning rendition of "Could I Have This Dance?" from *Urban Cowboy* (Murray 1980). The waltz lives on in popular music and dance through the genre of country and western.

The country-western waltz is usually danced in one of two different formats. One option is to use the traditional face-to-face position and floor pattern, with couples spinning both around each other and around the room. The other variation uses the side-by-side position of the cotton-eyed Joe dance. The man stands to the left of the woman and puts his right arm around the woman's shoulders. The woman holds the man's right hand with her right, and she extends her left arm across his body to hold his left hand. Everyone begins in a circle facing the same direction, and the couples progress around the dance floor performing modified versions of traditional waltz steps.

In *Urban Cowboy*, John Travolta and Debra Winger's characters waltz in the traditional format around the dance floor of Gilley's Club at their wedding reception.[3] In a scene which draws the aristocratic image of the waltz into sharp contrast with the backwoods image of country-music, Winger reveals white cowboy boots when she raises the skirt of her wedding gown to dance. The waltz has an elitist image which is indeed associated with weddings, but not weddings held at redneck honky-tonks.

Following the release of *Urban Cowboy*, several large scale country dancehalls began to crop up in various cities. Promoted as "The World's Largest Honky Tonk," Billy Bob's Texas opened in Fort Worth, Texas, on April 1, 1981. In *Urban Cowboy*, Gilley's is referred to as "The World's Largest Nightclub," and Mickey Gilley's official website purports that the club was certified as such by the Guinness Book of World Records (Manna). The website for Billy Bob's acknowledges the impact of the movie and boasts of Billy Bob's superiority over Gilley's Club. According to the website, "Comparisons to Gilley's located in Houston where the movie "Urban Cowboy" was filmed starring John Travolta were numerous. Gilley's was only 44,000 square feet, less than half the size of Billy Bob's and did not have Live Pro Bull Riding." The sudden

growth of the country nightclub business signified the popularity of "Texas Chic," if only for a few years.

The year 1980 also saw honky tonk dancehalls opening outside of Texas. In Stillwater, Oklahoma, local cowboys, cowgirls, and Oklahoma State University students danced together at The Tumbleweed Ballroom (also known as "The Weed"), a dancehall and concert venue made famous by its annual calf fry festival.[4] Another claim to fame involved country music star Garth Brooks. He was a bouncer at the Tumbleweed and occasionally took to the club's stage in the early years of his career ("Tumbleweed History").

Western trends had already been seeping into designs for consumer goods prior to 1980, although the images in *Urban Cowboy* certainly reinforced the trends. Ralph Lauren was one of the primary designers of high fashion western wear, as well as more affordable mass- produced western designs. Launching his Ralph Lauren Western Wear for Women and Polo Western Wear for Men in 1979, Lauren made his designs available to middle class Americans through nationwide department store chains (Schiro 1979). Not satisfied with dressing like rarefied cowboys, Americans could also smell like urban cowboys. In 1979 Lauren also introduced his western-inspired fragrance "Chaps." Taking the name from the classic cowboy hat, Coty Incorporated launched the Stetson cologne brand in 1981 ("Stetson").

What fostered the country western craze of the early nineteen-eighties? Why did the fad explode at that point in time? Contemporary journalists suggested a national frustration with international problems. *New York Times* contributor Miles Beller posed similar questions to several scholars in the summer of 1980. Leslie Fiedler, Samuel Clemens Professor of Literature at the State University of New York at Buffalo, suggested that the temper of the times called for heroes who act rather than brood. Beller quotes Fiedler:

> 'We want to see protagonists take destiny into their own hands,' Professor Fielder says. In contrast to the 1970's, which were characterized by an atmosphere of resignation, Americans today seem to him to have wearied of passive acceptance. And the quintessential Westerner, he says, is, above all, 'a doer'—someone who achieves his goals or dies trying. (Beller 1980, 15)

In March of 1980, *New York Times* writer Phil Patton asserted that country Western movies were in tune with the 'new patriotism.' According to Patton, director Sydney Pollack said that the trend in films toward country music and themes was a part of a "cautious patriotism." Pollack says, "It's all about the cowboy, and the cowboy is the quintessential American. His return is part of a new romance, an optimism about America," (Patton 1980, 21).

Pollack may have hit on one of the primary reasons for the early 1980's country- western craze, and the reason that the waltz fits so well with country music: romanticism. Country music has some of the qualities of romanticism, such as nationalism, sentimentality, freedom of emotional expression, an obsession with the past, and a blurring of class lines. A focus on nationalism and patriotic themes can be found in many country songs, such as Lee Greenwood's 1984 "God Bless the USA," (Greenwood 1984). George Strait's 1983 "You Look So Good in Love" is an example of both sentimentality and obsession with the past. In this country-western waltz, a man pines over an old girlfriend who has fallen in love with another (Strait 1983).

As evidenced by the 1980's country-western craze, country music also blurs class lines when it becomes popular outside of rural areas. City slickers seek out country-western bars and dancehalls, and cowboys and lower-class country folk become chic. Some country songs use the blurring of class lines as a theme, like Travis Tritt's "Country Club." With a bit of tongue-in-cheek humor, Tritt sings, "I'm a member of a country club. Country music is what I love," (Tritt 1990). In "Ladies Love Country Boys," Trace Adkins sings about an upper-class city girl whose parents send her down south to get a law degree, but instead, she brings home a pickup truck-driving country boy (Adkins 2006).

Country music and the waltz work well together because they both come from romantic ideology. As previously discussed, the waltz grew out of nationalism, but it also perpetuated individual expression and sentimentality. The more class distinctions blurred, the more the waltz spread. The more popular the waltz became, the more it contributed to weakening social barriers. Waltzing and romanticism were intertwined in the nineteenth century, and the same can be said about country music and romanticism in the twentieth century. Beyond the country-western craze of the early nineteen eighties, country music continues to follow many of the tenets

of romanticism, and its nationwide popularity coincides with the rise and fall of romantic ideology in the United States.[5]

Repeatedly transformed to suit the needs and desires of the dancers, the waltz has been assumed by every social class at one time or another in its history. One of the primary reasons that the waltz has endured for over two centuries is its flexibility. That is the nature of a classic: there may be many interpretations of the waltz, but none of the variations take away from the rich history of the dance.



## Notes

1 There was another country-western craze in the early 1990's, spurred on by artists like Garth Brooks who crossed over into the pop-rock category. Line dancing was popular, and honky-tonks flourished again. See Ben Ratliff, "You Can Take the Tunes out of the Country: City Slickers Love That Garth Brooks Music, Too," *The New York Times* (5 Aug 1997), C9.

2 I have referenced all song titles by vocalist, with songwriters listed in the bibliographic information.

3 Patrick Swayze's mother Patsy Swayze and his wife Lisa Niemi choreographed the dance scenes for Urban Cowboy. See http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0081696/fullcredits#cast.

4 I lived in Stillwater, OK, from 2005 to 2007, and this information comes partially from personal experience. At that time it was still a popular club for cowboys and college students, partially because it was one of the few bars in town that had an eighteen and up age policy, rather than twenty-one and up. The calf-fry/music festival was a major event, and people would travel from all over the state and beyond to attend it.

5 Another increase in the popularity of country music followed the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, most likely because of the romantic patriotic themes in country music. Alan Jackson's 2002 "Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning) references the Sept. 11 attacks. The country-western craze in the early 1990's coincided with the Desert Shield and Desert Storm military actions.

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# The Noyes Group: Under the Radar, but Still on the Map?

*Meg Brooker*

In a January 22, 1933, *New York Times* article, John Martin previewed "Awake Olympus!" the Noyes Group's debut New York concert. The next day, Martin panned the performance, describing the dances as "sentimental and banal."[1] That single concert at the Avon Theatre in the Broadway district was the Noyes Group's first and last public showing in New York. Formed in the early 1920s, the Noyes Group was an ensemble of dancers and educators trained by Florence Fleming Noyes (1871-1928) in her movement technique, Noyes Rhythm. Sixteen dances, featuring Greek mythological themes, comprised the program, and most of the dances were created in the 1920s, prior to Noyes' 1928 death. Harry G. Sommers, a former manager of both the Avon Theatre and the Knickerbocker Theatre, produced the concert with the support of elite society patronesses. By 1933, Noyes' ensemble of rhythmic dancers had danced together for over a decade. They packed the house, yet Martin categorized their audience as an "assemblage of friends," not expecting to view "a professional dance exhibition."[2] By what criteria did Martin evaluate the Noyes Group? Did his negative review contribute to the Noyes dancers' absence in dance history texts? If critics are the cartographers of dance history, how have critics like John Martin determined whose works merit recognition as historical landmarks and whose works are simply left off the map?

Drawing on newsletters, newspaper articles, critiques of Martin's methods, and my embodied experience as a Noyes technique teacher, I will demonstrate how Martin's reception of the Noyes Group performance fails to recognize the values of subjective agency and collective creativity in a movement practice that prioritizes internal sensation over external form. First, I historicize Noyes as a Progressive-era dancer and dance educator, citing her early appearances as a solo dance artist and noting the popularity of her school. Following Lynn Conner's analysis of newspaper dance criticism from 1927 to 1934, I situate John Martin as an authoritative voice, defining standards for the new modern dance. Next, I analyze the press for the Noyes Group concert, cross-reading notices from major New York newspapers and focusing on Martin's pre- and post-performance coverage. Finally, I examine the effects of defining concert dance as a practice of exclusivity, positioning choreographies as art objects populated by technically virtuosic bodies and, consequently, devaluing accessible, communal movement practices that invite audience members to directly identify with the bodies onstage.

During the 1910s and 1920s, Noyes created a public presence as a uniquely talented solo dance artist while also promoting rhythmic dance as a practice for all bodies. Her work intersected with the Progressive-era discourses of physical culture, dress reform, woman suffrage, and the settlement house movement. After a brief stint as an actress in one of Charles Frohman's touring companies, Noyes debuted as an aesthetic dancer in 1911.[3] By 1913, her focus expanded to include teaching and coaching other performers.[4] Throughout the 1910s, she continued to perform, and she presented her work in the contexts of high-society entertainment, charitable benefits, and the woman suffrage movement. In 1913, Noyes portrayed both "Liberty" and "Hope" in suffrage pageants in Washington, D.C., and New York, respectively.[5] She directed groups of her students in these pageants as well, and she trained her students not only as performers, but also as teachers of her method. By the 1920s, Noyes had certified a sufficient number of dancers and teachers in her technique to begin establishing branch schools throughout the United States. These women taught Noyes' work in settlement houses, business clubs, local schools, and even in the physical education programs of colleges and universities.[6] In the 1910s and 1920s, Noyes' work was well known, and students of her methods included not only women seeking careers as solo dance artists, but also men and women of all ages seeking the creative release and therapeutic benefit of rhythmic movement.[7]

Despite the popularity of Noyes' work, as a Progressive-era dancer and educator she has been relatively unhistoricized. She does not fit the binary Linda Tomko sets up between "expressive" solo dance artists like Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis and

advocates of "communal" dance practices such as settlement house workers Irene Lewisohn, Mary Wood Hinman, and Elizabeth Burchenal.[8] In fact, I have found only two scholarly references to Noyes, and one situates her alongside solo dance artists while the other notes the widespread influence of her school. In *Dancing Class*, Tomko mentions Noyes in a section dedicated to St. Denis, citing Noyes as "one 'barefoot' dancer" who was originally slated to dance for a suffrage event at which St. Denis later performed.[9] In *Done Into Dance*, Ann Daly footnotes a reference to the Noyes School in a paragraph explicating the relationship between "Duncan-style dance schools" and settlement house practices.[10] For Noyes, rhythmic movement was inseparable from the pursuits of health, education, and artistic expression in everyday life. Her work blurred the boundary between dance performance as the domain of the talented few and dance practice as an accessible, communal activity.

John Martin, on the other hand, in his role as dance critic for the *New York Times*, was clearly demarcating boundaries in order to define professional standards for American concert dance. In 1927, three of New York's major newspapers, the *New York World*, *New York Herald Tribune*, and the *Times*, appointed two women and one man, (Lucile Marsh, Mary F. Watkins, and John Martin, respectively), as critics dedicated to dance coverage. In *Spreading the Gospel of the Modern Dance*, Lynne Conner chronicles the proactive and prescriptive relationships these critics developed with the dance community. Between 1927 and 1934 (Marsh's position dissolved in 1932 and Watkins retired in 1934), these critics evolved vocabularies for translating new dance movement into verbal text. Conner argues that through this process, they not only educated their general readership about the new concert dance and taught them how to watch it, but they also defined its social and cultural value as an American artistic practice. Martin was the only critic of the three to maintain his position during the economic crisis of the Great Depression. According to Conner, he was "the undisputed voice of authority in the dance world," and favorable press from Martin legitimated dance artists' careers.[11] What, then, were his standards for evaluating the dance?

In *The Modern Dance*, a series of lectures given by Martin at the New School for Social Research in 1931 and published in book form in 1933, Martin outlines his criteria for the new concert dance. He narrates his version of Western dance history as an evolution from ballet or "classic" dance, through a transitional "romantic" period, culminating in "modern" dance. In Martin's estimation, romantic dancers like Duncan and St. Denis created new possibilities for subjective expression in dance, but they failed to generate new, original dance forms. Instead, they cobbled together their dance vocabularies from an eclectic mix of theatrical, historical, and exotic sources. Martin dedicates an entire section of *The Modern Dance* to a discussion of form, and for Martin, the choreographic artifact, or syntactical shaping of original movement vocabulary into a repeatable structure, is the concrete evidence supporting dance's claim to fine- or high-art status.[12] I argue that, by assuming dance must create an art object in order to qualify for high-art status, Martin reinscribes objectivity on the dancing body, casts the choreographer, rather than the dancer, in the role of dance artist, and insists on the critic as a mediator between dance artists and their audiences.

According to Martin's taxonomy, "rhythm systems" proliferated during the romantic dance period, and Noyes' work fits this category.[13] Following Duncan's example, rhythm systems reacted against bound muscularity and emphasized dance movement as an expressive musical response. Like Duncan, Noyes favored chiton-inspired tunics and culled her dance movements from a combination of natural and ancient Greek influences. Her practice emphasized releasing tension and using repetitive movement patterning to activate automatic movement responses.[14] Martin criticizes these rhythmic dance practices for producing "weak and effeminate" movement.[15] He accuses these practices of "attempt[ing] to manufacture something without a machine," and asserts, "obviously in order to be objectified, [the dance] must have a visible form."[16] In Martin's gendered perspective, the new "modern" dance must prove that it creates an art object, an artifact subject to analysis according to some definable and, presumably, objective aesthetic criteria.

Martin's assumption that, in order to be an art, dance must create an object, forecloses on dance as a practice populated by subjective bodies. In "Reconsidering Isadora Duncan and the Male Gaze," Ann Daly reads Duncan's dancing body as a "subject-in-process." From Daly's feminist perspective, Duncan's dance was not simply a romantic transition; it marked a revolution in reception practices with larger social ramifications. According to Daly, "The dancing body was no longer a product—of training, of narrative, of consumption—but rather a process." In framing her argument, Daly utilizes

Julia Kristeva's distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic as signifying spaces. Daly places Duncan, and I would situate Noyes as well, in the semiotic, "a realm of meaning that was not linear, not logical, not mimetic."[17] Martin, on the other hand, in his insistence that dance produce form, calls for symbolic, or "linear and logical," representation, rather than semiotic manifestation.[18] By calling for choreographies as art objects, Martin redefines the dancer as an instrument, both physically and psychologically, in service of the choreography. The dancer, as a performer, is no longer a subjective presence. Rather, the choreographer, as author and director of the dance, shapes the dancer's performance in service of the choreographer's singular vision.

In esteeming the choreographer as an individual artist, Martin not only dismisses dancing bodies as subjective agents, he also disregards the possibility of dance-making as a communal practice, as a collaboration not only between dancers, but also between performers and audience members. Martin ignores audience enthusiasm as a marker of value in performance. In *Stepping Left*, Ellen Graff analyzes Martin's critiques of 1930s leftist dance groups and notes, "Martin could not deny the audience's enthusiasm or the fervency of the dancers' beliefs, but he lashed out at the superficial thinking and danced generalizations that he felt characterized their performances." Graff critiques Martin for disregarding the audience and privileging bourgeois, abstract art forms over politically motivated dance content, citing his failure to include content among the elements he identifies as constituting modern dance.[19] In his emphasis on form, Martin insists that the choreographer's intention be shaped through the movement of the dancers bodies into an original structure, a choreographic art object. In this insistence, Martin elevates the artist-critic relationship above that of the artist-audience, and he defines artistic creation as an individual rather than communal practice.

I argue that Martin's reaction to the Noyes Group's attempt to translate Progressive-era community performance values into 1930s concert dance exemplifies both his blatant disregard for audience response and his insistence that dance produce an art object, not a subjective process. In *Dancing Class*, Tomko emphasizes the multiplicity of bodies involved in Progressive-era dance practices, noting, "Movement performance became a bodily capacity open to females and males, lower as well as upper classes, immigrant as well as native-born peoples, amateurs as well as professionals."[20] Progressive-era performance practices did not clearly cast bodies in the roles of either spectator or performer. Rather, performance practices were accessible to a variety of bodies, as both spectators and performers, in contexts ranging from settlement house productions to civic pageants. Yet, instead of conceiving dance as the means through which audience members and performers co-create subjectivity toward a goal of change, whether transformation of social consciousness, in the case of the workers' dance concerts, or of psychological consciousness, as with the Noyes Group, in defining 1930s concert dance, Martin reinforces the division between dancers and spectators. Rather than creating a space in which audience members identify directly with performers, Martin situates art production as an exclusionary, instead of communal, practice, and one which requires the mediation of critics to teach audiences how to interpret what they are seeing.

Cross-reading previews of the "Awake Olympus!" concert from newspapers, including the *World-Telegram*, the *Herald Tribune,* and the *Times,* reveals the Noyes dancers' emphasis on collective creative process, their attempt to frame their dance practice in modern terms, and their choice of joy as the program's thematic content. The previews describe the dances as a combination of solos and group pieces with Greek mythological themes and titles like "Bursting From Titan Roots," "Nymphs of Artemis," and "To Dionysus."[21] Photographs of Noyes soloist Catherine Rapp accompany several preview notices, including Martin's column in the *Times,* yet Rapp is also quoted de-emphasizing any featured-dancer status the solos may confer. In an interview with the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Rapp states, "We work as a group for the good of the whole. […] We pool our inspiration, and from this common fund comes our creations."[22] The notices also describe the dances as "modern compositions based on ancient Greek principles," suggesting the Noyes dancers were aware of the contemporary terminology defining the new American concert dance, and they were seeking to contextualize their work within the bounds of the modern dance art form.[23] Additionally, the previews address the potential incongruity between joy, as the program's thematic content, and the economic and political realities of the 1930s Great Depression. Rapp explains the program's subtitle, "An Evening of Joyous Dances," by describing the concert as an "anti-depression program."[24] In making this statement, Rapp is

not being flip or naïve. Noyes dancers believe in rhythmic dance practice as the means to affect changes in consciousness, and for the Noyes Group, even in the midst of the Depression, joy is the most relevant topic.

In his reception of the Noyes concert, Martin fails to address the content of the program, focusing his critique on what he perceives to be the dancers' lack of technique and on the audience's personal relationships with the dancers. Martin sums up his objections in the subtitle of his review, "Compositions All on Greek Subjects—Recital Before Audience of Friends." In keeping with the general disregard for rhythm systems he articulated in *The Modern Dance*, Martin accuses the Noyes system of failing to "induce either muscular or musical response." Although Martin compliments Rapp's performance, noting, "Miss Rapp is personable and obviously knows what she is doing," he tempers the compliment by qualifying, "the technical system in which she works allows her almost no dynamic range."[25] Martin fails to understand that Noyes Rhythm is a movement system that privileges internal sensation and the release of muscular tension over the aggressive muscular engagement required to produce "dynamic" effects.[26] Noyes was not trying to develop an athletically virtuosic dance training technique. Quite the opposite, Noyes articulated a relationship between the subconscious and what she termed "the sympathetic."[27] Noyes Rhythm creates neurological, not muscular, effects.

Martin also fails to appreciate the audience's response. He attributes the audience's enthusiasm to their personal relationships with the dancers, stating, "It was the type of performance that requires just such an assemblage of friends for its well being, for in spite of its claims, it is the demonstration of an educational system of sorts rather than a professional dance exhibition."[28] In Martin's estimation, the Noyes Group's audience was incapable of distinguishing between the dancers as people, as performers, and as choreographic elements. Ironically, for a critic who hails "metakinesis," or the capacity for motion to produce emotion, as one of the tenets of modern dance, Martin devalues the emotive response of audience members who have personal relationships with the performers.[29] "Friends" watching a performance do not objectively see bodies moving through space, representing abstract ideals. "Friends" see subjects, people with names and personal histories. They see people dancing within contexts that extend beyond the proscenium frame and theatre walls. From Martin's perspective, for a concert to be characterized as professional, both the choreographic artifact and the dancers' execution of that choreography, must withstand objective evaluation. If friends are only capable of subjectively responding to performance, and Martin's criteria calls for objective consideration, what does that say about dance's efficacy as a mode of constituting community?

With their January 1933 concert, the Noyes Group made an attempt to translate Progressive-era community values into 1930s concert dance. However, by the 1930s, modern dance was becoming a professionalized practice, rather than the means through which all members of a community could explore movement and create performance. John Martin, emerging as the "voice of authority," established professional standards for modern dance.[30] By securing a place for dance as a professional practice, he defined dance as an exclusive practice. Rather than responding to performances that reflected practices in which they participated, audiences of professional performances learned to appreciate dance from an aesthetic distance. They recognized choreographies as art objects and dancing bodies as instruments in service of the choreographer's artistic vision. Despite Martin's negative review and the general backlash against "rhythm systems" in the 1930s, the Noyes dancers managed to continue their work together and pass on their movement practice through a summertime community that is still active today.



**Endnotes**

1 John Martin, "Noyes Group Makes Dance Debut Here: Compositions All on Greek Subjects—Recital Before Audience of Friends," *New York Times*, 23 Jan. 1933.

2 Ibid.

3 Valeria Ladd, ed., *Rhythm for Dance and Art: The Exact Notes Taken of the Teaching in Action of Florence Fleming Noyes* (Ardmore, P.A.: Dorrance and Company, 1982) ix. Ladd gives a brief biographical overview of Noyes' life and artistic influences in the introduction to this compilation of teaching notes and technique exercises. Ladd was an original member of the Noyes Group and ran the school for over fifty years after Noyes' death. Some of her papers are archived in the National Museum of Women in the Arts.

4 Noyes School of Rhythm Foundation, Inc. "Interview with Bertha Remick," *Rhythm* 14, no. 1, 1937, *Rhythm* 15, no. 1, 1938, and *Rhythm* 26, no. 4, 1950. Bertha Remick was Noyes' original accompanist and collaborated with her on her first solo

performance. Both Remick and Ladd recount Noyes' affiliation with a Washington, D.C. rhythm teacher named Lucia Gale Barber. Mrs. Barber passed away in 1911, shortly after Noyes' first solo performance. Noyes took over Barber's classes, and during 1912, she opened her own studio in New York City. Noyes cites both Barber's work and her elocution studies with Charles Wesley Emerson as significant influences on her technique. Noyes earned an O.B. degree from Emerson College of Oratory, where she also trained in Delsarte.

[5] Florence Fleming Noyes and her students appeared in pageants to raise awareness for woman suffrage in March 1913, in Washington, D.C., on the steps of the Treasury Building, and, in May 1913, at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City. (*New York Sun* 1913; *New York Times* 1913). During the summer of 2008, while conducting research in the Noyes School of Rhythm Foundation's private archive, I found numerous scrapbooks filled with newspaper articles detailing these two events and describing the featured participation of Noyes and her dancers.

[6] Noyes Rhythm teachers taught classes at settlement houses, including Henry Street Settlement and Christodora in New York City (*Boston Journal* 1915). In the fall of 1924, the school began publishing a newsletter called *Rhythm*. It was started as a weekly publication and featured news from the main studio of the Noyes School of Rhythm, located in New York City, as well as from branch schools in cities throughout the country. It is now published as a quarterly. Early volumes of this newsletter document the wide range of classes offered by the Noyes School, and ranging from business clubs, to YWCAs, to the physical education department of the University of Minnesota. Noyes also developed comprehensive school curriculum for young children, and her teachers attended the first Progressive Education Association conferences.

[7] Noyes coached several dancers who had visible careers as solo performers. The Noyes archives contain many articles, programs, and pictures featuring dancers Grace Cristie and Hilda Carling. In the late 1910s and early 1920s, Cristie performed in venues ranging from the Greenwich Village Theatre to the Folies Bergère, and Carling toured the vaudeville circuit. In the 1920s, Noyes also coached dancer Catherine Rapp, who toured as a solo artist in a show produced by Daniel Frohman, and joined Valeria Ladd in an early 1930s tour to Greece.

[8] Linda Tomko, *Dancing Class: Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Divides in American Dance, 1890-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999) 36.

[9] Ibid, 56. Tomko details how Noyes was originally scheduled to dance for Anna Howard Shaw's birthday party, but the party was rescheduled because Shaw broke her foot. St. Denis danced in the rescheduled event, but Noyes did not appear. The Noyes archives contain a newspaper article entitled "'Dance of Freedom' Symbolizes Suffrage Cause" (source unknown), that describes the dance Noyes intended to perform for Shaw's party. The dance begins with Noyes wrapped in ten yards of chiffon, and her struggle to untangle herself represents women's struggle for freedom. The article concludes, "In the end, of course, she triumphs, and tearing off the fetters, throws them exultingly into the corner, and dances in perfect freedom and in the same brilliant manner that has made Mrs. Noyes famous."

[10] Ann Daly, *Done Into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995) 116, 240-241. In the footnote for this reference, Daly cites an article by Mildred Adams entitled "The Rhythmic Way to Beauty" published in October 1926 in *Woman Citizen*.

[11] Lynne Conner, Spreading the Gospel of the Modern Dance: Newspaper Dance Criticism in the United States, 1850-1934 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997) 109, 97-132.

[12] John Martin, *The Modern Dance* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1933) 3-6, 34-61.

[13] Ibid, 28-31.

[14] My understanding of Noyes' technique comes from my embodied experience as a practitioner and teacher of the work. Over the past five summers, I have spent more than thirteen weeks immersed in Noyes Rhythm at Shepherd's Nine in Cobalt, Connecticut, the summer school of the Noyes School of Rhythm. Summer Noyes Rhythm intensive sessions have been held at this location since 1919.

[15] Martin, 30.

[16] Ibid, 5, 30.

[17] Ann Daly, "Dance History and Feminist Theory: Reconsidering Isadora Duncan and the Male Gaze," *Gender in Performance: the Presentation of Difference in the Performing Arts,* Ed. Laurence Senelick (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1992) 253.

[18] Ibid, 254.

[19] Ellen Graff, Stepping Left: Dance and Politics in New York City, 1928-1942 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997) 10-11.

[20] Tomko, 34.

[21] Scrapbooks in the Noyes archives include preview notices from papers including the New York World-Telegram, the New York Herald Tribune, the New York Times, the New York American, the New York Evening Post, the New York Sun, the Daily Mirror, the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, the Hartford Daily Courant, and the Boston Herald. Three different pictures of Noyes dancer Catherine Rapp accompany these notices, and the image printed in Martin's column, showing Rapp in the militaristic "Dance of Sparta," is the most "modern" image of the three. The least "modern" is an image of Rapp credited to photographer Arnold Genthe. In this image, Rapp wears a Grecian tunic and carries a long vine with outstretched arms.

[22] Mary O'Flaherty, "Noyes Group of Dancers: Organized for a Decade, Ready for First Recital," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 20 Jan. 1933.

[23] John Martin, "The Dance: Critical Revelations of Puppets." *New York Times,* 22 Jan. 1933.

[24] O'Flaherty, (page unknown).

[25] John Martin, "Noyes Group Makes Dance Debut Here: Compositions All on Greek Subjects— Recital Before Audience of Friends," *New York Times,* 23 Jan. 1933.

[26] In *The Modern Dance,* Martin cites dynamism as one of the four discoveries made by the modern dance. He defines dynamism as movement quality "regulated by its quantity—by the degree or amount of force or intensity it contains" (32). Martin discusses dynamism in relationship to muscular effort or ease. Noyes would call this willful effort, and her movement practice seeks to undo what she perceived to be the potentially harmful habits that result from self-conscious or willful overexertion. Muscular

engagement *does* happen in the Noyes practice, but it is the result of conscious attention rather than self-conscious willfulness.

[27] In *Rhythm for Dance and Art*, Ladd quotes many instances in which Noyes refers to the sympathetic. Noyes Rhythm is taught through verbal imagery. Dancers learn to allow their bodies to respond to the different feelings the images evoke. In the Noyes system, the sympathetic nervous system is the conduit for transforming these initial responses or impulses into visible, physical motion.

[28] Martin, "Noyes Group Makes Dance Debut Here," (page unknown).

[29] In The Modern Dance, Martin defines metakinesis as "a medium for the transference of an aesthetic and emotional concept from the consciousness of one individual to that of another" (13). He relates metakinesis to the concept of intention. In Martin's analysis, metakineiss is the means through which dancers convey their intention to the audience, and the audience receives this information through a process of kinesthetic awareness.

[30] Conner, 109.

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# The Seduction of the Silhouette

*Jennifer K. Buscher*

Whether they are the black and white paper cut-outs dancing across museum and gallery walls or the colorful eye-candy plastered across billboards and buildings throughout the urban landscape, the silhouette form evokes movement. In this paper, I use the artwork of Kara Walker,[1] renowned for her use of this simple, yet profound visual technique, to understand another famous series of silhouettes: the iPod advertisement campaign.[2] There are vast differences in intent and purpose between Walker's artwork and the iPod advertisements – Walker utilizes the silhouette form to re-present American history, particularly moments of racial and sexual violence from the Antebellum South, while Apple employs the silhouette form to sell its portable music player, the iPod. In bringing these two together, I am interested in the silhouette as form and process. By form, I mean the characteristics of the silhouette as a very particular artistic technique and practice. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a silhouette is "A portrait obtained by tracing the outline of a profile, head, or figure by means of its shadow or in some other way, and filling in the whole with black."[3] And by process, I mean the creation of the silhouette, and more specifically the labor involved, whether it is the artist Kara Walker cutting out figures in the gallery space or the multiple layers of labor involved in the production of the iPod silhouette advertisements.

The silhouette is often generated from shadows. This paper explores the terrain hidden within the shadows of the silhouette. More specifically, I am considering the movement of shadows in cultures of consumption through the figure of the silhouette. My goal is to uncover and discuss multiple layers of invizibilized labor. My understanding and analysis of the invizibilization of labor draws on the work of several dance scholars, including Brenda Dixon Gottschild[4] who discusses the invizibilization of African American contributions to American popular and concert dance forms; Priya Srinivasan[5] who discusses the labor of the female Asian dancing body; and Anna B. Scott[6] whose work explores the complicated relationships between race, labor, intellectual property, and media. Laboring bodies, like shadows, move between visibility and invisibility in the transnational technology industry – from the racialized, gendered bodies who produce digital devices throughout the Third World to those that sell digital devices through the iPod silhouette advertising campaign. This industry depends on the shadows buried within the seductive power of the silhouette.

Visual artist Kara Walker is best known for her life-size silhouette cut-out figures. At first glance, the black silhouette figures flitting across white gallery walls invite the viewer into a playful, romantic, innocent reverie. But upon closer inspection, it becomes immediately clear that there is nothing playful, romantic, or innocent in the narratives Walker is constructing as she explores the deepest and darkest shadows of America's past through the silhouette form. The following description of one of Walker's first silhouette pieces, "Gone, An Historical Romance of a Civil War as It Occurred Between the Dusky Thighs of One Young Negress and Her Heart," is from a *New York Times* Art Review by Holland Cotter:

> With its mock-antique form and Old South flavor, the piece had the airy, Valentine's Day prettiness of a romantic ballet. But this was no love story. It was a danse infernal of sex, slavery and chitlin-circuit comedy. Moms Mabley and the Marquis de Sade were the choreographers. Margaret Mitchell did sets. Flannery O'Connor cued the lights.[7]

Cotter's description captures the theatrical and performative qualities of Walker's work. And it is no surprise that he uses dance as a metaphor to discuss her piece. There is an inherent movement throughout Walker's silhouette pieces. Her panoramic narrative scenes are site-specific. She cuts her silhouette figures for an installation on-site and describes this process as "cutting the shadows of the room out of paper."[8] It is evident that throughout her artistic process, in her careful placement of the silhouette figures across the gallery or museum walls, Walker is thinking about movement, and not just the movement of the silhouettes or the narrative, but also the movement of the spectator through the space.

The figures featured in Walker's silhouette pieces are drawn from racist imagery, iconography, literature, and pop cultural references. Characters such as 'the mammy,' 'the pickaninny,' 'the buck,' 'the nigger wench' 'the master/mistress,' and 'the overseer' recur throughout her work.[9] Walker even presents herself as a character within her own artwork, often referring to herself as "a negress" in several titles. In Walker's work, there is a definite connection between form and content – between the silhouette form and the racist

stereotypes she portrays through this form. Walker describes this relationship in a 1996 interview with Alexander Alberro:

> The silhouette says a lot with very little information, but that's also what the stereotype does. So I saw the silhouette and the stereotype as linked. Of course, while the stereotype, or the emblem, can communicate with a lot of people, and a lot of people can understand it, the other side of this is that it also reduces difference, reduces diversity to that stereotype.[10]

Walker's insights here resonate with my own reading of the silhouette in the iPod advertisements. While the iPod premiered in 2001, the iconic silhouette advertising campaign was not launched until 2003, originally as a print campaign and then translated into corresponding television commercials. The advertising campaign features a dancing body - in silhouette form - framed against brightly colored backgrounds, holding a white iPod in one hand with wires winding up the black body to the white earbud headphones. In the television advertisements, music, movement, and fashion work together to construct bodies that the consumer can identify with. Like Walker's silhouette figures, the iPod silhouettes also portray stereotypes, both racial and musical genre stereotypes. Through a combination of music, clothing, accessories, hairstyle, movement, and gesture, the silhouette is a meticulously assembled package designed to appeal to various demographics – the message is, if this is the type of music you listen to – rock, hip-hop, techno, alternative, indie, jazz, latin – then this is how you dress and this is how you move. And no matter what musical genre you choose or what fashion style you identify with or what body you desire to be, the iPod remains constant, creating a multitude of sameness across difference and offering the illusion of individual expression through a mass-produced consumer product.

In the silhouette form, the body is simultaneously present and absent – identity is both revealed and obscured, generalized and mythologized. The silhouette is a black void, a negative space, an "evacuated interior."[11] The silhouette form provides a blank/black canvas onto which one can project one's self and one's desires. This interaction, through projection, between the viewer and the silhouette form contributes to the success of the iPod silhouettes as a marketing campaign, though it often leads to discomfort for Walker's viewers as they become implicated into sexually and racially violent narratives from American history. Despite the erasure of skin color as the racial signifier in the silhouette form, we can still 'read' race in these images. Through handheld implements, hairstyles, and clothing, there is no doubt in Walker's work about which figures represent the white masters and which ones represent the black slaves. The discourse and controversy surrounding Walker's artwork revolves around issues of race and representation without ever questioning or debating the racial identities of the silhouette figures themselves. Similarly, we can still identify racial markers through clothing, hairstyle, and accessories in the iPod silhouettes. Overall, the advertisements rely on racial stereotypes that are aligned with the musical genre. So, for example, the silhouettes featured in a "Hip Hop" or "Jazz" ad 'read' as black, while those in a "Rock" or "Indie" ad 'read' as white. And, I would argue that we can also 'read' race through gesture and movement in these advertisements.

In her article "Dance" from *Culture Works: the Political Economy of Culture*, Anna B. Scott is interested in how various locations – the United States, Brazil, and India – and events – *carnaval*, hip hop music videos, and advertisements – employ Black Social Dance and the black dancing body as a marketing tool.[12] She considers how these dance forms and dancing bodies are manufactured, packaged and sold or utilized to sell products in a transnational late-capitalist economy. She concludes with an analysis of the Intel BunnyPeople advertisements. According to Scott, "Coded but marked as 'black,' the BunnyPeople have a cross-cultural appeal. Really they aren't any particular body. That funky hip-hoppity dance is internationally recognized as 'American,' and not necessarily understood as a historically racialized performance practice, Black Popular Dance."[13] Like the Intel BunnyPeople, the silhouettes featured in the iPod advertisements are faceless – supposedly anonymous – but can often be 'read' as black dancing bodies who perform Black Popular Dance forms in order to sell technology. In these advertisements, the identity and therefore the labor of the dancing body is erased. While the silhouette dancing bodies are highly visible, the identities of the dancers and their labor in the production of this marketing campaign remain invisible. These silhouette bodies – whose labor is invisibilized and whose identities remain anonymous – are the visual symbol of brand recognition for both Apple, the company, and iPod, the product. The

erasure of the dancers' identities in the silhouette form provides an empty space that the consumer can occupy. If this dancing body also represents the 'other,' then the consumer can become the 'other' that s/he desires. The silhouette advertisements invite the consumer to own the 'white' technology while simultaneously being able to move and dance like the 'other.'

Shifting through the layers of meaning hidden within the shadows of the silhouettes, we confront issues of race and labor which bring us back to the artwork of Kara Walker. In her work, Walker presents racial and sexual violence within the daily labor of a black slave. Moving between the mundane and the surreal, the everyday and the grotesque, issues of labor and consumption continually emerge from the shadows within her work. And who are the 'slaves' in the transnational technology industry? Also hidden within the shadows of the silhouette advertisements are the unacknowledged and invisibilized female Asian laboring bodies who manufacture digital devices, including the iPod, throughout export processing zones in Third World countries. These racialized, gendered, laboring bodies are embedded within the global circuits of capitalism that produce the digital devices that we utilize throughout our daily lives. Shifting from the iPod to the iPhone, I would like to conclude with a particular moment when labor briefly, but dramatically, emerged from the shadows – the iPhone girl.

When Mark Mitchell, from Kingston Upon Hill, UK, opened his brand new iPhone 3G in August, 2008, he discovered pictures of a young female worker from the Chinese factory still loaded on the phone. He posted the pictures to macrumors.com on August 20th and the iPhone girl became an instant internet celebrity.[14] Within a week, the story and images of the iPhone girl circulated across the internet and various media outlets nationally and internationally. There was a flurry of speculation surrounding the iPhone girl – who was she? How old was she? Would she be fired? The *Sydney Morning Herald* (August 28, 2008) describes the iPhone girl phenomenon:

> China's 'human flesh search engine' is in hot pursuit of an unnamed Chinese factory worker after photographs of her showed up unexpectedly on a new iPhone 3G purchased recently in Britain. … The term 'human flesh search engine' refers to this type of mob reaction by China's so-called netizens (internet citizens) to pool their collective resources in order to track someone down.[15]

I am fascinated by this concept of a 'human flesh search engine' that is propelled by a desire to name and identify the iPhone girl as well as its ultimate failure in this endeavor. Despite the efforts of the 'human flesh search engine' as well as those of journalists across the world, the identity of the iPhone girl was never discovered or disclosed. Foxconn, the Apple contracted factory that produces iPods and iPhones, did confirm that the iPhone girl was a Foxconn employee and had not been fired due to the pictures.[16] Apple never commented on the incident.

The iPhone girl represents yet another silhouette. Her identity is simultaneously revealed and obscured. She was highly visible as her image traversed the internet. She was even named one of *Time*'s Top 10 Fleeting Celebrities of 2008.[17] And yet, she remained anonymous, her identity obscured. Her celebrity status was short-lived. She soon faded back into oblivion, back into the shadows. But for a brief moment, the iPhone girl personalized labor – she was a face that represented the invizibilized labor force that produces digital devices such as the iPhone and iPod across the Third World. While many of the comments throughout the blogosphere and interwebs about the iPhone girl discussed how cute she was, there were also moments where issues of labor and working conditions entered into the conversations.[18] Labor issues are not usually included within the official or unofficial press coverage of a new Apple product. But with the iPhone girl, amidst the media frenzy surrounding the release of the iPhone 3G in the UK and its corresponding obsession with tech specs and cool new features and apps, the conversations across Mac, Apple, and technology-related websites, discussion boards, and blogs shifted to a focus on labor and briefly stopped to consider the body who had assembled the device in a factory somewhere in China. Thus, the iPhone girl reveals the significance and value of making invisibilized labor visible, even if it is just for a momentary glimpse into those shadows.



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1 Examples of Kara Walker's silhouette artwork can be found at the following websites - http://whitney.org/www/exhibition/kara_walker/exhibition.html and http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/walker/

2 Examples of the iPod silhouette advertisements can be found at the following websites - http://www.apple.com/itunes/ads/ and

http://www.rocketart.com/portfolio/general.php?page=1&id=1&num=1

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[6] Anna B. Scott addresses these issues in a series of articles published on *flowtv.org, a Critical Forum in Television and Media Culture*, including "Revisitations and Constant Auditions: The Politics of Placing People" (http://flowtv.org/?p=1078), "'Screenifying' Choreography: The New Parameters of Social Interaction as Envisioned by Bill T Jones' *Blind Date"* (http://flowtv.org/?p=887), "YouTube, Dance and Reform: The Body Caught in the Act" (http://flowtv.org/?/p=780), "Dancing in the Distraction Factory: CGI, Captured Feet, and Box Office Magic" (http://flowtv.org/?p=425) and "Not Yo' Momma's Cyborg: *Transformers* Meet More Than Your Eye" (http://flowtv.org/?p=608).

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# And They Drifted Out of View:

## Choreographing Topography in the Work of Eiko & Koma

*Rosemary Candelario*

The audience gathers at the edge of the water at twilight as Eiko & Koma slowly drift into view, like flotsam and jetsam, clinging to tree limbs and a mysterious slab of glass or plastic.[1] (See Figure 1) The dusky light casting off the water makes their white makeup glow, as shadows dig grooves into the wet clothing clinging to their skin. Slowly, slowly, a head turns, a torso rises, a hand reaches forward, searching. Reflections of Eiko & Koma dance across the surface of the water, multiplying their images, disjointing and duplicating shoulders, arms, and faces. The resulting multi-headed monsters from the deep are otherworldly, yet are tied to *this* world, *this* water by their twilight performance. They are both moved by the water and moving in the water: leisurely, released from the demands of clocks and schedules. At one point, Koma's narcissian face sinks halfway into the water, merging with its spectral self, water flowing in and out of his open mouth like breath. Sometimes the dancers appear as themselves, such as when the pair emerges from the river now and then to rest on the banks. Koma tends to Eiko and then separates from her. Eventually, they lower themselves again into the water, and drift out of view of the audience. Because the audience does not see them enter the river upstream and exit the river downstream, they are left with the strong impression of having witnessed mysterious river creatures at play, not a dance created by humans.

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I begin my talk today with this creative description of Eiko & Koma's 1995 site dance *River* – re-choreographed here by my imagination through an amalgamation of video and photographic documentation of performances in different bodies of water – in order to explicitly foreground choreography as the source of the theory I will explicate as well as the object of analysis. The piece asks questions about the relationships between humans and non-humans, bodies and nature, and site and performance, questions I will address via a notion of topography.

A colleague of mine once said of her contemporary Indian dance collective, "We are not

FIGURE 1: *River*. Photo by Harper Blanchit.

global. We are local in many places." This is a productive perspective from which to consider dance in global and transnational contexts. For while it has been suggested that choreography has the potential to efface technologies of mapping, I find this to be dangerously close to a reiteration of the familiar trope of the transcendence of dance in which dancers are imagined to be able to bridge cultural gaps and rise above issues of race or nationality. I want to argue against this kind of "no-place" of dance, the "very emptiness" of which, according to dance scholar Harmony Bench "grounds Western dance practices and launches dancing bodies into new sites by erasing topological specificities" (2008, 37). The danger is then that "dance and dancers can be imagined independent of context – that dance, existing nowhere in particular, can appear everywhere equally" (2008, 44). This of course belies the fact that even in a globalized and transnational world, borders persist. Bodies come up against them on a daily basis, sometimes with devastating consequences. We must therefore consider the ways that the particular bodies creating choreography perform in an historically specific time and place, which exerts a strong influence on both how they are seen and what impact their kinesthetic labor is able to effect. We need to look *not* for a way that choreography transcends

mapping, but for the ways that it suggests alternate epistemologies and methods of mapping that acknowledge the specificities of the local.

**Topography**

My project, then, is to reinsert particularity while at the same time taking seriously the potential of bodies to impact boundaries. I propose the definition of topography from the *New Oxford American Dictionary* as a point of departure:

> topography[2]
> the arrangement of the natural and artificial physical features of an area: *the topography of the island*
> • a detailed description or representation on a map of such features
> • Anatomy & Biology the distribution of parts or features on the surface of or within an organ or organism

I am struck in particular by the way this definition of topography makes possible the thinking together of the natural, the artificial, and the biological. In this combination I sense the basis for developing an alternate technology of mapping that can articulate what happens at the intersection of dancing bodies and sites. And because topography is concerned with the representation of corporeal, natural, and artificial features, it may also offer insights into representations mobilized by choreography. While choreography cannot, I maintain, erase borders, it can perhaps unsettle them. Therefore I am not interested in the actions of an artist mining a site to reveal its hidden significance, but rather in what the art and site can create together as corporeal, natural, and built topographies. In this context I examine the choreography of Japanese dancers, Eiko & Koma, who have lived and worked in the United States for over thirty years, suggesting that their acclaimed dances intervene in American arts discourses through their favoring of site-related or non-traditional performance spaces. The particularity of Eiko & Koma, as Japanese dancers making work in the United States for over thirty years, informs – as it is influenced by – a growing body of work on Asian American dance. My dissertation project on Eiko & Koma brings together all of these concerns, while today I focus on further explicating a productive relationship between topography and choreography, through an analysis of Eiko & Koma's *River*.

To begin with, I want to deepen the connection of natural and artificial sites to bodies that I identified in the aforementioned definition of topography. In his posthumously published essay "On Other Spaces," Michel Foucault declares that "The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space" (1986, 1[3]). He goes on to claim that contemporary space can be characterized neither as emplacement nor extension into space, but as relations among sites. UK choreographer Carol Brown takes this Foucauldian sensibility into dance, seeing choreography as "an emergent matrix of relationships shaped by states of flux between the body and the built" (forthcoming 2010, 2). Philosopher of science Donna Haraway takes this one step further to insist that nature is also made as a "co-construction among humans and non-humans" (1992, 297), just as corporeality is a social construction of bodies. Elsewhere I have employed Haraway's notion of cyborgs in order to cobble together – as one would join parts of a human with parts of a machine – an analysis of Eiko & Koma's work that elucidates the radical work their choreography does through the transgression of the boundaries of nature and time. Here, I bring Haraway's sense of what she calls the "artifactualism" of nature to bear on the topography of sites and bodies, and the ways they connect, interact, and move together in choreography.

A quick survey of the names of their performance works shows Eiko & Koma's strong affinity to nature: in addition to *River* (outdoor version 1995, proscenium version 1997), Eiko & Koma have created pieces such as *Tree Song* (2004), *Snow* (1999), *Wind* (1993), *Land* (1991), *Tree* (1988), *Grain* (1983), and *Fur Seal* (1977). While I am dealing in this paper with a dance work that takes place, as it were, in nature, many of Eiko & Koma's other works in fact participate quite literally in the construction of nature, such as in the 1998 piece *Breath* for which they built a forest environment complete with dirt, leaves, and wind for their month-long "live installation" in the Whitney Museum. This body of work is no call for a simplistic return to nature, however. Instead, Eiko & Koma ask with their movement, "Why should our bodies end at the skin?" (Haraway 1985, 97). They dance an expansion of corporeality that is not a mere enlargement of the boundaries of their bodies, but an extension of the idea of what their bodies can be. Watching the two dancers merge with and emerge from nature, the audience is left wondering: Are those two bodies, or just one? Are they male or female? Are

they human? Is the landscape itself moving? Are they the landscape? (See Figure 2)

FIGURE 2: *River*. Photo by Philip Trager.

Haraway's insistence that we "must find another relationship to nature besides reification and possession" (1992, 296) led her to theorize "a relentless differential/oppositional artifactualism" (1992, 298), which like her cyborgs rejects the boundaries or evolutionary hierarchies separating nature, humans, and technology, focusing instead on the generative possibilities of unruly and unexpected connections at areas in common. The result is a favoring of modalities of affinity, collectivity, and monstrosity: imperfect and messy, yes, but full of potential to intervene in a late-capitalist postmodern world through the articulation (think here not of words, but of joints, nexuses, connections) of an artifactual space, intentionally created by and through Haraway's monster promises and cyborg manifestoes as a political strategy for a different kind of being (both noun and verb) in the world.

What is significant about a piece like *River* is that the same bodies perform it in many different local topographies; *River* has been danced in rivers, ponds, lakes, and on stages across the U.S. and around the world. I suggest that performances such as *River* theorize an artifactual topography in which physical features of bodies and sites join(t) together to generate something new at each specific location. What I am arguing here is that Eiko & Koma's choreography highlights topographical specificities in order to bring them together in surprising ways, which then effects the creation of a new space. I now turn my attention to the qualities and features of that new space, which I term paratopia.

**Paratopia**

Performance and dance studies scholar Anurima Banerji, in theorizing paratopia, imagines a space alongside dominant culture which is nonetheless other. Or, as she writes, "another. Another ontology, another time, another way of being, another zone, another ethic" (forthcoming 2009, 3). Paratopia, according to Banerji, comes into being through attempts, often through performance, to forge a new social and cultural space.

> The paratopia shares some resonance with the "heterotopia," conceived by Michel Foucault ([1967]1986) as a kind of "other space," with the critical difference that [paratopia] is a temporal realm that materializes specifically *through embodied movement* – it is not a defined architectural zone that the body enters, in which corporeal experiences are structured and shaped (forthcoming 2009, 7).

In applying her theory of paratopia to the work of Indian choreographer Chandralekha, Banerji focuses on the movement, time, and space of specific dances to demonstrate how Chandralekha participates in the creation of paratopia. In terms of movement, Banerji suggests that Chandralekha rejects the tradition/modern binary (which is imposed particularly on non-Western artists) in favor of a choreography that is contemporary. While her movement vocabulary draws from the classical Indian dance form Bharatanatyam, she leaves behind its narrative content; in its place she introduces other movement vocabularies – yoga, martial arts, quotidian behavior – which results in an innovative and novel choreographic vocabulary. Paratopic time is created in Chandralekha's dances through an emphasis on "presence across time, but not liveness" (forthcoming 2009, 17). Contra Peggy Phelan, time in Chandralekha's repertoire is not a radical now, but a time, while present, that evokes the past and makes room for the future. Banerji's example here is the choreographer's use of cyclical time. Finally, drawing from Paul Carter's *The Lie of the Land*, Banerji shows the Western use of space to be part of the colonial project, in which the clearing of space (of people, of nature) functions also as a making-way for dance. Bench's "no-place" of dance, you will recall, engages in this

same emptying process. In contrast, Banerji claims for paratopia a different, shared relationship to space: an "ethics of the ground." In each of these cases, the body is essential to the paratopic project, manifesting movement, time, and space through the action of bodies.

What interests me about paratopian performance is that it makes space – literally – for the potential of rendering something new and yet utterly within the realm of possibility. A paratopia as a "place alongside" can be a tangible space in a way that a utopia can never be, giving us a tool to theorize the productive work that dance does. Paratopia, I contend, accounts for particularities of performing bodies and thus brings the politics of representation back into performance, notably in the terms of space.

**Paratopic Topography**

I am ultimately arguing that Eiko & Koma's choreography works through the connection of bodily and natural/artifactual topographies in sometimes unexpected ways to generate a different kind of space during each performance of a piece such as *River*, and that the effect is both local and cumulative. That is, the choreography – the decisions that create a moving coalition of topographies – creates a new space, a paratopia, which in turn alters the corporeal and sited topographies involved, and which also influences Eiko & Koma's long-term choreographic project.

It is here that I see the two concepts I have outlined, topography and paratopia, coming into relationship with one another. If topography encompasses both corporeality and site, and paratopia is a space alongside formed by embodied movement, then the paratopic topographies, if you will, created by Eiko & Koma's choreography are ones that have the potential to connect bodies and locations across space and time, not in a way that transcends those specificities, but which brings them into connection with one another. Art historian Miwon Kwon, in theorizing a new definition of "site" as related to performance, emphasizes the importance of simultaneity, of one place *next* to another rather than one place serially *after* another. She advocates "finding a terrain between mobilization and specificity" (1997, 109) that is relational – again, *next to* – as a way to "turn local encounters into long-term commitments and transform passing intimacies into indelible, unretractable social marks" (1997, 110). In this way, not only are new local spaces generated through bodies performing with sites, but those paratopic topographies have the potential of being sustained over time and in relation to other local performances.

I have dealt here with only one small aspect of Eiko & Koma's acts of choreographing paratopic topographies. Numerous questions remain unanswered by this paper. For example, how do the nation-states of Japan and the United States figure into Eiko & Koma's choreography? How do race, gender, and identity(ies) impact paratopic topographies? How does access (or lack thereof) to global mobility affect corporeal topographies, and what in turn is the effect on choreography? How do local audiences read multiply local choreographies? How does the economic imperative of touring, which almost becomes an enforced nomadism, impact the choreography of topography? I will address these issues in my larger dissertation project.

For today, however, I want to conclude with the idea that Eiko & Koma's work is a sustained itinerary of choreographic topographies, in which each stop is significant not only for the space of local paratopia created by the movement, but also for how it suggests the next stop, which itself leads to the next, and on and on. The itinerary often loops back on itself, reinforcing the spaces previously created. The cumulative effect of this choreography, what dance critic Marcia B. Siegel calls Eiko & Koma's lifetime piece[4], is the generation of a paratopic topographies in particular locations and across time, in which specific bodies and sites find points of connection from which to collectively and deliciously move.



**Notes**

[1] Floating driftwood sculpture created by Judd Weisberg.
[2] "Topography." *New Oxford American Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 2005.
[3] My version is downloaded from the Internet, and has no standard pagination. Page numbers are from my personal print out.
[4] Siegel, Marcia B. Telephone interview. July 18, 2008.

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# *The New Pedestrian* – Transforming Placeless-ness into Home-Place Through Street Performance

*The New Pedestrian* is a social experiment in dance as well as a personal antidote to alienation and placeless-ness I felt living in Salt Lake City, Utah. In an attempt to feel 'at home' I directed a dance-based "place" development project. Place is an intersection of human encounter and physical landscape. The main premise of the project, *The New Pedestrian*, was to engage with the city and its citizens through a walking performance. Two important intensions were the ritual of returning to the walk on a monthly basis and the intervention of interactive and improvisational dance in the streets.

When dance becomes part of the city sidewalks and meeting spaces, the distant city landscape becomes a part of the "field of care" and meaningful experience.[1] The relationships, memory, and personal growth derived from this visceral experience creates a familiarity with other sides of myself and specific parts of the Mormon Main Street Plaza or the layers of ink, paint, and embedded story along the walls of city buildings. The dancers' behavior and perception describes the significant changes in the participants' relationship to Salt Lake City (including myself). As Aristotle proclaimed in his theory of perception, mimesis transforms people from passive recipients to active participants. Through mimesis in performance, personal experience, and group interviews I discuss how the *New Pedestrian* embeds persons into place and place into person. Crossing boundaries of prescribed behavior in the city, personal borders of engagement, and putting dance in the streets this process transformed the city into a home-place.

## Contours of the Process and Structure of *The New Pedestrian*

Based on stories from the city residents, the Mormon Church security, and press surrounding Salt Lake development projects, I designated nine sites in the downtown. With the original eleven cocreators[2] I facilitated the choreography of a group walk. Each member created a "walk" including one stop, one gaze that changes direction or facing, and one lean into a fall that changes level. We threaded them together into one phrase, which we used to travel along the route from site to site. Then I identified one significant attribute for each site. Next we designed an improvisational score for each site as follows:

1. "Encounter with Difference," at the cultural landmark site: Main Street Plaza. In two groups participants cross and encounter each other noticing and negotiating differences in their approach and body language.
2. "Sculpting," at a site of entertainment: Broadway Cinema. Dancers partner and sculpt one other into still shapes. This sculpting continues until there is one person left. The last performer walks around to witness the sculpted bodies until "The Guide" (the New Pedestrian who carries a lantern and keeps time at each site) yells, "Can't you see me?" Then all the sculptures crumble slowly.
3. "Re-Enact," at the historical site: Salt Lake Tribune newspaper press. Dancers re-enact the daily ritual when newspaper press workers on their coffee break interacted with bar-hoppers in the early morning.
4. "Scatter–Gather," at a public meeting site: Salt Lake Public Library. The group scatters out (into the courtyard) and then gathers with "The Guide" as the point person. "The Guide" calls the duration of time for each scatter and gather. The first three scatter-gather pulses happen as quickly as possibly. Then, "The Guide" calls out two numbers like, "3, 7," indicating 3 seconds to scatter and 7 seconds to gather.
5. "Looking for the Lost" at an area where city construction has wiped out an existing structure or neighborhood: the lost China Town at Plum Alley. The group looks in all the corners, openings, cracks, windows, or

containers. Then they use phrasing such as, "Is this it?" "Here!" "This is it."

6. "Set and Re-Set," on the local public transportation: TRAX. All dancers get on the TRAX train and find a place to stand or sit. The group moves one by one on their own time replacing one another and then replacing others who leave the train.
7. "Block and Flow," at the Gallivan Center's Water Wall: a dry streambed that has been installed under a stone wall engraved with a poem about water. Most of the dancers flow like liquid around the wall and down the streambed while two others block the water (of dancers), pulling them out and obstructing them.
8. "Framing Art," in Michael Phelps Gallery. All performers mimic art buyers and viewers in the gallery, remaining low on the ground. The act transforms crumbs, light sockets, and loops in the carpet into art. The framing of a painting, critiquing art, and potentially "buying" art from the gallery owner are some of the behaviors performed.
9. "Bridge and Obstruct," at a site of controversial development: proposed Sky Bridge on Main Street. All dancers connect and find different points of view to hold in stillness. Staying connected they continue to change levels and find new views.

*The New Pedestrian*, was deliberately structured to encourage three main methods for relationship: play, perceptual awareness, and response. One of the most playful aspects was a series of "If/Then" scenarios. This game encouraged highly sensitive and direct response in unison, and illuminated what was happening in the city. While performing The New Pedestrians reacted with the following:

- *If* we see people on cell-phones, *then* we gestured to our ears to listen.
- *If* we see people with headphones on, *then* we covered our ears or any other people's ears to block out sound.
- *If* we see people reading, *then* we gestured to open and close a book.
- *If* we see people dog walking, *then* we wiggled our tails.
- *If* people call out, honk, or wave, *then* we slowly waved back.
- *If* we hear sirens, *then* we laid on one side of the sidewalk backside down.

## Transforming City Space

*The New Pedestrian* "manipulated expectations" in the productive city spaces by sculpting random people and responding to people on their cell phones with a gesture to the ear.[3] All of the movement came from the dancers response to the ordinary, which infused daily activity with aesthetic and relational value (rather than being a mechanical task). The conventional behavior of a city, such as sitting while riding the TRAX train contends with the function of the site. However, by dancing and mimicking the stance, posture, or behavior of people on the train, the performers embody these codes while simultaneously expanding them.

*The New Pedestrian* invited imagination and interaction in an otherwise serious and business-oriented space. Salt Lake City has a particularly contained feeling, where people are not as visible on the sidewalks as are the fences, grid structure, and cement slabs. Core participants Aniko Safron and Stella described how their experience of the physical spaces through *The New Pedestrian* transformed their perception and connection to Salt Lake City. The closeness and visceral encounter with the city through touch revealed the traces of humanity and temporality of human life. The layers of chipped paint, the marks left by vehicles that scraped buildings or sidewalks, and the people who made those traces all deteriorate. Furthermore, this also exaggerated the transitional state of city construction. The experience of change Stella shared was relative to how he had previously only engaged with the downtown from inside his car, removed from the immediate touch and details of the topography. He exclaimed, "I saw things I never knew were there – buildings and businesses – [I] saw angles of architecture against the sky I never would have seen or appreciated otherwise."[4] He also spoke extensively about the performative element opening up and developing parts of his personality that he did not have the opportunity to know before. As a result of these experiences, Stella confirmed, "I feel more embedded in the place than before because I've had . . . many experiences with the place."[5]

The seasonal shifts we experienced varied, from cold dark nights to dripping summer sweats, but the route remained the same. Humanistic Geographer Edmunds Bunske describes the intersection of imagination and consciousness in what he terms, "geographic sensibilities: using the senses, the emotions, and the intellect in forming relationships to places and landscape we inhabit."[6] The proprioceptive awareness, unique to dance performance, added depth to my 'geographic sensibilities' and by extension, enhanced my memory of the city. Through changing interpersonal and physical topography The New Pedestrians developed intimate and lasting 'geographic sensibilities.' While some characteristics, such as the concrete structures, mostly remain the same, a unique intersection of energy, weather, human emotions, power-relations, and movement improvisation feed *The New Pedestrian,* like a well-balanced living system. This balance created comfort and familiarity, and yet the unknown circumstances of the city street and playing the edge between responding to one's authentic experience verses meeting spectator expectations, made this "home" unique. It was both stable and unstable.

Many of The New Pedestrians agreed that the playfulness reminded them of the childhood experience of home. The costume and the role of performer provided a metaphoric mask to hide behind. Terri Martin said the city became a "playground for engagement and interaction I normally wouldn't imagine."[7] She notes how the performance transformed the nature of the city and her self into a more playful character:

> I don't buy into the normal rules of behavior. Instead [I] play off [those codes] and what others are doing. A freedom [is] created by stepping outside these normal agreements of how to interpret these places and how to behave in them. It transformed places and the [overall] downtown for me.[8]

Here Martin described the role of mimesis in *The New Pedestrian*. Acknowledging, relating with, and then reshaping aesthetic and behavioral codes (which are all mimetic devises) are a part of the playful character of this project.

The city space was no longer only used to accomplish an errand or make a meeting with one's boss. Instead it was a place to act different, to imagine, and to play. When performing throughout the downtown, *The New Pedestrian* only communicated through movement. There was permission to refrain from speaking, to connect and interact by expanding one's inner landscape through a widening of the chest and arms. It was also an invitation to notice what else, animate and inanimate, shares the space and time with one – be it a crushed can or an enthusiastic high-five from a stranger. Jessica Womack, described the value of place in her experience, which brought a heightened awareness to her "immediate impact," and "how place and people reflect one another."[9]

After performing for several months, *The New Pedestrians* identified distinct behaviors for particular places. Gaining knowledge, such as the public library courtyard and TRAX light-rail hosts rebellious and boisterous youth culture, created personal associations with the sites. I began to identify with certain areas of Salt Lake. I acquired feelings of ownership and closeness with the city and the participants. As many New Pedestrians agreed, the otherwise serious, business and task-oriented space became a playground in which we had permission to explore and push the norm. Van Moorleghem declared:

> If this project had a measure of success, I believe 'audience' participation would be it. I loved it when our play freed other people to play . . . Whether it was direct interaction or their own play . . . I felt that this project was working. As if this project were meant to aid others in finding a freedom or comfort level to be able to 'own' their city by playing in their public spaces and using these public spaces for their own purposes.[10]

The interactions that occurred between participants as well as with the architectural elements wove The New Pedestrians into the topography of Salt Lake. For example, after I scattered across the Library's public plaza by rolling and crouching up, over, and around the crescent stairs, my body learned the terrain as if it where my own backyard. I felt my muscle memory activate and I was reassured with an ease that I belonged with those contours and surface textures of the plaza as well as a part of the group with whom I performed. This site became a part of me. The 'manipulated' art experience is relational, vivid and full. The performance and creation of *The New Pedestrian* has revealed parts of my self, and

over time, I have developed a personal history and attachment to performance sites and the 'world' in which the choreography existed. *The New Pedestrian* created an alternative public and place identity. It houses the participants in a special group space where feel they belong and can depend on each other. Who is included or excluded in *The New Pedestrian*, and how does this denote home?

## "Returning" Home in the Context of *The New Pedestrian*

As many of the participants have expressed, the aspect of returning transforms any landscape into a 'home.' One of the original New Pedestrians, Terri Martin said, "Something about having a routine or route and retraveling it makes a place become home . . . [returning to the route] through all the [different] seasons provides a sense of ownership."[11] What we call home denotes a place that is familiar, that one can dwell in and rely on, that one knows well enough to figuratively own.

The Humanistic Geographer, Yi-Fu Tuan states:

> Back to roots is back to one's homeplace, where group belongingness matters more than an individual's sense of whom he or she is. Much of the yearning for roots in the modern and post-modern world is, thus, not so much a yearning for a greater sense of self as a yearning to numb one's troubled self-awareness in group identity.[12]

I feel *The New Pedestrian* not only cultivated a sense of long term relationship, but also a practice of collective identity. It provided me with the group connection as well as the trust that we will return together.

Tuan addresses the dichotomy of human desire for both journey and to be rooted. For example, Tuan claims the childhood home is "not only a familiar and nurturing place, it is also a space that invites exploration,"[13] and the collective voice of *The New Pedestrian* echoes how the performative role invites exploration and play away from social norms.

## Conclusion: Dance as a Place-Making Devise

Social interaction is as much a key component to creating a sense of place as touching and responding to the cracks and corners of the buildings and the pathways around them. Through this combination of improvised performance and routine, and through the movement vocabulary and the monthly re-occurrence, *The New Pedestrian* gained efficacy as a place-making devise.

The collaborative process and improvisational structure empowered The New Pedestrians with personal choice during the performances. The freedom to improvise in combination with the routine of the choreographed movement and the monthly occurrence on our repeated route during *The New Pedestrian* helps to understand its successful place-making and community identity formation. It has consistency and room for change. Thus, the performers were personally invested and responsible for the way the performances interfaced with the public and infused the city. The dynamic interplay of leadership facilitated growth on a personal and group level. Matthew Stella, like most of the New Pedestrians (myself included), came into deeper relationship with the city and themselves. As one of the original performers/creators, Hillary Van Moorleghem also declared, "This project created a platform where individuals can come together in a group to have a personal and community experience around Salt Lake"[14]

Community-development principles were at the heart of *The New Pedestrian* project. With its mixed group of performers and collaborative methodology, it also included a diverse array of sites. One of the main reasons *The New Pedestrian* was recognized by local and international press and continued by participants when I moved from Salt Lake in June, was due to its asset-based approach. The project grew from the ground up and mobilized the existing strengths of the community (both in the city and the performance group) and the physical environment of Salt Lake City. For example, Salt Lake City's wide sidewalks provided visible and organized space for us to dance in. Accordingly, *The New Pedestrian* capitalized on resources that the city offered and engaged people who were already present because of them, such as the gallery stroll or public transportation. We illuminated and exaggerated those resources. The city became an environment where we experimented with community interaction and expression; a laboratory through which relationships developed new facets and depth. The public and the dancers invigorated the city and in turn the city reinvigorated them.

The privatization of the Main Street in 1999 changed the public use of this part of the city for Salt Lake citizens and colored our experience while performing. The Church of Latter-Day Saints purchased a one-block segment of Main Street, the heart of the city, for $8.1 million. This is where we began our performance each month. We knew we could not perform on the grounds, and we were approached by security who insisted we not walk through the plaza wearing our costumes (white tyvek coveralls). This privatization adds a severe layer of civilian control and absence of public presence and personality.

Several of the performers voiced feelings of fear and alienation from the systematic divide in the community due to the stratification between Mormon and Non-Mormon political lines. This tends to make the Salt Lake community feel bipartisan. For example, Womack states:

> As we make our way through Temple Square, we act according to their rules. I feel as if the privatization of sidewalks is an atrocity to our community. If businesses and churches have the right to monitor sidewalks, pedestrians become even more marginalized. . . . Pedestrians are a vital part of the urban community, making the streets a meeting place.[15]

Postperformance discussions became an integral part of the project. We processed experiences and assumptions about public interactions as well as ethical dilemmas that arose. It was thrilling to perform in the streets, but some people reacted hostile. For example, one man chose to walk directly into me while I was dancing on the sidewalk, hitting me in the chest with his briefcase. In other instances, the public followed us along our two-hour route engaging in the sites of the city in a new way by dancing with us and viewing the city through our performance. By performing in the streets, we created opportunities for the viewer and the performers alike to relate more than the passively seated spectator in the theater space would. Our dialogues in performance and discussion unveiled boundaries of social tolerance and scratched away at acceptable behavior. This helped to embrace diverse values as well as some common umbrella parameters within the group.

As Lucy Lippard (1997) writes about "place-specific art," *The New Pedestrian* is also "made by [an] artist within [his/her] own places or with the people who live in the scrutinized place, connecting with the history and the environment."[16] She continues to explain, "This would be art that reveals new depths of a place to engage the viewer or inhabitant, rather than abstracting that place into generalizations that apply just as well to any other place."[17] By activating emotional and psychological bonds to place, in the private and public projects, the dancers engaged the viewer with the character of the place.

## Home-Place

Home is a seminal example of where we seek belonging and familiarity, and a place where humans share formative experiences. I also consider home as a place for imagination and daydreaming. According to Bachelard and Bunkse (2004), the essential nature of a home provides 'protected intimacy,' a safe space for meaningful associations and imagination. The openness to imagine is crucial to my dance work. The social and physical relationships to place I discovered and described in my work created emotional bonds and associations that I identify with on a personal level, and on a cultural level my work created an ability to re-image the social conventions and dilemmas of time and space.

In the article, "Nomadic Creations, Mobile Constructions and Willful Connections," Alix de Morant (2008) writes about how artists are the new map makers – putting themselves and the physical locations where they create performances on the map. Morant states, "that the nomadic arts, these arts of forecasting and connection, are inasmuch signs of an exploratory phase, where art is looking to inaugurate spaces and dimensions other than the ones that have been reserved for it up until now."[18] He relates this art to be like "a trajectory so as to branch out ones extension into the virtual."[19] *The New Pedestrian* was a remedy to feel permanent and important for a moment; and yet, I want to transmit deep perception and connection that changes the order of society.

I turn to Tuan to conclude. In *Place, Art, and Self* Tuan writes about how the development of the self creates isolation and that the journey of life is not only what educates us, but keeps us longing to be elsewhere. He differentiates, "Geography is

mostly about how we strive to feel at home on Earth, rooted in place; yet . . . the arts, too, can be a home, or make us feel more at home."[20] However, Tuan said:

> Even more than geographical places, [art has] the power to disturb or exalt, and so, like the great teachings of religion, remind us that we are fundamentally homeless. Like a plant needs roots to grow, a person needs movement and growth to have roots. As Eric Hoffer notes: only when he grows does he have roots and feel at home in the world.[21]

*The New Pedestrian* created community and vivid memories that will not fade. I believe I will recall this experience as I embark on new relationships, projects, and work. It has been something that bestowed deep reflection, and the room for play, discovery, and belonging. The community who created *The New Pedestrian* became an integral part. As a place-maker, it created a home-place through a uniquely rich and holistic body-based lived experience where growth can happen and by extension, roots deepen further into the urban topography of Salt Lake City, forging life-sustaining relationship.



Notes

[1] Cresswell, 2004. *Place a short introduction.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
[2] The original cocreators included Nancy Carter, Christopher Delporto, David Ludwig, Terri Martin, Lana Neilson, Aniko Safron, Matthew Stella, Hillary Van Moorleghem, Jessica Womack, and myself.
[3] Ellen Dissenyake, Telematic Conference Call, [2008].
[4] Stella, Matthew. 2009. Interview G by , 22 February.[5] Ibid.
[6] Bunske, Edmunds Valdemars. 2004. *Geography and the art of life*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press.
[7] Martin, Terri. 2009. Interview A by , 20 February.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Womack, Jessica. 2009. Interview C, by , 19 February.
[10] Van Moorleghem, Hillary. 2009. Interview F, by , 19 February.
[11] Martin, Terri. 2009. Interview A by , 20 February.
[12] Tuan, Yi-Fu, 1982. *Segmented worlds and self.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (40-41).
[13] Ibid.
[14] Van Moorleghem, Hillary. 2009. Interview F, by , 19 February.
[15] Womack, Jessica. 2009. Interview C, by , 19 February.
[16] Lippard, Lucy. 1997. The lure of the local, senses of place in a multicultured society. NY: The New Press (263).
[17] Ibid
[18] Morant, Alix di. 2008. Nomadic creations. In *Arts in the urban space, contemporary creation as an urban tool,* ed. Stéphane Simonin, p 12-14. Paris: Circostrada Network (14).
[19] Ibid.
[20] Tuan, Yi-Fu. 2004. *Place, art, and self.* Santa Fe, New Mexico: Center for American Place (44).
[21] Tuan, Yi-Fu. 2004. *Place, art, and self.* Santa Fe, New Mexico: Center for American Place (39).

# Dualism's Legacies: Dance and Difference in London in the 21st Century

*Jane Carr*

**0. Introduction**

Research amongst a small number of London based dance artists, has led me to contemplate how different artists negotiate the shared terrain of London in the 'noughties'. Thanks to the social changes that have brought cultures into play with one another, their dancing may be experienced as implicated in a complex web of significances that stretches far across continents and back through time. In this context, consideration of how the dances of a small number of individual artists might be understood to embody cultural values informed my recognition of how they could be perceived to articulate different positions in relation to the legacies of dualism.

**1. The view from the basement**

My point of view is one that has been informed by a particular and limited perspective of dance in London. For over fifteen years, based in an aging adult education college at just the geographic location where the riches and power of central London fade into the outer edges of two of London's poorest boroughs, I witnessed the dichotomies of urban life. Off the streets, and into a converted basement cupboard serving as office, might wander the successful but dissatisfied seeking to find a creative outlet, young adults from a local homeless project and (courtesy of the English Second Language Department), recent immigrants, some of whom longed to perform their traditional dances. At best these groups would happily coexist, at first tolerate and then sometimes learn to value each other's dance preferences. Occasionally, however divisions of some particularly toxic combination of class, ethnicity, culture, religion, age and/or gender would arise and I can vouch from first hand experience the relevance of Stuart Hall's statement that 'the capacity to live with difference is … the coming question of the twenty-first century' (Hall, 1992).

In this context I became intrigued by the relationship between people's dance preferences and their wider cultural attitudes, contemplating the contribution an under-standing of values as embodied in dance contributes to its appreciation.

**2. The non- aligned position**

Gaby Agis (Photo: Hugo Glendinning**)**

The artists who became the focus of my case studies certainly do not represent the totality of dance in London, since they share a position in terms of dance, which I consider as 'non -aligned'. (Generally speaking, their choreo-graphic work is not aligned to fulfilling the agenda of a particular established touring company or mainstream dance institution.) My premise was that such artists are likely to be interested in investigating the ways in which their physical presence might be understood and how their work relates to the norms they perceive in more 'established' dance companies or institutions[1]. It was also important that, since they perform their own choreography, they could talk from the view-point of both performer and choreographer.

The six artists are, like me, now 'Londoners' and, while none of us would be regarded as disabled, we are mature for dancers. In spite of these similarities, I was aware from the outset that some of the artists draw on different experiences from me, both in terms of dance and their wider cultural background. I envisaged these different perspectives would enrich the research, in part by raising my awareness of my own assumptions.. Thus while Gaby Agis and another female dancer have fairly similar cultural backgrounds to me and share experiences of training in what in Britain is termed 'contemporary' dance[2], two other females are informed by quite different influences: Nina

Anderson**,** who describes her ethnicity as African Caribbean, was brought up in one of the most economically deprived parts of South London and is trained in Egyptian dance; and Sushma Mehta, who describes her ethnicity as Indian, is trained in Kathak. Of the male artists (both of whom chose to remain anonymous) one, who describes himself as black British, was brought up mainly in the north of England and draws on a fusion of dance forms rooted in the freestyle jazz he learned dancing in clubs. The other artist, who describes his ethnicity as 'Hispanic', was raised in the Bronx and is fluent in what might be called alternative dance and somatic practices.

Sushma Mehta (Photo: www.shamaadance.co.uk)

For these 'non-aligned artists', working in some ways at a critical distance from established dance companies, the different ways in which their dance negotiates bodily significance is an important aspect of their choreographic style. All can be understood as in some ways continually questioning, sometimes resisting, current norms of bodily image, whether one considers the women's presentations of the female figure, Artist D's explorations of awkwardness or Artist B' s determination not to lose the connection between his dance and what he sees as the 'real' life experiences of black British people[3]. This doesn't mean, however, that this is all there is to appreciating their work since the audience's attention can also be very much focused on the dancing 'for itself'. As my research progressed I recognised that what had drawn me to the artists I approached is a commitment to dance as a communicative interaction within society, without reducing their dancing to only signifying a concern with the social. I came to appreciate how skilled they are at playing between an understanding of how their dance might 'read' and their phenomenological experience of performance**.** They explore that territory between dualisms that is important to developments in more academic considerations of human existence, such as the anthropologist Thomas Czordas (1994) posits in his discussion of embodiment.

**3. Embodiment**

This term, 'embodiment', itself raises issues that reveal the different conceptions of body and mind that permeate approaches to dance. I soon found out that it is one thing to consider dance as embodying cultural values, and another to account theoretically for how this can be the case. In very general terms the problem is that 'embodiment' might refer to a scientist's view of the physical aspects of human brain, nerves, muscles, perceptual systems etc responding interactively with the environment, or to a sociological approach to a culturally constructed body upon which social discourses are inscribed, or to the intentional and creative act by which a dancer brings their sense of personal agency to their dancing. The first approach appears to mesh well with a view of the body:mind relationship which emphasizes the observable physical interaction of aspects of the brain with other parts of the body, but as Anna Pakes (2006) has pointed out, perhaps leaves little space for the significance of felt experience or intention; the second seems in danger of subordinating bodies to ideas; and the third to seek that interaction between consciousness and physical action that has been a problem for philosophy ever since Descartes' 'cogito ergo sum' (1968/1637p. 55).

By drawing upon explorations of embodiment and bodily being in anthropology, existential phenomenology, philosophical aesthetics and sociology,[4] I arrived at a position which might be summarised thus: bringing the phenomenological experience of dance performance into play with a poststructuralist understanding of the shifting sands upon which cultural significances are continuously constructed, dissolved and reconstituted, may allow for an approach to dance that marries an experiential sense of communication with recognition of the instability of the signifiers dance creates[5]**.** In this context, what is perceived as embodied in dance is located within the play between real: imaginary, flesh: culture, dependent on a perception that is in itself interpretative (or 'seeing as' in the Wittgenstein

sense[6]). This falls short of making claims for the ontological status of what is understood as embodied, but by virtue of a person's enmeshment in a particular social environment, their acts are viewed as reciprocally related to the experience of others and it is this that grounds understanding of what is embodied. Hence, how movement skills and styles are displayed within dance can be interpreted as embodying cultural attitudes.[7]

**4. Articulating the body: mind relationship**

As I reflected more deeply on how values are embodied in dance, it struck me how dance articulates different attitudes to the relationship between body: mind itself. Indeed at present, the very popularity of the term 'embodiment' seems to reveal common concerns that shape much current dance practice in London in which articulating a body: mind connectivity has become very important.

Often, so called 'alternative' dance practices challenge what is seen as an overly separatist view of body and mind that is viewed as informing traditional western approaches to dance technique, especially ballet. What, in the American dancer and writer Sondra Horton Fraleigh's (1987, p. 9) terms, is an 'instrumental' attitude to the body, suggests not only a distinction between body and mind, but that the former is subservient to the latter. It is all too easy to relate this to an understanding of the subjugated body within a patriarchal culture informed by Christian traditions. Not surprisingly then the challenge to the seeming dominance of mind over body was important to many female pioneers of Modern dance, to the more overtly feminist practitioners who came after them and to those who have more broadly challenged the established western traditions from the 1960's onwards. While philosophically speaking rationalism and positivism are distinct from Cartesian dualism, it is often the body's subservience to the rational world of formal geometry, or to the objective mechanics of positivism, that are criticized by those dance artists who seek to challenge the dominance of the mind over things bodily[8]. In considering ballet, while what the (second phase) twentieth century feminists focused their criticism on was the idealization of the ballerina's body as the object of the male gaze, we might also consider that it was the enmeshment of the body within rationalist ideals that fueled the norms of classical technique. Interwoven with this, a positivist approach to the body as natural object must also have informed many a training manual, so that where scientific methods are used to achieve bodily ideals linked to concerns with form, the dancer may be thought of as enmeshed in a complex of both positivist and rationalist traditions. Further this is set in creative tension with the desire for self expression that may be viewed as the product of an emphasis on individualism, influencing both the Romantic development of ballet and the reaction of Modern dance against it.

**5. Nature: culture**

While large sections of the dance population in London continue to pursue traditional 'balletic' ideals, in what might be termed the main-stream of British contemporary dance, the dancer may be thought of as embodying a similar layering of traces of different attitudes to bodily being. Dancers may be called upon to make shapes with the formal clarity of any ballet dancer, be trained using scientific principles to achieve optimum mechanical efficiency in their movement, and in doing so be required to present an 'organic quality'. Young, fit and above all slim, their images may also be designed to contribute to a company profile that has to compete in an increasingly global and diverse market place for audiences at a time when from ballet to breakin', virtuosic skills, technological innovation and the sheer sex appeal of dancers increases from one season to the next, and variety (cultural or otherwise) seems to sell tickets[9]. In such a context it is possible to see such dancers as embodying the contradictions of contemporary British life in which the public sector is dominated by measures and targets aimed towards the attainment of predetermined social ideals for a population that lusts for the latest products of imported fashion and technology - whilst at the same time longing for a more 'natural', eco friendly life style.


Aya Jane Saotome (Photo: Irven Lewis)

In contrast, in what is called the 'Independent' sector of the British contemporary dance scene, there may be found more emphasis on a form of bodily sensitivity, or connectivity, which often draws on mid-twentieth century American dance experiments that led to what are now labeled as contact improvisation and release based techniques. Study of these dance forms is often reinforced by somatic practices such as Body Mind Centring©, Feldenkreis or Alexander, and may be experienced as both a reaction to the dualist legacies of the past, and the values of higher – faster - longer that can seem to dominate in a global dance market. Here it seems that issues of the body: mind relationship have become interwoven with that of another dualism nature: culture**.** For example, workshops offered through Independent Dance in Body Mind Centring © seemed to offer a practice of unpicking culturally learned movement patterns to reconnect with what are conceived as the primitive motor patterns that underlie them.[10]

Whether or not it is the case that at some basic level there are shared 'natural' motor patterns to human movement, in dance motility is culturally ensnared. It seems likely that at least part of what is perceived as 'organic' depends on the dancer being able, in some way, to draw on those bodily movements that in a particular culture are not usually thought of as being brought under conscious control. Manifestations of the 'natural' or 'organic' in western theatre dance have varied from Noverre[11] to Fokine, from Duncan to the BMC© inspired dance explorations I witnessed[12]. Perhaps, it is in the particular play between conscious and subconscious that the distinctions between different manifestations of the 'natural' are embodied in dance. How this second dualism is approached might then be seen as embodied within some theatre dance in the tension between recognisable, culturally conditioned patterns and movement that appears to draw on what is regarded as an 'organic' source.

A salutary reminder of the cultural attitudes that shape understanding of the 'natural' is the attitude of the dancer Nina Anderson to some alternative dance practices including Gaby Agis' Skinner Releasing classes. Intellectually and experientially informed of the primitivist assumptions the west (historically at least) have made about black bodies and, conversely, perhaps not as inculcated with a consciousness of 'lack 'in relation to the 'natural', this British born artist of African Caribbean parentage seemed to me to enjoy a slightly ironic attitude to the earnestness with which her white, liberally and well educated counterparts attempted to regain a sense of the (lost) 'natural'.


Nina Anderson (Photo: Morley College)

Similarly, I noticed that while many of his counterparts in contemporary dance were busily trying to explore their 'natural' motivation to move, Artist B was frustrated that contemporary dance audiences did not always recognise the sophisticated level of training and thinking informing his work. These experiences may not be universal amongst dancers from ethnic minorities; indeed, Artist D excels in alternative body practices, using them not only in performance but also drawing on them in his teaching. However, that he is recognisably one of a limited number, in London, of artists from ethnic minorities in this field perhaps indicates that it may be important to

consider the extent to which some current British alternative contemporary dance practices embody particular concerns that may emanate from a specific cultural heritage. Certainly when I look back at how, in my teens, I used to dance I wonder whether in practicing a syllabus exercise for pirouettes in quarters and halves I imbibed a rather British (even English) attitude to the analysis of dance steps and the control of the body. For me, as I am sure with many of my contemporaries, it was very important to find a different way to experience bodily being. Hence although the body awareness techniques many of my generation of British dancers explored may have derived from different continents, perhaps what we sought in them was shaped by a particular kind of British experience. And, given the current diversity of British communities, it is important now to consider that British people's approaches to bodily being may be informed by very different cultural attitudes to those I grew up with.

This does not ignore the view that a concern with the retrieval of evolutionary and/or developmental movement patterns may reflect a desire to find structures that are shared across cultural differences. However, there still may be a primitivist assumption that it is white, middle class, well educated dancers who have to work harder at the retrieval of the 'natural' that, until quite recently, seems to have inhibited cross cultural exploration of alternative somatic based dance practices. So while in London, there are any number of fusions of contemporary dance with Asian or African dance forms, jazz and street dance and so on, it has been rare to see these artists in say a Skinner releasing or Feldenkrais class. Although a few case studies hardly makes for conclusive evidence, it did also seem to me noticeable how much more those dancers who drew on forms other than contemporary dance thought about how to create dances that could be significant for audiences with different cultural backgrounds to themselves. This may just be the result of the particular intercultural dynamics of my research, but it is worth considering whether in some British contemporary dance practices there is a danger of becoming so focused on challenging body: mind dualism that this inhibits the challenge to other dualisms, thus limiting the exploration of self: other across difference.

**6. The future**

All this may be about to change**.** In London the so called 'alternative' styles have now informed the release based training at mainstream conservatoires for contemporary dance such as Laban and the Place. So, as the social changes in Britain produce a new generation of young people, some of them are coming into contact with these new traditions without seeing them as alternatives to established contemporary dance practices. Since hybrid explorations which draw on contemporary dance alongside Kathak, Bharata Natyam and Africanist dance have already proved successful[13], perhaps more instances similar to a recent event at Independent Dance mixing breaking, capoeira and contact improvisation are to be expected.[14]

Thinking about the future, I think it is important to recognise values that are shared by the artists who contributed to the research. Integral to these is a belief in performance as a dynamic interaction in which integrity is intrinsically important. Further research would be needed to see whether this understanding of integrity in the moment of performative interaction is more widely understood and, or, valued. However, it could be argued that currently, for many people living in London, the experience of increasing diversity, the global separation of families and communities, changes to established rules of behaviour, the prioritising of digital above face to face communication, a disenchantment with political 'spin' and more recently recognition of a disjuncture between tangible and monetary values, may all contribute to a fraught experience of the relationship between self and other. In such a context, it would not be surprising to find some people prioritising the potential of an art form to offer a sense of 'honest' engagement with others. Not-withstanding the difficulties of understanding dances that draws on traditions different to my own, what is interesting to contemplate is how within a fragmented, yet interconnected, culture of theatre dance, the experience of living and working in twenty first century London might engender shared values that seem to emerge across more obvious cultural differences. As a new generation of dance artists emerge in this landscape it will be interesting to see how they negotiate dualism's legacies and in particular chart that fraught terrain between self and other.

avantgarde dance (Photo: Irven Lewis)

## Notes

[1] These drew on research by Gaye Morris (2001, 54), Judith Lynn Hanna (1979, 227) and performer and feminist scholar Ann Cooper Albright (1997) and my own observations.

[2] For some discussions of this term (and its problems) see Preston-Dunlop, V. (1981). *Dance Words*, Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, p.18: Nicholas, L. (2004) Dancing in the margins? British modern dance in the 1940s and 1950s. In Carter, A. (ed.) *Rethinking dance history*. London: Routledge, p.27: Grau, A. (1998) Myths of Origin. In A. Carter (Ed.) *The Routledge dance studies reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 197 – 202.

[3] Further discussion of these artists' work can be found in my PhD thesis at www.daisyworld.org.uk

[4] In particular in the work of the cultural and psychological anthropologist Thomas Czordas (1994), the philosophical aesthetician Paul Crowther (1993), the existential phenomenologist Merleau Ponty (1962/1945; 1972/1961) and the sociologist Charles Varela (1995).

[5] I later recognized similarities with how Preston- Dunlop (2002) had developed a choreological approach to dance drawing on the concept of binocular vision.

[6] See Wittgenstein (2001/1947-49 pp165-194) for discussion of the recognition of 'seeing as'.

[7] In considering how, for the dance artist, a certain amount of conscious agency is possible in this arena, the sociologist Bourdieu's (1984/1979) concepts of habitus and field may be useful. In the act of dancing a dancer may make conscious decisions even though these are filtered through levels of consciousness of which they are less aware and which may carry shared cultural values. It is these latter that may sometimes be difficult to articulate for both dancers and audiences, since they may only be tacitly aware of them.

[8] According to the dancer and educator Kirsty Alexander, 'deeper kinaesthetic experience of movement' is set in opposition to 'the philosophy of "I think therefore I am" and the mind/body split it implies' (Alexander, n.d.). Skinner releasing, is portrayed as using images with which the student is encouraged to 'merge', experiencing them 'at a level just beyond our conscious control' so 'they become another reality'.

[9] See for example the variety of dance currently on offer at Sadlers Wells compared with the seasons before it closed for renovation.

[10] Reading a manual to support workshops in this tech-nique (Allison, Bainbridge Cohen and White, 1984, 3) I found the following statements: *As we recapitulate the inherited or evolved development movement patterns, we experience with clarity our own personal development process and our deviations or inhibitions of the natural (inherited) process.* And: *Brain structures near the base represent an early ascent on the scale of evolution. Parts of the brain stem are responsible for eliciting stereotyped patterns of motion, e.g. swimming, and can be elicited as primitive reflex patterns in man.*

[11] The interest in more natural expression also relates to what Munroe Beardsley 1975[1966] saw as conflict between empirical and rationalist approaches to art within Enlightenment aesthetics: Rationalists (viewing reason as the reliable source of human knowledge) were concerned with the given (apriori) rules for art deduced though reasoning; Empiricists concerned with drawing from experience to establish knowledge (aposteriori) about the nature of the experience of aesthetic enjoyment and the psychological genesis of artistic creation.

[12] K. J. Holmes' summer 2006 workshop presented by Independent Dance

[13] See for example Akram Khan, Shobana Jeyasing, Bawren Tavaziva and Jonzi D.

[14] A multi-disciplinary improvisation performance presented at Siobahn Davies Dance Studios by Independent Dance that included breaking, capoeira and contemporary contact improvisation, with dance artists including Katie P, Will Thorburn, Erez Odiera and Annie Lok.

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# A Path Towards Changing Space

*Susan Cash*

Throughout the past ten months I have been involved in documenting the process of one of my works that I have been choreographing in both Canada and Guatemala. I'm exploring a variety of aspects within this work and will illustrate in this paper the results and impact of a few of those discoveries so far.

The piece is called *Path* in English and *Senderos* in Spanish. I was interested in working with dancers in the sense that they would contribute movement vocabulary inspired from a certain source. In this case I wanted to explore traveling, personal journey and the intersection of paths that cross. I wanted to experiment by bringing these stories to perform them in different locations and investigate how this would impact on the movement, stories and space.

Each of the dancers has a story and yet they dance their stories together and so there are connections between the stories in the space whether we as movers and creators of movement know it or not. By the same token, it seems to me that "space" is a collaborator too and contributes to the story of the movers, at the same time as it transforms itself towards a diverse identity because of the movers within it, be it studio, theatre, outdoors or a public space.

I call these dances of adaptability to any space, "moving-site performance works." In fact I usually pick a space that is under-used, neglected or seen to only serve one purpose. With dance in these kinds of spaces, I find suddenly the geography can have vivacity, edge or fulfill a more substantial three dimensional or holistic purpose. Not only is the space transformed but the people who chance to walk past can not avoid a shift of sensibility that is significant and whether they stop to watch or hurry past, it has a long-term impact on the perspective of this landscape and on the humans who interact with it.

My work in this area explores the question; What makes space *place?* I observe how we as the general public interact and traverse our topographies through typical every day sites. I observe in some populations how the use of mobile hand held devises has changed the way we use our senses in space and experiment in *Path* with what these technologies bring to bear on changing space or making locales of identity. How do nature and technology interact and co-habit?

At the same time as I am engaged in this choreographic process I am reading a number of books on space and place and one book in particular "non-places introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity" by Marc Augé strikes a cord with my work at this time and serves to support my inquiry into the subject matter I find myself involved.

Supermodernity is described as the excessiveness of time, space and information. The author says, "The world of supermodernity does not exactly match the one in which we believe we live, for we live in a world that we have not yet learned to look at. We have to relearn to think about space."[1] Non-places he argues are the places we continually find ourselves in like a train, airport or mall and they shift our perception of place and change our idea of history and space.

I grew up in an age where if you walked down a corridor with a lot of people then you would stick to the right. You would try to keep pace on the subway platform with the general pace of the rest of the patrons. You would hold the door for the next person to go through no matter how long it took them to pass through. If you sat on a bench for two you would shift over to make room for a second person.

When I do my work in public spaces I have trained myself to watch the audience for clues for awareness, interaction and engagement. I began to realize that our ways of seeing had shifted and there were new signs. For instant we performed *Path* in Toronto around a fountain outside in a high traffic university campus area. There were many students around involved in their own activity or in groups. I observed one group very close to the dancers that did not appear to be interested at all with the dance that was going on

and began to do some break dancing and get very boisterous.[2]

After the dance was finished they asked me if it was the same group that had performed *Path* in the theatre the week before. After my affirmation they went on and on about how great the dance is and how awesome the dancers are and even expressed their outstanding abilities in the present setting. Here they had not appeared to be interested at all much less see what was going on in such detail but on some level they were influenced to break into their own physicality at that moment.

So I am quite struck with how space can be charged by the people in it and the relationships that are instigated that serve to highlight the spontaneity of space, even though (certainly in public spaces), we are largely individuals moving through often non-places.

This choreographic work utilizes different kinds of processes to come to a substantial ownership by the dancers in the work. They made a solo dance that represented to them a path or senderos and then they wrote text and picked music that related to their journey. In the case of the Toronto group they also did paintings that related to path. And in many ways the work became a galvanizing emblem at the same time as something that was taking them on their way to new and different territory.

When Augé speaks about excessive time in his book I think it reflects how many of us listen to music and watch TV or play the radio today, in short, fast bites changing constantly. The way of composing the choreography for both the works in Toronto and Guatemala have this fast paced realization that not only represents the human behavior but the time and feeling of this age of supermodernity. And maybe as I delve further into this subject matter I may find that I am trying to make in my choreography places where moments of synergy happen between people, technology and space that could identify that non-place as one of having a collective historical meaning if only for a moment in time.

Here are some photographs of moments from the work of the Toronto group that illustrate the convergence of individuals creating a whole (as in reaching past their singular Individuation) to form themselves with space. I am particularly interested in looking at the general public's contribution to the movement in space and how that serves to highlight space in different ways. I am interested also in looking at the juxtaposition of the feel of space, with and without movement.[3]

It is intriguing to see the space through the eyes of a camera on the floor following the movers and then to see the same space from a different angle, in this case, from above the action.

Figure 1 and 1A: York Dance Ensemble, Vari Hall, York University, Canada, 2009. Filmed by Alexandra Thompson and Sky Fairchild-Waller.

We knew there were lines on the floor but the perspective from above really highlights this element in the space with the movers.

Even though these are two very individual solos, from this perspective they have a lot to do with each other.

Figure 2: York Dance Ensemble, Vari Hall, York University, Canada, 2009. Filmed by Alexandra Thompson.

Pay particular attention to the pulling of space between the dancer and the person with the roller briefcase.

Figure 3: York Dance Ensemble, Vari Hall, York University, Canada, 2009. Filmed by Alexandra Thompson.

Now check out this trio where one is on his cell phone and how the different perspectives can tell you something more of what is going on in the space.

Figure 4 and 4A: York Dance Ensemble, Vari Hall, York University, Canada, 2009. Filmed by Alexandra Thompson and Sky Fairchild-Waller.

When the camera is in the middle of the action the space feels quite lively.

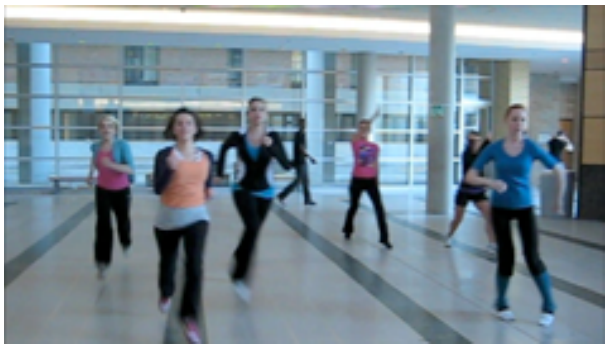

Figure 5: York Dance Ensemble, Vari Hall, York University, Canada, 2009. Filmed by Alexandra Thompson.

It is hard to be certain as to who are the dancers and who is the general public here.

Figure 6: York Dance Ensemble, Vari Hall, York University, Canada, 2009. Filmed by Sky Fairchild-Waller.

I am very drawn to the unconscious audience participation in this work as seen by the single file container that the general public forms around the perimeter of the space, supporting the movers.

Figure 7 and 7A: York Dance Ensemble, Vari Hall, York University, Canada, 2009. Filmed by Sky Fairchild-Waller.

Here is a before and after shot of a small part of two individual solos in Path done outside in London England.[4] Here are two different solos that even in a photograph seem to be connected somehow and at the same time highlight the texture of the materials they dance on and in.

Figure 8 and 8A: York Dance Ensemble, Tower of London, London, England, 2009. Filmed by Sky Fairchild-Waller.

I am invigorated by how every day spaces can be transformed by movement, and how movers in space can shift the focus, in often unconscious ways, that contribute to making non-place a place of meaning.

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Notes

1 Augé, "non-places," 36.
2 York Dance Ensemble performance outdoors, York University, May 2009
3 York Dance Ensemble performance, Vari Hall, York University, May 2009
4 York Dance Ensemble performance, Tower of London, London, England, February 2009

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# Beyond Representation:

## An Aesthetic Approach to Study on *1980—a piece by Pina Bausch*

***Chang, I-Wen***

To begin with, German choreographer Pina Bausch's dance theatre, by means of its unique theatre aesthetics and performance strategy, narrates a discourse about the "unnatural" nature of the body and the construction of human subjectivity through social, cultural and inter-personal relationships. In the 1980s, the concepts and styles of Bausch's dance theatre were brought to Taiwan and were thereafter engaged in a rich dialogue with the drastically transforming Taiwanese society. The new concepts not only provided Taiwanese choreographers with an effective means to interact with current socio-political issues, but also presented the body as a site of power struggle and possible subversion.

Although it was not until 1997 that the Wuppertal Tanztheater toured in Taiwan, a lucky few already had the chance to watch her pieces at international art festivals or heard descriptions of her work from students abroad in the 1980s. Some Taiwanese artists were already aware of the huge potential of dance theater. In addition, a few copies of Bausch's works were circulating secretly in the theater and dance field. According to theater critic and director Wang, Mo-Lin（王墨林）, he mentioned that " Some kind of 'a Pina Bausch's way of body language" had been widespread during 1987 in Taiwan's Avant-Garde Theatre.[1]

Bausch's work not only influence the Avant Grade Theatre but it also influence the dance field in Taiwan. Some examples include:

1. Lin Hwa-Min and Cloud Gate Dance Theater's *The Rite of Spring*(1984) and *My Nostalgia, My Songs* (1986). The latter used popular songs to discuss the story of the young adults who came from the countryside to Taipei city to make a living. Its main theme focused on their dreams and frustration, sorrow and efforts.
2. In 1997, Pina Bausch went to Taiwan, and many professional performance major students followed her artistic direction. They went to study in Folkwang dance school where Bausch graduated and later taught. Wu Kuo-chu (choreographer of Cloud Gate 2) and his work "Oculus" is one such example.

These are the examples to illustrate the influences of Pina Bausch on the Taiwan dance scene and thus provide the background of for my study. There is much research in English and other languages about Pina Bausch and her dance theater. Unfortunately, these materials are not so easily accessible in Taiwan. This essay would be the first master's thesis study on Pina Bausch in Chinese from Taiwan. In this essay, I examine Pina Bausch's Tanztheater in a different way not yet described. Dance Studies is a new and somewhat marginalized academic field in Taiwan, and I hope I can make a contribution to understanding Bausch's dance. Due to limited resources, I selected the piece "*1980—a piece by Pina Bausch"* of which I received a copy from my professor as my pivotal example for examining Pina Bausch's work. I adopt Deleuze's theory in this study, since it is most helpful for understanding the expressive possibilities of the body in Pina Bausch's Tanztheater.

**Pina Bausch and Tanztheater**

First, I would like to quickly pass through some distinctive feature of the aesthetics of Bausch's works.

I. Form:
1. Movement Repetition
2. "collage" structure
3. Dance as Theater
4. Use of spoken language
5. Stage Design

II. Content:
1. Focus on Human Nature
2. Critical expression
3. The aesthetics of cruelty
4. Open interpretation

To understand the import of Bausch's works, one must keep in mind that a certain sort of mind-body dichotomy was prevalent in western thought, and this is one of Bausch's main targets. Human beings live in a world constructed by logic and language. Through a quick and convenient classification approach, people efficiently eliminate information or even people that do not fit into their classification schemes. Minorities and marginal groups are excluded, and "the other" gets silenced and invisible. However, such a dichotomized epistemology is challenged in the postmodern era by decentralized narratives of disorder, dispersed fragments, and anti-patriarchal interpretations of the nomad bodies.

I now turn to postmodern theory to explore the deeper meaning of dance.

**Gilles Deleuze's theory as a perspective**

Gilles Deleuze is a French philosopher who wrote many influential works on philosophy, literature, film, and fine art, including the widely read *Capitalism and Schizophrenia I: Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), both collaborated with Félix Guattari.

Their theories propose a mobile subjectivity, the reiteration of marginality, and the possibility of multiplicities. When we mention dance, with its marginality in a world dominated by logic and rationality, it actually explores deeper meanings beyond words. It reveals things untold and sometimes forgotten fragments from life's experiences. When I read Deleuze's theory, I found an interesting connection and similarity between the possibilities revealed in Bausch' s dance piece. Therefore, I shall use his theory to examine the dance work by Bausch. The main idea that I would like to take a look at is **"**Rhizome".

According to Deleuze, Rhizome is an "image of thought," based on the botanical rhizome, that apprehends multiplicities. A rhizome works with horizontal and trans-species connections, while an arborescent model works with vertical and linear connections. Therefore, Rhizome has no center, no surroundings and is unlike a typical "tree structure" but it allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in representation and interpretation. In addition, Bausch's dance pieces also have a "rhizome" structure. Themes are revealed in the play not in a logical sequence with a tight organizing principle, but by throwing scattered forms and concepts around the elusive human body, the audiences feel a sense of openness, an invitation to make multiple connections freely between these forms.

**1980—*a piece by Pina Bausch***

Now I take Bausch's work *1980* as an example to explain how the deconstructive narrative about life and death in the piece presents the audience with an open interpretation beyond representation and a richer and more comprehensive understanding about theatre and life.

1. Transgression

Transgression is to subvert from normal behavior. In this piece, surprisingly visual impressions bring in the role of disorder, such as dominant woman vs. passive man. The male dancer Lutz Forster is passively unclothed by a female dancer and then forced to wear female black silk stockings, put on lip-stick, blush, eyebrow make-up, and his nipple is even painted pink! In the end his gesture is positioned as a typical erotic poster model. This also indicates these "gendered acts" are not born natural but only "naturalized" through time. It also declares how a patriarchal society educates women through various knowledge and learning systems to internalize this ideology. In Judith Butler's " *Gender Trouble*", she believes that gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a sort of natural being.[2] Through the deconstruction of the subjectivity, Bausch also focused on how external forces or restrictions are internalized in our body through repetition tactics thus showing the history of one's training and exposing the hidden control and the disciplining mechanisms.

The choreographer uses lipstick, blush and eyebrow make-up to mimic femininity. The meaning of this scene not only lies in disrupting gender stereotypes, but also on the gender code's influence on the body. This kind of effect can be described as "distortion"…any kind of distortion of the normal discipline can make us realize the fragility of order. In this scene, female code and male body do not mix well, suggesting how "gender subjectivity" is unnatural. Through this scene, we can easily tell that norms of conduct might be just constructed behavior, and those who do not conform to the "norm" will be punished. Transgression thus brings out the

subversive power: to transgress through the boundary, to challenge all criteria, to alter originally established orders, and therefore introduce a new angle of view and other possibilities.

2. "physical bodies" and "visceral bodies"

One example would be the beauty contest scene in "1980". In this scene, all female dancers wear a dinner suit and stand in a line. They follow a man's order and do some meaningless things such as whistling or performing tongue twister. This kind of behavior is ironic and it satirizes the beauty contest as a patriarchal mechanism to make women shallow and skin-deep. The other example is a dancer standing in a line. In this section female dancers were splashed with water one by one by a man. At first glance, the audience would feel so sad through watching these movements. In addition, the audience's emotions are aroused by their inner empathy.

When the man repeatedly splashes these women one after another the audience starts to feel uncomfortable and becomes angry why these women do not resist. During this process, rational thinking guides the audience's bodily emotions. Viewers are criticizing from what they perceive, which in turn derives from their bodies. Bausch uses the "body movement" of performers to provoke visceral feelings among the audience. In other words, during the performance, viewers are not only influenced by the dancer's "physical bodies", but also their own "visceral bodies".

## Conclusion

In *1980*, the atmosphere of lonesome alienation and loss are displayed deliberately through a dim and even hysterical way. This poetic piece does give us a wider understanding of multiple interpretations. Through what was discussed above, the narrative structure in this piece diffuses just like Deluze's concept of the rhizome. Deluze's concept of the rhizome is just like multiple interpretations beyond the representation, and it shows that fragments combined together add complexity to the overall effect. This concept is similar to the idea of "Total Theatre" and the integration of all elements on the stage. Thinking processes from the audience and the behavior of the choreographer and dancers are equally important.

I think the most impressive part of Pina Bausch's Tanztheater is that it breaks boundaries determined by social norms and illustrates the value of non-singular meanings. That is what is appealing to us and why her work so touching and amazing. As I mentioned in the beginning, there are a lot dancers and chorographers in Taiwan who are influenced by Bausch. I sincerely hope this study can be the beginning to introduce her dance academically to Taiwan, and thus encourage more research under this context for our local dance scenes.



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# The Yellow Butterfly Flying to the South.

# Japanese Dancer-Choreographer Hata-Kanoko, Her Work *Beauty of Nature*

# and the First Butoh Company in Taiwan

*Alice Yi-chun CHEN*

**The research motif**

The first time I saw Japanese Butoh performance was in 1994. It was *Unetsu* of Sankai Juku performed at the National Theatre, Taipei. I was deeply shocked and touched. It was hard to express the emotion I experienced, but I knew there must be a special philosophy and aesthetics behind Butoh. After that, I saw many Butoh performances, among them, the work by Kazuo Ohno and his son Yoshito Ohno[1], Eiko & Koma, Dairakudakan, Arutai Kobuzoku. In the summer of 2005, I participated in Semimaru Workshop of Sankai Juku in Japan. Then in the spring of 2006, I attended Tomoe Shizune and Hakutobo Workshop in Taiwan.

Among many Butoh artists, there is a special Butoh dancer- choreographer named Hata-Kanoko who has special experience with Taiwan. In 1998, she was invited to the Philippines to perform in the "Cry of Asia Festival." In the Philippines, she saw suffering life of people who lived in Smokey Mountain. Besides, she met and made friends with a Taiwan epic-theatre worker Mr. CHUNG Chiao. Mr. Chung Chiao is a poet and the artistic director of the "Assignment Theatre" in Taiwan. With the help from Mr. Chung, Hata-Kanoko came to Taiwan and has performed and organized Butoh workshops since 1998. In 2002, Hata-Kanoko and her family lived in An-keng, Taipei County. They become regular visitors of Taiwan. Hata-Kanoko keeps her performances as well as Butoh workshop in Taiwan. In 2005, Hata-Kanoko established the first Butoh company in Taiwan——"Huang Tieh Nan Tien", which means "The Yellow Butterfly Flying to the South". She then choreographed her first work for the company——*Shun Chien Chih Wong* (*King of the Moment*). Hata-Kanoko lives in Taiwan as their second home and dances Butoh in Taiwan in order to search for the speciality inside of Taiwanese people's body.

In 2006, Hata-Kanoko choreographed her latest work *Tieh Jan Chih Mei* (*Beauty of Nature*)and performed in "Losheng Sanatorium" since September 21 to 24. Losheng is a kind of hospital and community to isolate leprosy patients since the Japanese colonization era until this century. As a 4th generation Butoh dancer who admires Butoh founder Tatsumi Hijikata2 [2], Hata-Kanoko's Butoh is based on Hijikata's enlightment and she keeps her long association with Hijikata's aesthetics. *Beauty of Nature* was inspired by her early study and continuous observation of Hijikata's work. Besides, she insisted to have *Beauty of Nature* performed in Losheng in order to protest against Losheng's dismantling by Taiwan government.

My research attempts to find the possibility of Butoh in Taiwan. I'll explore anti-modernity and anti-westernized tendency and the representation of female body experience instead of feminism in the creations of Hata-Kanoko, a mother of three little girls.

**Hata-Kanoko, Japanese Butoh and Taiwan**

Hata-Kanoko was born in the northern top of Japan in 1964. Her hometown is very close to Tatsumi Hijikata's and Kazuo Ohno's hometowns. Before 1984, she attended a 2-year Women's Senior College and majored in insurance. From 1984 to 1988, she became an office lady working as a secretary. Besides, she worked in a mini movie theatre to play movies for audience. In 1984, she saw a solo performance of Min Tanaka[3]. That time, Min Tanaka called his dance "hyper-dance" instead of Butoh. In this performance, Min Tanaka was almost naked. He provoked his audience by pouring Japanese sake wine on them. Hata-Kanoko was very moved by

the performance of Min Tanaka. This was her first time to see live Butoh performance.

In 1987, Hata-Kanoko started her Butoh study in "Arutai Kobuzoku Butoh Company". Her teacher's teacher was Hijikata's student. Hata-Kanoko quitted her job as an office lady in 1988. From then on, Hata-Kanoko lives her life as a professional Butoh dancer. Sometimes, she danced golden powder show in night club to make money.

In 1998, Hata-Kanoko was invited by "Asia Council for People's Culture"[4] in the Philippines to perform in the "Cry of Asia Festival". In the Philippines, she saw very difficult life of people who lived in Smokey Mountain. Smokey Mountain is an area for storing trash. Crowded trash produces smoke. That's why it is called "Smokey Mountain". Some poor Philippines live in Smoky Mountain and earn very little money by picking up and selling useful trash such as recycled cans. Life is very hard for those people. It's almost like living in hell. But in Smokey Mountain, she said, "I saw Butoh on the street. Because the existence of those Philippines is the shape of Butoh. They always struggle for life. Their life is a reality full of pain. Even children who beg for money on the street are victims of Capitalism. To me, Butoh is the shape of life."

In this festival, Hata-Kanoko met Mr. Chung Chiao, the founder and director of the "Assignment Theatre" in Taiwan. Mr. Chung is a leftist intellectual. Since Hata-Kanoko's social movement ideas are very similar to Chung Chiao's, Chung invited Hata to come to his homeland Taiwan for Hata's first tour in 1998.

Before the end of World War Two, Taiwan was occupied and colonized by Japan for 50 years. Taiwan and Japan both belong to Buddhist and Confucian cultural circle. Because of these historical and cultural relationships, Hata-Kanoko feels very close to Taiwan people. Taiwanese friends who work in alternative theatre are also fond of her very much because she is a woman full of energy and sympathy. From 1998, Hata-Kanoko came to Taiwan to perform and conduct Butoh workshops several times. Hata-Kanoko and her family have lived in An-keng, Taipei County since 2002. She learned to speak Chinese language and became a regular visitor and observer of Taiwan.

In January 2005, Hata-Kanoko established the first Butoh company in Taiwan——"Huang Dieh Nan Tien" which means "The Yellow Butterfly Flying to the South". She regards herself as a yellow butterfly who makes her decision to cross the strait to fly to the south, from Japan to Taiwan. In her opinion, Taiwan, Japan, Korea and China surround and share the same China Sea. The China Sea is the complicated connection between Taiwan, Japan, Korea and China.

In the first work of Huang Tieh Nan Tien Butoh Company——*Shun Chien Chih Wong* (*King of the Moment*)[5], Hata-Kanoko cooperated with a blind dancer Lee Pei-chi. To Hata-Kanoko, Miss Lee is a symbol of people who live on the margin of the society. No matter how hard she works and struggles, she will never enter a higher social level. Miss Lee's body is a "weapon" against Capitalism in *Shun Chien Chih Wong.* Her body belongs to the public. She is the existence which is hidden behind the society.

### Hata-Kanoko's Latest Work
### *Tieh Jan Chih Mei* (*Beauty of Nature*)

In 2006, from September 21 to 24, Hata-Kanoko choreographed her latest work *Tieh Jan Chih Mei* (*Beauty of Nature*) for old grandpas and grandmas who are isolated in Losheng Leprosy Sanatorium by the colonial Japanese and later Taiwanese governments. Before 1960's, leprosy was misunderstood as terrible infectious disease. Those who got leprosy were forced by government into segregation in rest home. This kind of rest home is named "Ai-sheng Yuan" in Japan. In Taiwan, it's called "Losheng Yuan" since Japanese colonization era. Leprosy patients had to keep their distance far away from their family, friends and people until their death. At the end of the 20th century, research on medical science proved that leprosy is not infectious disease. Even close contact between lovers will not endanger the healthy partner. Those patients were cheated by their government. They spent their whole live in vain in Losheng. Some social movement and student movement groups showed up to support old grandpas and grandmas in Losheng. They asked for apology and reparation from both Japanese and Taiwanese governments. Unfortunately, Taipei County government sold the land of Losheng Leprosy Rest Home to the Taipei Metro company in 2002. Hence, the government forced those old grandpas and grandmas to move away. Some of them agreed to leave, but some refused. Because of the wrong policy of the government, their human rights were sacrificed. What they need is only dignity. Therefore, many sociology scholars, students, artists and people retort and argue against the government to prevent

Losheng from being moved away. This is not a problem of how many leprosy grandpas and grandmas who want to stay in Losheng. This is a problem of essential meaning. Our nation and government owe these grandpas and grandmas who spend their life without humanism and humanity in vain inside of Losheng.

Hata-Kanoko joined this movement by means of her work *Beauty of Nature.* Actually, *Beauty of Nature* is the name of a Japanese song. This song is the first song introduced from the west to Japan. In the end of 19th century, a military officer brought this song from Holland to the Japanese Army. Then it was transformed into a Japanese song played by military bands. As some of the military bands were dismissed, some musicians joined circus to perform for ordinary people. It was a process of sadness. The tune of this song is also filled with sadness. Hata-Kanoko heard the song *Beauty of Nature* in her childhood. The lyric of this song is very simple. Singer admired songs of birds, voice of rivers and beauty of nature with simple vocabularies. However, every time Hata-Kanoko heard this song, she felt sad because its tune is full of sorrow. In 2006, Hata-Kanoko combined the sorrowful images left in her heart by this song, the progression from the army to common folks of this song as well as the event of Losheng. She choreographed her dance work *Beauty of Nature* to fight for anti-modernity concept of Butoh. She didn't apply for any grants from the government, organization or business enterprise sponsors. She paid for every cent of the production herself. Everyone worked with Hata-Kanoko also received no salary. Even costume designer, sitar musician, lighingt designer and stage technician from Japan bought their own airplane tickets themselves. Everybody shared with the same ideology and friendship.

In the very beginning of *Beauty of Nature*, three female dancers are hanging high above the stage under very dark light. They are almost naked and white color spreads on their body. A few streaks of silkworm thread are placed on their bodies. They look like silkworms wanting to get out of their cocoons. Voice of water drops falling on metal cans and sound of insects continue. The dancers move slowly. Gradually, they stretch their bodies upside down.[6] The "upside-down" body symbolizes the history which is reversed by the hegemony of the government. And then, the blind girl appears. She winds a music box. However, the music sounds broken. To me, it is a metaphor of broken history and forgotten memory.[7] The blind dancer exits. Three dancers hang above and move up and down, up and down.[8] Their motion looks like turning toy horses in merry-go-round in an amusement park for children.[9] The background music as well as sound from the blind dancer's music box is the song *Beauty of Nature.*

Light turns dark. Live sitar music comes. Three dancers lie down on the stage. They are like babies unborn in mothers' wombs. But they are also dead people who hope to come to next life and be born again. When they shake their bodies slowly, some Losheng old grand-pas and grand-mas say it reminds them of their leprosy disease. They used to be seized by spasms or cramps. In the end of this section, dancers stand upside down to represent the world of the dead. Because in a script of kabuki, the world of dead people is described as being upside down.[10]

Light fades out. Solo performance of Sitar musician starts. Light fades in. Dancers gradually show up from the back of a mirror to Japanese ritual music. They make ugly and absurd faces. The mirror is very vague because it is a door to connect the lived and the dead.[11]

And then it's Hata-Kanoko's solo dance. The stage opens and a pool with water appers. On the first day leprosy patients entered Losheng, everyone was put in the shower of antiseptic solution and then put on clothes Losheng prepared for them as uniforms. It meant they would never go out of Losheng again.[12]

Blind dancer becomes a golden fish. She is playing and swimming in the water.[13] The stage rotates to reveal a back stage, where a show girl dances her sexy dance. However, her dance makes audience feel sad because she represents life of girls in the underworld of our society those who use their bodies to make money.[14]

With the music *My Sweet Home*, four men in black carry a table and Hata-Kanoko lies on the table as the dead. They pass the audience and go to the stage. Hata-Kanoko stays on the stage alone. She wakes up, takes off her Losheng uniform, shows her bikini and dances with fire. Just like dead leprosy patients' bodies burnt in fire. Finally, she became Buddha.[15]

The blind dancer, as the leader of the spirits of dead children, carries toys and dead babies past the stage.[16] Children's toy windmills turn rapidly,

but the stage is empty because all children have disappeared.[17]

The next section also showed up in Hijikata's work *Story of Disease* before. It is about a story of prostitutes. They carry their bags in front of kimonos and this is opposite to ordinary girls.[18]

After sitar solo, Hata-Kanoko uses a legend to tell the story of Losheng. A man unknowingly married a fox. Their marriage was happy and the wife gave birth to a baby girl. Finally, the fox had to go back to her forest. She cried and told her daughter, "If you miss me, please come to my forest near Osaka." Some grand-mas in Losheng were forced to leave their children in the similar situation. Hata-Kanoko danced her long solo of fox dance. The sitar music expresses her feeling. Finally, she wrote on the mirror, "If you miss me, please come to my forest near Losheng" [19]

**Conclusion**

*Beauty of Nature* is a successful writing said to be feminine (écriture féminine). Hata-Kanoko never admits she is a feminist but her work echoes the approach of radical feminism. *Beauty of Nature* was nominated the "Taishin Arts Award", the art award which provides the highest reward for winners in Taiwan. [20] However, Hata-Kanoko refused to take part in the competition because she didn't want a prize awarded by the Capitalist system. She knows the value of her own work. She insists on left-wing cultural resistance by means of her Butoh.

Ranajit Guha, the Indian post-colonialist scholar defined "subaltern studies" as "listening to the small voice of history". Dr. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak also asked, "Can Subaltern Speak? Suffering of Losheng's old grandpas and grandmas can not be forgotten. Hata-Kanoko and her work *Beauty of Nature* expressed the sublimation of misery.

Maro Akaji, the founder and artistic director of Dairakudakan used to said, "Butoh draws its energy from the earth. It comes out of specific Japanese culture, and out of a Japanese avant-garde." Unlike some later Butoh generations, Hata-Kanoko still keeps her connection with Hijikata. She insists on the marginality of Butoh. She keeps Butoh's alternative character and anti-modernity purpose. On the other hand, she expresses femininity instead of feminism in her work. Hata-Kanoko's art is rooted in her sympathy to human beings.

As Japanese obsessional artist Kudo Tetsumi said, "For me, art is to doubt everything completely, to doubt God, to doubt myself, and to doubt the world. The accumulation of these doubts became my art. To doubt to the extreme … hat is my starting point."[21] Hata-Kanoko also used to tell me, "I dance Butoh to resist the world." I was deeply touched by this sentence as well as Hata-Kanoko's works. For me, Hata-Kanoko's *Beauty of Nature* is a dark aura which reflects historical memory.

Hata-Kanoko laid down the possibility of development of Butoh in Taiwan by means of avant-garde theatre activities collaborated with Taiwanese artists in different fields. I left this topic to explorers in the future.

**Acknowledgements:**

Many thanks to Hata-Kanoko, friends of Taiwan Haibizi tent theatre, Prof. Sal Murgiyanto, Prof. LIN Ya-tin, Prof. CHEN Ya-ping and my parents.



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1 In Japanese language, family name is in front of given name. But Mr. Ohno's international name is well-known as Kazuo Ohno.

2 Hijikata is his family name.

3 Tanaka is his family name.

4 This organization is known as ACPC.

5 *Shun Chien Chih Wong*(*King of the Moment*)is not Hata-Kanoko's first work in Taiwan.

6 This section is called Drop.

7 This section is called Music Box.

8 Hata-Kanoko is the dancer hanging in the center. Other dancers are all Taiwanese including the blind dancer.

9 This section is called Carousel.

10 This section is called The Unborn.

11 This section is called Mirror.

12 This section is called Children.

13 This section is called Golden Fish.

14 This section is called Girls Who Perform in Funerals. In some country side of Taiwan, some people invite girls to perform hot dancing in funerals.

15 This section is called The Good Harvest.

16 This section is called Spirit of Dead Children.

17 This section is called Windmills.

18 This section is called Prostitutes' Kabuki.

19 This section is called Story of the Fox.

20 The winner of "Taishin Arts Award" will gained the reward of NTD 1,000,000 (about USD 30,700). Taishin company is a bank in Taiwan.

21 Munroe, Alexander, 1994, "Revolt of the Flesh: Ankoku Butoh and Obsessional Art", Japanese Art after 1945: Screen again the Sky, New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.,

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# "The Petipa Problem"

## Willa Collins

Marius Petipa is perhaps the famous historical figure within nineteenth-century ballet. During his tenure at the Imperial Theaters—as dancer, choreographer, and chief ballet master—from 1847 to 1903,[1] Petipa mounted numerous ballets, and is credited with creating masterpieces such as *Don Quixote* (1869), *La Bayadère* (1877), *Sleeping Beauty* (1890), *The Nutcracker* (1892), and *Swan Lake* (1895),[2] all of which are still in the repertory. Throughout his career, Petipa also staged several revivals of foreign ballets—as listed in Table 1—many of which originated in Paris or London, and created by other choreographers. While the works of Jules Perrot, Joseph Mazilier, and Arthur Saint-Léon were gradually eliminated from the performance repertories of Her Majesty's Theatre and the Paris Opéra, Marius Petipa kept the works of his predecessors alive by maintaining them in the performance repertory of the Russian Imperial Theatres.

However, in spite of his historical significance, Petipa is a problem. Dance historians, dancers, and choreographers often deify him as the father of nineteenth-century classical ballet. And while he is an important figure in dance history, it is essential to note that Petipa's historical contributions took place towards the end of the nineteenth century, and not during the height of Romanticism. Moreover, what do we *really* know about Petipa? Much of the historical information is very general, and some sources have conflicting information surrounding Petipa's background, along with his complete works list, some of which suggests the information was altered to Petipa's benefit.[3] This is just one perspective of the "Petipa problem."

Equally significant is the fact that many of the ballets mounted by Petipa in Russia originated in Paris. During the nineteenth century, Paris was the European center of theatrical activities. Many of the commissioned works performed for the first time in Parisian theaters were exported to other countries. Ballets and operas originating at the Opéra, Paris' premiere theater, were no different; they resurfaced in various European theaters, most frequently in Russia. There are, in fact, some ballets that owe their survival to export—as illustrated in Table 1—the Opéra having removed them from its playbill. And while Petipa is responsible for maintaining some of these ballets within the Russian repertory, the works have undergone numerous transformations from their original, nineteenth-century, Parisian conception to the versions presented onstage today. So, when studying a nineteenth-century ballet that was created in London or Paris by another choreographer, and revived numerous times by Petipa, how does one distinguish between what was inserted or created by Petipa and what was not? What did Petipa retain from the original choreography? What did he consider expendable? This is where Petipa becomes a problem. Let's take the ballet *Le Corsaire* as an example.

### *Le Corsaire* Chronology

*Le Corsaire* made its first appearance on the Paris Opéra stage 23 January 1856, and featured Domenico Segarelli and Carolina Rosati in the principal roles of Conrad and Medora—two Italian dancers renown for their dramatic talents—with choreography by Joseph Mazilier, a libretto by Jules-Henry Vernoy de Saint-Georges, and score composed by Adolphe Adam. In 1858, Jules Perrot staged the first Russian production of *Le Corsaire* based on Mazilier's choreography, in which Petipa danced the role of Conrad. Perrot's production added music by Cesare Pugni, and also marked the first time music by another composer was added to Adam's score. Five years later, Petipa staged a new production of *Le Corsaire* based on Perrot's version, with a new *plan de mise en scène*. The year of the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle, the Paris Opéra presented a revival of *Le Corsaire*, featuring Louis Mérante and Adèle Grantzow in the roles of Conrad and Medora. Director Emile Perrin called the choreographer Mazilier out of retirement, and contemporary reports indicate that the choreography was completely new, with a grand-scale divertissement added to Act II. This new dance sequence, the *Pas des fleurs*, was choreographed to newly composed music by Leo Delibes and inserted into Adam's score. The music from the 1856 score suggests that Mazilier accentuated Rosati's mimetic abilities by creating challenging dramatic

pantomime scenes, created dance sequences that blurred the line between drama and dance, and had a mime/dance ratio of sixty percent mime and forty percent dance.[4] Adèle Grantzow, however, was a very athletic dancer, and the music for Mazilier's 1867 version of *Le Corsaire* indicates shorter mime sequences and longer dance numbers, with a mime/dance ratio of forty percent mime and sixty percent dance.[5] This increase in dance music and the modification of some of the mime scenes suggests that Mazilier's choreography was part of a trend in ballet in the second half of the nineteenth century of decreasing the amount of mime and increasingly long dance numbers within a ballet,[6] the peak of which would be the ballets created in Russia by Petipa in the 1880s and 1890s.[7]

Petipa staged productions of *Le Corsaire* in 1868 and 1880, rechristened the *Pas des fleurs* divertissement as the *Jardin animé*, and featured his wife, Marie Petipa, in the role of Medora, as well as Adèle Grantzow, Henriette Dor, and Ekaterina Vazem.[8] In 1899, Petipa mounted a new production of *Le Corsaire*, in which he restaged the entire ballet, rearranging much of the original music, and added the famous *pas de deux*,[9] with music composed by Riccardo Drigo. [10] In addition to the *pas de deux*, Petipa also inserted variations for Medora and Gulnare in the *Jardin animé* with music not composed by Delibes. It is not clear if Petipa added these variations for the 1868, 1880, or the 1899 production; however, they are included in some of the modern productions. With each new version of *Le Corsaire* staged by Petipa, what did he retain from Perrot's choreography? And since Perrot's version of *Le Corsaire* was based on the Parisian version staged by Mazilier, what material did Petipa, and his successors, retain from the original 1856 Parisian version of *Le Corsaire*?

Presently, there are at least three dance companies that have *Le Corsaire* in their repertories—the Kirov Ballet, American Ballet Theatre,[11] and the Bolshoi Ballet—all of which are based on Petipa's 1899 production, and yet they are are all distinct from each other. Each company uses a different libretto, a different score, and indicates "original choreography by Marius Petipa" or "choreography after Marius Petipa" in the credits:

**<u>Kirov Ballet</u>**
**Premiered in 1987**
**VHS/DVD Credits: Original choreography by Marius Petipa**
**Program Credits: Choreography: Pyotr Gusev based on the composition and choreography Marius Petipa (1987)**
**Music by Adolphe Adam, Cesare Pugni, Prince Oldenburg, Léo Delibes, and Riccardo Drigo**
**Libretto by Jules-Henri de Saint-Georges and Joseph Mazilier in a version by Yuri Slonimsky and Pyotr Gusev**

**<u>American Ballet Theatre</u>**
**Premiered in 1999**
**Credits: Choreography by Konstantin Sergeyev after Marius Petipa**
**Staging by Anna Marie Holmes**
**Music by Adolphe Adam, Cesare Pugni, Prince Oldenburg, Léo Delibes, and Riccardo Drigo**
**Libretto by Jules-Henri de Saint-Georges and Joseph Mazilier in a version by Konstantin Sergeyev**

**<u>Bolshoi Ballet</u>**
**Premiered in 2007**
**Credits: Libretto by Jules-Henri de Saint-Georges and Joseph Mazilier, adapted by Marius Petipa**
**Music: Adolphe Adam; Original Paris Opéra score with added musical borrowings from: Léo Delibes, Cesare Pugni, Peter von Oldenburg, Riccardo Drigo, Albert Zabel, and Julius Gerber**
**Staging by Alexei Ratmanski and Iouri Burlaka**
**New Choreography by Alexei Ratmanski**
**Musical Dramaturgy by Iouri Burlaka**
**Choreographic notation from the Harvard Theatre Collection**

It should also be noted that the same five composers are listed as contributing authors to the scores for all three ballet companies, yet each score is different. Why these five composers? If Adam wrote the original score, and Delibes wrote the *Pas des fleurs/Jardin animé*, what are Pugni's and Oldenburg's contributions? Did Drigo contribute more than the *pas de deux* to the *Corsaire* score for Petipa's 1899 production? Ballet scores typically do not indicate who wrote what, so it is difficult to

discern the authorship of each composer unless you know what to look for. Anna Marie Holmes and Kevin Galié have created an in house "edition" for the American Ballet Theatre; however, the source of this "edition" is a photocopy of a hand-copied manuscript in Russian, with Adolphe Adam's name on the first page. All musical contributions by other composers, including Delibes, are not identified within the score. This is not very different from the *Corsaire* performance score at the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra; it names Adolphe Adam as the author, but does not identify Delibes as the author of the 158-page *Pas des fleurs* divertissement inserted into the score.[12]

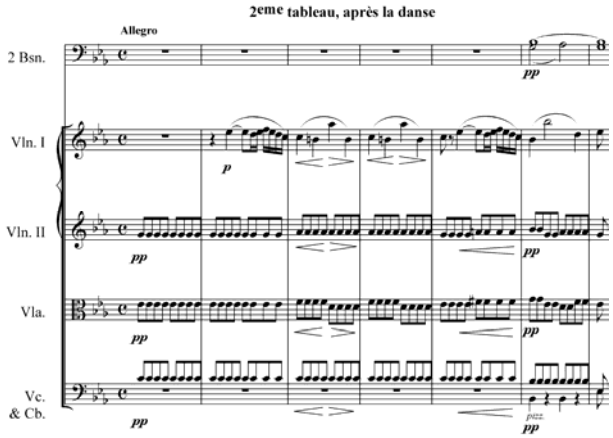
All of three present-day versions of *Le Corsaire* are unique in their own right, yet each company claims Petipa's original choreography has been preserved in their production. If this is true, then what did Petipa retain from Jospeh Mazilier's choreography? There are two elements from the Parisian versions that still exists in present-day productions of *Le Corsaire*: the pantomime or dramatic music, and the *Pas des fleurs* divertissment now known as the *Jardin animé*. Unlike Petipa, Mazilier did not leave behind any notebooks, drawings, sketches, dance notation, or *plans des mises en scènes* for his ballets with clues to his choreography or how he staged his works. So, while the majority of Delibes' original music from the *Pas des fleurs* is still present in the *Jardin animé*, whatever Petipa retained from Mazilier is purely speculation. Therefore, in the interest of time, I shall devote the rest of my paper examining some of the dramatic components retained from the 1856 production that consistently appear in all three versions of the present-day productions of *Le Corsaire*.

**Dramatic/Pantomime Music**

*Le Corsaire* was written specifically for Carolina Rosati and Domenico Segarelli cast in the roles of Conrad and Medora, two Italian dancers who specialized in mime. The *Corsaire* libretto contains lots of dialogue, most of which is designated to Conrad and/or Medora. Ballet composer Adolphe Adam often found inspiration for his music by watching dancers' feet,[13] which suggests he spent time in the studio with the dancers. The various dates in Adam's autograph score suggest that he composed the score in tandem with the composition of Mazilier's choreography. [14]

Moreover, there are several passages throughout the *Corsaire* autograph that suggest Adam composed music specifically for Rosati to convey certain information, particularly when Medora tells Conrad his lieutenant, Birbanto, is a traitor.

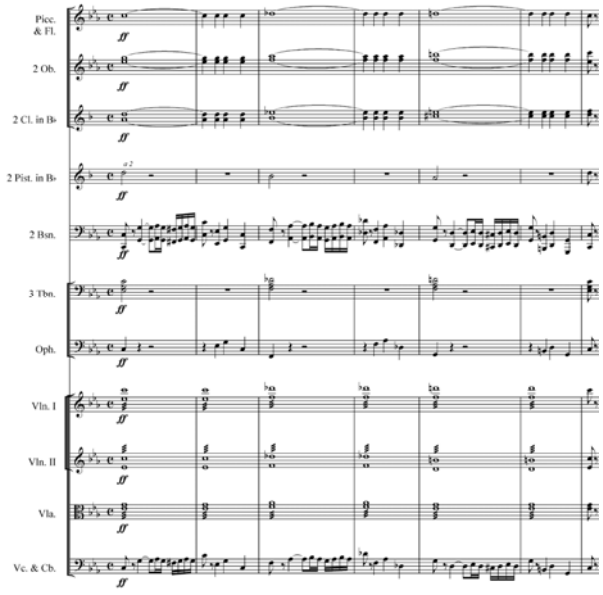
There are three melodies or motifs that Adam introduces with Birbanto—the "treason" motif, the "lotus flower" melody, and the "abduction" music—all of which he recalled in different guises in the 1856 version during the "revelation" scene in Act II, when Medora identifies Birbanto as her abductor, and a traitor to Conrad. As Conrad contemplates whether or not to free the slaves, Adam uses a turn figure in two different guises: first, as Medora pleads with Conrad to release the captives; and second, as Birbanto and his colleagues erupt in anger at Conrad's decision to free the women. Medora and the slave women have just finished dancing for Conrad and his men (Ex. 1).[15] Knowing that her lover is enamored with her, Medora seizes the opportunity to use her influence with Conrad to help the women. Adam conveys Medora's persuasion through the turn figure in a melodic violin line over a tonic pedal.[16]




**Ex. 1, Medora Pleads with Conrad to free the captured women (stable harmony).**

When Adam applies the same motif to Birbanto, however, he shifts the melody from the violins to the lower strings and bassoons, as if to suggest the men mimicking Medora's request in anger. Adam also reverses the direction of the turn figure, and puts it into a modulating sequence, both to mock Medora, and to illustrate the mutiny of Birbanto and his fellow corsairs through harmonic instability. Conrad is outnumbered, and could easily be ousted from his position as corsair chief. Adam illustrates Conrad's

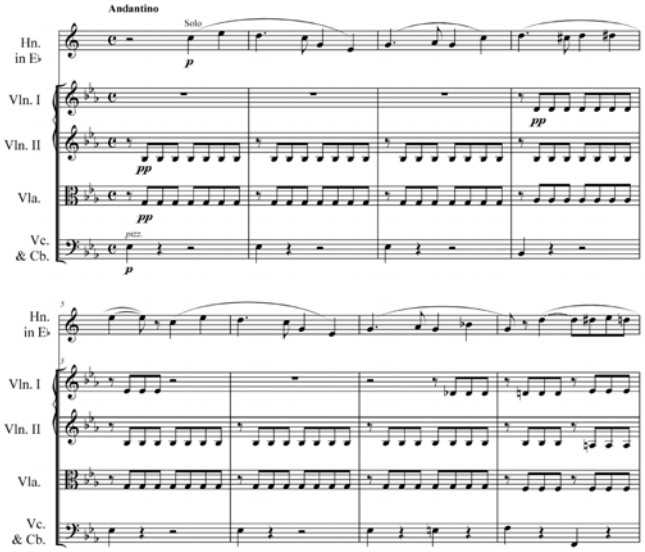
perilous situation by increasing the instrumentation from strings to full orchestra, and changes the dynamic marking from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo* as the mutinous corsairs advance on their chief (Ex. 2).[17]




**Ex. 2, "Traitor" Motif; Birbanto's Anger at Conrad's Decision to Free the Captives**

Acting quickly and thinking on his feet, Conrad grabs Birbanto by the arm, and throws the leader of the mutineers to his knees, at which point the other corsairs bow before their master. After quelling the revolt and reestablishing order among his crew, Conrad leaves with his beloved.

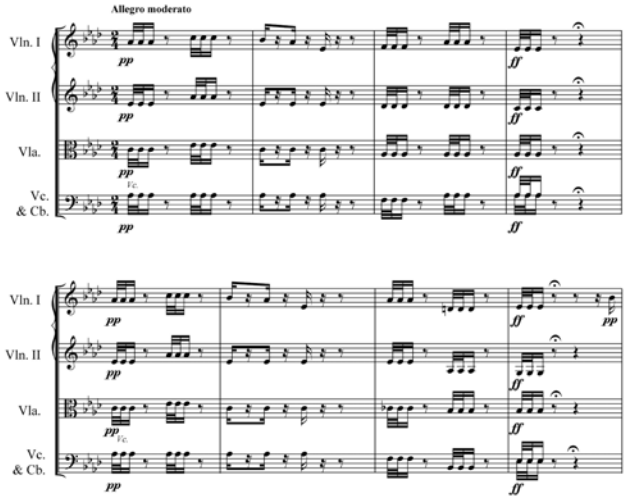
After his defeat and humiliation, Birbanto decides to seek his revenge on Conrad in a scene in which another important musical motif is introduced. Birbanto tells Isaac, the slave merchant, that the hold Medora has on Conrad's heart is too strong; but, if they kidnap Medora, Isaac can sell her to the Pacha, and order will be restored among the corsairs. Isaac is perplexed as to how they are to subdue Conrad and kidnap Medora; apparently, Birbanto anticipated this query, so he gives the slave master a demonstration. To a lovely melody played by the horns with a simple string accompaniment, Birbanto pulls a small bottle from his breast pocket, and pours its contents on a lotus flower (Ex. 3).[18]




**Ex. 3, "Lotus Flower" Music**

He then holds out the flower to one of the corsair guards to smell. The guard immediately falls asleep. This lyrical "lotus flower" melody is characteristic of a lullaby, illustrating both the beauty of the flower and the potency of the poison. After Isaac delivers the tainted flower to Conrad and Medora, Adam recalls the "lotus flower" music verbatim in the midst of their love scene, presenting a musical double entendre. As Medora presents the flower to Conrad as a token of her love, the audience witnesses a simultaneous moment of Conrad and Medora's love and Birbanto's betrayal played out to the accompaniment of the "lotus flower" music. When the music ends, Conrad, like the corsair guard, succumbs to the poison, leaving Medora vulnerable and unprotected.

Immediately after the "lotus flower" music ends, Adam introduces the music for Medora's abduction. Because Medora's capture is a high point in the drama and end of Act I, the abduction must have a bit of mystery and suspense. For this episode, Adam introduces a melody with a distinctive rhythmic gesture, allowing for staggered entrances of Birbanto and the mutinous corsairs. Additionally, Adam uses a *pianissimo* dynamic marking throughout this section, with the exception of the last measure of the rhythmic phrase, which he marks *fortissimo*, followed by a rest with a fermata. The repetition within the gesture, and the phrase as whole, would allow for the staggered entrances of Medora's masked abductors (Ex. 4).[19]




**Ex. 4, "Abduction" Music**

The "abduction" music is brief, yet memorable, and in the 1856 version, Adam recalled this, along with the "traitor" motif and the "lotus flower" melody in the "revelation" scene when Medora recognizes Birbanto as her kidnapper. In his review for *Le Moniteur universel*, Pier Angelo Fiorentino stated that one of the highpoints of the ballet was "Medora's pantomime…where she recounts to the Corsair everything that transpired in the preceding act under the eyes of the spectator" [20] Present-day productions still utilize the "treason" motif, the "lotus flower" melody, and the "abduction" music for the initial presentation but use different material for the "revelation" scene, streamlining it to a fraction of its original state. This alteration, however, can be traced back to the Paris Opéra's 1867 production of *Le Corsaire*, in which the "revelation" scene was fairly brief, and several other mime scenes were shortened from their original form. Apparently Petipa thought the drama associated with these motifs were important because they have been retained in their original context.

Stripping away the various layers piled on by Petipa and his successors, for one ballet is a difficult task. It is clear, however, at least for *Le Corsaire*, that Petipa did retain some of the elements from the original ballet. Was this the case in every foreign ballet that Petipa staged in Russia? What was important and what was expendable? If we can address these issues, we can at least eleminate one element of the "Petipa problem."

**Table 1: Ballets Restaged by Petipa**

| Petipa Date | Petipa Title | Original Title | Original Choreographer | Original City and Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1847 | *Paquita* (with Jean Petipa?) | *Paquita* | Joseph Mazilier | Paris, 1846 |
| 1848 | *Santanilla* (with Jean Petipa?) | *Le Diable amoureux* | Joseph Mazilier | Paris, 1840 |
| 1849 | *Lida, ou La lathière suisse* (w/Jean Petipa and Jules Perrot ?)<br>Insertion of a *scène dansante* and a *pas de trois* by Perrot. | *Nathalie ou La Lathière suisse* | Filippo Taglioni | Paris, 1832 |
| **1858** | ***Le Corsaire***<br>(with Jules Perrot?)<br>Addition of a new music composed by Cesare Pugni | ***Le Corsaire*** | **Joseph Mazilier** | **Paris, 1856** |
| **1863** | ***Le Corsaire***<br>New *mise en scène* by Petipa | ***Le Corsaire*** | **Joseph Mazilier** | **Paris, 1856** |
| 1866 | *Esmeralda* | *La Esmeralda* | Jules Perrot | London, 1844 |
| 1867 | *The Naïad and the Fisherman* | *Eoline ou La Dryade* | Jules Perrot | London, 1845 |
| 1867 | *Faust* | *Faust* | Jules Perrot | Milan, 1848 |
| **1868** | ***Le Corsaire***<br>"Pas des fleurs" divertissement renamed by Petipa as the "Jardin animé" | ***Le Corsaire***<br>Addition of a new divertissement, "Pas des fleurs," to music composed by Léo Delibes | **Joseph Mazilier** | **Paris, 1867** |
| 1870 | *Katerina, the Brigand's Daughter* | *Catarina, ou La Fille du bandit* | Jules Perrot | London, 1846 |
| 1872 | *Esmeralda* | *La Esmeralda* | Jules Perrot | London, 1844 |
| 1874 | *The Naïad and the Fisherman* | *Eoline ou La Dryade* | Jules Perrot | London, 1845 |
| 1875 | *Faust* | *Faust* | Jules Perrot | Milan, 1848 |
| 1880 | *La Fille du Danube* | *La Fille du Danube* | Filippo Taglioni | Paris, 1836 |

**Table 1 (Continued)**

| Petipa Date | Petipa Title | Original Title | Original Choreographer | Original City and Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1880** | ***Le Corsaire*** | ***Le Corsaire*** | **Joseph Mazilier** | **Paris, 1856, 1867** |
| 1881 | *Paquita* | *Paquita* | Joseph Mazilier | Paris, 1846 |
| 1881 | *Markitantka* | *La Vivandière* | Arthur Saint-Léon | London, 1844 |
| 1882 | *Paqueretta* | *Paquerette* | Arthur Saint-Léon | Paris, 1851 |
| 1884 | *Coppélia* | *Coppélia* | Arthur Saint-Léon | Paris, 1870 |
| 1884 | *Giselle* | *Giselle* | Jean Coralli,<br>Jules Perrot | Paris, 1841 |
| 1885 | *The Capricious Wife* | *Le Diable à quatre* | Joseph Mazilier | Paris, 1845 |
| 1885 | *Vain Precautions* | *La Fille mal gardée* | Dauberval | Bordeaux, 1786 |
| 1886 | *Esmeralda* | *La Esmeralda* | Jules Perrot | London, 1844 |
| 1887 | *Fiametta* | *Fiametta* | Arthur Saint-Léon | St. Petersburg, 1864 |
| 1887 | *Giselle* | *Giselle* | Jean Coralli,<br>Jules Perrot | Paris, 1841 |
| 1892 | *La Sylphide* | *La Sylphide* | Filippo Taglioni | Paris, 1832 |
| 1892 | *The Naïad and the Fisherman* | *Eoline ou La Dryade* | Jules Perrot | London, 1845 |
| 1895 | *The Little Hump-Backed Horse* | *The Little Hump-Backed Horse* | Arthur Saint-Léon | St. Petersburg, 1864 |
| **1899** | ***Le Corsaire***<br>Addition of the *pas de deux* | ***Le Corsaire*** | **Joseph Mazilier** | **Paris, 1856, 1867** |
| 1899 | *Esmeralda* | *La Esmeralda* | Jules Perrot | London, 1844 |
| 1899 | *Giselle* | *Giselle* | Jean Coralli,<br>Jules Perrot | Paris, 1841 |

## Notes

[1] Roland John Wiley, "A Context for Petipa," *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research*, 21/1(2003): 42-52; Vera M. Krasovskaya, "Marius Petipa," *The International Encyclopedia of Dance*, ed. Selma Jeanne Cohen, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), vol. 5, 149-62; TonyDevereux, "Marius Petipa," *International Dictionary of Ballet* ed. Martha Bremser, Larraine Nicholas, and Leanda Shrimpton (Detroit: St. James Press, 1993), vol. 2, 1108, 1111.

[2] The original version of *Swan Lake* premiered in Moscow in February 1877, and was choreographed by Julius Wenzel Reisinger. Petipa restaged *Swan Lake* in St. Petersburg in 1894, for which Tchaikovsky made several modifications to his original score Wiley notes during Ivan Vsevolozhsky's tenure as Director of the Russian Imperial Theaters (1881-99), his reorganization of the theaters in the early 1880s reduced the number of the members of the *corps de ballet* in Moscow by more than half, which also made it impossible to produce *Swan Lake*. Additionally, although some of the dancers were given positions in St. Petersburg, ultimately under Vsevolozhsky's reform efforts, ballet in Moscow suffered but prospered (with Petipa) in St. Petersburg. The choreography for the 1895 production of *Swan Lake* was created by Petipa and his assistant Lev Ivanovich Ivanov. See Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets*, 61-2, 92, 243-74; *A Century of Russian Ballet: Documents and accounts, 1810-1910*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 307-10; Cyril Beaumont, *The Complete Book of Ballets: A Guide to the Principal Ballets of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Putnam, 1938), 435-41.

[3] For example, the "Marius Petipa" articles by Toney Deveaux in the *International Dictionary of Ballet* and Vera Krasovskaya in the *International Encyclopedia of Dance* provide different information about the ballet master, as does Lillian Moore's article "The Petipa Family in Europe and America," featured in *Dance Index*. Moreover, John Wiley has noted the mountain of information one must sift through at the Russian repositories to gather information about Petipa for a biography, including police records that document Petipa broke the law, information either neglected or ignored by previous historians. See Tony Devereux, "Marius Petipa," *International Dictionary of Ballet*, ed.Martha Bremser, Larraine Nicholas, and Leanda Shrimpton (Detroit: St. James Press, 1993), vol. 2, 1108- 11; Vera Krasovskaya, "Marius Petipa," *The International Encyclopedia of Dance*, ed. Selma Jeanne Cohen et al. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), vol. 5, 149-62; Lillian Moore, "The Petipa Family in Europe and America," *Dance Index* 1/5 (1942): 72-84; and Roland John Wiley, "A Context for Petipa," *The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 21/1 (2003): 42-52.

[4] *Le Corsaire* performance score, *F-Po* A.590; Willa Collins, "Adolphe Adam's Ballet *Le Corsaire* at the Paris Opéra, 1856-1868: A Source Study," Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, 2008, 187.

[5] *Ibid*; Collins, 318.

[6] How much this shift in emphasis from mime to dance had to do with the changing aesthetics or the performers is currently unknown and pending investigation.

[7] Petipa's ballets have long dance sequences for the *corps de ballets*, with a strong emphasis on virtuosic dancing for the principal dancers, usually in the *pas de deux*. Petipa established the *grand pas de deux* formula, which consists of an *entrée* by the couple followed by adagio section between the two, a male variation, a female variation, and concluding with a coda. See Sandra Noll Hammond, "Pas de deux," *International Encyclopedia of Dance*, vol. 5, 106.

[8] In a letter to Charles Nuitter, Saint-Léon mentions that both he and Grantzow were ill in January of 1868, which was also when Petipa mounted his new version of *Le Corsaire* with the "Jardin animé." Additionally, Russian ballerina Ekaterina Ottovna Vazem recalls both Grantzow and Dor in her memoirs, but mentions Dor dancing in *Le Corsaire*. See *Letters*, 109; *A Century of Russian Ballet*, 284.

[9] It has been argued that the *pas de deux* between Conrad and Medora for the 1899 production was originally conceived as a *pas de trois* for Conrad, Medora, and Conrad's slave, Ali, (in which the slave does all of the male bravura work). Nadine Meisner , however, notes in her interview with Alexei Ratmansky, Artistic Director of the Bolshoi Ballet, that the dance sequence was indeed a *pas de deux*, created for Pierina Legnani and Alexander Chekrygin in 1899, and became a *pas de trois* in 1915, after Petipa's death. See Prichard, "Le Corsaire," 305; Nadine Meisner, "Alexei Ratmansky: The New Man at the Bolshoi," *Dancing Times* 97/1163 (2007): 13

[10] Maria Babanina, Repetiteur for the Bavarian State Ballet, argues that the female variation from the *pas de deux* was not written by Drigo, but by Boris Fitinhof-Schell, and came from his ballet (now lost) *Cendrillon*. See Ian Palmer, "Bavarian State Ballet *Le Corsaire*," <http://www.ballet.co.uk/magazines/yr_07/may07/ip_rev_bavarian_state_0307.htm.>.

[11] *Le Corsaire: The Kirov Ballet*. Produced by Pyotr Gusev and Oleg Vinogradon, directed by Robin Scott, 86 min. (Elektra Nonesuch, 1989), videocassette 40165-3; *Le Corsaire with American Ballet Theatre*, produced by Judy Kinberg, directed by Matthew Diamond, 113 min. (Chatsworth, CA: Great Performances, Thirteen/WNET, 1999), videodisc, ID5811RDVD.

[12] *F-Po* A.590, vol. 3, 65-224.

[13] Arthur Pougin, *Adolphe Adam: sa vie, sa carrière, ses mémoires artistiques* (Paris, Charpentier, 1877 ; Reprint, Geneva: Minkoff, 1973) 118-9.

[14] Adolphe Adam, autograph composing score, *F-*

*Pn*, *Mus*. MS 2632.

15 *F-Po* A.590, Act I, pp. 323-324.

16 When Adam changes to C major, he repeats the opening motif in the major mode over a tonic pedal, with the same instrumentation as presented in the minor mode.

17 *F-Po* A.590, Act I, pp. 331-33.

18 *F-Po* A.590, Act I, pp. 371-73.

19 *F-Po* A.590, Act I, p. 416.

20 "Au troisième tableau, nous citerons surtout…la scène où elle raconte au Corsaire tout ce qui s'est passé dans l'acte précédent sous les yeux du spectateur." ("From the third tableau, we praise above all…the scene where she recounts to the Corsair everything that transpired in the preceding act under the eyes of the spectator.") *Le Moniteur universel*, 27 January 1856.

# Fantastic geographies: dancing Dido across continents, centuries and genders: from Ancient Rome, through Enlightenment London to Modern America.

*Rachel Duerden and Bonnie Rowell*

## Introduction

2009 marks the 350th anniversary of Henry Purcell's birth; it also (arguably) marks the 320th anniversary of his opera, *Dido and Aeneas*, and the 20th anniversary of Mark Morris's ballet of the same name. It seems timely then to address these shifting landscapes, and to interrogate the nature of their relationship.

Mark Morris's *Dido and Aeneas* embodies a dialogue across not merely centuries but millennia. Human aspiration, failure, passion and duty are open to view and, while customs, ideologies and values shift, the network of connections between these human issues resonates across the years. Narrative transformation opens up new possibilities for engaging with issues that have pertinence to today's world. The libretto of Purcell's opera, by Nahum Tate, draws freely on Virgil's *Aeneid*, itself a robust re-working of earlier myth and legend, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, written centuries before and themselves dependent upon a much older oral tradition. So in the written and oral texts we have shifts and changes. In Morris's ballet, we also have the transformation of narrative through music and through dance, and in the post-modern context of the latter, all the earlier 'layers' of creativity become overlaid and interwoven. In Morris's dance, they are also revealed.

This paper, then deals with the topography of narrative – with Tate's manipulation of Virgil (himself making free with the ancient story), with Purcell's setting of Tate – the particular inflections of the music, the direction of the tragedy, the detail and nuance, and the shifting of planes of existence; and with Morris's reading, arguably responding very much to Purcell.

Another theme will be the 'real' and the fantastic – interleaving these in the bodies of the dancers, in the choreography and in the music; the 'fantastic' actually being the reverse side of the 'real' coin, the human face of evil in the Sorceress and enchantresses. The significance of myth in the context of political realism in both Virgil's and Purcell's narratives needs to be considered in relation to Morris's dealing with those themes. Shifts in attitude towards reality, religion and the forces of nature themselves reflect huge cultural reversals. Morris's choreographic treatment – a very obvious example being his emphasis on hands, feet and eyes throughout – gives the ballet a very grounded and distinctively anti-illusionist feel.

Lastly, we will deal with issues of gender, sexuality and Morris's embodiment of attitudes that can perhaps best be regarded as ethical, as a recipe for how to behave in a modern society. Through narrative transformations, the human condition is variously dealt with in relation to the gods' caprices and to rationalism versus feeling in Virgil; to fate, in Tate's libretto; to the political imperative of national identity and cultural accessibility in Purcell. These things come together in Morris's positive attitudes to, understanding of and affection for human failing and its opposite, resilience or redemption. So just as we see changing values embedded within the creative narrative, so too do we glimpse resonances that are common to all across ages and locations, in particular the ways in which these texts reflect upon, help us understand and celebrate the world. And celebration is to the fore in all these works, even through the tragedy of Dido.

## Political significance

Uncertainty over the exact date of the first performance of Purcell's opera adds a tantalising slipperiness to any attempt to read its political significance, since a few years could see major shifts in the political landscape of England at that time. If the 1689 performance at Mr Josiah Priest's school was in fact a revival, then, as Victor Gavenda writes 'the traditional interpretations of the opera no longer ring true: that it is either an allegory of the united monarchy William and Mary, who began their reign in 1688, or a cautionary tale designed to warn school girls not to lose their hearts to handsome men who arrive by ship' (Gavenda 1994:7). Thus, the

immediate historical context of the work, while means the whole story.

What is clear is that the decade during which the opera was being written and having its first and/or arguably revival performances – the 1680s – saw Britain recovering from civil war, plague, fire, revolution and on the threshold of significant political and social change. The Restoration of 1660 had brought with it the hope for greater coherence and stability and this optimism is also of course echoed in Virgil's time, during the age of Augustus Caesar and with Rome looking forward to a settled period of prosperity following a century of violence and political unrest. David West observes 'The *Aeneid* is, among other things, a search for a vision of peace and order for Rome and for humanity' (2004: x). However, the *Aeneid* is not just political propaganda, neither is it just about duty and virtue, nor even as West says a 'contemplation of the general human predicament. It is also full of individual human beings behaving as human beings still do' (2004: iix). Virgil was after all a realist who recognised human suffering in the face of Empire building. Both these themes – political propaganda and a taste for realism – find resonance in Purcell and Tate's Restoration England and in their treatment of the theme, albeit transformed.

And there is a parallel impulse towards the end of the 17th century in England with the issue of national identity too. One of Purcell's great contributions, claims Charles Hazlewood, was in relation to his 'ability to set heightened speech to music' combining urban vernacular language with the language of the court thus making something at one and the same time poetic, vibrant, but above all accessible (Hazlewood in King-Dabbs, 2009). There are of course clear parallels in Morris's work and we can look to the sailor's song for an obvious comparison. Dido's librettist, Nahum Tate wrote over 200 tavern songs (as well as being poet laureate) and 'come away, fellow sailors' sung in dialect, which it often is (although dialect is interestingly less to the fore in Morris's production) could just as easily be one of them. But Purcell's setting and Morris's interpretation are especially interesting. One of the ways in which Morris enters into dialogue with Purcell is by choreographic equivalence and here is an example with the jaunty hemiola patterns in 'Come away, fellow sailors', neatly pointing up and revealing the contradictory mood of 'But never intending to visit them more'. Here, Morris articulates the same rhythm as the melody on 'never intending to' but phrases it differently to illuminating in important ways, is not by any create the hemiola. The cheeky, playfully puppet-like backward skips across the musical rhythm embody both the jolly mood and the cheerfully unrepentant departure of the sailors at a stroke. The simplicity and economy of this device is characteristic in its transparency, and it can lead the unwary into seeing a 'predictable' relationship between music and dance where there is in fact great subtlety, not only in relation to the music but also to the words and the dramatic significance.

**Music and dance structures**

But a more careful consideration of how Morris uses the music, in particular, how he effects the balance between structure and detail reveals very complex relationships between the scores indeed. The choreographic structure of *Dido and Aeneas* is tight, highlighting the comparable structural tightness of Purcell's opera. It achieves this in a number of ways: not just in terms of the Dido/Sorceress parallel, although that is crucial, but also on other levels, for example the introductions to scenes 1 and 2 show images of clear-sighted progression towards the dramatic situation in the first, and chaotic, blind stumbling into unruliness in the second. The steady exeunt of all but Belinda and Dido at the end of the ballet, too, mirrors the opening entry, although not exactly, and this 'not exactly' aspect is important, in both Morris and Purcell. There are sympathetic vibrations set off, between characters and situations, between music, text and dance that together weave a network of associations: recalling, reminding, not repeating.

Morris's treatment of Purcell's music reveals typical structural clarity; acknowledging and responding to Purcell's lively play with rhythms, cross-phrasing and syncopation by employing choreographic equivalents as we have seen, but not necessarily – or even often – at the same time. A very different, and very tiny moment of music-dance subtlety occurs early on, in Dido's first aria, 'Ah, Belinda'. Purcell's setting of the words 'I am press'd with torment' employs a characteristic device of shifting the natural emphasis of syllables slightly earlier – anticipating the stress – to great expressive effect. The rhythmic pattern here is already angular, with its varied dotted rhythms, and Purcell makes this even more unsettling in its effect by the shift of emphasis (on 'with' and 'ment': the effect is like an *appoggiatura* – 'leaning note'). We might not notice that detail, but will surely understand the

anguish that it embodies. In the choreography, on the last two notes of the inexorably sinking melody ('me-nt'), which Purcell has made like an *appoggiatura*, Dido sinks forward on the bench, placing her hands in front of her, one then the other, softly but precisely on each of these melody notes. Dido's precise articulation of a pattern that is apparently unimportant seems to embody something of the inescapable tragedy of which she is herself the embodiment.

Morris responds to the economy of the musical scoring (strings only – sparse, austere, but passionate) both in the sculptural clarity of his gesture and also on larger structural levels. There is, for example, generally a simple correlation between solo, ensemble, or duet. However, sometimes Morris makes a choreographic parallel between scenes that is not necessarily explicit in the music. For example, the duet for Belinda and the 2nd Woman ('Fear no danger') is balanced by a duet for witches ('But ere we this perform'), but Morris uses choreographic canon in both, even when there is musical canon only in the second. This choreographic fore-shadowing again recalls ideas and situations and knits them together, making sense of the music and the narrative for us. Thus Morris pays close attention to music structuring devices such as canon, unison and parallel melody lines, and creates choreographic equivalents, but not in the same way or at the same time; rather, the connections he makes build stylistic coherence and narrative transparency.

In the opera, there are various devices of structure and harmony and harmonic progression that are characteristic both of the era and of Purcell's style, but amongst these there are specific features that stand out for various reasons. One of these is the orchestration itself, which is stripped down and austere: strings and continuo only, even for the thunderstorm, which is quite a feat of imaginative orchestral manipulation[1]. But it is a miniature, not an oil painting, and it conveys much through little. Morris recognises the potential effectiveness of economy of forces very well indeed and his choreographic palette is equally restricted and expressively concentrated. Acocella (1993) has told us that there are key gestures attached to specific words, which give a transparency to the drama and a strong through-line of movement language that weaves the threads of the pared-down story together. But just as Purcell manipulates the musical raw materials to colour different appearances of the same words in different hues, so too does Morris manipulate the choreographic raw materials. There is not always one gesture to a given word, and it is certainly not always performed by a particular character or number of characters. Both composer and choreographer harness their resources, keep them on tight rein, and concentrate their effectiveness.

A poignant example of this occurs in the tempestuous duet for Dido and Aeneas after Aeneas has told her he must leave. Aeneas's strong, direct and rhythmically precise gesture of one hand into the other palm, arms outstretched on the words 'By all that's good', becomes a soft, melting gesture with the same spatial design but entirely different dynamic inflection when repeated for the last time by Dido. The words are heard three times in all: the first two times (Aeneas then Dido) they fall on a major triad in B flat (2nd inversion: F-B flat-B flat-D). In the final occurrence, Dido's repetition uses the same last three notes (B flat-B flat-D) but these are now, harmonically, in G minor – the key 'in which Dido will die' (Price, 1986: 26). Both music and dance shift in an instant to another dimension of the drama, cutting through the bombast and the posturing of poor Aeneas, and even of Dido's own righteous indignation, to something beyond them both. The parody that is fundamental to the dramatic structure of the opera in the play of courtiers against enchantresses, Dido against the Sorceress, Aeneas against Sailors, is here given a tiny but chilling manifestation in Dido's parodying of Aeneas's protestations.

A significant musical idea in the opera, widely used and in varied contexts, is the interval of a rising diminished fourth. It is most often framed by semitones either side, adding a plangent, almost sobbing aspect to the motif. According to Price this motif is employed frequently by Purcell in his stage works, and is often associated with grief and lament. It is heard in Dido's first aria 'Ah, ah Belinda', and in the final chorus on the words 'soft, soft'. One of the most extraordinary occurrences, though, is when it is transformed from a diminished to a perfect fourth. Again this transformation is effected through the tiniest of means (the lower of the two notes drops a semi-tone), but in that moment the drama is itself transformed, as the alteration of a single note shifts the harmonic landscape. Price describes this alteration of the interval as having the effect of transporting the drama 'to another plane' (1986: 37). This occurs in the final chorus ('With drooping wings') and the motif with changed note is actually in one of the inner voice parts: scarcely discernible at all, at least as a note

in its own right. What we hear, albeit subliminally, is the effect. As Price puts it '[w]ith a single stroke, Purcell removes the sting of death' (1986: 38).

What Purcell has achieved through astonishing subtlety, Morris responds to with equally subtle and telling restraint. He does not copy Purcell, but embodies the musical/dramatic idea. In the choreography, the shift in plane is not drawn attention to at all. The clear, understated and sculptural gestures of the ensemble continue in close connection with the melodic shaping of notes and rests that is a characteristic of this chorus (the rests are 'heart-stopping', as Price writes, like a faltering step or breath). Every one of the five gestures that make up the choreographic phrase here (here x 2, watch, never, part) is transparent in its meaning without being literal. Nonetheless, the knitting together of these gestures with the words, the music and the historical resonance, creates a layering of ideas that crystallises the human dimension of the tragedy with delicacy and pathos.

Tate's words: 'Keep here your watch, and never part.'

| *Purcell's setting of Tate's words* | *Morris's gestures* |
|---|---|
| Keep here, here your watch | Here (1), here (2), watch |
| Keep here, here, keep here your watch | Here (2), here (1), here (2), watch |
| And never, never, never part | Never, never, never (slower with turn), part |
| *And never**, never, never, never part.<br>* perfect fourth | Never, never, never (very slow with turn), part |

**The transformation of myth: magic, science, religious belief or the forces of nature**

The Sorceress and witches may seem somewhat out of place in a classical myth re-telling, but the point is that both Purcell and Morris are re-telling and freely interpreting the ancient story. In Purcell's time witches would be evil but decidedly real people, rather than supernatural creatures. John Buttrey points out that '…in the seventeenth century, witches were being hunted and killed in England… [n]or were these romantic witches either, but real human beings who, through superstition, were branded as having infernal powers which brought evil on the heads of others' (1986: 235). So the fantastical side of *Dido and Aeneas* is actually rooted in the real and everyday just as the heroic characters are.

That the force of evil can overthrow goodness so comprehensively is tragic and frightening indeed, and has universal resonance. Certainly the witches are closer to our understanding when seen as real people who have been demonised by society rather than as Olympian gods, whose aims are so far removed from those of humanity, and whose motives are obscure and actions both pitiless and pointless. In addition, they have powers scarcely understood by humans and that are completely overwhelming – men and women are subject to their whims and powerless to avoid them. Morris and Purcell's witches, on the other hand, are clear about their aims – they hate good, love evil: straightforward, if devastating. 'Destruction's our delight, delight our greatest sorrow' they sing. But it also makes them blackly comedic, embodying the negative image of human belief in the positive will to the good; a chilling mirror-image of ourselves. So the Olympian gods are made real by Tate and given human desires: whereas for Virgil it has been suggested, they are associated with the triumph of rationality over feeling.

Virgil's epic poem retells the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and updates the narrative to the founding of Rome by Aeneas, some seven hundred years prior to the period in which Virgil wrote it (after 29 BC until his death in 19 BC). As an epic poem it is hailed as radical, revolutionary and modern in its form, breaking many of the poetic conventions of the time. Book 4 of the *Aeneid* has as its opening line:

> But the queen had long since been suffering from love's deadly wound, feeding it with her blood and being consumed by its hidden fire.
> (4:1-3) (West's prose translation)

So there we have it: love is passion and passion brings death. And here too is an excuse for placing Dido at the centre of the narrative in later versions. Elsewhere, love is equated with madness and with the loss of sense: there is an extended metaphor that likens Dido to a wounded deer running wildly with the hunter's arrow still in her side. But there are of course complexities: Queen

Dido is tempted by Aeneas, even though she has sworn off men since the death of Sychaeous, her husband. She is tempted she says because of his heroism: he appears descended from the gods, because he shows no cowardice. And her sister supports this by pointing out that Aeneas must indeed be sent by the gods in order to protect them from the warring factions on all sides. It is this argument, and not her personal passion, with which Dido is eventually won over; in effect she acts with the good of the community in mind. And Tate retains this element with the chorus singing 'When monarchs unite, how happy their state; They triumph at once oe'r their foes and their fate'.

Niall Rudd points out that although the story has elements of tragedy in terms of the gods' caprices, the *Aeneid* is also about Jupiter's rational purpose for Rome, as opposed to the irrationality of his wife Juno/women in general (1990: 145-6). 'Come then! No more delay! Women are unstable creatures, always changing!' says Mercury (4:570) as he tries to persuade Aeneas to leave Carthage. This theme is expanded by Ellen Oliensis: 'Virgil associates the feminine with unruly passion, the masculine with reasoned (self-) mastery. In narrative terms, this tends to mean that women make trouble and men restore order' (1997: 303). This is emphatically not so in Morris's version in which the Aeneas character is simplified, and this has the effect of undermining the potency of his motivation. By association, Morris presents rationality itself as an overly simplistic solution to the complexity of human issues. Chaos on the other hand is seen as exciting and creative and altogether more interesting. Morris turns our value judgements upside down.

Oliensis continues, although 'women are 'primitive' in the *Aeneid*, in that they are 'linked to (maternal, material and narrative) origins', Dido is an exception (1997: 303). Dido is unwittingly part of Juno's design, but she is also a more complex character – she acts as both mother and bride, has regal presence and power, as well as youthful and careless passion. Oliensis adds 'But if masculinity means the ability to harness passions, no character in the *Aeneid* is fully masculine – not even Jupiter' (1997: 305).

> Gender roles are complicated and crossed throughout Virgil's poetry, which gives us passionate men, rational women, backward-looking sons, and forward-thinking mothers, as well as their more predictable counterparts!
>
> (Oliensis, 1997: 310).

There is on the face of things then, a grand plan for sexuality and gender representation in Virgil, that is governed by political and social imperative – Aeneas must marry Lavinia and found Rome, signalling the necessary triumph of social duty over passion, just as Augustus must achieve social cohesion and stability in Virgil's own time – but there is also acknowledged the complexity of gender identity. In Morris the complexity of gender identity is of course given centre stage. Dido and the Sorceress transcend gender. A man's embodiment of the role perhaps opens our eyes more to the movement itself and its expressive power, because our concept of Dido is not limited to the image of the specific tragic heroine who may be all too easily read in terms of her femininity. Morris is interested in bigger issues: in the drama and the passion, and gender in today's world it seems, rather than being a heightened political issue, is just an irrelevance, or worse, a distraction from those bigger issues.

**Conclusion – narrative transformations and intertextualities**

Morris's *Dido and Aeneas* knocks our assumptions sideways and celebrates chaos and diversity – but not in a chaotic way. Myth orders the world in a hierarchical way; Morris does it in a more egalitarian way. So, while both Virgil and Morris are reflecting on their own very specific cultures, they are aligned in using similar artistic values, and in making sense of history. Noel Carroll tells us that historical narrative and changes in historical practices reveal both flexibility and rationality in the ways in which societies deal with change. This is primarily effected, he argues, through the interchange between audience and artist, in relation to their shared 'language' but also their ability to change – sometimes in radical ways – their frameworks of communication. Of importance to Carroll's argument is that there is reciprocal communication and therefore stability inherent in artistic practice, alongside an ability to evolve and adapt (Carroll, 2001).

If the first impulse of art is to cohere society, then participating in art activity is to align oneself with society. Historically the changing and developing parameters of art chart a culture's shifting beliefs, understanding, strengths and weaknesses[2]. The complex historical concerns of *Dido and Aeneas* productions show that there are

some elements that pertain specifically to the era in which they are conceived, but we can also marvel at the recurrence throughout history of a great number of themes that deal with political, sexual and spiritual issues that are revealed to us by these other masters in their chosen arenas (music, dance, poetry) and that they have laid before us. Within the context of post-modern art, it is sometimes difficult to remember that culture is primarily an expression of coherence, not disparity, although it may discuss disparity along the way, but Morris it seems never forgets this.



Notes

[1] Thunder machines were popular in the professional theatre at the time, of course, and may have been used in *Dido*. Morris amplifies the thunder effect through the dancers' rhythmically padding feet.

[2] These statements are even true of societies that do not have a concept 'art' in the western sense, but who practice design and craft nonetheless, designs and crafts that are an intense expression of their culture.

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# A dancing body, back and forth across memories.

## Variations for a dancer and a moving scenographic space

*Agathe Dumont & Émilie Martz Kuhn*

The theatrical stage nowadays is a melting-pot of cross-disciplinary forms and new enunciative strategies, of which the dancing body and the use of video screening are integral parts. Those particular types of scenic writing are prone to engender new expressive modes for artists to make use of, in order to try and represent the shared memory of mass crime which characterizes 20th century History. However, when facing a multimedia environment and multimodal writing of memory, the dancing body has to accept a wider sensitive spectrum, allowing for absence and virtual reality. In spite of these shortcomings of reality, physical moves must be physically complete, taking hold of the entire stage, constantly adjusting to comings and goings in time. It is around those issues that we have worked together between France and Canada and more specifically during two stagelabs that took place in Québec in January 2008 and April 2009.

We will try to present our creation process during those periods of work, based on the encounter of dance and video devices. Within the framework of this research, we have been interested in the memories representations of violent geopolitical events in the contemporary performing arts, exploring the stage director's strategies of scenic writing about the disaster memory and more specifically instances where these strategies mix several artistic domains and multimedia techniques. From this, was born the project "J'ai 15 ans de naissance"[1] - exploring one precise event : the genocide of the Tutsi of Rwanda which occurred in 1994 - that we are presenting here through a dialogue between the stage director and her dancer.

The story begins with a French young woman who is 25 years old in April 1994. One morning, while she is in her bathroom, she hears on the radio that President Habyarimana's plane has crashed and that a civil war is beginning in Rwanda. Her life changes from that moment on. The show is made of sequences talking about this young woman's life following the announcement of the genocide, years during which she will be confronted to various memories of the event. In the first workshop, we worked on the relationship between a dancing body and a text projected on a stage. The second laboratory revolved around the relationships between the dancing body and images projected on stage : images of TV news of 1994, images of catastrophes, images of different memorials in Rwanda as well as live images from on-stage cameras.

**Talking about movement...**

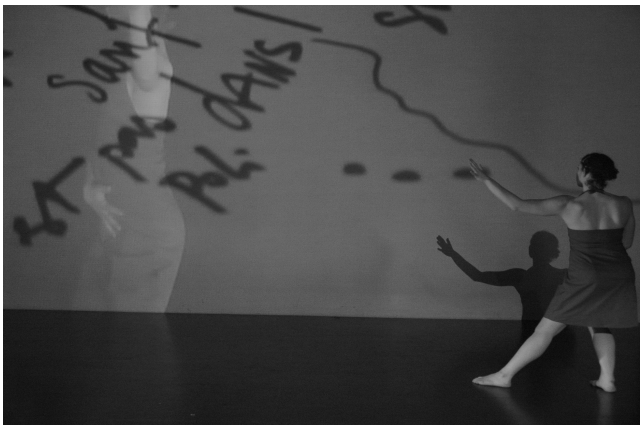
A.D : I remember starting my dance from figures and postures, slowly shifting in space. Then, I progressively linked those figures together and began to bring in qualitities, dynamics and forces: I started to colour them with my musicality and with small and precise details, linked to the character's identity. The first pattern that appeared was the movement initiated by the hands. The hands are a great place of expressiveness. They are connoted to a very feminine gesture, to intimacy. But, starting from the hands, we can also unfold the body in space, opening the arms and the chest. From my hands, I started to develop a dancing language based on very small articular shifts : fingers, wrist, elbow, shoulder; I picture my movement as a wave, spiralling around me and down the whole body. This gesture is a reminder of the character's identity throughout all the performance; the arms, sternum and hands are the prime medium of her expression. As Wifride Piollet, a french pedagogue, uses to say, the hands and the sternum are the place where all the expressiveness of the dancer stands and the arms, she says, are : "L'appui des ailes."[2]

É.M : It's during the first research laboratory that I discovered the interest of creating a show based on dancing. The goal of the research being the discovery of original forms of representation of the memory on stage, the dancing body, which is not based on language, helps me to develop my imagination and to create a complex scenic language. Moreover, Sophie Guhéry says : "Historiquement, la danse a toujours mis en échec la parole : on lui a reconnu la capacité à être

plus efficace que la parole, à être plus immédiate qu'elle, plus rapide même. L'œuvre dansée est plus fugace que les mots." [3] Therefore, dancing gives us the opportunity to participate to a scenic writing of language, more based on sensations. Sequencing a precise sensation in order to create the "tropisms" that are depicted in Nathalie Sarraute's novels and build a new kind of kinesthesic relationship between the audience and the stage.

A.D : Do you consider dance as a narrative, a spatial, dynamic agent ?

É.M : Dancing is a mix of all those characteristics. In our work frame, it becomes a dramatic agent, in a very subtle way, and we need to work more in that direction. The dancing takes in charge a story, which is the sub-text of the creation. The dancing body tells the story of the 25-years-old woman and the events that are going to change her life. The dancing "filters" the reality. In other words, it allows me to take a distance from reality so that we can approach it, which is really interesting when you choose to work on subjects that are usually designated as "unspeakable". Conversely, to push furthermore his attempt to bypass reality, the dancing body must become abstract in order to actively participate, along with the other elements of the representation, in building a scenic space that will be the one for the memory to express.



©Agathe Dumont during the first laboratory. Photography by Émilie Martz Kuhn, 2008.

A.D : I am interested in working on memory. I like to cross boundaries and sometimes being forced to overpass certain physical limits. It's away challenging for me to go deeper in the dancing material and to try to take some risks. I find our topic violent and I feel that I need a strong energy to face it, to be present and say something about it. Furthermore, I'm also always interested, as a dancer and as a scholar, in working with people from different fields and I particularly like to work on the idea of theatricality in dance. On the other hand, as Sophie Guhéry says, I'm pretty sure that dance can bring a very peculiar body on stage and above all can "say" a lot, beyond words. When brought to face images, the body has to be concurrently a dancing presence and a dancing memory. Not only does this destabilize dance but also its expressive resources. Could those two practices, once combined, disclose new stage languages and unknown spaces for memory representation, where the dancing body would be the prime medium ?

**Body memory**

The issue of memory and body or the body memory arrived very early in the process because it asked for adjustments in our communication system on stage! For a dancer, the memory of the body primarily means something very specific, referring to physiological problems, and it's central to every dancer's work, during trainings as well as during performances. Beyond the idea of recording something, the way we do it and the way we use the body memory is a problem. We must differentiate two things. On one hand, the concrete memory of the body, how it is to "remember" something, how do we develop reflexes and knowledge. On the other hand, we have the body as a symbolic representation of memory, here through the dance medium. The goal within the creation process was to go easily from a dancing body as a dramaturgic agent, to a body that is moving away from its own physical dimension, by participating, for example, in the representation of the functioning of the memory itself on stage. The dancing body has to be able to represent a wounded, bruised body. One that has marks and scars from the catastrophy. The body should create reminiscence for the audience, like for example, in Sasha Waltz's work *Körper*, on Birkenau's deported during World War II. With this process, the body becomes itself a memory trigger for the spectator, a memory-medium on stage. On the other hand, The intimate memory comes from a self-construction that every individual makes of its past. The intimate memory participates in the building of the collective memory, or the collective memorie*s*. When they are combined and going in the same direction, they give birth to the collective memory of

an event. In the first scene of the show, the main character is in her bathroom. It's a normal day, she is washing, listening to the news on a small radio. Amongst a flow of informations, she hears about the Rwanda genocide. This scene is the presentation of the character, the audience is brought in her intimate space, her habits, her routine, through a choreography based on small everyday-like gestures, from the hands and the upper body. Suddenly, the space is invaded by an external world : when she turns on the radio, the place disintegrates and the body opens in space as if she wanted to push the walls of her small bathroom apart : the collective contaminates the intimate, they get to overlap.

**Dialogue on memory**

É.M : In this work, do you have the feeling to dance part of the character's memory?

A.D : I find it very hard to figure out what could be "dancing her memory". When dancing, I do not separate into what comes from the memory and what comes from the "here and now". Everything is inextricably intertwined. It is also related to the fact that the physical memory works that way. All the information is stored in the perceptive memory and the procedural memory. These are resources; I do not call for special memories to be involved in the movement. Everything for me in dancing is more or less acting now, performing here, in front of you. It's the whole scene that creates the memory, I don't think that dance achieves it on its own. On the other hand, do you think that *one* particular dancer can personify or embody a shared memory?

É.M : Without the intimate memory there is no collective memory. I want the dancing body to be alone on the stage so that it could represent the collective as multiple. I think that one body condenses or epitomizes many bodies in a symbolic way. The young woman dances sometimes her own memory and sometimes participates in representing the occidental collective memory of the genocide. But all of this is imbricated. As a dancer, do you think these ideas are coherent?

A.D : It's really hard for me to feel dancing as incorporated in a shared memory. My private memory is always very present, due to the solo form and to the fact that I, myself, am creating and dancing this choreography. Everything started from my intimacy and from internal sensations of the events you were describing, the images you were showing me etc. I couldn't say that the movement really emerged from the images you've shown me in a mimetic way or in order to give a meaning to movement. At the beginning, I would rather invest the body with a meaningless energy. Dance is put at stake in front of the images and something appears from the combination of the two. We're really working here on peculiarity and kept in emotions which can be translated into a dancing movement. Shared memories of the genocide are always present but more or less as superimposed on dancing. The scenographic environment gives spatial and temporal marks on a shared memory, whereas dance, through its private memory, refuses to give landmarks. In our work the main stimulus is repetition. Not repetition as reproduction but, as Deleuze would say, as difference: a refrain, haunting the dance and progressively and almost invisibly deteriorating. In our improvisations, two memories and two spaces interfere : a memory of bodily sensations and a memory caused by outside parameters. Are those concepts familiar to you ?

É.M : I will base my answer on the dialectic of the inside and the outside, as developed by Gaston Bachelard in *Poetique De L'espace*. More specifically, I will use his conception of an "elastic space". Internal and external must not be opposed, but they should be, in my opinion, put into an elastic relation : the inside and the outside should be under a constant tension, on the scenographic space management level but also on the dancing body level, which should signify the inside by the outside or the outside by a gesture, a movement that acquires its dynamic from the inside : "L'être est tour à tour condensation qui se disperse en éclatant sa dispersion qui reflue vers le centre. L'en-dehors et l'en-dedans sont tous deux intimes. Ils sont toujours prêts à se renverser, à échanger leur hostilité. S'il y a une surface" limite entre un tel dedans et un tel dehors, cette surface est douloureuse des deux côtés." [4] This allows us to develop the idea of a human being in a spiral form, as it is called by Bachelard, which could be summed up in our work by the idea of a spiral body, even a spiral memory.

A.D : This idea of "spiralling" is indeed relevant. It could be fundamental to construct one's motivity. Moreover, it's interesting because you talk about the spiral as an internal/external movement and I consider it to be an up and down movement or

vertical/horizontal. For you, it's a spatial pattern, for me it's primarily related to the body-space, starting from the backbone/ pelvis area, and then spreading.

É.M : This elastic space management is based on the real-time image projection of your body on stage. This process allows us to enlarge the intimate space. Do you think that the creation and extension of your movements are influenced by the location of the camera that films you live on stage?

A.D : Throughout the beginning, the movement is written. I have set it and it has not varied over the last takes. I always do the same gestures, in the same space and during the same time. But when the live camera gets closer, I tend to change my motion. While my kinesphere has not changed in this scene, I have the sensation of moving in a constricted kinesphere. Therefore, I increasingly keep on separating all the body joints: hand, wrist, elbow, shoulder. More and more, I contract every small muscles, pushing them apart as to make more space inside the body. As the space to move in seems too tight, I start the movement from elsewhere.

The presence of the camera, in a way, refocuses the choreography and my imagination. This proximity brings me close to the appearance of a mental space, tangled and tight. The images also creates another kinesphere. In an article in the dance journal *Nouvelles de danses*, Johanne Birringer brings up the idea of an extrasensible kinesphere, which I really do feel when I'm dancing so close to the camera.[5]

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**Dancing memories : the memorial**

In a second scene, the character is in a memorial in Rwanda, facing what should be the official representation of memory in a society while her own feelings and memories urgently emerge. The whole stage is soon invaded by images, mixing excerpts from various scenes filmed in Rwanda during the summer 2008. In this scene, we wanted to work on speed. In the field of the studies that are currently made on memory management in our contemporary Western societies, a lot of thinkers are expressing the hypothesis that the relationship we have with the memory could be biased or transformed by the speed of the actual and continuous media information flow. These brought us to consider a couple of issues concerning the use of video on stage from a pragmatic point of view. We had to manage the very high speed of the projected images as well as the power of the dancing body. How could we make them work together? Paul Virilio's analysis on speed and memory were interesting for this research. His point of view is that modern society is more concerned with going faster than with keeping things protected. Ideas, people, carried away by a torrent of images, lead to a loss of memories and to a society that is no longer concerned with recollection. To go faster, humans prefer to forget. However and to nuance this text, we could say that in our case "to go fast" is not a synonym of "to forget" but of " to pile on", even though speed has a tendency to erase the physicality of memory: "Je rappelle que si nous sommes homme ou femme, nous le sommes dans un corps propre. Or, le monde propre est liquidé par la rapidité absolue du feed-back. […] Après l'élimination du monde propre, l'élimination dans l'instantanéité de l'échange, il y a la possibilité de l'élimination du corps propre. C'est-à-dire une perte de temporalité propre du corps, une temporalité qui est limitée.Un individu a une temporalité comme il a un âge ou un sexe […]."[6] Furthermore, speed in our work is a way to express multiplicity. We can think of speed not only in its relationship to time but also as multidirectional rhizomatic lines.

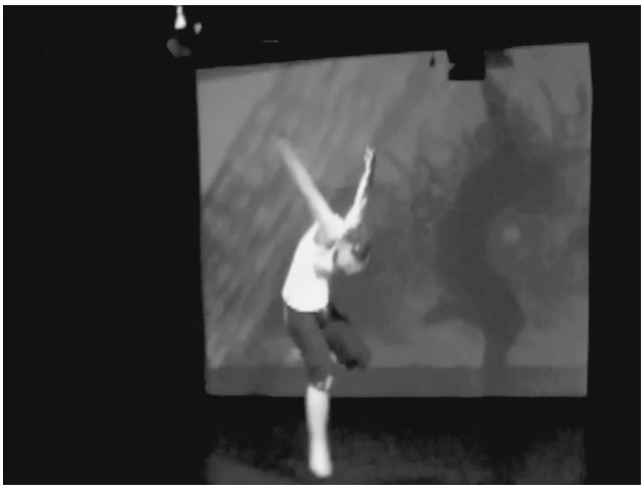
**Dialogue on images and speed**

É.M : When you can't see the image on stage although it is present, how do you think about the image and its speed in relation to the choreographic writing?

A.D : In all cases, I "see" the image because it colours the stage, almost invisibly. Compared with a more

traditional scenery, a virtual space sharpens and stimulates more deeply our sensations : I'm very alert because my environment can change at any time. The image flow creates a zapping-space. The body surfs on it and either sustains or counteracts it ; the movement flow can be a countercurrent to the flow of images. On the other hand, the cycle of the images goes on and on and becomes like a musical score that dance can follow.

É.M : Looking further on this question of speed, it appeared that, when I was looking at the scene being staged, when I was looking at the construction of a combined vocabulary between the dance and the images, I was feeling uncomfortable : I just couldn't follow what was happening on stage. I had the feeling that the stage was reaching a saturation point, and this led to nowhere.



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**Dancing to forget ?**

The third scene of the project takes place in a bar. A probably drunk young woman, alone, seems to seek a companion for the night, dancing, completely lost, finally ending up on the ground. In the background, on many TV screens, archives images of the Hiroshima bombing are projected and accompanied by the ironic music "Enola Gay" by OMD, while on another screen we can see the training of the Rwanda milicia in 1994. Discrepancy is the heart of the scene and it allows us to open our eyes, to open up the perspective of the audience, and maybe to renew his/her perspective on images that he or she has already seen.

However, we have to be aware that images are stronger than the real body. Sometimes, the body wants to fight against them, sometimes the image stops the flow of movements, as if it was stopping the process of recalling a memory. Moreover, the image hurries the body as if it had to tell or to dance everything in a very short time, dance is exhausted. This scene should also engender questions around the idea of a body truly marked by its memory. The trace, for example, is what's left of the genocidary event : it becomes a sign, it is a mark. A precious mark that can stand as a proof of what happened, and that stays. The memories come back because the events leave some memorial traces. In our work, the stage is supposed to be a gathering of traces that are left and managed differently.

**Dialogue on traces**

É.M : When dancing, do you have the impression of creating a new space each time, or are you considering the stage as a palimpsest charged with traces on which you come back over and over again?

A.D : Dance is *the* artistic medium which leaves no marks. Even though we can score dance trough systems or record it through video, the dancing body is strongly ephemeral and improvisation reinforces it. However, this idea of a palimpsest-like space is really interesting. Physically, I would say that this is linked to going back and forth is space, to impress the movement in air, always with the same rhythm. The palimpsest acts as a repetition. Repetition includes : duplication, accumulation or transposition, but also deterioration. Repetition plays with memory: we can repeat things to remember them, to write them, to root them in the body. Repetition is energy, physical exertion. What is the most interesting in repetition is not one's ability to reproduce a given pattern, but their intelligence to slightly transform it, with the thinnest qualitative, rhythmical variations the movement can hold, – the chromatic scales of movement, would Rudolf Laban say – and above all this, there is in repetition the possibility of an accident. In repetition dance founds forces to generate the movement, to stop it, to speed it as if it could affect temporality.

É.M : The trace materializes itself on stage simply through the work done on real time images. We can sequence and create slowmotions on the projected image. We are able to observe the dancing body and at the same time the slowmotion of the movement that is projected. The spectator's eye goes back and forth between the two bodies : the projected body and the

one that is on stage. The dancing body is repeated, superimposed on the image a few seconds before. Does this video device requires a lot physical investment ?

A.D : The closer the camera, the more I feel restrained. Therefore, when the device is allowing a real time bitmapped body representation, it's harder and more complex for the dancing body to move. First of all, once you've experienced the system, it's clear that the separation between the perceived body and the ideal body is blurred. Furthermore, everything is dissociated and reversed. When silhouetted against the screen, one you don't feel the internal sensation of movement in the same way : you can directly see what you are doing. Most of the time, I feel that video and dancing together in real time create a space for the junction of two writing systems.

**As a conclusion**

In the first stagelab we had worked on traces, through the idea of writing and projected texts. It is important to keep in mind the idea of a multidimensional score where improvisation could not only exist in dancing but also in the projection and the transformation of the images on the stage. One of our most interesting and sensible experiment occurred when we chose to combine our improvisations and to set up a scene where the dance really met with a space being drawn in the meantime. The dancer improvises in front of the screen where is projected her real-time image as well as a text written exactly at the same moment and following the dance. The dancer follows the text, as a score, while the drawings build a space around the dancer. Many traces are left, providing a score and being in the meantime its sensible and sensitive interpretation.



Notes

[1] The title of this project cannot be translated.

[2] "Supporting the wings" (Translation by A. Dumont) in Wilfride Piollet, *Rendez-vous sur les barres flexibles* (Paris : Sens&Tonka, 2005), 41.

[3] Sophie Guhéry, "La danse contemporaine, laboratoire d'une action nouvelle? " in *L'annuaire théâtral*, No. 36, (2004): 46.

> " Historically, dance has always refused words. It is well know that dancing is more effective, more immediate, and faster than words. The danced work of art is more fleeting than words." (Translation by É. Martz Kuhn).

[4] Gaston Bachelard, *Poétique de l'espace* (Paris : Quadrige / PUF, 2001), 196.

> "The human being, in turn by turns, condensation that disperses itself by breaking out its dispersion, which flows back to the center. The inside and the outside are both intimate. They are always ready to reverse, to exchange hostilities. If there is a limit surface between this inside and this outside, this surface is painful on its both sides." (Translation by É. Martz Kuhn).

[5] Johanne Birringer, "La danse et la perception interactive" in *Interagir avec les technologies numériques*, edited by Florence Corin, *Nouvelles de Danse* (Bruxelles : Contredanse, 2004), 99-113.

[6] Paul Virilio, "Vitesse et oubli", interview by Bernard Degroot, in *Alternatives Théâtrales*, No. 51 (May 1996) : 6.

> " It should be remembered that we are born male or female each in a specific and real body. But, the absolute speed of feed-back is getting rid of the real world. […] There is […] a loss of the body's real and own temporality, only a limited temporality is left. Every human being has their own temporality as he or she is male or female, or has an age. […]." (Translation by A. Dumont).

# The City as Muse: How St. Petersburg Inspired Petipa

*Cheryl Belkin Epstein*

One of the questions posed by the organizers of this conference was: "How does place change the way we dance?" In this presentation I will attempt to answer that question in relationship to a specific geographic place and the dance of a specific choreographer. The place is the city of St Petersburg, Russia and the choreographer is Marius Petipa.

When Marius Petipa arrived in Russia in 1847 at the age of twenty-nine, he was a dancer and choreographer in the tradition of Romantic ballet.[1] In St. Petersburg he developed what has come to be known as the "Classical" style of ballet because it reflects classical ideals of balance, harmony and order, the same ideals upon which the city of St. Petersburg itself was built. What I am suggesting is that it was not a coincidence that Petipa developed the "Classical" style in St Petersburg. Rather the development occurred because of the influence of the layout and design of the city. In other words, the place changed the dance. I intend to illustrate this by considering the visual elements of the city and comparing them to similar elements that began to appear in Petipa's work after years there.[2] This presentation is part of a longer paper. This afternoon I will simply highlight some of the key aspects of the argument.

St. Petersburg, Russia was established in 1703 by Tsar Peter the Great on swampland where the Neva River runs into the Baltic Sea. In his book, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia,* (New York: Picador, 2002), Orlando Figes discusses in detail the creation and development of the city. Peter had travelled widely as a young man and as a result had come to see Russia as backward. Wanting to break with the Russian past, he was intent on creating a European city whose citizens would "leave behind the 'dark' and 'backward' customs of the Russian past in Moscow and …enter the modern western world of progress and enlightenment" (Figes 10). As Tsar he was able to impose his vision. It is a fascinating story. The city was built from scratch at a furious pace and huge human cost.[3] Nevertheless, using European architects and engineers, Peter succeeded in building a city that was a "work of art" and theatrical in its affect (Figes 8).

> Petersburg was conceived as a composition of natural elements- water, stone and sky. This conception was reflected in the city panoramas of the eighteenth century, which set out to emphasize the artistic harmony of all these elements….But Peter was eclectic in his architectural tastes and borrowed what he liked from Europe's capitals (Figes 8).

In spite of the varied styles and influences, a unique form of unity was imposed through decrees that regulated building facades, roof lines and decorative effects.

> …despite its obvious borrowings, the city had its own distinctive character, a product of its open setting between sea and sky, the grandeur of its scale, and the unity of its architectural ensembles, which lent the city a unique artistic harmony….Whereas older European cities had been built over several centuries, ending up at best as collections of beautiful buildings in diverse period styles, Petersburg was completed in fifty years and according to a single set of principles. Nowhere else, moreover, were these principles afforded so much space. Architects in Amsterdam and Rome were cramped for room in which to slot their buildings. But in Petersburg they were able to expand their classical ideals. The straight line and the square were given space to breathe in expansive panoramas. With water everywhere, architects could build mansions low and wide, using their reflections in the rivers and canals to balance their proportions, producing an effect that is unquestionably beautiful and grandiose. Water added lightness to the heavy baroque style, and movement to buildings set along its edge. The Winter

> Palace is a supreme example. Despite its immense size it almost feels as if it is floating on the embankment of the river; the syncopated rhythm of the white columns along its blue façade creates a sense of motion as it reflects the Neva floating by (Figes 9).

The multiple columns of the Winter Palace are a simple structural element that is repeated over and over again in the composition of the building. As will be discussed later in the paper, this repetition of a simple structural element through the repetition of a simple choreographic element, together with the lining up of the corps de ballet in multiple lines like columns, performing movements that suggest the shimmering effect of the columns' reflection in the water will, I suggest, appear in "The Kingdom of the Shades" scene in Act II of Petipa's *La Bayadère*.

I remind you that Peter's intention in creating St. Petersburg was to mould its people. George Balanchine, the Russian/American choreographer who is considered to be the inheritor of the Petipa tradition, has acknowledged the inspirational power of St. Petersburg. In an interview about Tchaikovsky, he referred to himself as a "Petersburgian" which, he explained, "is not the same as being a Russian" and furthermore declared "how good, how just is it that Tchaikovsky, along with Pushkin and Stravinsky, was a Petersburger" (Volkov 71).

> Petersburg is a very original city, one that resembles no other. It was built in an original way; all at once, as if it rose miraculously. Tsar Peter the Great gave the order and it sprang up! That's why Petersburg had straight, beautiful streets. And they were always concerned with proportion there. There was a special imperial decree that the height of the buildings could not exceed the width of the streets. For instance, I lived on the famous Theater Street, next to the Alexandrinsky Imperial Theater. A small street, but of extraordinary beauty, and why is that? The length of the street is 220 meters, the width 22 meters, and the height of the buildings on the street is also 22 meters. It's not hard to figure out why the street is so fantastic! (Volkov 50).

In these statements Balanchine implies that the beauty of the city contributed to the artistry of these Petersburgians. Would this not also apply to the city's adopted son, Petipa? Balanchine goes on to say that "the architecture of a city isn't enough – the people have to be lively, too" because "a city dresses up in its people" (Volkov 105) but perhaps, as was intended by Peter, the aesthetic liveliness of the people had also been informed by the urban design.

Marius Petipa came to Russia as a dancer. The son of a ballet master, he was born in Marseille, France in 1818 (Krasovskaya 150) and brought up in the French tradition of dance. He began his dance training at the age of seven under the rigorous tutelage of his father, Jean-Antoine Petipa (Petipa, *Memoirs*, 2) and continued to study with him and dance in his ballets for many years. In addition to his own choreography, Jean-Antoine would, during his long career, remount many of the famous ballets of the time including works by Pierre Gardel and Jean Dauberval, as well as the masterpieces of the Romantic era, *La Sylphide* by Filippo Taglioni and *Giselle* by Coralli and Perrot (Babsky 147). As a young adult Marius Petipa also studied in Paris with Auguste Vestris who was one of the finest teachers of the age and "had an intimate knowledge of the French school of dance from Noverre's classical rules to the most recent innovations" and who "was a strict custodian of the academic tradition" (Krasovskaya 149). So from an early age, Marius was steeped in the repertoire of the Romantic era. Moreover, his knowledge of the Romantic tradition would deepen upon his arrival in Russia. He not only danced in all the principal roles in the ballets of Jules Perrot, but shortly after his arrival he also began to assist Perrot, and later his successor Arthur St. Leon, two acknowledged masters of the choreographic art of the Romantic period (Slonimsky, *Petipa* 101-103).

Petipa had begun choreographing around the age of sixteen when he began his independent career at the theatre in Nantes (Krasovskaya 149). He had some early success mounting the ballets of others (Krasovskaya 150-151), but did not achieve his first important success as an original choreographer, however, until 1862 with his production of La *Fille du Pharaon* (Slonimsky, *Petipa* 101).This ballet sat comfortably in the Romantic mould. Set in the exotic location of an Egyptian desert, it was melodramatic with elements of the supernatural. Yuri Slonimsky, the Russian dance historian, wrote:

> On "The Daughter of Pharoah" Petipa lavished his full store of knowledge and experience; everything he had seen and learned from his teachers in Nantes, Bordeaux, and during his work side by side with Saint-Léon and Perrot…. There is not a single new idea in this first of Marius Petipa's large-scale works. All of it is permeated by a disciple-like devotion to his master-predecessors (Slonimsky, *Petipa* 102).

What he did add, however, that astonished the audience at its première, was monumentality, created by massing the dancers on the stage and providing them with a grand accumulation of choreographic material (Slonimsky, *Petipa* 103). Petipa had been in St. Petersburg for fifteen years and his choreography, although still tied to the Romantic narrative, had begun to mirror the monumental look of his adopted city.

Neither in his memoirs, nor in those parts of his diaries translated into English, does Petipa reflect on his personal response to the architecture and design of St. Petersburg. His memoirs were written late in life when he was embittered and disillusioned in order to "justify his position" (Moore, editor, in introduction to Petipa, *Memoirs* viii-ix). Although he speaks of his arrival in St. Petersburg, it is only to recount the theft of his hat, the unusual carriages and his gratitude to the Director of the Imperial Theatre for an advance on his salary (Petipa *Memoirs* 22-25). Although he speaks of his work in the memoirs, he does not speak of his creative process. Similarly, those of his diaries that have been translated into English are also concerned primarily with day-to-day matters, money, and complaints against his colleagues. Although there exist archival documents that reveal that he worked "out the groupings and floor plans of at least some of his dances on paper, the diaries do not record his thoughts at the time of such explorations or explain the choices he ultimately made" (Garafola in Introduction to Petipa *Diaries* 14). Fortunately other visitors to the city were more reflective and did record their responses to the beauty of the city, in particular to the theatricality of its design.

> As the French writer Madame de Staël said on her visit to the city in 1812, 'here everything has been created for visual perception'. Sometimes it appeared that the city was assembled as a giant mise-en-scène – its buildings and its people serving as no more than theatrical props. European visitors …were particularly struck by the strange unnatural beauty of its ensembles and often compared them to something from the stage. 'At each step I was amazed by the combination of architecture and stage decoration', wrote the travel writer the Marquis de Custine in the 1830s. 'Peter the Great and his successors looked upon their capital as a theatre.' (Figes 7-8).

Even though he did not write about it, it is unlikely that Petipa was not also struck by the visual impact of the city. He had borrowed from the theatrical aesthetics of the ballets from his past. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to conclude that he had also started to borrow from the theatrical aesthetic of the city itself, an aesthetic that was monumental in scope.

His next enduring success was not until 1869 when he created *Don Quixote*. This ballet was also a Romantic ballet. Set in Spain, it was a comedy about the attempts of a young barmaid, Kitri, and her lover, Basilio, to escape the marriage arranged for her by her father. High-spirited and fun, it appealed to the bourgeois audiences in Moscow where it was originally performed. Two years later when it was performed in St. Petersburg, Petipa revised it considerably in order to appeal to the more refined aesthetic sense of the St. Petersburg audience, the aesthetic sense that had been manipulated by Peter through the physical structure and design of the City. He toned down the comedy and introduced more balletic steps into the Spanish dances (Roslavleva 97). He also adjusted the story to make way for a dream sequence.

> Don Quixote's interest in Kitri was no longer that of a patron: he mistook her for (his beloved) Dulcinea, and thus the double role was taken by one ballerina… providing her with more varied material. The accent was now made on the big classical scene of Don Quixote's dream, where Kitri-Dulcinea was surrounded by a large corps de ballet and seventy-two children costumed as cupids. ((Roslavleva 97).

In spite of these modest "classical" changes, the ballet was never as successful in St. Petersburg as it had been in Moscow (Roslavleva 97). The profound influence of St. Petersburg on the development of the classical style would not become fully apparent until his next major ballet, *La Bayadère*, was created in 1877.

The bayadère, or temple dancer, in the ballet *La Bayadère* is Nikiya, whose life must be devoted to the temple. In spite of her dedication to the temple, the temple priest, the villain in the story, desires her; she is in love with Solor, a young warrior. Solor swears his love to her, but dazzled by the beauty and wealth of Gamzatti, the Rajah's daughter, Solor betrays Nikiya by agreeing to marry Gamzatti. The temple priest grows suspicious when Nikiya refuses him and in his jealousy sets in motion a chain of events that results in the death of Nikiya. The plot is pure Romanticism and the Dionysian flavour of the choreography in the first act reflects this. In the second act, however, a purely classical style of dance begins to emerge.

Solor, deeply remorseful over the death of Nikiya, smokes opium. In his drug induced trance he imagines he sees Nikiya whose image begins to refract and divide. The scene begins with one dancer descending a ramp at the back of the stage. She does an arabesque penchée, leans back then takes a few steps as another dancer appears and together they repeat the sequence, then another dancer appears and another as the line makes its way down the ramp and continues in a zig zag pattern onto the stage floor. The structural element is a simple choreographic sequence. In the original production, Petipa used forty-eight dancers (Carreiro 2) so the structural element of this first section was repeated forty-eight times. When all the dancers who are dressed in short white tutus have arrived on the stage floor, they organize themselves into equal lines, perpendicular to the front of the stage, like the white columns of the buildings of St. Petersburg. As they begin to bourrée in fifth position, they resemble the shimmering reflections of the city's columned buildings in the waters of the city's canals, water that can be reached by descending ramps that run down the sides of the embankments. The dancers' movements are both simple and majestic. Their harmonious arrangement is orderly and balanced. The scene does not advance the story. The beauty is in the structure and the form. It is pure dance. The influence of the city's architecture in the emergence of this purer style can, I think, be clearly detected in the opening of this scene. Following the opening sequence, the members of the corps de ballet divide into two lines, one on each side of the stage, perpendicular to the front. The soloists then begin a series of variations that take place between these two columns.

I now want to refer back to Theatre Street mentioned by Balanchine. The street is known as Theatre Street because the Alexandrinsky Theatre is located at the end of the street. On either side of the street are two identical buildings one of which housed the Imperial Ballet School (today known as the Vaganova School). The street is also sometimes referred to as Rossi Street after the architect who designed it. In his article "Balanchine: The Early Years", Yuri Slonimsky elaborated on the power of this street to inspire.[4] Though he was not writing about Petipa or *La Bayadère*, Slonimsky's observation can be applied profitably to both. He makes a direct connection between the architecture of Rossi Street in which the Imperial Ballet School of St. Petersburg was located, and the development of classical ballet, something Balanchine did not do. As a dancer and ballet master in the Imperial Theatre and as a teacher in the Imperial School from 1855 (Slonimsky, *Petipa* 101), Marius Petipa would have passed down the street innumerable times and thus been subjected to the phenomenon that Slonimsky describes.

> Wherever students or performers living and rehearsing on Rossi Street might turn…they cannot remain indifferent to Rossi's distinctive and …musical sense of rhythm….The entire street consists of a single building on each side. It is as if one were proceeding triumphantly along a broad corridor to the Muses. As one approaches the theatre, the columns, after fusing with each other, disassociate themselves. They unexpectedly become alive, acquire an alternating cadence with the windows and become participants in the musical-rhythmic movement….The passersby are caught up in a presentation. They are infected with the music and rhythm of the architectural ensemble and penetrate into its simplicity and majesty. It begins to seem that in the repetitions of columns on both sides, Rossi (the architect) has constructed, with the art of a ballet master, the rows of a corps de ballet.

> And in the spaces between them, in the window recesses, it is as if he has selected the "places" of the soloists contributing their "voices" to the measured, uniform pace of the columns. This ensemble seems related somehow to the composition of the corps de ballet of classical productions.
>
> When a student absorbs this orderly procession from day to day and from year to year, he becomes possessed by its beauty. Without Rossi Street our ballet, it seems to me, would be poorer. The dancing of the finest ballerinas of the city on the Neva is somehow indebted to it and its inimitable lines. (Slonimsky, *Balanchine* 4)

If, as Slonimsky states, one street can inspire such an orderly and profoundly satisfying procession (and what he describes can be seen in "The Kingdom of the Shades" scene), what of the effect of the entire city?

Another aspect of the relationship between the classical design of St.Petersburg and the classical design of Petipa's choreography that requires further exploration is his use of triangular arrangements of dancers. Throughout St. Petersburg, its multi-columned buildings are usually surmounted by triangular pediments. Many of these pediments are decorated with simple medallions, however, at least some are filled with sculptural reliefs that echo the designs that Pheidias, the sculptor of Antiquity, created for the western pediment of the Parthenon and the eastern pediment of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia. Pheidias solved the problem of designing within a triangular shape by placing a reclining figure at each end, whose toes reached into the bottom corners, and then adding figures that gradually ascend until they arrive at the central figure of a fully erect god. It is a stable composition that would become a standard not only in architecture but in painting as well. This arrangement is found throughout Petipa's classical ballets.[5] One can see this triangular arrangement in the pediment of the North Portico of St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg where the figures gradually ascend to the central standing figure, no longer Zeus but Christ. Petipa used this triangular arrangement extensively in his classical ballets, substituting at the apex of the triangle the ballerina, ballet's equivalent of a god, often in a partnered lift that further emphasized the triangular shape. The trianglular form is another design element that Petipa may have incorporated into his choreography after having been exposed to all the triangular pediments atop buildings throughout St. Petersburg.

Others have attributed Petipa's development in Russia to factors other than the city's design. Vera Krasovskaya in her article on Marius Petipa in the *International Encyclopedia of Dance* outlines the various influences on Petipa.

> The art of Petipa was a harmonious blend of various influences: Jean-Georges Noverre's classical academicism; Jean Dauberval's innovations in the field of bourgeois comedy of manners; the structural forms of dance elaborated by Pierre Gardel, master of pre-Romantic ballet; and the wide-ranging searchings of the Romantics. A synthesis of the various schools and styles had formed a solid foundation for the development of Petipa's gift. The favourable climate he found in Russia, even though he arrived at a mature age, stimulated the full flowering of his talent. (Krasovskaya 149)

The favourable climate to which she refers is usually understood as the full resources of the Imperial Theatre system, as well as the wealth of talented and well trained dancers produced by the Imperial Theatre School. The Soviet dance historian, Alexander Demidov, attributes Petipa's development to the "powerful influence of Russian culture" that he absorbed "through some kind of complex internal process" (Demidov 2). Demidov locates the source of Russian culture in its national character and folk traditions as expressed through its folk dance. He believes that it is Russia's specialized form of folk dance that Petipa absorbed and that exerted such a powerful influence on his choreography.

> A special stratum of Russian folk culture is represented by khorovod dances- big ensembles with very complex patterns of movement and unexpected transitions from one type of movement into another, forming new and beautiful compositions every time. The dances performed by the popular

> Berezka Ensemble are based on ancient Russian khorovod dances preserved in folk traditions up to the present time. And even today, when seeing these dances performed by amateur artists, one can detect what a great role they have played in forming the unique art of the mass corps de ballet classical dance. Everyone is always amazed by the dances of the corps de ballet in Russian classical ballets: *Swan Lake, The Sleeping Beauty, La Bayadère*. One is amazed not only by the co-ordination of the dancers but by the flawless compositional structure, at once enchantingly simple and elegant, by the artfulness of the transitions, by the beautiful, expressive groups….The khorovod culture of the past provided the principles of complex polyphonic compositional design that are typical of classical Russian choreography (Demidov 3-4).

To the favorable climate Petipa found in St. Petersburg and the influence of the khorovod should be added the inspirational aspects of the physical structure of the city itself. The City of St. Petersburg was not the only influence on Petipa, nor does it account for all the unique qualities of the Classical style, but the monumentality of Petipa's later works as well as the explorations of geometry and the sense of order and balance that began with *La Bayadère* and continued in his subsequent ballets can, I think, be traced to the look of the city. The place changed the dance and ballet was enriched as a result.



## Notes

[1] There is some confusion surrounding Petipa's birth. In his memoirs he says he was born in 1822 (Petipa *Memoirs* 1). This is not correct. Other sources suggest he was born in 1819. Scholars today, however, are agreed that he was born in 1818 (Koegler 65), therefore all references in this paper to Petipa's age are calculated using this date.

[2] The presentation given at the conference was illustrated with slides and a video excerpt that could not be included in the body of this text.

[3] For further information on the creation of the city, see Iurii Egorov, *The Architectural Planning of St. Petersburg,* translated by Eric Dluhosch (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1969).

[4] It seems Slonimsky was the first to identify the powerful influence of Rossi Street (sometimes referred to as Theater Street). Slonimsky interrupts his article on Balanchine's early years (published in 1976) to discuss the street and its powers. After suggesting the ballerinas are indebted to it, he then wonders if Balanchine is not also. Did Balanchine read the article his friend had written about him, incorporate the idea into his own thinking then reveal it in the much later interview with Volkov on Tchaikovsky? It is difficult to know but Slonimsky's elaboration of the notion is far more developed than Balanchine's, at least as revealed in the published interview.

[5] I am indebted to Jane Smith, my art history teacher at the National Ballet School, Toronto, Canada, for introducing me to the work of Pheidias and first pointing out the correspondence between the design of Pheidias's pediments and the triangular arrangements often found in Petipa's classical ballets.

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# (Dis)placing choreographic traditions: tracing the legacies, traditions and export in Mauro Bigonzetti's choreographic endeavours

*Kathrina Farrugia*

In this paper, I present the following:

- epistemology charting the term '(dis)placement'
- a brief historiography of Mauro Bigonzetti's choreography in local and transnational sites (Aterballetto, English National Ballet and New York City Ballet)
- a reading of Bigonzetti's choreographic endeavours within three corporeal transnational sites in selected works: *Pression* (1994), *X.N.Tricities* (1994) and *Oltremare* (2008)

**(dis)placement: epistemology and application**

I commence by providing an underpinning to the term '(dis)placement'; as inferred by the title of this presentation, this term becomes central to my approach to reading performance history, and choreographic traditions.

In her contribution to Susan Leigh Foster's *Corporealities* (1996), Heidi Gilpin explores the term 'displacement' as "the act of perceiving movement enacts its own displacement. In the act of movement, of "putting something in another place", there is the displacement of a body"[1]. In another vein, French theatre semiotician Patrice Pavis (2004) applies the mathematical construct of displacement in vectors; amidst the use of vectorisation, displacement specifies the change in position of a point or a particle in reference to a previous position. Both Gilpin's and Pavis' applications suggest Freudian identities of connection and spatiotemporal contiguity.

Within parameters of reading choreographic histories, I recognise the identity of (dis)placing the histories, legacies and practices that through intertextuality become the essence of reading stylistic 'texts'; texts which arguably become the embodiment of performing histories. Hence, choreographic/historiographic (dis)placement is the term I propose to outline the act of reading and speculating on noticeable references to points of reference particularly in the light of charting historiographical references within choreographic treatment of vocabularies and syntax.

**(dis)placing a performance and choreographic history: Mauro Bigonzetti**

Born in Italy in 1960, Bigonzetti enters Rome Opera ballet school to study the 8 year programme, encountering classicism in technique, *pas de deux* and repertoire.
As a performer, Bigonzetti performed with

- Rome Opera House ballet company for 4 years
- Between 1983 and 1993 performs for Aterballetto

His choreographic career commenced in1990:

- 1993 becomes resident choreographer Balletto di Toscana
- 1997 – 2008: Aterballetto to work as a choreographer & Artistic director
- 2002 to current: Returns to freelance work, NYCB (2002/2006/2008), Teatro la Scala (2008) and Alvin Ailey (2009)

**Bigonzetti: performance histories, collaborations, and readings**

In the following section, I chart the some of my observations pertinent performance histories in Bigonzetti's performance career alongside voicing parallels between some of Bigonzetti's thoughts on influences such as Glen Tetley, William Forsythe and Mats Ek.

*Performance histories*
My observing of recorded performances at the Teatro Valli archives in Reggio Emilia (northern Italy), Bigonzetti's performance histories includes performing the role of the Chinese man in Leonide Massine's *Parade*

(1917). Analysing a recorded performance from 01st July 1986, Bigonzetti's performance of the solo highlights essentially stylistic features of vocabularies that arguably become intrinsic to his own choreographic style. The feature of angularity in key points in the corporeal identity; flexion at ankles, knees and elbows and the predominant use of the sagittal and vertical plane.

Alongside performing Hans van Manen's *Twilight* (1973) as part of the mixed bill in July 1986, Bigonzetti's exposure to the July 1986 tour of Scapino Ballet tour showcasing *Septet extra* (van Manen, 1972) and 1991 tour of NDT show casing works by Jiri Kylian and Van Manen. More importantly, the close association with Tetley and the creation of *The dream walk of the shaman* (1985) highlights significant (dis)placement of choreographic legacies. Observing rehearsal footage of Tetley and the Aterballetto dancers (including Bigonzetti's role as the Water boy), and the photographic images presented here, suggested what I believe are transferred legacies: the positioning of the arms in the horizontal/vertical planes, with flexion at the wrists, and more readily observable, the use of placing the designed vocabulary within the sagittal/vertical planes.

*Collaborations*

Reflecting on his experience of working with William Forsythe in the 1980s during a recent interview, Bigonzetti charts the eclectic avant garde practices imparted by Forsythe, implicitly describing an early work such as *Pitture per Archi* (1992) which acutely highlights (dis)placed performance and choreographic histories associated with Forsythe's works in the 1980s, including *Steptext* and the Paris Opera Ballet commissioned, *In the middle somewhat elevated* (1989). Created for Aterballetto, *Steptext* (1985) was premiered 11th January 1985 at Teatro Ariosto four Aterballetto dancers. Forsythe's associations with Aterballetto resonate both the company and choreographer's interest in challenging aesthetics: as Bigonzetti argues, the interest in choreographic dialogues, research and experimentation challenged his own understanding of choreography.

*Reading (dis)placed histories*

In a recent interview, Bigonzetti highlights his admiration for the choreographic inventiveness of Swedish choreographer Mats Ek. Despite not having performed in any Ek works, the frequent performances of the Cullberg ballet at Teatro Municipale Reggio Emilia between 1983 and 1993 suggest readings of (dis)placed histories that resonate Ek's influence on Bigonzetti's choreographic style. The proximity of the premiere of Ek's seminal works including: *Giselle* (1982), *Rite of Spring* (1984), *Swan Lake* (1987) denote the historiographic and choreographic legacies surrounding the Northern regions of Italy, Aterballetto and Bigonzetti as a choreographer responding to the creative practices highlighted at Teatro Municipale Valli in the 1980s.

Observing repertoire by Ek and Bigonzetti, I find many similarities within the stylistic treatment of body parts within the kinesphere. In works created by Bigonzetti as early as 1994, a signature *ronds de jambe envelope* sur pointe taken with flexion to extension within the foot, knee and hip respectively, performed by the female, (evident in the three case studies: *Pression, X.N. Tricities, Oltremare*), highlights the similarities of choreographic treatment of balletic vocabulary within the Ek's and Bigonzetti's choreographic endeavours.

Reading references to the stylistic treatment of choreography imparted by Tetley, Forsythe and Ek is inherently implicit: the use of the coplanar treatment particularly the cross-section between the vertical and sagittal plane, Bigonzetti's choreographic style suggests the anterior tracking of limbs (rond de jambs of arms or legs) (as he himself would argue, his fascination with '*enveloppe*') alongside the placement of the arms in the side/side high placement with flexion in wrists, along with the interest in flexion at the knees, and ankles within both all three planes: vertical, sagittal and horizontal.

**Commissions across three local/transnational sites (Aterballetto, English National Ballet, New York City Ballet)**

Set up 1979 and briefly directed by Ugo dell'Ara, Aterballetto is located in Reggio Emilia in the northern region of Emilia

Romagna (Italy). In her thesis, Daniela Carnevale (2001) charts Aterballetto's philosophy: a pioneering spirit, away from the 'academic' centres of Rome and Milan. The Municipality of Reggio Emilia presents an ideal space; the cultural emancipation of political and cultural regions following political reforms in the 1950s Italy highlights the acceptance, approval and support for this small but equally eclectic ballet company; the first regionally funded dance company. Whilst its early repertoire was choreographed by Amadeo Amodio (Aterballetto's second artistic director, 1979 -1997), the company's invitations for collaborations with Glen Tetley, Lucinda Childs and William Forsythe carve the historiographic and choreographic traditions, legacies and practices. Stagings of works by Balanchine, Tudor, Van Manen, Roland Petit also carve the historiographic and choreographic legacies. As from 1997, a significant percentage of the repertoire was created by Bigonzetti. Celebrating its 30th anniversary, Aterballetto still resonates the need to experiment, research and challenge eclecticism, primarily through Bigonzetti's work.

A second performance site is English National Ballet, located in Kensington, London (United Kingdom). Set up by Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin and originally named London Festival Ballet (1951), the company resonated similar artistic concerns which underpinned the Festival of Britain in 1951 (embracing post-war arts modernism in Britain)[2]. The company's early repertoire included works by Fokine, Massine, Dolin choreographies resonating the effect of neoclassical trends at the turn of the 20th C which were not only typical of the choreographic legacies put forth by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes (1909 – 1929) but were equally of influence in the following two decades. In a recent interview, Bigonzetti suggests that his association with ENB as a result of former artistic director of Teatro dell' Opera di Roma and ENB, Derek Deane's commission for two works following an observation of Bigonzetti's *Sei in movimento* (1992) performed by the Rome Opera Ballet School. Two works were created for ENB: *X.N.Triticites* (1994) and *Symphonic Dances* (1993)

New York City Ballet provides the third transnational site – the home of Balanchine's and Jerome Robbins' most celebrated balletic works. In spring 2002, 10th Diamond Project provides space for eight choreographers including Christopher Wheeldon and Mauro Bigonzetti. Bigonzetti himself suggests that a showcase of *Mediterranea* (1993) performed by Balletto di Toscana at the Joyce Theatre, New York City elicited Peter Martins' interest in commissioning Bigonzetti's work. Following the *Vespro* (2002) – a collaboration with fellow Italian composer Bruno Moretti, two further commissions were created by Bigonzetti: In Vento (2006), a second Diamond Project commission, and *Oltremare* (2008). A fourth commission for the upcoming 50th anniversary of the Lincoln Center suggests the strengthened associations between NYCB and Bigonzetti's choreographic endeavours.

**(dis)placing choreographic traditions: *Pression* (1994), *X.N.Tricities* (1994) and *Oltremare* (2008)**

X.N.Tricities (1994) was created for English National Ballet, set to music by fellow Italian Guseppe Cali, X.N.Tricities was first performed in London July 1994 and restaged for regional performances in April 1998.

*Pression* (1994) a work for four dancers, was originally created for Balletto di Toscana, restaged for Aterballetto in 1999; first performance 26th May 1999, Venice. Set to and named after Helmut Lachenman's composition of the same title, *Pression* provides a duality of forms: aurally, the juxtaposition of the Lachenman and Schubert scores; visually, the two genders performing the binary of vocabularies; kineaesthtically, the juxtaposition of contemporary, transient vocabularies to the more angular use of pointe work.

*Oltremare* (2008) was created for New York City Ballet and was first performed at New York State Theater on 23rd January 2008. Set to a commissioned score by Moretti, Bigonzetti's frequent collaborator, *Oltremare* charts the emotional and physical journeys imparted in the process of migration. Creating an effective mise-en-scene through the use of props and costumes, the work resonates and consolidates some of the (dis)placed histories charted in the earlier part of my presentation. An online posting on the NYCB Youtube.com page highlights Andrew Vyngette outlining

Bigonzetti's interest in challenging the dancing body: to parallel Richard Schechner's perspectives, the performativity, theatricality and narrativity within Oltremare pushes the dancer's role in the work. The dancers become the narrative alongwith the theatricality and performativity embedded in the soundscape, where Bigonzetti frequently gets the dancers to sing, chant or add to the aural setting of the choreographic work.

Although these three works are separated by spatio-temporal factors including time, geographic location and three different ballet companies, all three works suggest a similar choreographic treatment of the body parts in space. The commonalities within these local and transnational sites of embedded in these three works include:

- The predominant use of saggital plane
- With Parallel limbs with flexion in foot
- Arms placed in the vertical place with arms tracing flexion/extension
- A recurring trend is the female's *ronds de jamb en dedans* (with progressive flexion of foot)

*Pression* (Bigonzetti, 1994)

**Bigonzetti's choreographic style: transnational choreographic (dis)placement of balletic traditions**

The choreographic treatment of selected vocabularies in the earlier mentioned choreographic works suggest the transnational effect of a choreographer whose performance and choreographic histories suggest complex identities of 20th Century neoclassicism that inhabited the creative space in Reggio Emilia, and transferred to other sites such as London and New York City.

In the parameters of this paper, Bigonzetti's work cannot reductively be labelled as 'Italian choreographic identity' – his work, arguably, is largely defined by the choreographic histories which surrounded his development as a choreographer in the late 20th and early 21st Centuries. Trying to define an 'Italian identity' surpasses the role of this paper; or, indeed becomes the seed germ for another paper. But briefly - for those familiar with the choreographic histories associated with multiplicity traditions surrounding the Italian school, the virtuosity of Pierina Legnani and the pedagogy imparted by the Cecchetti family, the Italian balletic legacies in the 21st Century are as complex as trying to define 'neoclassicism' in ballet. Helena Wullf (1998) reminds us that "the Italian style is not construed as a national ballet style today, and either is Italy entirely united as a nation. The Italian style is thus not used as a feature of nationalism like other ballet styles[3].

Equally, Bigonzetti's treatment of vocabulary is arguably as Italian as the plethora of choreographers surrounding the balletic traditions he has encountered and arguably (dis)placed in the last two decades. As living proof of this, Bigonzetti's recent work, *Festa Barocca* (2009), for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and recent restaging of *Mediterranea* (1993) for Milan's La Scala Ballet highlight the displaced choreographic histories across the variety of dance companies, and spatio-temporal factors including and regions, countries and decades.

**Conclusion: (dis)placing choreographic histories: choreography as a corporeal transnational site**

Bigonzetti's history as a performer and choreographer resonates an alliance with Emilyn Claid's theoretical construct "body of knowledge". Reading Bigonzetti's choreographic endeavours suggests a web of interconnectedness and transient liminality between dancers from New York City Ballet

or English National Ballet. Equally, whilst Bigonzetti's choreographic style becomes an implicit identity for Aterballetto's dancers, the legacies which NYCB/ENB ballet performers embody suggest the embodied histories which chart Bigonzetti's own performative and choreographic legacies. The transnational context: the "multi-locale", transnational experiences and connections" [4]in *Pression*, *X.N.Tricities* and *Oltremare* denote and purport the overlaps, intimacies and proximities that suggest ever-complex genre of neoclassicism in the late 20th and early 21st Century.

Transnational identities are shared by the spatio-temporal relationships between the choreographic material stemming from the three choreographic works, exemplified by the dancers performing Bigonzetti's work each outlining the presence of the stylistic features outlined in this paper; as Lepecki argues,

> ...the question of the presence of the dancing body [...] becomes a matter of delicate excavation, as dancing body release layers of memory-affects, photographic contact, digital depth and choreo/graphing.
>
> (Lepecki, 2004, p. 4)

Reading Bigonzetti's works suggests the act of (dis)placing historiographic and choreographic legacies, which as Wullf suggests, highlights the pattern of transmobility, transnational experiences and inter- and intra-connections in the ballet world.



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Notes

[1] Gilpin in Foster, 1996, p. 108
[2] Nicholas, 1999, p. 25
[3] Wulff, 1998, p. 41
[4] Wulff, 1998, p.18

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# Mapping Body Politics of the Norwegian "Springdands"

*Anne Margrete Fiskvik and Egil Bakka*

In this paper (performed as a lecture demonstration with film illustrations) we investigate early representations of folkdance on stage and look closer at the ballet "Amor og Ballettmesterens luner" from 1786 and particularly the pas de deux, called Norwegian which is part of it. Vincenzo Galeotti's ballet is interesting for many reasons; it has, for instance a reputation for being the oldest ballet surviving with "original" choreography. The Springdance and the Halling are especially interesting to us because they are the earliest known and surviving representations of Norwegian folkdance on stage. Egil (who is primarily an ethnochoreologist), and Anne (with a background in theatre dance) have been looking into the Norwegian material in this ballet, and tried to follow it's journey from Norwegian peasant life to the theatre stage of the Royal Danish ballet. We have worked with two sets of source material surviving from 1786, a ballet program and a set of musical scores.[1] Additionally we have worked with a performance transmitted on Danish TV in 1975. In addition to the program and TV recording, we have also worked with written sources from the eighteenth century, but first and foremost twentieth-century film documentation of the Norwegian Springdance and Halling. The Springdance and to some extent the Halling have been the dominant dance type in the traditional Norwegian dance repertoire. They were well known and performed throughout Norway until the beginning of the twentieth century in a colorful and broad range of local variants. The dance is well documented in the eighteenth and even in the seventeenth century, but real descriptions are available only from the nineteenth century.[2] At "The Norwegian Center for Traditional Dance and Music" in Trondheim, Norway, there are literally thousands of video recordings of Springdance and Halling, most of which were collected among traditional dancers throughout the country since the 1960s by professor Egil Bakka.

In our analysis we try to draw upon the totality of dance culture, including in the discussion both theater dance and traditional social dance, genres which have mostly been kept apart in dance historiography.

Approaching dance history through the lens of traditional dance is not a wide-spread practice. Both for the project presented here, material and knowledge from different disciplines can be brought together to shed light upon dance history.

**Folkdance in Norway then and now**

Let us move to the location of our story, the Nordic countries, and more specifically, Norway. Norwegian folk dance history is rich and complex. Folkdances like "Springdance" and "Halling" constituted the dominant repertoire for many hundred years (Bakka 1978:25–27) and Springdance and Halling are still important dances in our culture. The Springdance is a couple dance, where especially the man improvises. The Halling is our "national dance", mostly known as male solo dance, competitive and improvisational in nature. The Halling has traditionally been danced to live fiddle music in various social and competitive settings. Both the Springdance and the Halling have long traditions; roots have been identified at least back to the 15th century. In the Halling the (male) dancer performs difficult leaps, kicks, and other acrobatic stunts to demonstrate vigor and virility. Even though it is a dance that traditionally has belonged to the "folk", to farmers and mountain people in particular, it has traveled down to the more urban districts of Norway and become an icon of our cultural heritage. This journey has been especially visible in the last 5-10 years, as more popularized and "globalized" versions of the Halling have emerged, often integrating movements from break dance and capoeira. A new generation of performers, like the artist Hallgrim Hansegaard and his professional dance ensemble "Frikar" has turned Halling into a theatre dance practice. Hansegaard as been featured on the Norwegian version of "So you think you can dance" and the company Frikar has been part of the series "young talents", and they were dancers for the Norwegian winner of the European Song

Contest, Alexander Rybak. So contemporary folkdance is rich and varied, and represents a long tradition and also challenges traditional body politics through the refinement and expansion of dance techniques… But let us now go back and focus on a much earlier example, possibly the first example ever, of Norwegian folkdance on stage.

**Vincenzo Galeotti's "Springdands"**

In the latter part of 18th century, the Springdance and Halling were important dances and part of everyday peasant life. They were, as described above, improvised couple or solo dances that were much further removed from European fashion trends. Still the Springdance and the Halling show up in Copenhagen in 1786 as a part of a ballet by Vincenzo Galeotti (1733-1816) called "Amors og Ballettmesterens luner". [3] The two dances were presented in the Amor ballet as couple dance named "Springdands", danced in ¾ time, and in the middle section the dance changes to a Halling, danced in 2/4 time. Galeotti, the ballet master of the Royal Danish Theater in Copenhagen, premiered "Amor" on 31 October 1786. The program reads (in English translation): "The Whims of Cupid and the Ballet Master. A small allegorical ballet by Vincenzo Galeotti. The music, with exception of Mad[ame] Biørn's solo, is by Mr. Jens Lolle."

In the ballet program, Galeotti tells his audience how the ballet was created and lay out the plot and structure of the ballet. The ballet is made up by a series of couple dances, many of which represent different nations and folk, and Galeotti explains the plot in the following manner:

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

The scores are a hand-written repetiteur (violin) part and some orchestral parts. Notes and corrections dating from later use of the scores allow us to see some of the changes the music went through over time.[4] The music is a suite of dances, composed by Jens Lolle (1751–1789).[5]

**Short performance history of Amor**

The Amor ballet, as already mentioned, consists of a series of dances in different styles, representing the body politics of different nations and folk. The TV recording that we have worked with shows how the ballet was performed in 1975, which of course is one performance point in a continuous performance practice tradition. Since 1786, Amor has been performed more than 540 times, it only disappeared from the stage for period under August Bournonville. In October 1823 it was performed for the one-hundredth time, and it was given frequently until 1841. Then, under Bournonville, it disappeared from the stage for twenty-two years, until February 1863, when it was restaged. After this, it was not given for a year, but then performed again in 1884–85. Since then it has been produced regularly to the present day. According to August Bournonville, the ballet was kept alive by the dancers, also through periods when it was not performed very often. In 1895 an abbreviated piano version was published of the music. The Danish ballet master Harald Landler's staging at the Paris Opera in the 1950s introduced Amor to European audience. During the 1960s it was performed in England and the USA (See Lund, 1966: 83–84 and Aschengreen 2005).
Most historians writing about Amor claim that the famous ballet master August Bournonville did not particularly like the piece – he found it too lightweight. But apparently, Bournonville *did* like the Norwegian Springdance/Halling because during the period from 1847–1867 the Sprindance/Halling was performed as an individual piece more than 200 times (Jürgensen 1998:12). On the one-hundredth-anniversary program of the Royal Ballet in 1848, Bournonville included the

Springdance/Halling, explicitly attributing it to Galeotti (Jürgensen 1998:11–12). Why would Bournonville attribute this little piece to his predecessor if he himself had made major alterations? It is possible that Bournonville did not rework the Springdance/Halling and that they remained fairly unchanged throughout this period. The music also testifies to this: There are only a few minor changes and additions, some of them made in relation to the performances in 1863 (after the twenty-two–year pause). Let us therefore assume that most of the Springdance/Halling is Galeotti's work, and that the elements and the structure have not changed much.

**Galeotti and the "folk"**

In Amor, Galeotti is representing various nations and types of people through movement. Galeotti considered Amor an experiment with which he tried to expand the contemporary conventions of ballet and theater and "to present a cheerful ballet and to recommended myself." [6]Apparently Galeotti was happy with the result, because he sums up his work in the following manner: "I believe I have gotten closer to my desired goal: to have many pas de deux follow after one another and to let the figures remain motionless on the "skuepladsen" [performance space], and moreover, to have shown humorous elements without descending to crudity; if this attempt can thrill the audience, then I shall enjoy the flattering experience of having achieved what I desired. (Galeotti, 1786, translation by Fiskvik). The entire ballet is made up by short divertissements portraying different "folkdances".

If one studies other works by Galeotti (some six programs for ballets from Galeotti's hand have survived and are kept at the Theater Museum in Copenhagen) one can note that almost all of them include roles for people of the "lower classes", either in Denmark or in the country where the ballet takes place. This suggests that "the lower classes" were portrayed often in Galeotti's ballets, and not unlikely through the use of folkdance material. This again must be seen in relation to the general taste of the public; the Nordic audience of the latter part of the 18th century wanted to be entertained. Also, around this time the general audience's tastes and preferences start to have more influence on the ballet productions at the Scandinavian courts. We see this for instance in the writings of Bournonville who worked during the middle of the 19th century. When he is looking back he claims that the late eighteenth-century audience did not appreciate the grand dramatic spectacles à la Noverre and Angiolini. The audience wanted something to laugh at (just like today, Bournonville adds sarcastically), like small divertissements.[7] We also see the same trend in Sweden under Gustav III.[8]

We are now getting close to the question of the transformation of folkdance material onto the stage: Would dance material attributed to rural people and people of other nations have been totally made up at the time around 1786?

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

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

> If one were too scrupulous in depicting the characters, manners and customs of certain nations, the pictures would often be poor and monotonous in composition.…

> I think, Sir, that neither a Turkish nor a Chinese festival would appeal to our countryman, if we had not the art to embellish it, I am persuaded that the style of dancing common to those people would never be captivating. This kind of exactitude in costume and imitation will only present a very insipid spectacle, unworthy of a public which only applauds in proportion as artists possess the art of bringing delicacy and taste to the different productions which they offer to it.
> (Noverre, 1803/1966: 153–154, translated by Beaumont)

Noverre claimed that the portrayal of the lower classes or exotic nations on the stage should not be too realistic. Thus choreographers would use the material as a sort of body politic. Today, Hammergren and Meglin claim that the folklore function was emblematic rather than realistic, which is yet another way of classifying the movements as part of a contemporary body politic. Let's try to scrutinize this by analyzing the movement material in the Sprindance/Halling.

**Tracing similarities rather than differences**

Instead of stressing that there would obviously be differences between the genuine folkdances and staged versions of these in the 18th century, we ask instead: What about the similarities in the movement material?

We assume that it would be quite simple for a ballet master to find dancers who could give both serious and parody versions of the dances of the people, certainly from their own country, but probably also from neighboring countries. (Bournonville tells the story about how he totally outdid a group of rural Italians in their own dance, so certainly many ballet masters might have known traditional folk dances.) Members of a theater audience in those days would at least have had stereotypical ideas about the dancing of lower classes; and most of them, especially in Norway and Denmark may even have had personal experience. A ballet master could easily score a "hit" when using realistic parodies, but probably (as stated by Noverre) would find it inappropriate to simply reproduce such dances. Rather they preferred to rearrange the material, keeping what they would find appropriate for their purpose.

A dancing master would need to take into consideration the more or less concrete or reality-based, perhaps even stereotypical notions of his audience. What would Galeotti's audience think about Norwegian dance? Can we expect the upper class Copenhagen audience of those days to have had any idea of what a Springdance and Halling looked like? Is there any reason to believe that the audience would have seen such folkdance, and if so, would a choreographer feel obliged to satisfy some of the stereotypical notions of his audience?

Norway had no noticeable aristocracy in the eighteenth century, so the highest-ranking people were the bourgeoisie of the towns and the civil servants and bureaucrats. Many of these would be Danes, who moved back and forth between Denmark and Norway. Also a number of Norwegians also went to Copenhagen to study, and some made their career there.[9] Therefore it is hard to believe that the Norwegian Springdance and Halling would be something unknown even to a Danish ballet audience. There are good reasons to believe that there would be a number of Norwegians in Copenhagen who knew the Springdance and Halling, and even had performed it on occasions.

We propose that a ballet master could easily pick ideas from rural dancing and often used these in order to create an appropriate body politic. In this way he could satisfy his audience's expectation to find something recognizable in, say, a Norwegian dance. Then he would polish and clean it up, applying an educated technique and a polite style that would make his building blocks acceptable. Now, let us go into more details in our analysis, dissecting the movement material:

**Comparing body politics of the Springdance/Halling**

As mentioned in the beginning, we have studied the Springdance/Halling in Amor from a TV recording broadcasted in 1975. We have already mentioned that the TV performance could of course be dismissed as not in any way representative of the late eighteenth century. But keeping the long history of the Springdance/Halling in mind, we (maybe naively) assume that there is some original material left.

For comparisons, we have studied archival material on the traditional

Springdance and Halling and many similarities in the various elements of the dance can be seen. One of most general and easily seen we find in the step patterns, in the typical kneebends (kruking)which is so typical for Norwegian folkdance.

Another common element is when the couple dances forward along the circular path with crossed arms on the back, facing in the same direction. Then they make a clockwise turn. This element is also wellknown from the traditional context, although the way the couple holds each other is used more for turning than for dancing forward.

Another interesting element is when the partners let go of the fastening and perform a motive in which they gesticulate to each other and change places; then the woman kneels and the man kicks above her head. This is an element unknown from Norwegian sources, but it can be found in choreographies attributed to the mid nineteenth-century Swedish choreographer Anders Selinder, for example, in *Jössehäredspolska* and *Daldans* (See Bakka in Norden i dans 2007: 210).

Yet another motive is when the woman dances around the man and then turns under his arm. This is a well-known motive in the Springdance, but it is hardly ever done with deep knee bends (although knee bends per se are common). The traditional flow of the motive is interrupted by these bends, which have the effect of poses, putting the dancers side by side in a line parallel to the front of the stage. This interruption would also not be used in a traditional Springdance.

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

The dance ends with a rapid "one measure couple turning," which is typical for many Springdances in regions around Oslo. It is a very distinctive pattern that seems to be a link between the old couple dances that came before rounddance genre.[10]

**Folk dance or demi-charactère?**

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

Amor is the only Galeotti ballet that has survived in a continuous bodily transmission, and as mentioned above, we hope to see at least traces of eighteenth-century dancing styles in it. Sources on the late 18th dancing are scarce, but it can be helpful to look at verbal descriptions of the dancing styles from Galeotti's contemporaries. The various dances in Amor were composed in the different dance styles common to the period: *Noble*, *demi-charactère*, *comique*, and *grotesque*. Even though we have identified most elements of the Norwegian dance as usual elements even in Norwegian folkdance (based on our anaysis of the TV recording from 1976), we also acknowledge and recognize the style of the 18th century demi-charactère in the Springdance. There are several descriptions of the various character traits of the dancing styles in writings by Gallini, Noverre, Angiolini and others. Characterizing the "half-serious style," Gallini explains: "In the half-serious stile we observe vigor, lightness, agility, brilliant springs with a steadiness and command of the body. It is the best kind of dancing for expressing the more general

theatrical subjects. It also pleases more generally … A pastoral dance, presented employing all aspects of the pantomimic art, will commonly be preferred to the more serious style ... For [the half-serious stile], it is impossible to have too much agility and briskness" (Gallini, 1762: 77).

To us, also the characteristics of the demi-charactère shine through in the Springdance and Halling. Notice how actively the dancers use their arms in the ; this is another trait of what Angiolini, in his *Dissertation sur les ballets pantomimes des anciens* (1765), points out as being typical of the demi-charactère style, and that "demands of its performers correctness, lightness, equilibrium, smoothness and grace."(Angiolini 1765; translated by, and quoted from Fairfax 2003: 105).

**Summary and Conclusion**

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

Concluding the paper, one can say that the Springdance and the Halling staged in Amor in 1785 present elements from traditional dance performed in demi-charactère style. The Springdance and Halling can be described as a representation of a folkdance in the frames of a stylized theatre dance: Dances of the folk who has been transformed to stage dance. During the more than 200 years that have passed since Amor premiered, there have been numerous other examples of Norwegian folkdance on stage. Today the folkdancer Hallgrim Hansegaard has rapidly become an agent for transporting folkdance in general and Halling in particular onto the theatre stage, and in doing so he is major exponent for transgressing boundaries between theatre and folk dance. Opinions of these developments are varied today. At least we know that in 1786, the Danish audiences were thrilled when they saw Springdance and Halling, and have continued to be pleased by not only the Norwegian dances, but all the other couple dances of Amor.

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

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



Notes

1 The Royal Library, Copenhagen: Sign.: Det Kongelige Teater nr. 0226 and The Royal Library, Copenhagen: Sign: MA ms 2951-52.

2 See, for example, Hammer 2000:257, and Moe 1869 and Niels Hertsberg's painting from the 1820s (Norden i dans 2007:52)

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

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

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

[6] "At frembringe en munter Ballet var min Hensigt og mig anbefalet." From the front page of the 1786 program. (Galeotti, 1786)

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

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

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

[10] Rounddance is s term used by 19th century dancing masters to refer to a genre of fashionable couple dances, among others waltz, polka etc.

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# Madame Mariquita, the French Fokine

*Sarah Gutsche-Miller*

In 1909 Diaghilev took Paris by storm with a series of classical ballet divertissements and sensuous exotic spectacles staged in the opulently redecorated Châtelet theater. The ballets were an unmitigated success and Michel Fokine, the choreographer of all of the works performed that year, captured the imagination of *le Tout-Paris* and critics alike. Yet the arrival of the Russian ballet troupe and the staging of Fokine's ballets did not mark a revolution in French ballet as has long been assumed. Rather, the Ballets Russes found a receptive audience and Fokine was able to capture the imagination of that audience because *le Tout-Paris* was already familiar with classical ballet, sensuous exoticism, and novel approaches to choreography. Paris already had a versatile and creative choreographer: her name was Madame Mariquita.

Although Mariquita is now so little known that she has been left out of all dance dictionaries (Lynn Garafola does, however, provide an introduction to her career in "Where Are Ballet's Women Choreographers?"), she was one of the most revered choreographers of her time. Critics routinely showered her with flowery praise, and when she died in 1922, dozens of newspapers in Paris, London, and New York ran obituaries and eulogies.[1] Madame Mariquita was as prolific as she was talented. She choreographed simultaneously for popular venues and state-subsidized theaters, and staged as many as two hundred ballets over a nearly fifty-year period that drew on a broad range of idioms and styles. Since it is impossible to present an in-depth analysis of her oeuvre in so short a time, my goal in this paper is to provide a brief overview of Mariquita's career and an introduction to the types of ballets that she created for the Gaîté, the Folies-Bergère, the 1900 Paris Exposition Palais de la Danse, and the Opéra-Comique.

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Mariquita was born in the vicinity of Algiers around 1838. Orphaned at an early age, she knew virtually nothing of her origins or ancestry, and likely did not know her exact date of birth. Surviving documents provide few clues. Her application for membership into the French Society for Author's Rights (SACD) lists her date of birth as December 25, 1840, but this was likely invented for bureaucratic purposes.[2] The year is possible, but it seems a stretch since most accounts place her on the Paris stage in 1845 around the age of seven or eight; she probably chose Christmas day at random.[3] Mariquita's full name also remains something of a mystery. Her death certificate and application for membership to the SACD respectively list her name as Marie Thérèse Gamaléry and Marie Gamalein, and in her memoirs, the Moulin Rouge dancer Jane Avril recorded the variant Marie Gamaléra.[4] Whatever her name at birth, she was known to all first as Mademoiselle Mariquita, and then as Madame Mariquita.[5]

Mariquita had a successful career as a dancer before turning to choreography. She was adopted by a dancer, and began performing in Algerian cafés when still a small child.[6] When her adoptive mother died a short time later, Mariquita was brought to Paris by an impresario in the hopes of furthering her stage career, and she soon made her début in a vaudeville at the Théâtre des Funambules.[7] As a youth, she gained a reputation as one of the era's best character dancers, but iconography and prose descriptions suggest that she was also a talented ballerina who could perform in an academic style with technical prowess. She is, for example, placed alongside the most famous French ballerinas of the nineteenth century in a composite image printed in the Illustrated London News in 1907.[8] In his history of nineteenth-century ballet, *Technical Vade Mecum: The Art of the Ballet*, the English dancer Edouard Espinosa similar ranks Mariquita alongside the best of the Opéra's French ballerinas, writing "In the great outstanding PREMIERES ETOILES, FRANCE gave us: LEGRAND, BEAUGRAND, DOR, MARIQUITA and SUBRA [capitals original]."[9]

The ability to perform character dances and classical choreography with equal skill stood Mariquita in good stead: she danced in operettas for Offenbach's Bouffes-Parisiens, in spectacle féeries at the Porte-Saint-Martin, and in music-hall divertisse-ments at the newly established Folies-Bergère. She

also danced briefly for the Opéra, but it seems that she was ill-suited to the institution's conservatism and left of her own accord with a four-thousand franc fine for breaking her contract.[10]

Mariquita made her first forays into choreography in the 1870s with light divertissements for popular theaters and music halls. Her ballets were an immediate success, and at least one inspired several imitations. *Les Joujoux*, a divertissement with music by Olivier Métra created for the Folies-Bergère in 1876, ran intermittently for more than a year and was the acknowledged inspiration for J. Hassreiter's, Franz Gaul's, and Joseph Bayer's 1888 Viennese ballet *The Fairy Doll* (*Die Puppenfee*).[11] *Les Joujoux* also spawned local imitations: Henri Justamant and Louis Desormes created their own *Joujoux-ballet* for the Folies-Bergère in 1889 and Fernand Beissier, Egidio Rossi and Henri Cieutat staged *Les Joujoux* for the Casino de Paris in 1894.

By 1880, Mariquita had turned almost exclusively to choreography. That year, she was offered the post of ballet mistress at the Gaîté, a theater that staged large-scale spectacles with a prominent ballet component. She remained the Gaîté's in-house choreographer for more than twenty years, and her divertissements and mises-en-scène were popular additions to the theater's féeries, dramas, and operettas.[12] In 1890, while still the Gaîté's resident choreographer, she was hired as the ballet mistress for the Folies-Bergère, Paris's pre-eminent music hall and a center for pantomime-ballet. There she staged two to three major pantomime-ballets per year, collaborating with many of the era's great writers and operetta composers.

From the 1890s through the 1910s, Mariquita was a coveted choreographer, always in high demand: she choreographed dozens of popular dance numbers for the Gaîté; all forty-five of the Folies-Bergère's ballets staged between 1890 and 1904 (she returned every year or two between 1904 and 1913 to create new ballets for the hall); and from 1898 to 1918, she was the ballet mistress for the Opéra-Comique, where she choreographed several important pantomime-ballets and opera divertissements. As well, she frequently took on choreographic projects in smaller Parisian and provincial theaters, and in 1900, she was named the official choreographer for the Paris Universal Exposition's Palais de la Danse. Her fame stretched beyond France. Directors at London's Alhambra Theater of Varieties invited her to stage a ballet there in 1903 and in 1911, but she was prevented both times from leaving the Opéra-Comique for the required month.[13]

What is perhaps most striking about Mariquita's professional life, at least from today's perspective, is the extent to which she remained involved with the production of popular entertainment after entering "high art" institutions. Despite international fame and a position at the Opéra-Comique, Mariquita continued to create light fare for the popular theaters. While it was common practice for choreographers to move among different types of venues, Mariquita may have remained loyal to the music halls and boulevard theaters because of their openness to a variety of forms of dance. Both allowed her to have a broader, more flexible definition of ballet than was possible at the more conservative state theaters.[14]

Mariquita's oeuvre reflected the types of venues for which she choreographed: she created light divertissements and titillating spectacles for the popular theaters, and academically-oriented, but still sometimes sensuous dances for national institutions. Some of her "ballets" had little relation to ballet as we know it. Several divertissements for the Gaîté and the Folies-Bergère were, for example, topical dances designed to show off as much leg as possible or to showcase interesting visual effects. Music-hall ballets such as *Marine* and *France-Russie* featured battalions of young women in travesty, dressed in the colours of the French and Russian flags, crisscrossing each other to produce a kaleidoscopic effect.[15] *Arc-en-ciel*, a far more complex pantomime-ballet that mixed characters of the commedia dell' arte with rainbow fairies, featured a divertissement for two groups of seven dancers dressed in red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet tutus who form various patterns then come together to form a rainbow—an effect much admired by the public and theater critics alike.[16]

Mariquita's much talked-about ballet for the Gaîté's 1893 pièce à grand spectacle, *Les Bicyclistes en voyage*, similarly included a dance that placed a premium on spectacle, legs, and new fads. Marcel Hutin, writing for *l'Art musicale*, described it as a ballet composed of

> four quadrilles of young women who move about the stage on bicycles covered in ribbons and flowers. In their midst, [other cyclists], momentarily on foot and pushing their bikes, move about in circles and zigzags as the four pedal around them. Then, a couple of mime-ballerinas, Mlle Litini, a *gommeux* [a nineteenth-century

> dandy, here in travesty] and the lovely Mlle Labounskaya, enter and add a note of grace to this ensemble, in the middle of which some clowns perform fantastic turns.[17]

Many of Mariquita's ballets for the Gaîté and most for the Folies-Bergère were, however, popular forms of romantic ballet. These works had detailed narratives and adhered to the traditional choreographic and musical structures of mid-nineteenth-century pantomime-ballet, but they reflected their fashionable, pleasure-seeking audiences' preferences for stage spectacle and the female body. Mime, ballet, and character dances were frequently supplemented by popular music-hall dances (the cancan or *danses excentriques*), so-called lascivious dances or mimed seduction scenes, and, occasionally, semi-nudity.

The Folies-Bergère's 1893 ballet *Fleur de lotus*, a Cinderella story with a first tableau reminiscent of *Giselle*, contained all of the elements of romantic ballet, but as the framework for a production with an up-to-date, popular sensibility. The two tableaux were composed of a series of dramatic and comic mime scenes that framed two classical ballet divertissements, each of which included solo variations, an exotic character dance, and an ensemble finale. The mimed scenes were likewise conventional and featured standard character types—peasants, royalty, fairies—in stock situations: the prince seduces the young peasant girl who has been warned by her sister to steer clear of gallant passers-by, chaos ensues during a storm, and fairies assemble and dance by a lake.[18] These were, however, combined with scenes inspired by other forms of contemporary popular culture such as striptease pantomimes and suggestive cabinet cards of famous beauties, the predecessors to pin-up girls.[19] During a lake-side scene in the second tableau, for example, the sister is encircled by fairies who slowly undress her so that she may bathe while they flit about around her. Then, due to the unexpected appearance of a royal party, the bathing sister is forced to hide in the reeds and later emerge wrapped in a giant leaf, otherwise naked but for a flesh-coloured leotard.

By the time Mariquita was awarded the post of ballet mistress for the 1900 Exposition Palais de la Danse, her work for the Gaîté, Folies-Bergère and other theaters had made her adept at combining character dances, historical dances (the minuet, gavotte, etc), classical ballet, dramatic mime, lascivious dances or dances of seduction, popular music-hall quadrilles, and spectacular visual tableaux. Her two major ballets for the Palais, *Terpsichore* and *L'Heure du berger*, combined several of these dance types in a sort of popular-oriented dance panorama or series of stylistically diverse divertissements loosely bound by an overriding theme. *L'Heure du berger*, for example, begins with a pantomimed tableau that introduces the ballet's central characters: Saturn, the god of time, Love, personified, the Twentieth Century, also personified and performed in travesty, and l'Heure du Berger, the star ballerina.[20] The Twentieth Century and l'Heure du Berger fall in love, but their union is impeded by Saturn, who jealously tries to keep the lovers apart.[21] The four tableaux that follow are long divertissements, each set in a different season and locale. "Winter in Flanders" featured several folk and character dances, but it also had a classical snowflake ballet.[22] (See figure 1).

Figure 1. "Winter," *L'Heure du berger*. In *Le Théâtre* No. 40 (August (II) 1900).

"Autumn in Provence" provided opportunities for ensemble dances for grape pickers, dances to folk songs, and a comic drunken dance, as well as a formal pas de deux for the lovers. In "Bretagne," there are dances for harvesters, a clog dance, and a ballet variation for l'Heure du Berger. (See Figure 2)

The final tableau, which takes place in Parisian Montmartre in front of the dance hall le Moulin de la Galette, is more overtly sensuous and is reminiscent of music-hall ballets. Flirtatious pierrots and pierrettes dance coquettishly and are joined by the young lovers.

Figure 2. "Bretagne," *L'Heure du berger*. In *Le Théâtre* (August, II, 1900).

Saturn, unable to keep l'Heure and the Twentieth Century apart, then challenges Love to a duel and a battle ensues. Love triumphs and the production ends with a tableau for peasants, personified seasons, and personified hours under the banner "Love defeats Time" in an apotheosis finale worthy of boulevard-theater spectacles.

Mariquita's ballets for the Opéra-Comique were equally wide-ranging. Photographs of scenes from *Les Cygnes* (1899) and *Javotte* (1899), for example, suggest that she continued to stage ballets that drew on the conventional costumes, groupings and gestures of classical pantomime-ballet.[23] (See Figure 3)

Figure 3. *Javotte*, tableau 3. In *Le Théâtre* (February, II, 1899): 15.

Her later Opéra-Comique ballets reveal new interests and influences, and move away from the traditions of nineteenth-century ballet. These include her dances inspired by antiquity, some of which might be described as academic in genesis. Divertissements for Camille Erlanger's 1906 opera *Aphrodite*, Jean Nougès' 1912 opera-ballet *La Danseuse de Pompei*, and restagings of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Aulide* and *Alceste*, for instance, included dances intended to call to mind the imagery of ancient Greece. (See figure 4)

Figure 4. Régina Badet in *Aphrodite*. In *Le Théâtre* (April, II, 1906): 15.

According to Mariquita, such dances were the result of studies of historical documents and visits to museums, where she looked at ancient vases, frescos, and statues. These, she claimed, helped her devise the poses and gestures on which her work rested.[24] However, as Samuel Dorf has noted in his studies of the uses of antiquity in early twentieth-century dance, far from attempting to create "authentic" reconstructions of Greek dances, Mariquita, like many other dancers of the period, used evocations of antiquity as an exotic framework in which to create

sensuous spectacles with mass appeal. (See Figure 5) Some of these ballets were, to quote Dorf, "erotic fantasies of an imagined antiquity for a fashionable modern audience."[25]

Figure 5. Régina Badet in *Iphigénie en Aulide*. In *Le Théâtre* (April, I, 1908): 8.

Sensuous spectacle notwithstanding, by the 1910s, Mariquita had made the Opéra-Comique a center for innovative ballet choreography.[26] Although some of her works drew on classical ballet and others were distinctly popular in tone, many could not be easily categorized or described. These seem to have moved away from the standardized steps and stylized poses or gestures of ballet and may have leaned towards modern dance, perhaps reflecting the influence of dancers such as Loie Fuller or Isidora Duncan. Critics describe these works in nebulous terms and speak of Mariquita's renewal of gesture and dance, of her bringing "truth" of expression to dance, or of her infinitely varied combinations of old and new. Many described Mariquita as a great artist who created a personal style and was endlessly imaginative.[27] Robert Quinault, a star dancer and former pupil, wrote that her conception of dance was so new that not only was she not guaranteed a warm reception, she also made enemies in the dance world.[28] Mariquita herself spoke of her dislike of academic forms of classical ballet, which she felt had become stilted and acrobatic, and advocated a freer interpretation of music using the entire body. She described her approach to choreography as instinctive, and wrote about her irresistible penchant for independence.[29] She was famous for eliminating the gymnastics routines from classical ballet and for being the first to do away with the tutu. While it is difficult to recreate her dance aesthetic with precision, she was by all accounts creative, imaginative, and original. French critic and film director Louis Delluc's epithet, which was later echoed by Quinault and the Opéra-Comique's director Albert Carré, was, I believe, accurate: Mariquita was the "French Fokine."



Notes

[1] Lynn Garafola, "Where Are Ballet's Women Choreographers?" *Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 215-230.

[2] Société des auteurs et compositeurs dramatiques, Paris (*F-Pse*).

[3] Oddly, a second document in her SACD file lists her birth date as 1845, the year she arrived in Paris. A couple of obituaries place her in Paris at as early an age as five, but according to Charles Akar, her debut at the Funambules was at age 8 in a vaudeville by Auguste Jouhaud. Charles Akar, "Mariquita," *Echo* de Paris 6 October 1922. Her death certificate did not list a date of birth and obituaries alternately claim that she was 82 or 84 when she died in 1922.

[4] Mariquita's death certificate is archived in the city hall of the 9e arrondissement, Paris. See also Jane Avril, *Mes mémoires, suivi de Cours de danse fin-de-siècle* (Paris: Phébius, 2005).

[5] This was the name she used for all formal correspondence.

[6] According to some reports, she also performed with a group of strolling players, presumably alongside her adoptive mother. Cyril Beaumont, "Mariquita: Javotte," in *Complete Book of Ballets: a Guide to the Principle Ballets of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1938), 533.

[7] Mariquita, performing under the assumed name of Fanny, replaced the dwarf Carolina at short notice and was an immediate success. Clipping in *F-Pn* 8-RO-11776.

[8] "The Evolution of Ballet Costume: Stars of Yesterday and To-Day," The Illustrated London News, 9 November 1907. There is some evidence that she received classical training from Paul Taglioni. Léonce Balitrand, "Mariquita est morte," *Petit Parisien*, 6 October 1922.

[9] Edouard Espinosa, *Technical Vade Mecum*, *The Art of the Ballet* (London: Eve Kelland, 1948), 14. Espinosa also characterised Mariquita as one of the most memorable dancers he had ever seen, and in his autobiography *And Then He Danced*, he described a performance of hers from some sixty years earlier. Edouard Espinosa, *And Then He Danced* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co, 1946), p. 3. I would like to thank Jane Pritchard for showing me Espinosa's books.

[10] Untitled clipping in *F-Pn* 8-RO-11776. See also Gaston Lebel, "La célèbre danseuse et maitresse de ballet Mariquita est morte," 6 October 1922, clipping in *F-Pn* 8-RO-11776.

[11] George Jackson, "Die Puppenfee," in Selma Jean Cohen, ed, *International Encyclopedia of Dance* (New York: Oxford

University Press, 1998), vol. 5, p. 278. *The Fairy Doll*, in turn a runaway success, was repeatedly staged in Parisian music halls—at the Olympia in 1894 and 1899 and at the Folies-Bergère in 1904—and remains in the repertory today.

[12] Clippings in *F-Pn* 8-RO-11776. Ballet masters, who were often expected to arrange dances in keeping with a "house style" (Garafola, "Women Choreographers," 219), were not called choreographers. My use of the term is anachronistic, but clear and in Mariquita's case often appropriate.

[13] Mariquita was amenable to both appearances. Her letters of acceptance are in the London Theater Archives (*GB-Lv*).

[14] This was also no doubt in part because of poor remuneration usually granted to dance personnel at any level of the theatre business.

[15] Jules Lemaître, "La Semaine dramatique," *Le Journal des débats*, 3 February 1890.

[16] Francisque Sarcey, "Critique théâtrale," *Le Temps*, 18 September 1893.

[17] Marcel Hutin, "Premières à venir," *L'Art musicale*, 32/19, 5 October 1893, p. 28. "[Le ballet est] composé de quatre quadrilles de petites femmes montées à bicyclettes fleuries qui évoluent sur scène. Au milieu de ces cyclistes roulantes se pavaneront en musique d'autres cyclistes momentanément à pied et qui feront des grâces en rond et en zigzag pendant que les quatres pédaleront sur la scène. Enfin, un couple de mimes ballerines, composé de Mlle Litini en gommeux cycliste et de la jolie Mlle Labounskaia (sic) […] ajoutera une note gracieuse à cet ensemble, au milieu duquel quelques clowns exécuterons des tours fantastiques."

[18] There are neither sinister acts nor morals in this ballet: the young girl is seduced, but Cinderella-like, the prince brings her to his palace and marries her (his friend later marries her sister).

[19] Striptease-like pantomimes with titles such as *Le Coucher de la mariée* and *Le Reveil de la mariée* were all the rage in music halls in the 1890s, and cabinet cards were bought in the millions.

[20] There are several posed photographs of *Terpsichore* and *L'Heure du berger* in *Le Théâtre* No. 40 (August (II) 1900).

[21] "L'heure du berger"—the hour of the shepherd—was known as the hour favourable for a lover to seduce his beloved.

[22] The ballet has obvious costume references to Justamant's ballet *Les Flocons de neige* from the féerie *Le Pied du mouton* (Eden-Théâtre, 1888).

[23] Her opera divertissements likewise mixed classical ballet and character dances.

[24] Mariquita, *Comoedia*, 1ere année, 1 (15 December 1908): 23. Mariquita occasionally spoke of her study and use of images of antiquity in interviews and in her own articles for *Musica, Comoedia*, and *Le Théâtre*. She did, however, adamantly state that she was only an interpreter, that she neither invented, nor created Greek art.

[25] Samuel Dorf, "Eroticizing Antiquity: Madame Mariquita, Régina Badet and the Dance of the Exotic Greeks from Stage to Popular Press," unpublished conference paper, *Opera, Exoticism and Visual Culture: The Fin de Siècle and its Legacy. An International Interdisciplinary Symposium*, University of London, September 2008, p. 10.

[26] The Opéra was only beginning to recover from a long period of decline, a dark age that perhaps made possible the development of so many forms of ballet in alternative popular venues, and although the Ballets Russes attracted a lot of attention and drew large audiences, their season was very short.

[27] See Obituaries by Charles Akar, Montaudran, and Gaston Lebel in *F-Pn* 8-RO-11776, Albert Carré, *Souvenirs de théâtre* (Paris: Plon, 1950), p. 219, and Robert Quinault, *La Danse en France sous la Troisième République* (conference), texte dactylographié, s.d. (cote B.N. Op: AID 2209), p. 18-20.

[28] Quinault, *La Danse en France*, p. 18-19.

[29] Mme Mariquita, "L'Eurythmie du geste," *Musica-Noël*, in "19th-Century Ballet" clippings file, *GB-Lv*. My thanks to Jane Pritchard for bringing these clippings and Mariquita's letters to my attention.

# Dancing politics in contemporary dance with Jacques Rancière

*Stefan Hölscher*

45 years after the first concert took place in Judson Church in 1962, Xavier Le Roy – in collaboration with dramaturge Bojana Cvejić – stages a quite historical figure: He assumes the role of the conductor and what Sally Banes once called "Democracy´s Body"[1] is revisited and questioned in 2007. How does Le Roy relate to the idea of a certain effervescent quality of potential bodies with his very special staging of *Le Sacre du Printemps*? How does he touch on questions of community, sociality, participation and a bodily co-presence that is simultanously shared and divided? Before I try to answer this question, I want to situate his piece in a wider historical context and afterwards ask why the conductor becomes the main figure in his piece. What French philosopher Jacques Rancière calls the *aesthetical regime of art* shall be used as a model to describe the paradoxical space that is proposed as a democracy *without* body in Le Roy´s piece at the end.

Traditionally there are three different spheres within the spatial dispositif of ballet. Belonging to the dancers, the musicians, and the audience each one allocates different ways of doing and making, experiences of time and space between bodies, and zones of participation. 1. There is the space of stage, where usually narrative unfolds and the bodies and their legions of interests, desires, and relations are juxtaposed. 2. There is the orchestra pit – mostly a quite hidden area from where the music occurs, underlining the plot with melodies and rhythms as much as haunting the stage as a structuring instance that also produces and influences the dancer´s movements in a very ghostly way. 3. On the other side of this scene, there is the audience, in history sometimes an imagined "WE" which feels mirrored as a community with all its commodities and successes by means of a distribution of bodies and their interactions on stage. The romantic *ballet d´action* of the 19th century was a new way of production, one transpiring within the industrial revolution that had lifted society´s bodies airiely as plumes, or – in Karl Marx´s terms – dissolved everything stable into the air. In this setting the conductor holds a very special role: The relations between those three spheres are policing each other through his body. He is the one mediating between the score written down before the performance and the musicans playing in the pit. Indirectly he also helps to arrange the visual configurations on stage, triggering not only to the musicians, but also to the dancers. If it was not for him, the whole dispositif would not work. Without his hidden translation the spectators could not be mirrored as a fixed sociality.

Using Jacques Rancière´s terminology as a system of reference I want to think about dancing politics that enable different conceptions of the relationship between specific ways of working, making, and doing with regards to a given "distribution of the sensible" (Rancière) constituting the communities in which commodities are produced and received. Therefore I want to suggest to imagine the sensible between us, our bodies and their words as conducted in both senses of the word. Participating in the sensible are only those parts which have been counted and recorded already by techniques and systems of notation, by writing. In contrast there is no location for the countless parts, the ones that cannot be represented in a certain territory, mapped on a wall or policed yet by a specific choreographic system. Therefore the sensible is about participation in a redundant way. Only the countable counts: Moving through this territory Le Roy in his radical version from 2007 mainly focuses on the conductor´s body as a dancing one. While Sir Simon Rattle (the director of *Berliner Philharmoniker*) underlined the motto of his previous project *Rhythm is it!* and even proclaimed that rhythm is life, for Le Roy the distribution of different rhythms makes the divided and shared sensible that constitutes sociality even more complicated. - Especially since his piece is primarily based on a research whose impossible task had been to analyse video recordings of Rattle´s conducting and to reproduce his movements afterwards.

What is at stake besides problems of authenticity is – in regard to the relation to the audience Le

Roy establishes – the contradictory community of *potential bodies*, a bodily co-presence without a common social body, maybe even a "disincorporation"[2] of sociality itself. Another distinction by Rancière, the one between police and politics, can help to think even further in this direction and to connect his philosophy to the question of what paradoxically constitutes politics beyond sociality as well:

"The police is thus first an order of bodies that defines the allocation of ways of doing, ways of being, and ways of saying, and sees that those bodies are assigned by name to a particular place and task; it is an order of the visible and sayable that sees that a particular activity is visible and another not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another as noise. (…) I now propose to reserve the term politics for an extremely determinded activity antagonistic to policing: (…) Political activity is whatever shifts a body from the place assigned to it or changes the place´s destination."[3]

This kind of dialectics between police and politics is inherent in the legacy of *Judson Church Theatre* because of different reasons and a lot has been written about them already. As Sally Banes has explored and protocolled it widely, at the core it is the logic of equality being introduced on many different layers into the dance field: The equality of bodies, the equality of positions in space, the equality between bodies and objects. But equality is not something fixed and given, it has to be verified and produced in confrontation with each specific space and time in a specific way. The community of *potential bodies* can never merge with sociality since the latter is necessarily defined by a police order. Art is never able to fully become life and participation may only occur in a paradoxical way. Especially when a given "distribution of the sensible" is reconfigured, participation in a common of community is even interrupted. In this case different positions cannot be distributed anymore clearly and policing starts to migrate inbetween the allocations to recapture them. Sometimes a specific public of the audience even turns out to be the opposite of sociality and its distribution of places, functions, and identities, when community is confronted with the uncommon, something that suddenly reshapes its shares and divisions. Then a given "distribution of the sensible" starts to oscillate "between the arithmetical multiplicity of desires and the geometrical proportionality of the well-ordered community"[4].

This was the most striking case in dance history in 1913, when Vaslav Nijinsky and Sergei Diaghilev´s *Ballets Russes* presented their *Le Sacre du Printemps* at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. The screams and browls in the audience that were provoked by what people saw on stage – and heard painfully because of the ballet´s music composed by Igor Strawinsky – point towards a community of *potential bodies* that can never be grasped as a fixed sociality.

Acoustically it was a certain anticipation of *musique concrète*, the ionisation of the musical material through polyrhythm and polytonality, the entrance of quotidian noise into harmony, the multilayered clashes of shreds of sound, that disturbed and reconfigured the sense perception of those modern times at the start of the 20th century. Visually it was the various stambling and trampeling qualities in the dance that were juxtaposed to ballet´s former lightness.

Refering to this historical context in Le Roy´s version the whole spatial disposif is turned upside down. The conductor appears simultanously as instructor and executor, blurring the gap between cause and effect, and making and doing in a typical choreographical system: He is on stage, facing the audience and acting as if he addressed the spectators as his orchestra while he himself is triggered by the score. Therefore sociality seems to be deeply related to the orchestration of its parts and amounts while the music is on playback, pre-assembled, and a sign hinting towards the age of postproduction at the same time. It remains undecidable whether his gestures are policing the scene or the other way round. Throughout the piece the impression arises that the conductor is in a very twisted position. On the one hand he governs the audience and regulates our starts and stops as imaginary instrumentalists, but on the other he himself is policed by the score. Although pre-sensed, every tiny quality moving through his body is conveyed as not being initiated by him but by the recorded instruments he tries to conduct. There is a surplus between him and the distribution he constitutes that subverts his sovereignty over the scene. The whole scenery points at the main paradox of social bodies as explicated by Rancière:

"Rather, it is that the people are always more or less than they are supposed to be: the majority instead of the assembly, the assembly instead of the community, the poor instead of the city, applause instead of agreement, pebbles counted instead of a firm dicision taken. (…) that divergence from itself, which consitutes the demos as such."[5]

And there are more divergences in the piece: The sounds of the different instruments are spread via loudspeakers among the audience and therefore seem to allocate specific places, functions, and identities. After the music has started with a high bassoon, Le Roy first stands backward towards the auditorium. Then he turns around and directly addresses single spectators. The whole setting creates the impression of a clearly distributed and divided space, where the spectators are situated as if they actively participated and executed their work, too. But everything is fake. No real instruments exist, just recordings. No work. Only tapes. Le Roy´s wild gesturing of his arms and their utilization as pointers in different directions (towards us as instrumentalists starting and stopping) oscilates between codes that connote pantomimically turned movements of a conductor and codes that in contrast almost seem as if his dancing mimetically got transformed into the dance of the instruments he conducts, e.g. when he suddenly moves as if playing a violine. At those moments a self-affirmation of the distribution of space and time seems to get manifested in his body.

In the conductor´s face the most interesting dance can be watched. His face as a significant surface is sharply choreographed by the music tape in addition. There we can see the multiple layers and forces constituting the score. Each new kettledrum brought into action becomes visible there, whole groups of violines populate the wrinkles on his forehead, the celli migrate over the pits around his mouth, and when the beats of the cymbal thunder, his face as a screen oscilates between two communities: A fixed and social one and one consisting only of *potential bodies*. At many moments throughout the piece one might be reminded on what Gilles Deleuze and Fèlix Guattari write about faciality as a surface of sociality :

"The organization of the face is a strong one. We could say that the face holds within its rectangle or circle a whole set of traits, faciality traits, which it subsumes and places at the service of significance and subjectification."[6]

It is indeed in Le Roy´s face where his piece mainly connotes questions of community, sociality, participation and bodily co-presence: Is there a certain sensible incorporated, the shares and divisions of doing and making, choreographing and dancing? Where is the sacrifice, albeit inbetween it seems as if his face was rendered into potentiality? Is he therefore in contrast rather offering a community of *potential bodies*, a bodily departure from the places, functions and identities that hold us as a public together? Is it the conductor´s body that is offered as a potential sacrifice? We might be reminded on the primal scene in Louis Althusser´s philosophy, the interpellation of the subject by law: Only because a policeman calls another body, exactly this one afterwards is constituted as one belonging to sociality. But in Rancière´s terms only through the disincorporation of sociality democracy might occur.

"Democracy is the community of sharing, in both senses of the term: a membership in a single world, which can only be expressed in adversarial terms, and a coming together which can only occur in conflict. To postulate a world of shared meaning is always transgressive."[7]

Therefore in Rancière´s *aesthetical regime of art* democracy cannot have a body, but has always to be verified from the beginning. What Le Roy seems to show is that the politics of equality are still knocking on sociality´s door, without a common measure, but as the countless bodies outside the already counted territories. 45 years after the first concert took place in *Judson Church Theatre* and nearly 100 years after the birth of modernism in the wake of *Le Sacre du Printemps*, both legacies are still alive and questions might be raised about the word democracy. In Le Roy´s piece also we as spectators are emancipated from our allocations and leaving the sphere belonging to us. We become aware of a community of *potential bodies* whose members can never be too sure about the sociality holding them together.

**Acknowledgements**
I would like to thank Enad Marouf, Sebastian Schulz, Gerald Siegmund, Alan Twitchell and Liz

Waterhouse for their feedback during the writing process! Hopefully they can find a few of their suggestions in this final version...



Notes

1 Sally Banes, *DEMOCRACY´S BODY – Judson Dance Theatre, 1962-1964*, Duke University Press, 1993.

2 "It is true that the circulation of these quasi-bodies causes modifications in the sensory perception of what is common to the community, in the relationship between what is common to language and the sensible distribution of spaces and occupations. They form, in this way, uncertain communities that contribute to the formation of enunciative collectivities that call into question the distribution of roles, territories and languages. In short, they contribute to the formation of political subjects that challenge the given distribution of the sensible. A political collective is not, in actual fact, an organism or a communal body. The channels for political subjectivization are not those of imaginary identification but those of literary disincorporation." - Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, Continuum, 2004, p. 40.

3 Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement – Politics and Philosophy*, The University of Minnesota Press, 1999, p. 29-31.

4 Jacques Rancière, *On the shores of politics*, Verso, 1995, p. 87.

5 Jacques Rancière, *On the shores of politics*, Verso, 1995, p. 94.

6 Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus – Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 188.

7 Jacques Rancière, *On the shores of politics*, Verso, 1995, p. 49.

# Nihon Buyo: Beyond the Boundaries of Western Aesthetics

*Takashi Izuha & Mieko Marumo*

**Introduction: Terrific tide of western civilization**

This paper investigates how Shoyo Tsubouchi was influenced by western aesthetics when he was conceiving Nihon Buyo. Nihon Buyo is a technical term to indicate several styles of Japanese dance including two important traditional dance styles, Kabuki Buyo and Kamigatamai. The term Nihon Buyo was first coined by Tsubouchi in the early twentieth century and what he intended by the term was an alternative composite performing art with dance and music invented by modern sensibility. While stylistic bases of Nihon Buyo relied on traditional Japanese dances like Kabuki Buyo, Tsubouchi's efforts to add modernity to Nihon Buyo were so significant that his intellectual background should be noticed.[1]

+ + +

After the end of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1868, people endeavoured to break the old-fashioned feudal society and aimed at utilitarian sciences. They employed western practical sciences including engineering, medicine and law as their models to form national policies. Not only these practical sciences, western humanities including philosophy, aesthetics and literature were introduced to Japan during this period of the tide of western civilization. For instance, receiving western humanities and understanding these ideas, Japanese intellectuals and novelists tried to improve their own culture which they thought depended on old-fashioned feudal thoughts.

**Tsubouchi and western literature**

Shoyo Tsubouchi was one of these intellectuals who wanted to improve Japanese culture. He was born in 1859, the age when the Tokugawa shogunate ended and Japan opened its borders to foreign trade in 1858. He was first influenced by English poets like Shakespeare when he was studying at a high school in Nagoya and he is well known for accomplishing his translation of the complete works of Shakespeare into Japanese in 1928.

He was also active as a novelist. Not only did he write his own novels, he published his own theoretical discourses on literature including *The Essence of Literature* in 1885 in which Tsubouchi started his idea on literature with the following comment. 'The main object of literature is to represent human expressions. What is human expression? It includes all human activities which come from emotions.'[2] For human expressions, he used a Japanese term *ninjou* [人情]. *Ninjou* was not the new word coined in his era but had been used to describe human emotions since the sixth century.[3] In Tsubouchi's era, *ninjou* was used to mean sexual passions and was taken as one of the main subjects especially in literature. Popular novels of the Yedo period in the early nineteenth century, for example, by Tamenaga Shunsui, dealt with romantic or erotic relationships between men and women as their main subjects. However, these erotic relationships became a focus of criticism in the age of Tsubouchi after the Meiji Restoration and they considered more fundamental, profound and complicated human expressions should be represented in literature. Tsubouchi exaggerated the balance of emotions and reason in human expressions and considered that these balanced structures of human expressions should compose modern literature.[4] In this sense, what Tsubouchi meant by *ninjou* was different from the meaning with the romantic connotation of the Yedo period. Though he used the same term, he denied the vulgar human relationships for modern literature.

In the age of Tsubouchi, English Bildungsroman, for example, by Charles Dickens or Edward George Bulwer-Lytton were translated into Japanese as models of modern literature. Tsubouchi was influenced by representations of human minds in these western literatures when he struggled to represent human expressions in Japanese literature. Tsubouchi noted the difference between Japanese Tamenaga's romantic literature and Bulwer-Lytton's. 'Tamenaga defines human expressions as physical pleasure which is for him the only subject to represent while Lytton defines it quite differently. He describes more profound human minds with ardent love. It is largely wrong to think that we need only obscene sexual passions to represent expressions.'[5] Bulwer-Lytton's *Ernest Maltravers* was first published at London in 1837 and was translated into Japanese in 1878. For marketing reason, the translated title implied relation to Japanese traditional popular novels on erotic relationships between men and women. However, the translator Junichiro Niwa was conscious of the difference between western idea of love and Japanese old-fashioned idea of *ninjou*. Tsubouchi also noticed

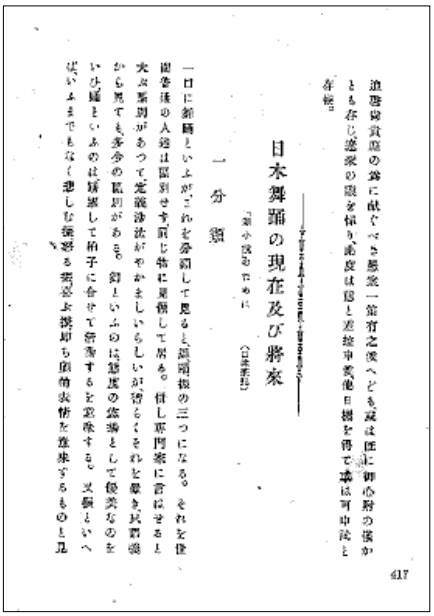
the different human expressions represented in *Ernest Maltravers* and noted, 'they [Tamenaga's and Bulwe-Lytton's] are as different as "moon and turtle".'[6] What Tsubouchi intended for Japanese modern literature was not physical emotions but profound human expressions influenced by western literature.

Bulwer-Lytton's literature could directly influence Tsubouchi's efforts. He himself translated a part of Bulwer-Lytton's *Rienzi* in 1885 and published it with a shorter edition of his *The Essence of Literature* for the preface of the translated *Rienzi*, which indicates that Tsubouchi introduced Bulwer-Lytton's literature as a model of what he intended as modern literature.[7] Bulwer-Lytton published his own idea on literature for *Monthly Chronicle* in 1838. In this article, Bulwer-Lytton noted that several passions were inevitable for literature as an art form and 'delineation of passions is inseparable from the delineation of character.'[8] He continued, 'It is, accordingly, in the perfect harmony that exists between the character and the passion that the abstract and bodiless idea finds human force and corporeal interest. If you would place the passion before us in a new light, the character that represents it must be original.'[9] Emotions of human beings should be well-represented in fiction. 'You will recollect that in the novel, as in the drama, it is the struggle of emotions that the science of the heart is best displayed.'[10] What Bulwer-Lytton mentioned here as 'passions' or 'emotions' corresponds with what Tsubouchi meant by *ninjou* as Tsubouchi also noticed that delineation of human expressions was the main subject of literature and what he intended as *ninjou* was all kinds of expressions including passions, emotions, love, et al.

In his memoir, Tsubouchi noted that he read several treatises and articles on English literature at Tokyo University Library when he was a student there. One of the reasons that he came to devote himself in reading them was the fact that he got a bad grade in English literature at the University because he could not analyze the character of Gertrude in Shakespeare's *Hamlett* but just wrote about her morality. At this stage, he might have been aware that characters in literature should be fundamental factors for analysis and characters with profound expressions should be inevitable in great literature. During the struggle with reading the treatises or articles, he might have met Bulwer-Lytton's theory on literature. Then he noticed that Japanese popular novels with sexual affairs as their subjects could not reveal human nature. As a novelist, he was one of the people who tried to improve Japanese literature as a modern art form. Through his reading English literature and studies on it, he established his own idea on literature that human expressions were inevitable to represent. Western influence on him can be pointed out here in terms of Tsubouchi's thoughts on human expressions for Japanese modern literature.

**Nihon Buyo and expression**

Tsubouchi's notion of western ideas of expression was not limited in the field of literature. Tsubouchi also insisted that Japanese dances at that time were too confused and mundane because their storylines were based on outdated epics of Kabuki which were difficult to understand.[11] He put his effort into creating an alternative Japanese dance-based performing art with modern sense; that was Nihon Buyo. In the process of coining a new term for the new performing art, he introduced some terms including *hyoujou buto* [表情舞踏 ie. expressional dance] to fix an proper term for Japanese new performing art, though he would fix the term Nihon Buyo soon after.



日本舞踊の現在及び將來

一分間

417

**Fig.** Reprint of Tsubouchi's 'The Present and the Future of Nihon Buyo' (1909) first published for *Shin Shousetsu* in 1908. See note 12.

In an article published in 1908 [Fig.], Tsubouchi introduced his concept of dance-based performing art and applied dance drama set in Kabuki plays as one of the bases. Though he stated that Japanese dances which Tsubouchi intended to integrate as Nihon Buyo 'are of course different from western dances', the fact is important that Tsubouchi named the dance *hyoujou buto*, which indicates he considered that expressions should be significant elements of this modern performing art.[12] *Hyoujou*

came to be used around 1900 to define expressions or facial expressions.[13] The word *hyoujou* consists of two parts *hyou* and *jou*. *Hyou* is a word stem of a verb *hyousuru* which means express, represent, describe or realize and has been used since the thirteenth century. *Jou* means affection, mind, sentiment, love or human hearts in general which has been used since the seventh century. Though these two components of the word *hyoujou* had been used as Japanese words for a long time, *hyoujou* was typically a new word coined in the Meiji era when a large number of new words were introduced to translate foreign words and ideas. *Hyoujou* was a word translated from the English word 'expression'. *Hyoujou* should have implied western aesthetics of expression.

Expression was one of the western ideas that were introduced to Japan in the late nineteenth century. For instance, in fine art, more and more Japanese painters of the late nineteenth century mentioned expressions and it became one of the important aims of painters to represent expressions in their compositions. In fine art, the term meant expressions of feeling of figures like facial expressions and body actions, which could be traced to the idea of expressions in paintings of the Renaissance and the term became a keyword of criticism of painting after around 1900. Painters were supposed to represent expressions or feelings which they thought had not been well represented in former traditional Japanese portraitures. A critic noted in preparation for exhibiting Paris Exposition in 1900, 'Our portraiture has been much less expressive and tended to represent facial typology for a long time. However, it is a pity that Westerners consider these monotonous expressions invaluable. Japanese painters must make a determined effort on this matter and are expected to represent figures with full facial expressions and energetic actions.'[14]

Tsubouchi exaggerated the grandeur of Japanese culture and the necessity to make it accepted worldwide. Creating new performing art was a part of his effort to make Japanese culture accepted worldwide. That's why he accentuated expressions of Nihon Buyo as he acknowledged western aesthetics that expressions were important factors for art forms including literature and dance.

## Conclusion: Beyond the boundaries of western aesthetics

Tsubouchi used *ninjou* and *hyoujou* to indicate human expressions which he considered necessary for the modern Japanese performing art. He noted that 'it seems better to add expressions [*hyoujou*] to movements in order to make their [Furigoto's] taste and appearance more beautiful.'[15] He considered that it was necessary to add expressions which were different from those of Japan. That's why he called Nihon Buyo *hyoujou buto*. Expressional movements would add grandeur or sublimity to Japanese dance and would help realize new unified dance-based performing art.

Not only did Tsubouchi try to improve Japanese traditions, but he put western aesthetics into Japanese new performing art, Nihon Buyo, in perspective of global basis. Whereas traditional aspects of Nihon Buyo have been well noticed among scholars, we have to notice Tsubouchi's notions on western aesthetics and their influence on his efforts to create new Japanese performing art. What he intended was to improve Japanese dance into a composite art form with worldwide reputation beyond the boundaries of western aesthetics.



## Endnotes

[1] For further information on Tsubouchi's first definition of the term Nihon Buyo and its historical development, see Takashi Izuha, et al., 'Shoyo's Nihon Buyo', *Proceedings: Looking Back/Moving Forward*, (Birmingham, AL: Society of Dance History Scholars, 2008), pp.94-97.

[2] Shoyo Tsubouchi, *Shousetsu Shinzui*『小説神髄』[*The Essence of Literature*], (Tokyo: Shougetsudo, 1885), p.19.

[3] *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten*『日本国語大辞典』[*Grand Dictionary of Japanese*], vol.15, (Tokyo: Shougakukan, 1975), pp.550-551.

[4] Tsubouchi, *op.cit.*, (1885), pp.19-26.

[5] Shoyo Tsubouchi, *Imo to Sekagami*『妹と背かゞみ』, (Tokyo: Kaishin Shooku, 1885-86), p.50.

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] Edward George Bulwer-Lytton, *Gaisei Shiden*『慨世士伝』, (Tokyo: Banseidou, 1885), preface pp.1-19.

[8] 'On Art in Fiction', *The Monthly Chronicle*, I, (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1838), p.49.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.*, p.50.

[11] Shoyo Tsubouchi, 'Buyo ni tsuite'「舞踊について」['On Buyo'], *Shumi*『趣味』, vol.3, no.2, (1908), pp.101-104.

[12] Shoyo Tsubouchi, 'Nihon Buyo no Genzai oyobi Shourai'「日本舞踊の現在及将来」['The Present and the Future of Nihon Buyo'], *Shin Shousetsu*『新小説』, vol.13, no. 2, pt.5, (1908), pp.1-12.

[13] *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten*『日本国語大辞典』, vol.17, (1975), p.156.

[14] *Waseda Bungaku*『早稲田文学』, vol.7, no.3, December, (1897).

[15] Shoyo Tsubouchi, *Shin Gakugeki Ron*『新楽劇論』[*A Study on New Drama*], (Tokyo: Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1904), p.66.

# New Frontiers for Aesthetic Pedagogy:

# Web-cam technology as a partner in creating new places and spaces for collaboration

*Luke Kahlich, Ed.D. - Temple University, Philadelphia, USA*

*Pauline Brooks, MFA - John Moores University, Liverpool, UK*

We first discussed dance and technology during a conference at John Moores in 2001. At that time we were both were chairing large departments of dance and had no time to spend on learning software and keeping up with hardware innovations or trying to put ideas into practice. After stepping down from chairing, we renewed discussion of our shared interest in using technology in pedagogy and the creative process. While we as artists/educators are very interested in the role of emerging media technology, as are increasing numbers of our students, our institutions (and many others) are not presently ready to invest the resources at the level of American institutions such as University of Florida, Florida State University, Ohio State University, Arizona State University, University of California, Irvine for instance. We therefore sought to find a low cost alternative that might be available to a larger number of dance educators and students without major resource requirements.

We talked about using cell phones, about emailing videos and finally settled on experimenting with the use of the internet. Each of us arranged to have five students and meet each week to plough forward with this idea. While we both had space and bodies, and software and hardware. . . we were unsure (as were the technicians at our respective institutions) of how exactly this would unfold. Temple University offered to host the sessions via Adobe Breeze (later upgraded to Adobe Connect and later to Adobe Connect Pro), software designed for "talking heads" in the corporate world.

**Entering New Territory**
**2007-2008, Project 1**

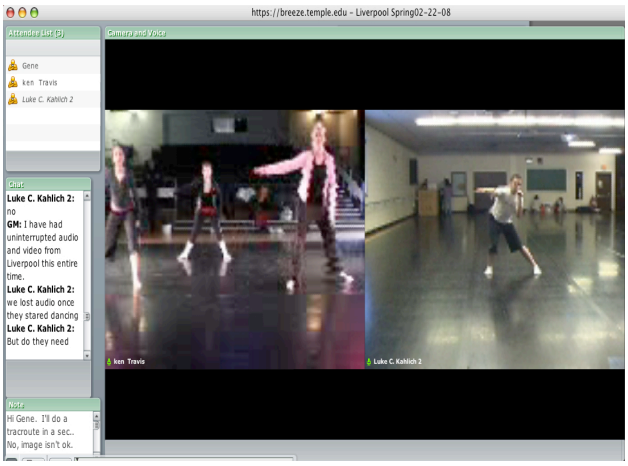
Original course description: This course will be an experimental use of technology, specifically internet technology, regarding its use teaching, learning and creating in the choreographic process, and more particularly internationally.
Specific objectives were:

- To experiment with the use of internet technology in choreographic pedagogy.
- To develop basic knowledge and skills with internet technology.
- To design creative and educational projects for dance utilizing internet technology.
- To build a conceptual and practical foundation for further study and use of internet technology in dance.

Attempts to keep a diary as the experience unfolded collided with ongoing issues, making it difficult to pay the hoped for time to teaching, the creative process or the journal entries. As we learned something new each week, we found that the challenges were considerable and often frustrating, often focused on the technology itself.

So off we went on September 19, 2007.

One of the first sessions included a warm-up led by Pauline. This was designed to introduce students into the software; how they would see themselves, their peers and possibilities of interactions.




***Computer Screen of Session – Liverpool on left and Temple on right***

The students were then guided to experiment with new materials, finding workable structures, and to get to know each other. Three journal entries from early meetings give an idea of the initial difficulties and frustrations we all faced:

9/19/07

Problems with Liverpool connection. We need to know what to do with the students when the technology doesn't work. Worked for the most part, but mostly talking. Difficulties with audio. Size of screen with breeze limited.

9/24/07

Browser quit repeatedly

9/26/07:

Cameras are working well this time, but there is no sound from Liverpool. Worked on views that were more and less successful in sharing a physical warm-up, lead by Pauline, with students at both ends following. We began to work with the split screen that was set up, since each site had a screen set side by side. Students offered suggestions and we worked on the issues of levels of detail in the movement given the limited quality of video.

With the limitations from ongoing issues with hardware, networking, software and cameras, we finalized the work that was created during the semester for the semester final showing on December 5, 2007. The performance was aired via the Internet between invited audiences at both universities.

***December 5, 2007 Internet Showing – Temple perspective***

***December 5, 2007 Internet Showing – Liverpool perspective***

Temple University agreed to fund a weeklong trip to Liverpool for all of the US project members, which culminated in a shared performance at John Moores. We agreed to continue to meet weekly during spring 2008. In addition to reviewing our first semester work, we added three more projects: experimentation with video at both sites to be combined with the interface of live dance with film at John Moores; a structured improvisation, (demonstrating the split screen with two spaces with the live audience in Liverpool), and a new, live group dance.

Ongoing comments from the project participants included:

- Audio lag very troublesome.
- Could not log on at Temple.
- Total frustration.
- Projector not working.

- Things working!!!
- Total loss.
- Final session went great!!

Some of the successes were:

- Persistence, excitement and dedication of students.
- Creative work accomplishments.
- Improvement of institutional interest and support.
- Future possible individual and collaborative efforts.
- Clarity of needs for continued developmental work.
- Production of cutting-edge research in transnational pedagogy and creative work.

Issues that continue to need to be addressed as we continue to develop ideas of using the internet for pedagogical, research and creative practice:

- Networking at institutional level.
- Software for audio/video (DVTS).
- Cameras (NTSC/PAL).
- Delay and noise/echo.
- Microphones for moving bodies
- Time zones for scheduling.
- Dedicated Technology Space: designed to allow more productive use of time for researcher, teacher, and student.

**Moving Forward – Learning from the Past 2008-2009, Project 2**

Specific objectives were:

- To investigate how web-cam and e-mail technology can serve dance pedagogy and creative process, specifically if and how it might engage students in the making of dances within a new spatial 'frontier'.
- To use technology on a shared international project encouraging the development of international links and the practice of networking.
- To explore the potential for linking spaces and audiences via the internet with web-cam choreography, including performance experience and aesthetic pedagogy.

In the second year we experimented with an alternate module based on what we had learned the previous year. Three Temple MFA students were paired up with John Moores BA students, each with different levels and ways of collaborating in creating and learning dance. In some ways this went more smoothly:

- We knew the software better (opportunities and limitations) and it had developed somewhat.
- We had some students who had worked with technology previously.
- The MFA students had more experience with choreography.
- We had a better idea of when to interject ourselves into the process.
- We provided more structure up-front and more time for development.

We paired up students early according to interests and provided the fall semester as time to develop ideas and the spring semester to move toward more finished works. In the end we also included two faculty works (one from each institution), as another alternative venue of sharing choreography.

On April 30, 2009, we held a formal performance via the Internet between our dance theatres. Along with an introduction of administrators from each institution, we presented three student works and two faculty works followed by an audience discussion.

Three student projects were developed:

<u>Carolina and Faye</u>

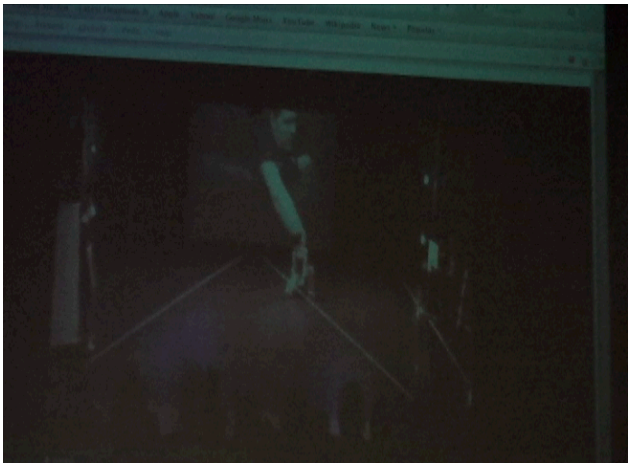
- Use of visual image and screen to influence devising
- Processes included: improvisation, camera frame, on screen-off screen cues; unison complement/contrast, split-screen exploration,
- Use of 'cone of capture'.
- Communication methods used: web-cam, email, Skype.

***Trio working with split screen***

***Group work based on accumulation and using metronome for accompaniment***

Colleen/Sarah/Amy

- Use of personal lives to influence devising, props and text
- Processes included: free associative writing, use of question and answer, improvisation, split-screen, camera frame
- Use of 'cone of capture'
- Communication methods used: web-cam, email, Skype.



***Faculty work from Liverpool projected to Temple***

***Trio using text, stories and props***

Beau and Danielle

- Use of previously created material based from gesture
- Processes included: Accumulation formula, collaboration of ideas, autonomy of theme, numerical codes.
- Use of 'cone of capture'.
- Communication methods used: web-cam, email, Skype, You tube.

***Audience question from Temple to Liverpool***

**Project Evaluation - Artistic**

"It was interesting that we each tried to do something specific with the technology, as well as to consider the definitions of the space of both the live theatre and the screen, and [how we were able to layer] connections and collisions between the two." (USA)

" It was not just about how the technology helped with the piece, but how the dancers became something else; for example, we became an interactive company of 7 on screen at the same time as being 3 or 4 live dancers interacting with varying numbers on the screen. "(UK)

"One choreographer makes the best of the awkwardness of adjusting to the technology… playing with the dancers going in and out of view." (USA)

**Project Evaluation - Pedagogic**

"The project and the technology gave us the opportunity to share a journey in a personal relationship through dance collaboration. It was an overwhelming experience for being in contact with each other…it has been a nice experience to get to know you, and weird because I cannot touch you." (USA)

"It feels strange to be part of a performance where we have built a relationship, yet cannot enjoy a post-performance social! Sharing the experience has enabled us to feel close." (UK)

"The audience struggled to watch both live dancers and the screen sometimes." (USA)

"It can be difficult for developing intimacy. The relationship between dancers is on display. The dancers have to try to build a connection with one another, talking in front of everyone, while watching their own image projected on a screen, and often hearing their voice in an echo." (USA)

**General Student Comments**

- Ideas lost in translation-- *Many ideas and thoughts were lost in translation over email because we did not understand each other's intentions.*
- Links to sessions -- *Once I had links to the sessions, I would watch them during the week and piece together the phrase work.*
- Audience accepted technical issues-- *I received interesting and surprising feedback about our performance. Because of its structure, any technical difficulty that we experienced read to the audience as part of the piece.*
- Learned about each other and technology-- *This was a new way for me to create work and I think our performance reflected what we learned about each other and technology.*
- Dancers were resourceful-- *We dancers were resourceful, and willing to keep bending to the capabilities of the technology.*
- Strangeness of navigating mediated presence- *The strangeness of navigating mediated presence, the experience of connecting with another human being through a technological filter.*
- Can't sense subtle energetic shifts--*You can't really see them, you definitely can't touch them, and you can't sense those subtle energetic shifts that allow dancers to sync up their movement. … At times, their movement feels purely mechanical to me. At the same time, certain human characteristics are amplified; one dancer leaves the microphone on and close to her mouth as she dances, and halfway through a lengthy piece, the sound of her breathing drowns out all other noise in the space.*
- Exercise in letting go--*This process has been an exercise in letting go, not only of the expectation of being able to work on any given day, but also of any previous ideas for the work because of communicating through this medium is so different than anything experienced before.*
- Grasping for energy-- *I feel like I am grasping for someone's energy.*
- Comfort with image-- *I was becoming uncomfortably aware of her image at first, but then gradually settling into the experience of being larger than life.*
- Prior experience helps-- *The one choreographer who had the most prior experience… developed a very specific, cleanly geometric and gestural phrase. . . Even with this adjustment, he commented that teaching the phrase to the Liverpool counterparts took an inordinately long time.*

**Inspirations for future work**

Despite the challenges, each choreographer felt that he or she had gained something positive from this process. Some of these benefits expressed by the students were:

"I had a connection with dancers half way around the world, and that this project enabled me to be connected to a global sense of a dance community".

"This process increased confidence in using technology in work in the future".

"This opportunity was valuable career skill building, enabling him to have at least a familiarity with technology that is becoming increasingly important in all fields".

"As a dancer and a kinesthetically-oriented person, I still value personal contact over virtual. However these kinds of virtual connections offer a complementary education and communication tool that enable connections and information that would not be shared otherwise".

Their suggestions for future projects included:

"Longer sessions might bring more humanity to the work. You would see the tiredness, the tension, readings that you get when you see a person".

"If I worked with this technology again, I would most likely narrow down the scope of my project from the beginning. I also think that it would be helpful to have one person in charge of setting the choreography and the other performers could contribute input and creative ideas".

**Future Work/Considerations include:**

- Exploration with students idea of new extended body through the use of technology and screen projection possibilities
- Education of audiences regarding viewing of intermedial/ telematic performances shown in theatre settings
- Networking at institutional level
- Software for audio/video (DVTS)
- Cameras (NTSC/PAL)
- Delay and noise/echo
- Microphones for moving bodies
- Time zones for scheduling
- Dedicated Technology Space: designed to allow more productive use of time for researcher, teacher, and student

**Larger issues for Consideration**

- How does the use of technology affect pedagogy and creative process?
- Can traditional expectations be applied or do medi-aesthetics need to be developed?
- How can this work be more widely used?
- How can international collaborations be developed into the regular curriculum?
- Where do we go for other technology?

**The Next Exploration: Fall 2009, Project 3**

The next mission will be…

- Restricted to Fall 2009 semester
- Have more developed structure from outset
- Faculty directed work
- Use a longer session for final audience discussion.
- Experimentation with assisting the education of audience, by bringing them into key points of the process and involving them in dialogue with the creators and performers.

# I'll Stay On My Side, If You Stay on Yours:

# An Analysis of the Racial Divide & Africanist Presence

# in Target's 2008 Dorm Room TV Commercial

*Stephanie D. Kobes*

Today, we as humans live in a multi-media culture infiltrated with conscious and subconscious messages that affect the lens through which we observe the world. Everyday we are bombarded with images from billboard signs, to newspaper/magazine ads, to the art hanging in our office, to internet pop-up ads, to the packaging of our foods and beverages, to a darkened theatre where we view dance or a play, to television commercial advertisements, etc. This list could go on ceaselessly. How we see the world and how we choose to think is influenced by our own values and personal life experiences and is in part shaped by what we take in from the popular culture that surrounds us. We, as Westerners are under the misconception that what we are creating is original, when in actuality much of what we create and see has an Africanist presence based on our shared cultural experiences.

This paper peers deep inside Target's 2008 dorm room TV commercial[1] and uses a magnifying glass with an Africanist lens to examine the embodied movement of the actresses & physical design and layout of the commercial itself.

This paper is meant as an interpretative analysis of Target's commercial, meaning this examination is not definitive and multiple interpretations are possible. This paper is also therefore, not accusing Target or its advertising agencies of malicious/outright racism, instead it is analyzing the commercial as a cultural and topographical text; a well-established research tradition in marketing/consumer research.[2] What I am suggesting is that Target's 2008 dorm room TV commercial mirrors a national racial bias that already exists in today's American society. I also am not suggesting that the media is the root cause of racism as a whole in our society. It is my belief and the belief of advertising researchers that the media can communicate racial stereotypes in a number of subtle ways that may never have been intentionally created, but if we start to identify, examine and discuss these ideas, perhaps it will be a step toward racial equality.[3]

Through popular culture's renewed interest in dance, thanks to TV shows such as "So You Think You Can Dance?," "America's Best Dance Crew" and "Dancing With the Stars," Target aims at selling its products through Hip-Hop. "Stacey Feldman, vice president for marketing of the women's health and personal care brands at Church & Dwight in Princeton, N.J says 'Dance is universal; it's something everyone relates to,'"[4]

Hip Hop originated as a competitive street dance, in which "crews" of young Latino and African Americans in marginalized areas were able to express themselves through movement. These dancers could often be found battling each other through the language of dance for each other's t-shirts. A definite connection to the fashion industry, the clothing the dancers wore was said to reflect the wearer's self-image and though idiosyncratic in nature, made a cultural impact. In prisons, where belts and shoelaces are taken away, pants sag. This prison practice soon became a style found on the streets. Loose clothing that was comfortable and easy to move in, along with hooded shirts to protect the dancers shoulders and heads while spinning, shaped a fashion trend popular in the 1980's that can still be seen today. "[The] dance was simply one part of a larger culture we now call Hip Hop. Hip Hop included rap music, dance forms (breaking, popping and locking), the DJ-ing that was itself an art, graffiti and clothing styles. The African American elements of this street form clearly include community, polyrhythms, competition, improvisation, pantomime, and percussion." B-boys used dance to gain respect and achieve a position within their own group and used improvisation to challenge competitors and try to make a lasting impression through their movement choices.[5]

In Target's 2008 dorm room commercial the viewing public is put inside a dorm room on move in day and watches as two college age women, one African American and one Caucasian, decorate their room by

battling out their decorative differences through the language of dance. Though only a 30 second slot of time, the commercial itself is loaded with Africanist presence and subtle innuendos, which support and encourage our already White privileged society.

On the surface level, viewers see two young women in stylish, bright-colored Target attire attack their interior design project (with the use of all Target products) through dance. They come face to face in their Hip Hop battle, dividing the room in half with their decorative opinions, fashion statements and their movement styles.

Their Hip Hop styled movement includes Brenda Dixon Gottschild's five premises of Africanist aesthetics, which are all used by Target to sell its products in an appropriating manner. These five premises are Polyrhthm/Polycentralism, Ephebism, High Affect Juxtaposition, Aesthetic of the Cool, and Embracing of the Conflict. "Polyrhythm/Polycentralism" is defined as movement from any part of the body, which may be considered the center; as opposed to the Eurocentric center at the core of the body, the Africanist center can initiate from any limb. There also may be multiple centers occurring at one time. [6] We see this polyrhythmic and polycentric aesthetic occurring throughout the commercial from the opening dance sequence in the call and response scenario through to the end in all of the unison dance sequences. The second aesthetic, "High Affect Juxtaposition" is when a mood, attitude or movement is slammed or put against its opposite.[7] In the commercial the driving mood of decorating on move-in day contrasts the light, airy and playful mood insinuated by the actresses. The interior design and costume choices, black and white versus flashy and colorful are also used in selling the diversity of Target's products. "Ephebism" involves power, vitality, flexibility, drive, attack, rhythmic speed and sharpness. It entails a supple and articulate spine and a groundedness rooted in the body's response to rhythm and sense of swing. The "Aesthetic of the Cool" is an all-embracing characteristic about attitude. It combines bodily/facial composure with strength, energy, articulacy and brilliance. "Embracing the Conflict" takes a look at opposites and/or conflict and rather than resolving the differences or erasing one or the other, finds compromise by utilizing both clashing points of view.[8]

In the Target commercial, a supple spine/torso, groundedness into the earth, off centered movement, attack of the rhythm (both through editing and physical movement), flexed/bent body parts and an energetic call-and-response between the two women allows them to talk without words and come together in a movement/decorative harmony. The commercial ends in an embracing of their conflicts as each side of their dorm room is decorated the way in which they aesthetically have chosen. Their faces throughout the commercial remain composed even as they move from decorating, to battling, to dancing in unison. Well crafted in its devious design, this 30-second commercial also helps to shape how society views African Americans in our Western culture.

> The spectrum of ways in which blacks [in advertising] are presented has broadened. Ambiguity and a variety of possible interpretations are intrinsic to certain forms of advertising, and deliberate where the objective is to appeal to multiple audiences through a single message or campaign. Innovation and a breaking of mental sets and images may be necessary in order to attract attention in an image-saturated environment. Juggling with the 'pictures in people's heads,' playing around with mental structures may now be a basic requirement for attracting any attention at all. On the other hand, the advertisers cannot afford to stray too far off the beaten path. How much leeway there is depends on the product, on the target audiences, and on the cultural context.[9]

The Target corporation is firmly rooted in promoting diversity from its hiring efforts, to its minority scholarship funds, to its support in belonging to the National Minority Supplier Development Council, as well as its multicultural marketing techniques through "Essence," (an African-American magazine) and "Latina" magazines.[10] However, as previously stated, despite all of these diversity efforts racial stereotypes seen in society are reflected in television advertising and therefore reflected back to the consumer in a bitter endless cycle. As is the case in Target's ad, what society first sees is a Black and White woman battling it out to the Calbaria song by the Copenhagen group Enur and sung by Afro-Danish reggae vocalist Natasja Saad—a multi-cultural detail that could be dissected by itself.[11] At first glance the ad seems innocent. The two actresses split their room in half, embracing their conflict and finding compromise by way of harmonious movement and yet, keep their individuality through their own interior design aesthetic. Hip Hop is

the language used to discuss their differences. Yet more camera time, physical movement and sense of importance is given to the White performer, who appears dressed more authentically in Hip Hop attire appropriating a culture, which she now will live across from. The last five seconds of Target's ad proclaims "Be Happy Together, Design Together, Save Together at Target." Though on a superficial level this can be looked at as any typical dorm room environment regardless of race, the idea of its significant presence in this ad offers a whole new lens with which to dissect a loaded half-minute.

"Advertising has been said to encourage the racism that is dominant in our culture and to actually play a role in the country's current racial problems."[12] "As critics since Friedan (1963) have pointed out, advertising is much more influential than literature in spreading sexist, racist, and classist ideology because it is so much more accessible."[13]

When analyzing Target's commercial carefully, the viewer is blasted by quick and subtle images that portray "Whites" towering over "Blacks" in a world in which life is seen mainly through the eyes of the White performer. Often people of color are shown through the camera in a top down angle, which gives an impression of minority obedience and submissiveness and gives the viewer the sensation of domination. [14] Images in which minorities appear shorter than their white counterpart or in which Caucasians appear more center screen than their minority counterpart suggest dominance, but not equality.[15]

In the commercial, the Caucasian performer is visibly taller than the African American performer. Target's ad opens with a centered full body shot that finds the characters standing back-to-back staring at their own bland/undecorated side of the dorm room. In a matter of two seconds, the camera angle switches to reveal a medium shot at a slight upward diagonal showing the two women shaking hands disclosing just how much taller the White woman is compared to the Black woman. Instead of the hands meeting in a mutually friendly offering, the Black performer is seen presenting her hand first, beginning what is to be the theme of this commercial. The Black woman starts off the dance battle and as she shows her four count movement phrase, the camera tracks to the Black woman's side of the room to reveal what the space looks like from her perspective. The camera pauses here momentarily as the White performer begins to show her moves, (a full eight counts) but then promptly tracks to her side of the room as she ends her movement phrase, thus seeing the room through the White woman's eyes. Both the camera tracking and the unequal amount of time given to present movement, insinuatingly suggests who will win the battle and who is more important.

Throughout the commercial the fast edits and track shots expose what the dorm room looks like and the power of the gaze from the perspective of the White woman in the commercial. Of the 20 carefully angled and spliced shots, during a 30 second duration, there are only three shots in which the camera discloses the vantage point from the Black woman's point of view. However, each time this happens, the camera swiftly tracks to the opposing side where the viewer gazes through a White woman's eyes at a Black woman and her way of life.

> Although many of the negative and stereotypical portrayals of Blacks in advertising have faded into oblivion, some still find their way into television commercials. These portrayals are of concern because they can have an impact on others' social construction of reality about Blacks and they can affect Black Americans' self-concept. This is particularly important for Black children in their formative years because of the need to develop positive self-images. Ward (1992) wrote that it is more a matter of how people are included rather than that they have been included. Often images that Blacks see of themselves are either negative, offensive, or simply not there.[16]

If Target's commercial is paused near the end, what the viewer sees is a finished decorated dorm room in which the White woman's side is an Apollonian, black and white motif kept simple, yet elegant. The Black woman's side of the room reveals a more Dionysian perspective, perhaps suggesting a sense of exoticness through lavish, bright colors and loud expression. This idea is reflected throughout in the clothing and hairstyles of each performer. The Black woman is outfitted in a bright, green flowy shirt, tight flashy yellow leggings, short jean shorts and slip-on flats. On the contrary, the White woman is dressed in black skinny jeans, a gray hooded sweatshirt with only one accent color and sneakers. The costume in and of itself emphasizes curves in the Black woman giving her more sex appeal and sense of rowdiness and hides curves in the White woman, thereby suggesting more conservative, tame characteristics. At the same time,

the costumes give a sense of delicateness and femininity to the Black woman and sense of strong athleticism and Hip Hop authenticity to the White woman. Even their hair suggests these traits. The Black woman's hair is featured and worn down in a more feminine ideal, allowing for it to fly loosely about as she moves, compared to the more conventional, sporty tossed-up do worn by the White woman.

Target's 2008 dorm room commercial is trying to appeal to a culturally diverse audience suggesting that Target's products are for everyone, regardless of race, cultural background and/or aesthetic. In the end, it presents a facade embracing of a decorative conflict in which the two women seem to agree to disagree. On a deeper level, the commercial resolves in a drawing of an "invisible" line that neither performer, Black or White ever cross throughout the entire 30 seconds. It draws the same line, which divides our society. It uses the Africanist influenced dance form of Hip Hop and allows for more movement from the White performer as opposed to the Black performer and even goes so far as to give the White performer the last solo moment as she is seen eagerly pushing the pink stool belonging to the Black performer to her side of the room, putting her in her place.

The performers interact and even make physical contact, but neither attempt to understand or place themselves on the other side of the room. The day ends, the line is still drawn, and each will be found fast asleep in their own space without ever truly getting to the root and history of their differences. So in a mere 30 seconds, Target is selling their product to racially diverse consumers while at the same time highlighting the racial divide. "I'll stay on my side, if you stay on yours."



Notes

[1] "Target Dorm Commercial FULL HQ—Enur 'Calabria 2008,'" Youtube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfqEG7ZPO1k

[2] Bristor, Julia, Lee, Renée Gravois Lee, and Michelle Hunt, "Race and Ideology: African-American Images in Television Advertising" Journal of Public Policy & Marketing 14 (1995), 49.

[3] Bristor, "Race and Ideology: African-American Images in Television Advertising," 49.

[4] Elliott, Staurt, "Five, Six, Seven, Eight: Madison Avenue Shows It Still Loves the Right Moves," New York Times 6 Mar. 2007: 4C.

[5] Glass, Barbara, African American Dance: An Illustrated History, (North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc, 2007) 278-280.

[6] Gottschild, Brenda Dixon, Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance. (Connecticut: Praeger Publishers 1996) 12-13.

[7] Gottschild, Digging the Africanist Presence, 14.

[8] Gottschild, Digging the Africanist Presence, 13-16.

[9] Pieterse, Jan Nederveen, White On Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture, (Connecticut: Yale University Press 1992) 201-202.

[10] Target. Company, (2009) Diversity Section, http://sites.target.com/site/en/company/page.jsp?contentId=WCMP04-031762

[11] "Enur 2008 Biography." Ultra Records. http://www.ultrarecords.com/artists/enur/ par. 4.

[12] Fuller, Lorraine, "Are We Seeing Things? The Pinesol Lady and the Ghost of Aunt Jemima," Journal of Black Studies 32 (2001): 122.

[13] Stern, Barbara. "Gender and Multicultural Issues in Advertising: Stages on the Research Highway," The Journal of Advertising 28 (1999): 7.

[14] Pieterse, Jan Nederveen. White On Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture. (Connecticut: Yale University Press. 1992) 208.

[15] Bristor, "Race and Ideology: African-American Images in Television Advertising," 53.

[16] Fuller, Lorraine, "Are We Seeing Things?" 121.

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Target Company Wesite, Diversity Section. 2009. 2 June. 2009 http://sites.target.com/site/en/company/page.jsp?contentId=WCMP04-031762

# Patterns and Process for Site-Specific Performance Workshop
-
# Specific Performance Workshop

*Debra Loewen*

In his book, The Nature of Order, architect and philosopher Christopher Alexander describes fifteen fundamental properties of architecture that give buildings an "aliveness". He explores the connection between these properties with patterns found in the natural world, detailing how these elements combine to "embrace the user" and in doing so make the world a more "beautiful and harmonious place". Alexander's properties include: Strong Centers; Local Symmetries; Graded Variation; Inner Simplicity and Calm; Not Separateness; Alternating Repetition; Levels of Scale; Good Shape; The Void; Boundaries; Interlock and Ambiguity; Echoes; Contrast, Roughness and Positive Space.

In my workshop, Patterns and Procedures for Site-Specific Performance, each construct was examined first through projected photographic images of buildings, settings, city landscapes, and related natural forms. In addition, each property was identified pictorially with a single/image graphic design. Dialogue and discussion followed as participants explored these ideas with one another, demonstrating these constructs individually and with one another, embodying concepts of Local Symmetries, Not Separateness, Grades Variation, etc. in the confines of the small lecture room. Using cards depicting the 15single/images, participants were instructed to work in groups to design an ordered sequence of the patterns as a "score" for a structured improvisation. Groups could use as many elements as they wanted, and were not required to use all of them. Placing the cards face up on the table, each group presented their "scored" pattern sequence to the remaining participants. Analysis of the "scores" elicited comments on combinations and juxtaposition of elements, overlaps and transitions, single image response, and repeating or reoccurring events. Next, the workshop shifted its focus to the outdoor courtyard, where participants were asked to find an area that revealed some of these essential properties in constructed forms. The Olmsted design for Stanford University was an inspiring setting for identifying these elements in interior spaces, buildings, landscapes, courtyards, walkways and arched entrances, and open walkways. Working from their score, the participants included spatial parameters of the chosen site as a new layer in the developing play of the scored improvisation. These additional elements included steps and railings, plantings, doorways, entrances, benches, and other architectural structures. Audience perspective was decided by each group and the workshop concluded with two site-based performances for passers-by. Identifiable in each "performance" were Alexander's properties: boundaries, echoes, good shape, positive space, alternating repetition, contrast, graded variation, levels of scale, inner calm and simplicity, and others, vividly evident on three distinct levels: embodied in the activity of the moving bodies; encoded in the temporal sequence of unfolding form; enacted in relationships created between the moving dancers and the architectural forms.

**Workshop Feedback:**

"I liked using the pictures and words as a starting point, I thought they were very open and yet supportive instructions, I enjoyed working with a group as it allowed me to meet people in the workshop in a different way. We were immediately having to communicate about our creative and methodological interests/values/differences... I like learning about dance through doing." Jessica Runge

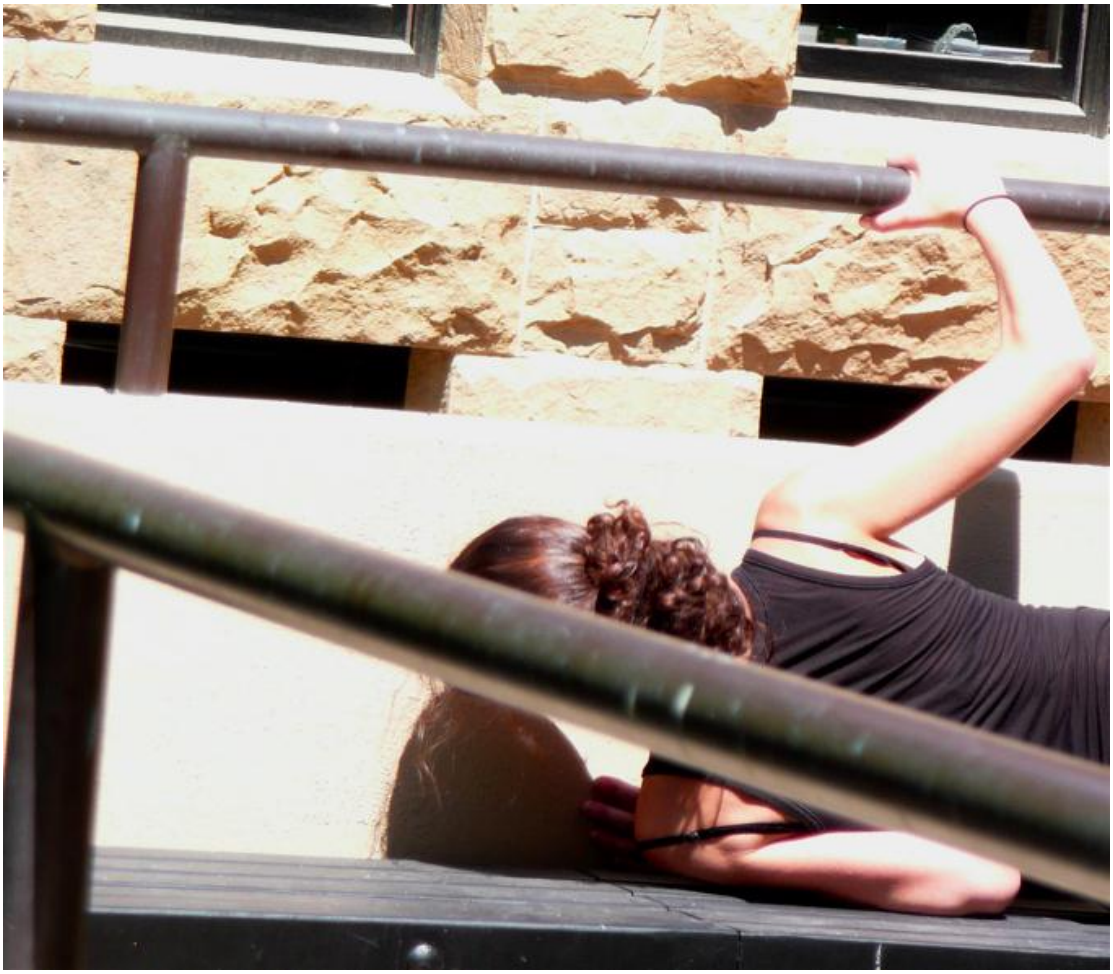
"The application of the 15 qualities was a great way to begin to develop a relationship either to others or to the space. It was fantastic and so simple, walking through those configurations without complex movement was an excellent exercise!" Beth Weinstein

**Acknowledgements**

The Fifteen Properties of Architecture are outlined in The Nature of Order the first book in architect Christopher Alexander's series, The Phenomenon of Life.

CES Press 2004

Loewen



Loewen

# *ROMERÍAS TOURS*: BRINGING A NEIGHBORHOOD'S PAST AND PRESENT ALIVE

## THROUGH PERFORMANCE AND PARTICIPATION

**Anadel Lynton**

Contemporary dance practitioners in Mexico, as do many artists in most countries, have a difficult time relating professionization (which implies both expertise **and** economic remuneration) with the communication and meaningfulness that most of hope their work will achieve. This dichotomy is compounded by the expectations transmitted implicitly by teachers and peers: creating dance is a transcendent mission that should carry messages about the beauty and freedom of the body to wide audiences of "the people" while reinforcing national and ethnic identities, promoting social justice, and being subsidized by the government along with education and health.. These expectations are in part due to the fact that almost all the venues for Mexican contemporary dance performance, professional education and research, are affiliated with the government or public universities. Modern dance itself (as a field of study and a performance practice) was sponsored by the federal government from its early beginnings in the 20s and 30s, and was considered an important means for expressing the identity and values of the nation, along with visual arts, particularly muralism, graphics, and traditional crafts and concert and traditional music with local roots. But, over the last decades and in contrast with the so called golden age of modern dance (in the 50s), theaters remain largely attended by the colleagues, friends and relatives of the performers in spite of the excellent dancers coming out of the schools. The contradictions between the creative processes of production and the forms of distribution (how and where to reach audiences with what messages) are in crisis, adding to all the other crises we are facing.

I believe that in Mexico (and perhaps elsewhere) we need to experiment with and consolidate other forms of expression for other venues (particularly public spaces) as many people still prefer not to enter concert theaters which continue to be associated with older, or upper class initiates, in spite of decades of efforts to produce and distribute high culture "for the people". We also need to experiment with themes that more people can understand and identify with using innovations in movement, multimedia, and other disciplines that can innovate as well in ways of communicating ideas and feelings, not only the latest international styles. I also believe that the value given to local production need not only be applied to food and plants. We also need to help involve more people in the production of their "own" expressions of their "own" ideas, directed to their "own" communities.

This paper describes one such local process, an attempt for local resonance through the participation of local current and former residents in a project related to their rediscovering aspects of local history and culture on the streets, through dance, music, and words. Oral history, collaborative processes, and the use of popular cultural forms (street theater, recreations of popular dances from the past, touring, pageants, solidarity, and remembering), all contribute.

I dedicate this paper to Anna Halprin who helped show me a way to work that surpassed the technique classes and formalist construction that continues to predominate in the values of the "dance worlds". Wendy Woodson, Liz Lerman, Boal, Freire, Pichon-Riviere, Zapatista and other rural and urban communities and my many students and colleagues have also played important roles.

**First a bit of context in Mexican dance history.**

Dance is a major component of the political and religious expressions of the sacred and of the affirmation of group identity and social cohesion as well as of the power of these who dominate. Many Mexican communities continue to celebrate a ritual calendar of festivities dedicated to their patron saints, Christmas, Easter, the Day of the Dead, and the Virgin of Guadalupe, along with rituals to ask Mother Earth to concede water for the sowing of crops and thank her when they have been grown and harvested. These ceremonies always involve dance along with songs, prayers, incense, flowers and fruits of the earth. The Conquest brought many medieval dance-dramas which were superimposed on local forms and deities,

giving rise to the syncretism mixtures of several cultures (local varieties of the Native American, African, and European). At the same time, as denounced in the Inquisition, forms perceived as "the work of the Devil", often combining these same sources (European, African and Indigenous) were violently repressed. Social dances became omnipresent features of the celebrations along with the religious rituals. Dance is often used as well in personal or family prayer to the saints and other deities. Professional dance troupes from Europe also began to visit Mexico in touring companies during the latter colonial period and Independence. During and after the Mexican Revolution (1910-21) the visits of Anna Pavlova and her performance of the Jarabe Tapatio on point, impressed writers in the press as a high art legitimation of Mexican popular culture. This dance was codified and became an "official" representation of Mexico in public school festivities. Large folk dance festivals became frequent. Members of these companies sometimes opened dance schools in Mexico. Modern, "Aztec", and Oriental dances were included in the curriculum of the National Conservatory of Music. In 1931, a federal government sponsored dance school was founded in the Secretariat of Education.

José Vasconcelos, the first Secretary of the newly founded entity in charge of public education believed that art could "save" Mexico. Promoting national unity in a country deeply divided by class and ethnicity where neo-colonial loyalties to Europe and the US still predominate became an important task for education. Vasconcelos conceived of education as a form of evangelization and sent "cultural missionaries" to alphabetize the rural indigenous populations, report on local cultural traditions and multiply the practice of the arts. Representing the nation through art evoked deep emotions as diverse cultural traditions became national symbols. Versions of rural folk dances transformed to be taught in schools and become an urban dance practice and a referent for folk dance “ballets”. The longing to reach a wide public in public spaces with dance ceremonies, social dances, folk performances and classic, modern and contemporary dance forms continues to be a strong competitor to the contrary tendency to use dance art a sign of upper class distinction and prestige by audiences who assist at orchestra, opera and dance performances in elegant opera houses and theaters.

In the 20s, massive folkdance performances were organized and in the 30s, mass ballets, combining amateur and professional performers, were presented. The most emblematic ballet was *30/30* (celebrating the Mexican Revolution and referring to a fire arm common in this revolt). It was also described as a proletarian revolutionary ballet and policemen, firemen and normal and secondary school students performed along with students and teachers of the recently founded government dance school. This work was presented on important occasions and witnessed by two of Mexico's presidents.

In the late 30s, two dancers from the US, Waldeen and Anna Sokolow (with ties to Martha Graham and German expressionist dance, respectively) were invited to found modern dance companies with dancers from the official school. Many well-known painters, composers and writers collaborated and the resulting performances were enthusiastically received by audiences and intellectuals. In the 40s and 50s, modern dance groups offered seasons in opera houses and toured the countryside under federal government auspices, performing in parks, streets and churchyards, bringing, so the dancers believed, messages of freedom of body and spirit to the "people". By the 60s, there continued to be some opportunities to perform in the streets but the increasingly intensive practice of specialized theatrical movement techniques made some important company directors believe that the only way to maintain quality was to bring ordinary people into the theaters as well as building more theaters in areas that did not have them. This was done on a large scale by the Mexican Institute for Social Security. The enjoyment of the arts was considered part of a "right" to a healthy life in body and soul, in those days. Now this idea has been largely abandoned and many of these theaters are empty or rented to groups that with many difficulties try to maintain them active

Years later, after the 1985 major Mexico City earthquake, contemporary dance invaded the streets and shelters performing for those who had lost their homes and family members. The pleasure of face to face contact with appreciative audiences who energized the performances and expressed their interest and gratitude verbally afterwards, was rediscovered. The most appropriate physical and compositional techniques as well as contents for this kind of performing were discussed intensely in the dance community.

**My implication**

As a dancer in Mexico since the late 50s, I have always found performing outdoors for ordinary people immensely more moving, satisfying and pleasurable than performances for the more usual theater audiences of family, friends and fellow dancers. I also

enjoy the reactions of people who identify or are interested in the themes treated in the choreographies. I have expressed my urge to promote the participation of ordinary people, as performers and in creative collaborations, in works such as *Games for the City* (*Juegos para la Ciudad*) in 1987 and *Tlatelolco 1988.* These works were included in the annual street dance festivals organized by the cultural commissions of urban popular movements and a dancers' organization. Pierre Alain Baud describes the later performance as full of participative games for the public recreating the atmosphere of a spontaneous community festivity while desacralizing the Palace of Fine Arts, so charged with official arts history (the performance took place on the front steps and balcony of the marble opera house, as well as passing through a contiguous subway station on its way to a colonial plaza across the street).

Influenced by my experiences in Mexican dance, encounters with Anna Halprin, Wendy Woodson, Augusto Boal and Paulo Freire (the latter two through books) as well as Pichon-Riviere's operative group practices, I began to teach workshops I called Dancing in Community, where ordinary people created and performed their own dances using everyday and social dance movements and culturally familiar images as a shared vocabulary that could express deeply felt and reformulated ideas.

After experiencing work with members of urban and indigenous social organizations, I identify with the synthesis that the National University linguist Carlos Lenkensdorf makes of the Tojolobal Mayan philosophy of art. He says that this Mayan language group considers that through the arts: 1) the thoughts of the heart are manifested; 2) the sense of community of the participants is strengthened; 3) the underlying truths of women and men, the community and the cosmos, are highlighted and expressed; 4) the arts are integrated into the intersubjective community thus reflecting the participative democracy of the Tojolobales rather than emphasizing the extraordinary in the authors, performers or works. The prevalence given to the community does not limit the development of the individual creator but rather, is an incentive for contributing to the community; 5) it is a signaled that the arts do not belong to a separate and autonomous sphere of esthetics, but instead, are incorporated into the cosmic Tojolobal community uniting the various aspects of reality: social, religious, symbolic, natural, political, pedagogical and the demands that work requires of life. Along with the other arenas of participative community life, the arts are a sign of a democratic life style

(Lenkensdorf: 166).

***Romerías Tours***

Using oral history interviews, my own memories and those of my collaborators, as the raw material for recuperating recollections about 12 square blocks of central Mexico City Neighborhood known as the Colonia Roma Sur. *Romerías Tours* seeks to share these enjoyably and propitiate the exchange of reminiscences among tour participants and people encountered in the streets in order to stimulate greater interest in the past and present of this community and perhaps enrich its life.

The Colonia Roma began its urbanization in 1904 and its southern part in the early 20s. It was publicized as a residential neighborhood with modern services (paved streets, drainage, running water, and parks). Beginning in the 50s, some older buildings began to be replaced by offices and commercial venues. It was devastated and depopulated by the 1985 earthquake. Now it confronts pressures to convert it into a zone of luxurious condominiums, restaurants and night clubs, affecting its family life and traditional architecture, some of which has been declared artistic heritage.

*Romerías Tours* begins in the assembly hall (a former garage) of the Neighbor's Union (*Unión de Vecinos y Damnificados 19 de septiembre*, UVyD-19, an emblematic neighborhood organi-zation that demanded housing and promotes culture), decorated with photographic images of the area's past and present. A brief video introduces the theme with interviews with residents. Then, a whistle sounds, the guide appears dressed as a 30s street photographer, and announces the beginning of the tour. The walk through the streets covers 12 blocks of the area. The "tourists" are encouraged to observe the buildings, the people and their activities and to recollect what might have been happening in certain places in previous times. Some of the images of previous times are evoked through dances and theatrical sketches. He invites the public and some of those encountered in the streets to comment on their experiences or what they have heard about the past, and sometimes, to participate in dances. On returning to the Neighbor's Union, a member of the cultural commission comments on the struggles for affordable housing, the cultural encounters sponsored over the years and the present day challenges the community faces. We then invite our tired tourists to share a coffee or tamarind water and cookies with us, as we begin a dialogue on the experiences of the tour, contemporary life in the Roma, and what might be done to improve some

aspects.

*Romerías Tours* is an alternative form for communicating narrated experiences (oral history) in a variety of voices. It raises questions about possible actions to conserve what seems most valuable from the past (memories, solidarities, and some buildings) as well as the present, in a neighborhood under strong commercial pressures. The *Tours* celebrate the characteristic diversity of the area. The interactions recorded and transcribed, as well as those that occurr during the *Tours*, are part of a living history. We hope that reliving history may help recycle that which we appreciate most and to help act to change that which we find is not functioning. Our imagination is stimulated by surprise and enjoyment as we listen and look at that which surrounds us (sometimes noticed for the first time).

Versions of *Romerías Tours* have been presented 21 times. The *Tours* are always open to changes as interactions take place in the here and now between members of the cast, the public and the real life characters we have discovered on the way. These include (among others) an poet who works on the street hammering dents out of cars, the owner of one the few surviving *nixtamal* mills for tortillas, resisting the assault of Mimsa (industrialized and adulterated corn meal) reminding us of the corn fields that once covered the ground where we are walking, Superbarrio, an admired leader of the urban popular movement of the 80s. We also pass the homes of beat poets Burroughs and Kerouac, and bolero singer Antonio Badú.

Graffiti covered lions, erected when the first streets were laid out, symbolize the many contrasts in the area: its modern supermarket, surrounded by ever present informal sidewalk commerce and numerous evictions. The long-forgotten National Stadium where the revolutionary mass ballet 30/30 and the first Central American Games were presented was demolished to build a beautiful and elegant high rise housing project for government workers which killed many as it fell in the earth-quake. A succession of dance and social clubs existed within a few blocks: the high-class whore house of *corrido* singer La Bandida in the 40s, the Swing Club where boxers mixed with politicos in the 50s, one of the first rock and existential hangouts of the 60s, and now, a XXI century gothic club, La Victoria, coexisted with the reputed public school were most of the area's children studied, inaugurated by president Cárdenas in the 30s. There, well known cultural missionaries converted traditional dance forms into urban folk dance versions like the j*arabe tapatio* representing the idyllic Mexico. All of these sites provoke reminiscences and stimulate narratives, remembered and reelaborated in present time.

**Lived history**

In *Romerías Tours*, we emphasize the simultaneity in space of the energies and experiences of past and present and imagined near future. The conscious and unconscious selection of memories adjusts them to our present day values as we relate them to others. We take as a premise that whatever the people interviewed say is significant from their point of view, as history lived by them. This gives us a key to understanding that it is not a question of truth or lies but rather, of perception, collective and personal. We try to offer a "reading" (or "dancing") of the Colonia Roma from different perspectives and interpretations.

The Romerías Collective believes that other communities can research their own histories and create unique forms to spread the word about what seems most significant or curious to think about now. To stimulate interest in this possibility, a workshop course called *Doing Romerías* was organized. It included readings, experiential creativity exercises and improvisations using movement, sound, words, photo, video and other visual arts. The students also participated in *Romerías Tours*. This kind of grass roots historical research is a form of critical action orientated towards confirmation and change or transformation.

**Objectives of the Romerías Collective**

The objectives of the Romerías Collective can be summarized as follows:

To use oral history methods as a model for recuperating memories from present and former residents and those who work in the area as a principal form of information and points of view, complemented by documents such as photos, newspaper clippings, diaries, creative and historical writings and documents; To expand the frontiers of art to include the daily life of the community's inhabitants; To help the public to see what they normally may not notice and resignify urban space;

To improve relations among neighbors;To propose a replicable model for cultural activities in other places.

The use of my voice (recorded and live) along with that of other residents and trades people, also live and recorded, as we relate enjoyable memories and tragic events, solidarities and conflicts, gives us voice and recognition as citizens and proposes dialogue.

This process is part of a basic philosophy that is founded on the principles of participative democracy and all human rights for all peoples. This can only be achieved by constant, active and conscious collective community processes fed by memory and identity, often difficult to construct in large cities. *Romerías Tours* hopes to open a path, among many others possible, for listening and action.

**Program Notes**

The program we hand out to the public, includes, along with the credits, a series of texts designed to orient the tour participants about how we are conceiving history, memory and participation. A few examples follow.

Although the people and places change, what has happened in the past continues in some way to be present, vibrating in the air, and may inspire and enrich our existence. We carry out this family and cultural *romería* through the streets and memories of the Colonia Roma, evoking the 16th century to the present, enlivening these vibrations with dance, performance art, photography and video.

The first version of *Romerías* was presented in March 2006 as part of the Festival Urbe y Cuerpo consisting of site specific choreographies created for Mexico City spaces. Referencing stories of everyday life and extraordinary events, *Romerias* included diverse theatrical events, an exhibition and two guided tours through several neighborhood blocks. In November of that year, we combined it all in *Romerías Tours* with the support of the program Arts Everywhere of the city government. In 2008, *Romerías Tours* developed the itinerant theatrical actions located where the actual buildings and happenings occurred thus directly connecting some of the multiple layers or strata over time, which co inhabit in the memories of the neighborhood residents. It was funded with support from the National Fund for Culture and the Arts.

Susan Sontag has been cited as saying that to remember, more than to tell stories is to evoke images. We imagine the past. Proust reminds us that while we physically occupy a very small place in space, through memory, our images can cover a profound distance in time. Our minds retain layer after layer of fugitive impressions. The places we once knew are no longer of this world.

Our lives are part of the collaborative creation that is community. All means of expression are useful for enriching our present and helping us participate actively in the construction of our future as we confront the urgent necessity of reconstituting our sense of local community within the complex web of relations of the city.

*Romerías Tours* remains a work in progress. It can't take on a fixed form, as it continuously remolds itself through interactions among neighbors, visitors and cast members, celebrating ongoing daily life as it recalls some of the extraordinary events of the past. We wish to reflect on the forms that citizens can use to participate in the construction of diverse communities which are more amenable to our needs and desires.

What I am going to tell you was told to me. Like all memories, it may be partly true or partly false, it all depends on where you’re looking from. This is not an official or objective history. It is based on memories, and anyone may add some or fantasy about these times, places and events. That is what memory is for.

**Recapitulation**

Since 2006, versions of *Romerías Tours* have been presented 21 times on the streets of the centrally located sector of the traditional Roma neighborhood of Mexico City, founded in early 20th century. Accompanied by pre-performance workshops and post performance dialogues, the Tours are itinerant, interactive and interdisciplinary integrating dance, video, storytelling, architecture, oral history, photography and performance art, evoking memories of the past and reflecting on the present. Vacated by many residents after the major 1985 earthquake, new arrivals and some older and former residents who live, work, study and pass through the area, often have no idea of the history under their feet, nor have they noticed old and new personages who continue to populate the area, and the extraordinary architecture remaining. Seemingly forgotten, are the sites of the National Stadium where a mass ballet on the Mexican Revolution, a Presidential inauguration, and the first Central American Olympic Games took place, as well as the city's first and beautifully decorated high-rise department development, and the nearby elegant Swing Club, a revolutionary educational center for primary education, the home of a vigorous urban popular movement which organized annual street dance and other arts festivals.

The city's theaters find it harder and harder to bring in the audiences. Taking performances to the streets, treating subjects of public interest, offering active movement and verbal participation to the “tourists” and voice to local merchants and residents, has turned into an exciting alternative for performers and audiences. Local artists and residents join in

speaking and dancing swing, *boleros*, and *jarabes*, and express bodily the pain and solidarity the earthquake provoked. The many participants in the *Romerías* (the term plays on the name of the area and the word for pilgrimages and popular festivities) bring artistic experiences to life collaboratively and meaningfully.

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**Some Photographs of *Romerías Tours***

**24 years in the Colonia Roma**

**The Swing Club**


***Nixtamal* mill "Little drops of love"**

**Dark culture in the Victoria**

**Dancing with Antonio Badú**

**The Guide and Superbarrio**

**The Jarabe Nacional**

**A neighbor's garden**

**The National Stadium: 30/30**

**The National Stadium: The Central American Games**

**The earthquake**

**A neighbor tells his story about the earthquake**

**Don Braulio, the poet and car repair man**

**The Tour photo**

**Coffee, crackers and dialogue**

# Random-Access Repertory: New Imperatives for Teaching Our Dance Histories in the Millennium

*Liz Maxwell*

> "…masterworks convey the ideas and feelings of different times and places, express a range of emotions, and embody a sense of beauty and harmony that enriches the experiences of all who can appreciate them. Indeed, our sense of beauty and taste comes chiefly from those works of art that we (as a culture over the centuries have made our own…One cannot hope to enter into a work, let alone understand it, unless one engages its particular materials."[1]

### What Is Imperative?

It has been a relatively new quest for arts educators to create a population of those who can appreciate art for its nuance, inspiration and the mysteries art reveals. For those involved in dance in higher education, the implementation of a comprehensive curriculum hopes to create young students interested in a plethora of dance–related subjects. Yet for the dance major, appreciation has often meant a specialization into ballet or a specific form of modern dance. It is often assumed that he/she will also become interested in dance theory, world cultural forms, dance pedagogy and dance history just by nature of their professed major. Nonetheless, dance appreciation is so often shaped by our early exposures, that by the time the student is in college those prejudices are already firmly in place and their areas of specialty are at odds with the comprehensive training. This creates tension in both the curricula and the training of the dancer in higher education. Consequently, it will be important to create opportunities for phenomenological emphasis in the dance history education of dance majors that will help to relieve some of this tension.

To teach the new millennium student, I first have identified problems of engagement in the subject of dance history and debate traditional approaches in teaching dance history by drawing on new somatic research to facilitate the *whole* of student education. As a dance history professor, a performer and a dance reconstructor, I challenge the extreme reliance on chronological and fact-based learning. To counter, I propose there is rich information stored in the collective body knowledge of the 21st Century dancer that can engage him/her more effectively. Once engaged, I feel there are issues at stake to deepen the understanding of the aesthetic. To make the case for sustaining and validating dance repertory within the curriculum of the dance academy, I endeavor to include types of learning that access *Bodily-kinesthetic intelligences.* [2] By using experiential and phenomenological methods, such as dance reconstructions, we can better illuminate the lessons of dance history. Finally, increasing the value of *embodied practice* will be imperative to the future of dance history as techniques dissolve, dissipate and maybe even disappear.

The key to a student becoming more attuned and more deeply connected to the mysteries of history, and indeed any subject, is to learn it through all the senses and modes of intelligence. I have been working with imagery and sentient experience to teach the subject of dance history. I believe this method has had a great effect on my student's engagement and interest in the material. By borrowing the term "random-access" for my title from digital age technologies I make the case for using non-traditional methods to teach dance history. Random access literally means, "permitting access to stored data in any order the user desires."[3] By applying this term, I suggest freely ordering the material not by chronological means, but by means based on *new* kinesthetic themes to teach *old* factually-based subjects. Linda Tomko persuasively suggests in her essay "A Querying Stance as Millennial Lens" that four new approaches will better engage students in the traditional

dance history classroom. The first of which implores educators to "…embody some dimension of the movement practice under discussion…" then to introduce student-centered learning whereas the class will "…rotate responsibility… between students and between teachers…" Finally, an important reflective element is introduced where class time is devoted "to in-class writings" within a culture of "group collaboration." [4] These interactive methods also reflect Bill Evans' comments in the essay "Teaching Movement Analysis" where Evans states "Learning is most effective when the student is invited into the process and becomes an active participant."[5] Jill D. Sweet describes this as the important process of *transformation*. Through this experience, students can then appreciate the difficulties inherent in describing and analyzing through linear methods a 'nonlinear and nonverbal experience.'" [6] A dance education cannot solely consist of lecture, video observation or the reading of texts. It is not enough to merely flip on the video. So, for the dance major, who needs to develop critical thinking through active engagement, what better way to apply theories than by laboratory practice, in the dance studio. The academy is where these two modes of dance teaching can coalesce and find a balance. In order to teach dance history we ponder questions as to the value of dance history in the curriculum of higher education. We may even ask: Why preserve the 'dance of the past' when students are more interested in the "new?" To answer these questions, I believe a new approach is needed, an approach that honors body knowledge and the collective memory of oral traditions. In an effort to make dance history meaningful, here I will outline new ways to teach historically relevant dance styles, choreographic methods and techniques.

**Problems of Engagement**

New dance scholarship is challenged to focus on the old forms as new styles and techniques rise up, demanding to be counted. As dance histories increase, we have the extra burden of trying to process, evaluate and determine that which is *most* valuable. Now, most universities teach technique as a distillation of older forms and these techniques are examined in the dance history classroom through video, lecture and text. It is then up to the student to make the connections between the theoretical dance history class and the practical studio class which may or may not occur concurrently. In academia, learning how to view, replicate, describe & create movement is the business of the dance major. By teaching through many modalities and creating ties to cultural, social, political or aesthetic topics, each person can find his/her unique relationship to the material. By using experiential, phenomenological in-roads, such as dance repertory or reconstruction, we can illuminate the lessons of dance history as we open the floodgates for new learning.

In order to think clearly about the arts, students must first be supplied with the skills necessary to become a discerning, educated observer. We all, at times, may feel frustrated or ill equipped to identify the salient qualities of such art. Most of us, instead, resort to more judgmental critiques to hide our ineptitudes. For my students, who are passionate young people, I typically hear comments such as, "I really liked it…" or more frequently… "I didn't like- whatever it was." These biased responses often take the place of informed commentary. Observation and analysis can be a highlight of the dance history, repertory or reconstruction experiences. As Gardner reflects, "Education succeeds if it furnishes students with a sense of how the world appears to individuals sporting quite different kinds of glasses." [7] Far from their starting point of critical judgments, students can then *see* other features of the work, thus creating new in-*sights*.

Body knowledge promotes a sense of authority and ownership in the learner.[8] By using improvisation and qualitative experiences in combination with movement description, students are empowered to expand their own movement palette and ultimately add to their own creative potentials. Somatic-based frameworks, such as Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analysis (LMA), has advantages not only in creating movement expression and body re-patterning but it provides a strong

foundation in writing dance description with its elaborate naming system and use of graphic symbols.[9] This very methodology can serve to unite the disciplines of dance practice and cognitive dance studies and necessitate a more engaged student learner.

## Deepening Understanding

Many new studies are finding that somatic education is one of the best ways for students to retain material because it stimulates all modes of intelligence. Somatics can help the 'new age' student find imagistic impulses, access their own kinetic history, motivate creative impulses, provide a deeper understanding of themselves and, ultimately, see a clearer connection between themselves and those who went before. The problem with the somatic approach to education is that so often its values are "unto itself" and at odds with traditional goal oriented learning. [10] Many body-based, somatic practices view sensation and feeling as having their own inherent merit. While this experience has a definite place in the oeuvre of somatic education it is not the entire picture. Somatic education creates links from the "lived body" experience to critical thinking and does not place a hierarchy of importance over the two.[11] In academic settings, words are needed for collegial reliability and to validate physical and observational experiences. Movement analysis is one way in which the disciplines of language and somatics can become integrated. To incorporate kinesthetic knowledge, systems of education must validate these new methods as we simultaneously develop dance as a valuable discipline within the academy.

Dance is taught through oral tradition and oral traditions use two powerful tools to access learning. First, is the use of imagery and the second is through communal, inter-active modes of transmission. The use of imagery in dance is most effective because images convey the sentient in immediate ways. Images have the power to travel directly into our nervous system, bypassing the cognitive side of the brain.[12] The use of imagery is so much a part of the everyday experiences of the dancer that it has been overlooked as an important aspect of dance tradition. Especially in academia, the use of imagery has been marginalized because of its subjectivity and its lack of inter-collegial reliability between individuals. Also dance requires a great deal of communal inter-activity. It is alarming to imagine how our world may become less and less communal, as we become increasingly reliant on new technologies. It will be imperative for the developing individual to find practices, such as dance, that will avail them of a most basic human instinct: to interact and to relate.

Dance can be a powerful way for us to see ourselves in relationship to societies, both past and present. The dance class is a place where the collective memory of the past can be experienced communally. By *witnessing* others' learning we can actually increase our own learning effectiveness. This communal circumstance creates a "transactive memory system" as termed by Malcolm Gladwell. He further states, "when people know each other well, they create an implicit joint memory system — which is based on an understanding about who is best suited to remember what kinds of things." [13] Kinesthetic knowledge also carries with it a kind of sensory intuition that supplies us with things like non-verbal communication, memory of past experiences and a critical evaluative system that, in the blink of an eye, can discern nuance in the person on the street or within a dance phrase. This is imperative because if we lose the collective kinesthetic knowledge of our predecessors we cannot move forward and are then destined to recycle from the same current well. This type of learning is much more than brain memory alone. It creates a system that can increase capacity for empathy and comparative ideas to become a more actualized self within an increasingly complex world. Kinesthetic knowledge is honored in academia when we *look* beyond the video or the textbook and *move* to unravel the stories, meanings and creative imperatives that have contributed to its artistic uniqueness.

## 'Carrying the Torch' Through the Work of Dance Reconstructions

My quest to facilitate personal connections to academic dance curricula began with my own reconstruction and repertory experiences in dance training. For instance, my own (early) opinions of Martha Graham's work, formed entirely of video viewing, could not have been more negative. I thought of her work as old-fashioned, stiff and overly dramatic. However, as a young, undergraduate student I found myself in class with two preeminent dancers of her company. It was a nearly complete reversal when, after attempting to execute the dances, I developed an extreme appreciation of its challenges. Today, I may still believe it to be *old-fashioned, stiff* and *dramatic* but now I see it as the avant-garde of its time, where stiffness importantly created a new sculptural sense and the dramatic qualities are the virtue of an expressionistic era. That did not cure me permanently from being too critical in my dance observations but it did encourage me to view education as a non-linear event. It would be many years later, after graduate studies and certification in Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analysis, that I would be able to say I have truly gained a dance history *appreciation*. So, from my own experiences, learning dance repertory is an important acculturation process of the dance major and one that may be imprinted first in undergraduate training, but may not even firmly take hold until much later. In this way, access to dance repertory should be an important function of the collegiate dance program. Such projects should receive ample funding for two reasons: because academia is perhaps the best repository for the works to be maintained and preserved and its presence in the training is vital to the developing dance student.

**New Methods for New Imperatives**

> "Instead, students should probe with sufficient depth *a manageable set of examples* so that they come to see how one thinks and acts in the manner of a scientist, a geometer, an artist, an historian. This goal can be achieved even if each student investigates only one art, science, or historical era."[14]

My early repertory experiences are what I count as being the point of entry to my awareness and appreciation of dance history. To honor this rich and influential past, I attempt to interest a new generation in dance history through a course called, simply, Modern Dance Repertory.[15] This course provides experiential awareness of the history of dance and serves as a laboratory for observing, analyzing and embodying nuance in style, technique and aesthetic. Using terminology and methods steeped in LMA to teach the *what, how* and *why* of dance re-creation became a potent tool for de-mystifying dance and its myriad styles. I began with scripted improvisations to encourage students to physically inhabit the *world* of a particular artist. For instance, when teaching about Isadora Duncan whose natural flow was achieved by initiating the movement in the proximal centers of the body, the class pushed balloons through the space from the solar plexus, thus accentuating core to distal initiations. I continued to add additional layers of effort theory from Laban until we achieved the desired effect, a dance that was similar in motivation, as well as Body, Shape and use of Space, to that of Duncan's work. Using Valerie Preston-Dunlop's *looking at dances: a choreological perspective on choreography* did much to aid our own reflections and contextual interpretations of the work. We then discussed as a group our written or oral self-reflections. This simple procedure, fluctuating between historical content, self reflections, style analysis and personal meaning making, was enough to grant the students entrée into this other world. A traditional warm-up followed, emphasizing technical aspects of the work such as initiation point, effort qualities and phrasing. By this point, the class was fully engaged in the process and could discern between critical *judgment* and critical *inquiry*. As a capstone activity, each student engaged with an artist's work in one of two ways; either a faithful "re-production" of a dance (not learned in class) or an original work inspired by the artist's style and/or creative process. Today it is not every dancer's privilege to learn the many

different styles of 20th Century dance. Dance techniques such as Graham, Limon, Balanchine and Fosse are now more often a dissolution of the former unadulterated techniques that once defined an aesthetic. Our recent times incline us more toward a devotion of the *new* thus contributing to the demise in teaching old techniques and styles. In the wake of these shifts, it is my observation that important foundational ideas in dance are in danger of being lost. I propose that the dance lessons from earlier times can be fed to a new generation by distilling its salient qualities toward more practical experiences within the dance lexicon. This can be achieved either through repertory excerpts or the full-fledged experience of dance reconstruction. Today, through more comprehensive studies such as this, college dance students can be given the gift of dance through the ages.

Preston-Dunlop identifies both the imperatives and the deficits in teaching dance history in academia when she states, "Perceiving is a whole person endeavor, not a physical one only. As Martha Graham stated, art cannot be experienced except by one's entire being." [16] Repertory and dance reconstruction experiences are valuable to the college dance major because they are capstone activities for the synergy between academic and practical modes of study. Learning a dance reconstruction is different from learning original, newly created dances. While both are valuable, learning repertory is unique because the material is prescribed and codified and has proven to be valuable in a time-historical context. In this way, the individual is not given free reign over the material. Instead, the dance must be executed with the correct style, technical approach and motivation. We are going to need this type of training in the 21st Century in order to balance the current trends in teaching that maintain a post-modern philosophy of *anything goes*. Through experiential study of dance history through dance repertory and reconstruction, today's students can actually wrestle with the same themes, aesthetics and styles of the earlier times. To quote Gardner again, "In each case, one beholds an artist with a distinct vision of the world..."[17] The fortunate dancer who can experience such a singular aesthetic vision may have a better awareness of his/her own unique place in the world of dance and certainly a better awareness of the historical, aesthetic and cultural impact of his/her predecessors. In conclusion, we are not *those* bodies, but we are not apart. Each of us is a whole person created by a blend of parts: past, present and future. It is that whole person that I wish to address in my approach to dance education.



**Endnotes**

1 Gardner, *The Disciplined Mind,* 151. See also Clement Greenberg's theories on the importance of art as a barometer and instigator for aesthetic experience

2 This term was first identified by Howard Gardner in his ground-breaking *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences,* People who have Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence should, in theory, learn better by involving muscular movement. Access to more of this type of learning should, I propose, benefit all types of learners since it is this type of learning that is lacking in typical educational systems.

3 Woolf, Editor in Chief, *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, 948.

4 Tomko, "A Querying Stance as Millennial Lens," *Teaching Dance Studies,* 108-109

5 Evans, "Teaching Movement Analysis," *Teaching Dance Studies*, 17.

6 Sweet, "The Anthropology of Dance," *Teaching Dance Studies,* 138-139.

7 Gardner, *The Disciplined Mind*, 157. Gardner goes on to say that crafting "an education that yields deep understanding of questions and issues as important as evolution, Mozart and the Holocaust: that permits meaningful participation in today's (and tomorrow's) world."

8 Fortin, Long and Lord: Research in Dance Education, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2002, 175.

9 Hackney, *Making Connections: Total Body Integration Through Bartenieff Fundamentals*, 231.

10 Fortin, Long and Lord: Research in Dance Education, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2002, 156.

11 Fraleigh, *Dance and the Lived Body: A Descriptive Aesthetics,* 4. "The lived-body concept attempts to

cut beneath the subject-object split, recognizing a dialectical and lived dualism but not a dualism of body-soul or body-mind."

[12] Hackney, *Making Connections: Total Body Integration Through Bartenieff Fundamentals*, 42.

[13] Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, 187-191.

[14] Gardner, The Disciplined Mind, 118.

[15] Eastwest Somatics Network workshop at SUNY Brockport in June 2008 entitled "Teaching Modern Dance Repertory and History through the Somatic Lens" presented by Liz Maxwell.

[16] Preston-Dunlop, *looking at dances: a choreological perspective on choreography*, 42.

[17] Gardner, *The Disciplined Mind*, 151.

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# Heart, Soul and Spirit: Conversations between Kokoro, Culture, and Community

*Samantha T. Mehra*

Butoh planted its first steps with the performance of Tatsumi Hijikata's *Kinjiki* in Tokyo in May of 1959, functioning much like Nijinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* with the upper echelons of the audience writhing, fainting, and brawling. Much of the upset arose from Hijikata's calculated investment in shock, seen in charged moments where, for instance, a chicken is strangled between a performer's legs. Or, some might have taken exception to *Kinjiki*'s thematic plunge into homoerotic physical and verbal relationships. In both cases, the performance of these otherwise 'hushed' images in front of a horrified group of conservative spectators was made possible via the basic dancers' bodies, which were stripped of vapid expressionism, decadence, and and all academy-prescribed movement. Butoh as realized in its infancy vied for a return to the riddled blood, bones, and guts of the human form, drawing upon aesthetic tonalities from Kabuki and Noh, physical stances from village farmers in bucolic northern Japan, and layers of the marginal. Butoh in turn functioned as an expression of upset over the post-war western infiltration of Japan's cultural life, and a reaction to the post-nuclear domination of western modern dance which had quoted the sensibilities of Graham, Kreutzberg, and Wigman; Hijkata instead sought a practice authentic to the individual body, a practice where movement meant 'from within', and not 'from without'.[1]

As second and third generation butoh artists migrated, cross-polinated, and located themselves outside of the aforementioned 1950s Tokyo moment, the function of butoh adapted to the cultural conditions of these new global homes, aided in part by the fundamental individualism of the practice itself. Now, we locate artists like Sweden's Su-En and Mexico's Diego Pinon in an international network of butoh practitioners who create and converse with their respective contexts. Kokoro Dance, a 20 year-old Vancouver-based butoh company, and the subject of my masters research, is among the crop of global manifestations of butoh which although not representative of the original Hijikata locale, has created work which enters into dialogues with the local Vancouver setting. Kokoro exemplifies butoh's temporal and global reaches, ones which ornament, transpose, and broaden the meaning and function of the original version of the term. Whereas Hijikata's realization of butoh acted as a domain-shifting response to western influence, Kokoro's practice of butoh embodies a conversation with the particularities of the British Columbian context.

Here, I investigate how Kokoro's individual practice of butoh, particularly its uses of the body (meaning the physical, and the body of work), functions in the B.C. locality as counter-cultural while also reflecting themes found in the city's land, history, and people. As a culturally reflective entity, Kokoro Dance's work speaks a confluent choreographic language, one relevant to Vancouver's unique cultural syncretism, history, and landscape. As a counter-cultural entity, Kokoro's valuing of the body in its nude, aged, multiracial, raw state problematizes the sensibilities of audiences, critics, and butoh purists. Theoretically,[2] I am working from critical strategies employed by Cynthia Novack in her *Sharing the Dance*, particularly her statement that dance is a part of culture, "both contributing and responding to larger patterns of thought and organization," made up of an "interplay of ideas, techniques and institutions with the lives of people involved in creating and watching it."[3] This directs my focus toward the network of sometimes unspoken discussions between dancers, audiences, critics, bodies, cultural practice, and terrain.

Kokoro (a Japanese term with the multiple meanings heart, soul, spirit, mind and feeling)

was established in 1986 by husband and wife team Jay Hirabayashi and Barbara Bourget, whose full-length and site specific work is informed by ballet, modern, theatre, jazz, and most identifiably, butoh. B.C.-born Barbara Bourget began her dance career as a ballerina, training at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, and later dancing with Les Grands Ballet Canadien. Seattle-born Jay Hirabayashi, whose father Gordon is the subject of historical legal case regarding the mistreatment of Japanese-Americans, entered dancing at the age of 30 in order to rehabilitate a ski-injury, and later performed with Vancouver-based companies like Paula Ross, and EDAM.

The Kokoro aesthetic involves multifaceted presentations of the body, ones linked to age, ethnicity, nudity, and 'fusion' layered one upon the other to reveal a confluent costume. For ease of reference, I think of them as: **The butoh body, the aging body, the culturally-syncretic body, the ugly body, the nude body, and the body of work.** These bodies, which are somewhat self-explanatory, are corporeal 'terms' used to dialogue with audiences, critics, space and place, and affix Kokoro's work in the dual state of countering and mirroring; and, they guide my understanding of the whys and hows of Kokoro's identity.

Through its site-specific performances in some of the city's unique locations, its very 'Canadian' indefinability, and the predominant use of an initially Japanese sensibility all make for a dialogue of agreement between Kokoro's dancing bodies and Vancouver.[1] As an expression of the cultural makeup of the city, Kokoro investigates Japanese immigrant culture and history, which constitutes significant chapters in the story of Vancouver. It is of interest to note that British Columbia, coupled with Ontario, has one of the country's highest proportions of "people belonging to visible minority groups", including significant Japanese and Chinese communities.[4] More significant to British Columbia's collective memory is its sordid past with Japanese immigrants who, although building thriving diasporic networks in pockets of the city such as Powell Street (where Kokoro had its first offices), were interned during World War II. "22,000 persons of Japanese descent, an estimated 16, 500 of whom were either Canadian-born or naturalized citizens, were dispossessed of their homes and property and uprooted from the West Coast of British Columbia...to camps in the interior of B.C."[5] The complicated image of the province as being a 'resistant' actor in multicultural politics stems from it being a historic site of racial internment and foreign labour. The Japanese community's active part in Vancouver's history has been acknowledged and incorporated thematically into Kokoro's works, particularly *The Believer*, originally titled *Rage*.

Motivated by the historical turning point of Japanese redress in the mid to late 1980s, Jay sought to extend that metaphoric struggle into a larger piece.[6] Although he had not personally experienced the relocations, the racism, or the overall degradation of Japanese persons in the media and beyond, "I called [the piece] *Rage* because that's how I would feel. I felt like there was buried rage in those people...It was a third-generation response; the generation that went through it buried it....I wasn't trying to say what they felt, but what contemporary people would feel. They would be angry."[7] Jay reinvented the piece as *The Believer* (1995), a work for three dancers inspired by his father's forty-year belief in the Constitution. The forty-minute dance materialized as an interdisciplinary statement enriched with history, politics, and complex dancing bodies which move arthritically through infant, clown, and spasmodic states, culminating in one dancer's potent beating of a taiko drum. Jay interviewed his father about his experiences, snippets of which became part of the musical score[8]; the backdrop imagery consisted of illuminated projections of photographs, newspaper clippings, and hate letters which had been sealed in the Hirabayashi scrapbooks. *The Believer*'s exposition of the body in its near-naked, raw, visceral state, bound with an excruciating slowness and arthritic tension, allowed emotionally-charged onlookers to kinaesthetically sense the buried and then explosive rage inspired by this historical moment. *The Believer* is one instance in which Kokoro willingly incorporated and discussed

this scar in Vancouver's genetic makeup via their interdisciplinary choreography, and multifarious presentation of bodies.

Vancouver's shapely and unpredictable geography is rich with beaches, forests, and mountains. Since theatres and rehearsal spaces are at times unaffordable, performance-hungry Jay and Barbara took their performances into these untamed city nooks, the landscape acting as a backdrop, stage, and light source. As Kokoro's incorporation of butoh complements natural landscapes, the company has taken its work to city streets, clown conventions, shopping malls, museums, rooftops, art galleries, and climbing gyms. *Wreck Beach Butoh*, an annual event since 1998, situates dancers on the sand, in the waves, in sunshine, or downpour. A structured improvisation, the butoh fu-driven movement corresponds with the breathing of the ocean, a kind of kinaesthetic response to the functions of the surrounding beach. After paying an initial 'lifetime membership' fee, professional and amateur dancers undergo two weeks of intensive classes which culminate in two final nude butoh performances during the lowest tide of the year. It has been described as "a water and sand dance experience with music and costumes by Mother Nature,"[9] where the internally-driven, nude, un-frivolous body is made plain to us through its exposure and immersion in the landscape.

Although the number of participants varies each year, the choreographic structure remains in place. During a two-week period, Jay and Barbara develop a movement score comprised of sections that use different sources, such as pictures of sculptures, and a series of tasks (such as burying oneself in the sand), or *butoh-fu* (Hijikata's notational, stream-of-consciousness 'poetry', which provides internal conditions derivative of images that can be physicalized, like "sun shining on the top of the head", "10, 000 year old forest on our shoulders, farmers tilling the soil on the back of our calves"). Dancers always submerge themselves in the water twice during the hour-long performance, and with their return are stamped in camouflage sand makeup. The nude, white quivering bodies caked in sand, the moments of charged stillness, and the intensely expressive faces and appendages are compelling to witness. The performances, coupled with the feeling of wet sand under the toes, the choppy wind blowing the audience in wayward directions, and the rain (or shine), allow audiences to enmesh with Kokoro's journey across the beach, which finds itself in conversation with the sandy Vancouver geography.

Yet, these presentations of the body have oft countered mainstream aesthetic values in the context of B.C. and beyond, one previously invested in the cultivation of romantic notions of youthful and beautiful dancers and dancing. The way in which the body is presented in Kokoro's work can be construed as counter-cultural; the company's investment in attaining a state stripped of social decadence and trained behaviours elides an alternative demand for conservative notions of the beautiful and behaved, although it is important to note that this counter-cultural treatment of the body is not a pre-meditated assault on the sensibilities of the viewer. Conservative critical and audience reactions stem from Kokoro's first performance in 1986, to as recent as 2006, and reveal the evaluative details of 'micro-cultures', such as dance audiences and critics in pockets of British Columbia, as well as staunch butoh "puritans" who see the genre as belonging to Japanese bodies alone.

Jay has interpreted these reactions as such: "a number of things upset people. One thing is Barbara shaving her head. [Our work] is still unsettling to people who don't think it's proper to show your tits when you're nearly sixty, and shave your head, doing movements that some people think are grotesque and ugly. It challenges, pushes the buttons of...the classicists, and the ones that are uncomfortable with change or…their own bodies."[10]

The challenging uses of the body, particularly the nude, the "ugly", and the aging, had in the past unsettled vestiges of the mainstream Vancouver dance audience, which had seemingly come to expect young nubile bodies dancing less provocative work. Michael Scott, a *Vancouver Sun* critic, is agreed upon by the artists and local dance community members to

articulate well the initial disgust for Kokoro's work, and at once highlight the aesthetic values and principles of the Vancouver dance readership at the time. The performance of Kokoro's *Episode in Blue* (1988), a theatrical song and dance production inspired by Mikhail Bulgakov's book, *The Master and the Margarita*, initially sparked the critic's wrath: "Who needs to bother with the expressive vocabulary of dance theatre when…a gratuitously naked body will do? Not this group obviously…The astounding thing about *Episode in Blue* is that a production so vulgar....ever found its way on to a professional stage in the first place."[11] In his equally aggressive review of Kokoro's 1995 *Truths of the Blood*, Scott saw the bodily representation as "so appalling, they're lucky it wasn't booed off the stage," chalking it up to "white-powdered bodies, bare female breasts and irritating soundscapes."[12]

The constipated tension brewing in the bodies of critics and audiences surfaced at a performance as recent as 2006, with the performance of *Sunyata* (based on *Dante's Inferno*) in Victoria at the McPherson Playhouse. Normally, this audience of season ticket-holders would see ballet and modern contemporary work of the modern/post-modern tradition, so the introduction of the muddy, gritty, nakedness of *Sunyata* onto the Victoria stage, wherein the naked dancers crawl over the heads of audience goers and later swim, slip, and slide in mud, was a shock to the spectators' system. Horrified by the raw, visceral theatricality, the presentation of the bodies in a nude, unclean, primordial state, compelled a third of the audience to leave after the first section (although it should be noted that those who stayed gave a standing ovation at the end), and the local reviews were scalding. Even within the text of one review, there are detectable traces of the privileging of classical or even modern ballet aesthetics in this locale; one critic quoted protests from the mouths of audience members who found themselves shaken by Kokoro's assault on their sensibilities, commenting that "A bit of Giselle would go down well about now."[13] While Barbara's contributions to the work are informed by balletic organization of bodies onstage, some found the otherness/or alternate visions of the body as the predominant reasons for disliking this piece, rather than looking toward the ballet, modern, or other key western accents layered into Kokoro's choreographic arsenal.

Jay and Barbara's indefinable nature has not only confused or offended microcultures of B.C.'s critics and audiences, it has also problematized the idea of 'tradition' for segments of the larger butoh community. Initially, butoh was an expression of male, Japanese bodies, given the identities of the founders. And so, perhaps the most confusing (and fascinating) issue at work in butoh discourse is that of cultural authenticity. Since the genre originated in Japan and was initially and intentionally sculpted for Hijikata's and Ohno's Japanese bodies, there is some vehement renouncing by Japanese practitioners of western incarnations of butoh. Toshiharu Kasai notes that there exist "Japanese Butoh dancers or critics [who] deny the western dancers' ability to dance Butoh due to their physical, mental and cultural gaps…lacking in Japanese physical characteristics" like ganimata [bow-legs] and Japanese views on the mind-body connection.[14] Such a reductionist view negates the work accomplished by international butoh companies and artists who locate their work in the butoh sphere.

Given the presence of puritans, Barbara has felt her fair appearance burning on her like a scarlet letter when confronted, or ignored, by purists. While this is a highly personal interpretation, she has been publically lashed for her use of non-Western forms. In 1994, when Kokoro's *Dance of the Dead* (a piece incorporating inflections of Butoh and Flamenco to explore the ideas of Butoh states and duende) was presented in Ottawa, critic Pauline Tam accused Barbara of choreographing a "pointless and disrespectful exercise in mixing and matching artforms of disparate cultures, for no other purpose than to see what would come about."[15] Thus Barbara's light-skinned body on the stage can offend those who discern a white woman practicing butoh or flamenco to be a concrete example of a dancer "trivializing and

robbing" cultures[16]. While Jay's Japanese heritage has at times legitimized his butoh practice, purists have often criticized Barbara's body as a site for butoh, citing its non-Japaneseness as counterintuitive to the genre.[17] Yet, in the face of these microcultures, the two Kokoro founders look at the fundamental philosophy espoused by Kazuo Ohno, that dance has less to do with aesthetic hangups, and more to do with the ability to "dance the source of love. For Ohno, butoh means finding your own movement voice. It is a universal quest. I have chosen to follow his advice."[18] Although Kokoro's performance of butoh is far removed from its 1950s Tokyo moment, it retains some sense of memory, of practice, and of respect for the genre's ancestry and bodily intentions.

To briefly conclude, Kokoro's usages of the body engage in a dialogue with the communities it encounters; at points, the company has been in agreement with Vancouver's history, diasporic Asian communities, and the bare bones of the natural landscape. At others, it has disagreed with critics, audiences, and butoh purists who themselves comprise micro-cultures with webs of totems, values, and notions of 'good' dance. The very performance of a Kokoro work creates an enthusiastic discussion about dancing, thus performing one interpretation of Bonnot and Condillac's statement that "A dance that expresses grace and dignity is good; a dance that creates a sort of conversation seems to me better."[19] The conversation is ongoing, and, much like Jay and Barbara, intriguing and multifaceted.



Notes

1 Stein 116.

2 I had at my disposal the entire Kokoro archives, as well as Jay and Barbara themselves. My research involved Participant Observation (which included attending their Powell Street and Wreck Beach butoh performances, as well as some rehearsals), and over a dozen hours of interviews with Jay and Barbara, as well as casual liaising with Kokoro staff, and some of the dancers. In the archives, which extended as far back as their time with Paula Ross, I excavated information from files (which included copies of Canada Council peer assessments, letters, reviews, articles, press kits, and student responses) and media (as I was lucky to have a complete film and photo library). Additionally, I partook in a rather intense textual study of Butoh, including its theory and its history.

3 Novack 13.

4 Carrington 412.

5 Kokoro Dance.

6 Hirabayashi, 1 August.

7 Hirabayashi, 1 August.

8 Johnson, *Principle* 47.

9 Birnie, *Let's Butoh* C5.

10 Hirabayashi, 1 August.

11 Scott, *Squalor*.

12 Scott, *Stumbles* C8.

13 Litwin, *Dancers Portrayed Hell* B9.

14 Kasai, *Butoh Body 4*.

15 Tam.

16 Ibid.

17 Bourget, 15 August.

18 Bourget, *Juliette* 11.

19 Foster 19.

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# Mobile Topography and Volatile Terrain:
# Choreographic Explorations of Seismic Movement in San Francisco

***Elliot Gordon Mercer***

The San Francisco Bay Area is shifting. Sitting atop the tectonic boundaries of the Pacific and North American Plates, the region has spent over ten million years being wrenched apart in opposite directions as these two landmasses steadily grind past one another.[1] Resulting from this tectonic friction, a vast network of both historic and active fault lines has developed beneath the San Francisco Bay Area.[2] Grouped into seven major zones, these faults run through the many counties, cities, and neighborhoods around the bay.[3] The constant movement of these numerous faults has slowly shaped the region's iconic terrain and given San Francisco the nickname "The City of Hills."[4] Residents of the San Francisco Bay Area experience this tectonic movement daily, whether they perceive it or not. In addition to the nearly imperceptible tremors that frequently jostle the region, the San Francisco Bay Area regularly experiences larger earthquakes, some of which have had catastrophic effects: an 1868 earthquake along the Hayward Fault opened up a 20-mile crevice along the south east shore of the San Francisco Bay, the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake toppled numerous Bay Area freeways as well as a section of the San Francisco Bay Bridge, and the infamous Great San Francisco Earthquake of 1906, one of the largest ever recorded in the continental United States, decimated the city of San Francisco to such an extent that it has been considered the most devastating natural disaster in the nation's history.[5] The unpredictability of the region's topography is present in the San Franciscan mindset and memories of previous earthquakes continue to reverberate in local consciousness.

Drawing inspiration from the region's active topography, local artists have explored the physical volatility of San Francisco's natural landscape in the creation of new performance pieces. Here I explore the ways in which four San Francisco-based choreographers investigate and corporealize the concept of seismic move-ment and its physical effects in recent choreo-graphic works. My analysis of three contrasting pieces by Joanna Haigood, Margaret Jenkins and Ellie Klopp, and Muriel Maffre, which were each developed and premiered in the San Francisco Bay Area, discusses how local artists have been using dance as a means of engaging with the location's volatile topography and tectonics.

I first discuss Joanna Haigood's 2008 work *The Shifting Cornerstone*, a site-specific piece made for the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. In so doing I investigate the relationship between the physical body and the urban landscape as a moving body. I then turn to Margaret Jenkins and Ellie Klopp's *Fault* (1996), which metaphorically uses the concept of seismic shift to reflect on the nature of humanity and the incalculable movement of modernity. Lastly, I explore former San Francisco Ballet principal dancer Muriel Maffre's collaborative project *Ballet Mori* (2006) as it employs the use of new technology in amplifying the real-time sounds of tectonic activity for the creation of a musical score to which her solo is performed. These choreo-graphic works each focus on the instability of nature and the mobile topography of the body and contemporary society.

In her choreographic work, Joanna Haigood focuses predominantly on creating dances that engage with the physical spaces of natural, architectural, and cultural environments. Prior to creating a work in such a space, Haigood routinely researches the history and character of her chosen location.[6] Such a study was the impetus for her most recent work, *The Shifting Cornerstone*.[7] In *The Shifting Cornerstone* Haigood confronts the ideas of time and change within the urban environment by exploring the historical transformations that have reshaped a prominent street corner in San Francisco's South of Market district. "From marshland to coal yards to marketplace to rubble to apartments to pawn shops to resident hotels to parking lot to art center,"[8] the space at the corner of Mission and 3rd Streets has had many different looks and served various purposes for a countless number people. To illustrate the changes that the local urban

environment has endured over time, Haigood drew from the location's past and created historical characters that were directly affected by the major shifts in the immediate environment. These characters were then staged in a site-specific dance installation that was performed directly on the corner of 3rd and Mission Streets amidst busy midday foot traffic.

The first character that emerges in the piece is a woman dressed in a plain, beige, working class, Victorian-era dress and a disheveled brown fedora. She stands motionless in the north-facing windows of the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts gallery, holding a large ring of old rusty skeleton keys in an outstretched hand. The vision of the misplaced historical figure within the modern structure makes the performer appear as if she were a long forgotten ghost haunting the location where YBCA stands today. Slowly, she passes through the gallery doors onto the center's paved plaza. A small tremor begins in her body, jarringly rattling the ring of keys. A look of pained astonishment quickly flashes across her face as she erupts into violent convulsions and hectic turns that resemble a whirling dervish. As the convulsions end she collapses to the floor, lying motionless on the pavement. In this moment Haigood brings images of the past and present histories of the area; the modern time and space of the YBCA plaza is layered with a Victorian-era character experiencing the same location at the moment of the Great San Francisco Earthquake on April 18, 1906.[9] Dressed in working class clothes and holding a large key ring, the character is representative a service worker completing her early morning rounds at the residential hotel that once occupied the space where YBCA now stands. The residential hotel and most sur-rounding buildings were completely destroyed by the earthquake and resulting fire that swept across the eastern section of the

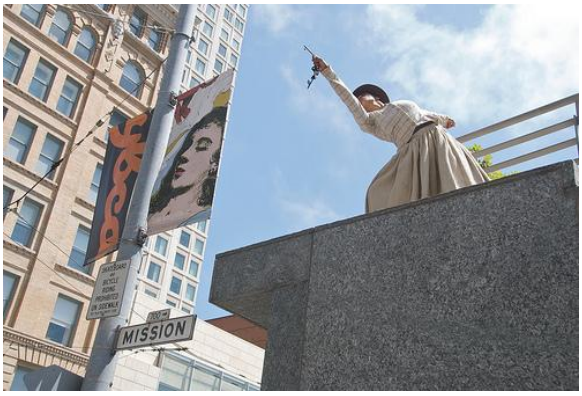


FIGURE 1: Amara Tabor-Smith in *The Shifting Cornerstone*, 2008. Photo by Steve Rhodes.

city.[10] Through the layering of the images of past and preset in this instance, Haigood emphasizes the monumental physical shifts that have occurred in the immediate urban envi-ronment.

Haigood continues to use this visual contrast of past and present through this character's subsequent actions, further emphasizing the shifting environment of the local area. The character paces around the plaza gripping one of her keys in her hand, pausing only to point the key in front of her. In so doing she tries to unlock doors that are no longer there, doors in a building that toppled during the earthquake and has long since been cleared away. Leaving the plaza, the character hurriedly runs down the street, into the intersection, and up onto a wall overlooking the street, all the time looking about wildly as if surveying the surrounding area. She pauses atop the wall and begins pointing her key in front of her. In pointing her key she identifies the surrounding buildings that survived the 1906 earthquake and remain standing to this day. Throughout her action it is unclear whether she remains in the past or if she has been transported to the present. Through her frantic survey of the area and identification of historic buildings, it can be suggested that she is viewing the damage that has been done by the earthquake and picking out buildings that survived destruction. Alternately, she can be attempting to locate recognizable reference points in the modern environment into which she has just been integrated. I suggest that it is Haigood's intention to convey both situations simultaneously as means of connecting the environment of the past to that of the present, exemplifying the shift of time and the change in urban landscape.

Similarly, in their 1996 work *Fault*, Margaret Jenkins and Ellie Klopp also engage with the concept of seismic activity to examine how humanity and contemporary society shifts.[11] Jenkins and Klopp created *Fault* during a three-year residency at UC Berkeley, where they combined lengthy discussions with academic collaborators and practical dance workshops with the Margaret Jenkins Dance Company as a means of investigating the close connection between philosophy, physics, geology, and human interaction.[12] These discussions and explorations resulted in the creation of a two-part, evening-length piece that worked as a metaphoric comparison between earthquakes and human life.

Jenkins asserts that human beings like fault lines, are constantly shifting and "always in a state of something about to happen."[13] Expressive of this dynamic understanding of human nature, *Fault* employs a composition of precarious cantilevers and movements that throw bodies off center as a means of exploring the limits of balance and imbalance in both the individual and the collective group. *Fault* also employs extensive use of rapidly shifting group patterns that exemplify the constant fluctuations and transformations present in interpersonal interaction and social dynamics. In one section for the entire cast, dancers within the large group are faced with recurring displacement and slippage as they are moved about to form a series of geometric shapes and designs. This series of formations is created by repeatedly rotating, transferring, and rearranging agglomer-ations of dancers as if they were individual, yet intrinsically linked, facets on a Rubik's Cube. These individual and group movements work to expose and corporealize the constant imper-ceptible movement of the human psyche as one transitions between harmony and chaos, control and submission, and resistance and resignation both intra- and interpersonally.

FIGURE 2: Margaret Jenkins Dance Company in Fault, 1996. Photo from Voice of Dance.

Muriel Maffre's 2006 work *Ballet Mori* also links modern life to the nearly imperceptible motion of the earth. Rather than linking human movement and tectonic movement meta-phorically, *Ballet Mori* employs modern technology to partner choreography with actual seismic activity. Commissioned by San Francisco Ballet to celebrate the centennial of the Great San Francisco Earthquake, *Ballet Mori* began as an art installation piece designed by Ken Goldberg, a conceptual artist and professor of industrial engineering, computer science, and robotics at UC Berkeley.[14]

In the late 1990s Goldberg and a team of fellow engineers and select students at UC Berkeley pioneered new technology that allowed the inaudible sounds of seismic waves to be charted.[15] This seismic technology was employed on the Hayward Fault, which runs along the eastern shoreline of the San Francisco Bay and through the UC Berkeley campus.[16] Using data collected by this seismometer, Goldberg designed a creative project that artistically visualized the recorded movement of the fault. Later that year, composer Randall Packer developed a musical algorithm of more than 100 natural sounds that would continuously respond to the real-time data collected by Goldberg's seismometer.[17]

It was this collaborative musical piece that was introduced to Maffre. At SFB, Maffre piqued the interest of fellow Principal Dancer Yuri Possokhov, who created a movement vo-cabulary for the ballet.[18] Integrating Possokhov's movement vocabulary and Packer's pre-programmed sound vocabulary, Maffre created an improvisational piece in which dance move-ment concepts were to be chosen in response to the ever-changing pattern of

sounds as conducted by the real-time movements of the Hayward Fault.

For the performance, data collected from Goldberg's seismometer on the Hayward Fault was uploaded to the internet, passed through Parker's musical algorithm, and amplified in real-time throughout the San Francisco Opera House for the entire eight minutes of the piece.[19] Haunting noises such as muted thuds, rushing waves, dripping water, indistinguishable moans, shrieking wind, and creaking boards create a cacophony that reverberate and echo eerily. The result is chilling and produces the feeling of an ominous subterranean atmosphere.

The ballet begins with Maffre concealed by a scrim. Lit from behind, she casts a larger-than-life silhouette that details her slight movements and undulations as she mimics the rhythmic drone of the score. Emerging from under the scrim, she moves about the stage with an eerie litheness, stealthily maneuvering through the darkness of the stage and over several subtle mounds of pushed-up Marley that suggest the rugged, barren remains of earthquake rubble or a cavern floor. Costumed in a sheer white dress painted with splotches of subtle earth tones, Maffre appears almost ghostlike and glows in the darkness of the stage.

FIGURE 3: Muriel Maffre in *Ballet Mori*, 2006. Photo by Erik Tomasson from San Francisco Chronicle 6 April, 2006: E-1.

Maffre's dance combines movements from the classical ballet vocabulary with insect-like poses, bizarre contortions, and billowing motions. Moments of placid control and refined movements are abruptly interrupted by jagged thrusts of the arms, powerful turns, and turbulent movement sequences as the soundscape uncontrollably shifts. These instances of radical transition from familiar to unfamiliar, controlled to volatile, exemplify the precarious nature of tectonic activity.

At points Maffre chooses to layer seemingly unpredictable and precarious movement amid times of relative serenity in the score. Here she translates the forceful tension held in the sustained tones, reflective of the forceful tension of the earth pressing against itself, into powerful action in which her body violently pushes through and against the environment of the stage.

Throughout the piece, the image of Maffre as a lone figure in the desolate environment evokes the concept of an area that has been completely decimated, save for a sole survivor struggling against nature to survive. Slowly crumbling into the floor, Maffre concludes the piece by rolling over one of the set's uneven mounds and into a shallow crevice where she stops moving and is enveloped by darkness.

In these three recent works, Joanna Haigood, Margaret Jenkins and Ellie Klopp, and Muriel Maffre engage with the shifting topography of the San Francisco Bay Area as a means of exploring the dynamic relationship between humanity and the natural environment. Exposing both the earth and the body as undergoing constant motion and change, these pieces reveal the physical volatility of the human condition, contemporary social dynamics, and modern urban development.



Notes

[1] "Plate Boundaries." Plate Tectonics. 10 February 2009 <http://www.platetectonics.com/book/page_5.asp> 10 February 2009.

[2] "Bay Area Faults and Earthquakes." UC Berkeley Seismological Laboratory. 16 March 2005. <http://seismo.berkeley.edu/seismo.baseis.html> 10 February 2009.

[3] "Earthquakes in Northern California" Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup. 01 December 2008 <http://www.crew.org/region/noca.html> 10 February 2009.

[4] Graham, Tom. "City of Hills." San Francisco Chronicle 7 November 2004: PK – 20.

[5] Earthquake Hazards Program: Northern California. The United States Geological Survey. 10 February 2009 <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/regional/nca/index.php> 10 February 2009

[6] "Joanna Haigood, Artistic Director." ZACCHO Dance Theatre. 15 Jul 2008. <http://www.zaccho.org/director.html> 20 Aug 2008.
[7] The Shifting Cornerstone premiered on August 16, 2008. See The Dancers' Group and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. "Program from The Shifting Cornerstone: a performance installation. August 16-17, 20-24, 2008."
[8] The Dancers' Group and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. "Program from The Shifting Cornerstone: a performance installation. August 16-17, 20-24, 2008" pg. 1.
[9] "The Great 1906 San Francisco Earthquake" United States Geological Survey. 20 Aug 2008. <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/regional/nca/1906/18april/index.php> 18 May 2009.
[10] "Map of Area Burned by 1906 Earthquake Fire" 16 July 2004. The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco. <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist1/burned.html> 20 Aug 2008.
[11] Fault premiered on Friday, November 1, 1996 at UC Berkeley's Zellerbach Playhouse. See Roca, Octavio. "Jenkins' "Fault' Shakes Things Up." Rev. of Fault, by Margaret Jenkins. San Francisco Chronicle 27 Oct 1996: PK-36.
[12] Roca, Octavio. "Jenkins' "Fault' Shakes Things Up." Rev. of Fault, by Margaret Jenkins. San Francisco Chronicle 27 Oct 1996: PK-36.
[13] Jenkins, Margaret. qtd in Roca, Octavio. "Jenkins' "Fault' Shakes Things Up." Rev. of Fault, by Margaret Jenkins. San Francisco Chronicle 27 Oct 1996: PK-36.
[14] "San Francisco Ballet to be set to Sounds of Seismic Movements." The Associated Press. 30 March, 2006.
[15] Anwar, Yasmin. "1906 Earthquake Centennial Inspires Ballet Performed to Live Seismic Data." UC Berkeley News 30 March, 2006.
[16] Keats, Jonathon. "Shaking Up the Ballet." Wired. April 2006. <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/14.04/posts.html?pg=4> 17 October 2008.
[17] Howard, Rachel. "Maffre, Ballet Dance to Amplified Sounds from a Fault Line in a New Work Created in Honor of '06 Earthquake Centennial." Review of Ballet Mori, San Francisco Ballet. The San Francisco Chronicle. 6 April, 2006: E-1.
[18] Ulrich, Allan. "San Francisco Ballet, Ballet Mori" Review of Ballet Mori, by San Francisco Ballet. Voice of Dance. 5 April 2006.
[19] Orrghen, Anna. "Ballet Mori and the Acoustic Unconscious." Review of Ballet Mori, San Francisco Ballet. Rhizome. 18 April 2006. <http://rhizome.org/discuss/view/21120/#41213> 18 May 2009.

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# Dancing on the Plaza: Investigating Theatrical Dancing in Colonial Peru through the Form and Function of Lima's Plaza Mayor

*Peggy L. Murray*

The fully-sung opera, *La púrpura de la rosa* (or *The Blood of the Rose*) premiered in Lima, Peru in 1701 at the Viceroy's palace. The Viceroy's composer, Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco, used an older Spanish text by Calderón de la Barca for the libretto in this work, [1] and it featured *bayles* (rustic or low-class dances like *jácaras* and *villanos*), as well as *danzas* (more refined dances associated with the aristocracy). Two troupes of actresses joined forces for the production. As was also customary in Spanish theater, women seem to have dominated the stage playing roles of both genders.[2] I will use *La púrpura* as a case here because of the relatively abundant and current scholarship that exists regarding it.

The sacred *and* secular music in colonial Latin America, and in Peru in particular, has received important musicological attention in recent years. An area of special interest has been musical theater and opera in important viceregal urban centers in the second half of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth. This historical research has addressed musical scores, composers, musical performance practice, and (more rigorously of late) performance contexts and even musician profiles.[3]

Interest in *La púrpura,* often dubbed "the first opera of the Americas," stems, in part, from its being fully-sung--the way we today conceive o f [1]operas. Nevertheless, Lima enjoyed a rich musical theater culture, from the seventeenth century forward with works that more commonly included spoken text with singing and dancing.[4] Although dance music figures prominently within these works, including *La púrpura*, their choreography has yet to be seriously investigated.

This dearth of scholarship is somewhat surprising given the intriguing possibilities that colonial culture might hold for inquiries into popular topics like transculturation, hybridity, gender, ethnicity, class and agency. On the other hand, the lack of attention is understandable, as we currently have little information about dance here that feels stable enough to stake claims on. I have, thus far, found no dance manuals, notations, descriptions or iconographic depictions of colonial theatrical choreographies from Peru.

We might presume that the Spanish step vocabularies that dance historians have come to know through sources by Juan de Esquivel Navarro and Juan Antonio Jaque from the mid- and late-seventeenth century held sway in Peru--it was, after all, an extension of the Spanish empire.[5] These sources do address many of the dance types used in colonial performance. Yet we need to acknowledge the very different contexts of, for example, Esquivel's perspective, as the dancing master and proprietor of an all-male social dancing school in Spain, and that of a female-dominated colonial Peruvian theatrical cast. We cannot assume that Lima and its culture were immaterial to choreography and style. Our assumptions might be helped if we knew more about the work's performers or choreographers and the movement idioms they might have employed (might they have been from Spain, were they creoles, were they *castas* of mixed ethnic heritage?). Their social and ethnic status may well have determined *how* they danced. Such questions, of interest to dance history, reach beyond disciplinary boundaries. Historical social context and dance seem ever locked in a hermeneutic relationship, where context informs about acceptable (and unacceptable) bodily behavior and movement, and the body's movement, its formal qualities and codes, in turn expands our view of a historical moment. As a preliminary step to understanding this performance genre, its dance *and* its performers I investigate here the urban milieu of colonial Lima.

Urbanization itself was an important policy of colonization. The physical layout of colonial cities reflected the need for an effective administrative apparatus.[6] A geometric grid pattern with a central

plaza at its core became the ubiquitous format of urban centers in the New World.

As was typical of Spanish American cities, life in Lima revolved around its main plaza, the Plaza Mayor. In and around this central urban space, the Viceroyalty's most important buildings, monuments and expanses served administrative, religious, commercial and social functions. Although this structure became rather standard throughout Spanish America, the unique aspects of plazas and buildings surrounding them were a source of pride and identity for urban residents.[7] Some of Lima's defining features include the Plaza's fountain and intricately-carved wooden balconies. The balconies, now UNESCO world heritage sites, were sometimes called women's balconies – a point to which I will return. The eastern side of the Plaza boasted the religious buildings (the cathedral, a parish church, bishop's palace, a monastery and convent); the northern side, the administrative buildings (the Viceroy's palace and office buildings); the western, government and commercial buildings (the *audiencia* or courts, *cabildo* or town/municipal legislature halls); and on the southern side, an arched colonnade provided shelter from the sun for market shops and stalls.[8] This architecture and the institutions to which it pertained created social spaces for a wide of variety performative behavior that informs how we might conceive of dance culture in this time and place —formal and informal, official and unofficial, public and private. From here I will consider some of these individual spaces and selected embodied activities that took place within them.

The Viceroy's palace served as a common venue for public theatrical performances put on in celebration of official events.[9] Whether royal births, marriages and ascensions in Spain or state visits and anniversaries of the Viceroyalty, the administration sponsored lavish celebrations and entertainments. These provided a display of wealth and power, and encouraged buy-in to the colonial project by creating a sense of communal participation in the distant events of the monarchy as well as the local events of its representatives.

*La púrpura de la rosa* was presented on the occasion of King Philip V's eighteenth birthday and his ascension to the thrown of Spain. The symbolic imagery and text of the work suggest official messages about Spanish supremacy, and also about the inevitable coming together of Spain and its colonies and the harmonious effects of that union.[10] Throughout the work there is a mix of high and low styles in the music and dance. Rustic villagers parallel and parody the intrigues of gods and goddesses with strophic songs, chase scenes, physical comedy and dancing (and interestingly, low dance types are integrated into the realm of the gods).[11] In the end we have perfect harmony between heaven and earth, the court and peasantry and perhaps, Europe and America.[12]

Regardless of the occasions for state-sponsored entertainments, their main purpose was to promote the Crown's (or Viceroy's) agenda. In the case of *La púrpura*, we find both high and low music and dance types serving these lofty messages. This variety suggests that the 'actresses' (possibly regardless of their own social status) were versatile enough to be able to perform them effectively, although we do not know how they might have acquired their skills. We might conclude that in Lima, distinctions between high and low styles may have been malleable, or at least, that there was wide appreciation for both.[13]

Like the viceregal administration, the Church shared enormous responsibility in the colonial project. Conversion to Roman Catholicism was, of course, an essential component. With its many religious buildings with many functions, the Plaza Mayor must have been a busy center for the processing of souls. As well as the primary charge of conversion, the colonial Church ministered to those already converted—colonists, and their mestizo and creole offspring, and ever increasing numbers of devout indigenous inhabitants and free and slave Africans. In addition to celebrating masses, the Church had in its arsenal a full schedule of religious feasts and festivals—most requiring special festive music and elaborate processions around church buildings, city streets and the Plaza.[14] Such occasions invariably included dancing.

Importantly, these events included indigenous participants--descendents of Inca nobility appeared in full regalia. Adding indigenous aspects to these displays confirmed Spanish supremacy over the vanquished, provided an example of subservience to the Catholicism and the Crown, but also allowed the indigenous elite to display its visibility among the contemporary power brokers. The choreographic components of the Peruvian religious celebrations has yet to be thoroughly explored (as has the level of participation of women in them), but they may offer

indications of movement conventions that appeared in other performance situations as well.

An additional charge of the Church was education. Colonial Lima boasted a rather elaborate education system that included convent, monastery and lay schools, and which was interestingly primarily focused on the education of girls.[15] These places of learning served the children of Spanish elites (both mestizo and creole), the children of indigenous elites, and even orphans.[16] Evidence points to a strong tradition of performing arts education generally. In convent schools girls had voice and music, dancing and acting lessons along with academic and domestic subjects.[17] One secondary source acknowledges that as a result of this training

> musical entertainment available in Peruvian nunneries became almost legendary, and its fame reached all the way to Madrid and Rome. Nunneries would vie with one another to attract talented musicians and singers in order to offer the most elaborate musical programs to the public.[18]

This assertion brings our conception of convent performance outside of cloistered monastic walls and prompts questions about how these productions might have compared with, and competed with other public musical theater performances (like *La púrpura*). The education received in these schools was to prepare young women for proper and hopefully advantageous marriages. It would appear that the performing skills honed here were eventually to be exercised in the home rather than the public theater. To be investigated here is the nature of the dancing taught and performed in convents, and whether any of our public theater/opera actresses got their start in the convents.

The last social spaces of the Plaza that I will address are arguably the most public and most private—the public square and the screened balconies of the residences and other buildings around it. By day the open space of the public square within the Plaza was traversed by those carrying out religious, governmental and commercial business. The Plaza's market stalls and artisan and merchant shops drew passersby and household servants who were charged with the marketing for the families for whom they worked.[19] In Lima's seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries we can see this space as an important site of contact between people of various ethnicities and stations. From Lima's founding, dances associated with indigenous inhabitants such as the *chacona* and *zarabanda*, demonized for their lascivious qualities, survived in the unofficial culture of the streets and public square.[20] These dances, and others, were sometimes alternatively attributed to African residents, and there exist reports of African confraternity groups playing music and dancing in the Plaza. As we have seen with *La púrpura's* use of low and high dance types, it seems reasonable to assume that some of the dance stylings of the Plaza and streets might have made their way to the viceregal opera stage.

Largely absent from the public square, however, were Spanish elite women, who ventured there only when accompanied (preferably by male relatives), and generally only to attend mass or special events.[21] Around the Plaza the homes of Lima's Spanish elite, as well as some of the public buildings, sported ornately-carved shuttered wooden balconies, where the families' women could appreciate a summer breeze, and yet remain hidden from public view. Historian Susan Migden Socolow points out that

> the role of women in these [Iberian] societies reflected the combined effect of Islam and Roman Catholicism….The Islamic ideal of the cloistered, sheltered woman, the woman protected in the home or harem, continued to resonate in Iberian society, as did the strong link between female virginity and honor.[22]

The strong Spanish Catholic tradition of claustration within convents and enclosure within private homes surely differentiated women by class, honor and ethnicity from those not enclosed. The women behind the Plaza's balconies must have differed on some of these grounds from the women of the public square and perhaps from the women of the stage.

The Plaza Mayor, as the hub of political, religious, economic, social activity in the Viceroyalty of Peru supported a variety of performance activity thanks to its physical spaces, official and unofficial functions, and the variety of people that frequented it. These raise questions about possibilities for research: With regard to musical theater and its female performers, what was their status in their society? How did they hone their

stage skills? Did they bring their own movement vocabularies to the stage or did they adeptly appropriate other movement styles? How might their performances have confirmed and/or challenged the conventions related to class, ethnicity, the status of women, or more broadly, the colonial project? In the cases of the social spaces created by the Church, to what extent was conformity to a set movement norm demanded of the subjects of conversion, and to what extent were traditional styles allowed to survive? In the public square with its opportunities for cultural contact, what hybrid movement idioms developed? Did they make their way to the theater? Lastly, in the private homes with our subjects shielded behind balconies, what sorts of social dancing occurred? How might it have compared aesthetically with that in the public square or theater? There are myriad questions to investigate in a vein of inquiry that appears to be wide open and ripe for the picking.



Notes

[1] Louise K. Stein, *La púrpura de la rosa: fiesta cantada, opera en un acto* (Madrid: Instituto Complutense de Ciencias Musicales, 1999) xxi-xxvii.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Musicologist Robert Stevenson has long been active in this area and laid important groundwork for current scholars such as Louise K. Stein, Geoffrey Baker and Bernardo Illari.

[4] A point evident throughout Guillermo Lohman Villena, *El arte drámatico de Lima durante el virrenato* (Madrid: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de la Universidad de Sevilla, 1945) and Robert Stevenson, "The South American lyric stage to 1800." *Inter-American Music Bulletin* 87 (1973): 1-27.

[5] These texts are, in some cases, further clarified in texts produced by Miguet é Irol and Ferriol y Boxeráus almost a century later (the mid- and late-eighteenth century).

[6] Louisa Schell Hoberman and Susan Midgen Socolow, *Cities and society in colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1986) 10.

[7] Jay Kinsbruner, *The colonial Spanish-American city: urban life in the age of Atlantic capitalism* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2005) 25-26.

[8] Ibid p. 174.

[9] Where in the palace they were staged is not delineated in the existing musical score. An additional factor hindering this research, is that the palace was demolished in an earthquake in 1746 and subsequently rebuilt.

[10] Musicologist Louise K. Stein asserts that the opera might well be read as *la música de dos orbes* (the music of two worlds or spheres) symbolized by its theme of godly-human love (that of Venus and Adonis) and including both courtly and peasant situations, and through images of earthly and cosmic harmony; See Louise K. Stein, "'*La música de dos orbes*': a context for the first opera of the Americas." *Opera Quarterly* 22 (2006): 433-458.

[11] Louise K. Stein, *La púrpura*, xxvi.

[12] Andrew Lawrence King, "'*La música de dos orbes*': Performing Spanish baroque opera in Lima and Sheffield" in *Bringing the first Latin-American opera to life: staging La púrpura de la rosa in Sheffield*, eds. Jane W. Davidson and Anthony Trippett (Durham, UK: Durham University, 2007) 127-166.

[13] This is in contrast to Esquivel's disparaging of low class dances. See Lynn Matluck Brooks, *The art of dancing in seventeenth-century Spain: Juan de Esquivel Navarro and his world* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2003).

[14] Kagan, 173.

[15] Karen Burns, *Colonial habits: convents and the spiritual economy of Cuzco*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999) addresses the early colonial impetus to indoctrinate (especially) girls in Spanish customs, religion and mores through convent education.

[16] Luis Martín, *Daughters of the conquistadores: women of the Viceroyalty of Peru* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1983) 85-123.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., p. 212.

[19] Kinsbruner, 91.

[20] Stein "*De chacona, zarabanda, y La púrpura de la rosa en la cultura del Perú colonial*" in *Perú en su cultura*, eds. Daniel Castillo Durante and Borka Sattler, (Ottawa and Lima: PromPeru/University of Ottawa, 2001) 216-217.

[21] Kinsbruner, 126.

[22] Susan Migden Socolow, *The women of colonial Latin America* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 5-6.

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# William Forsythe and the terrain of stillness

## Ann Nugent

At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline.
Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.
TS Eliot, Burnt Norton, 1936

It will seem perverse to discuss stillness in the context of William Forsythe's high activity dance, yet stillness is a part of the dance, as integral to kinaesthetic energy, and as likely to impinge on audience experience, as motion. Stillness, and indeed silence, feature prominently in Forsythe's works, as theatrical devices through which the atmosphere and dynamic are affected. Stillness calls attention to itself, and to the listening and looking dancers, and Forsythe's dancers are always acutely attuned to what is going on.

**The aesthetics of silence**

My intention here is to consider aspects of what may be imparted when movement and sound appear to cease, in a paper that derives from a 1967 essay on *The Aesthetics of Silence* by Susan Sontag. I came across it in a handbook compiled by Forsythe's former dramaturg, Heidi Gilpin. It was one of many texts offered as possible conceptual triggers for his 1995 *Eidos:Telos*. Sontag looks at silence in the context of 'trespassing the accepted frontiers of consciousness' (185), and she writes from the different viewpoints of creator and recipient, setting up a discourse between what goes into the art work and what can be taken out of it. Silence, she claims, is what the artist wields in a relationship with an audience. She is not thinking of literal silence but rather of its status as a philosophical tool, and she sees that it can serve as 'aggression', or as 'weapon' or as 'punishment' (185). It symbolises the power of the artist to perceive and to cause the object of that perception to be regarded as unintelligible, invisible or inaudible (184). Perhaps this is to show 'disdain for the "meanings" established by bourgeois-rationalist culture' (203), where the viewer's failure to see or hear anything outside the old meanings is a reflection of entrenched habits of observing art.

If silence can be looked at in this way, then so can stillness and in a dance context Sontag's argument about 'a punishment' might have relevance, for if the dance is stilled then its very existence might seem to be denied, and this could punish not only dancers but also audiences. Where, though, is the dance to be found?

Since there is no scientific measurement that can define stillness, I propose that it is seen as both abstract and poetic, with qualities emerging out of performer states of being. To become aware of stillness or silence is not a matter of neat division between two senses, either for the doer or the receiver. As Cage points out, there is no certainty that silence can be heard by the ears and stillness seen by the eyes for the ears and eyes are not beings.[1]

Stillness in performance is constituted in many ways. It is not a fixed attribute or an entity in its own right; it is relative to movement of some kind, and always part of the bigger interplay of sound, sight, dimension and effort.[2] Stillness on Forsythe's terrain is a power that neither empties nor reduces, nor is it ever absolute, not least because eyes blink; invisible organs go on functioning and the brain continues thinking. But it will, nonetheless, change the experience of watching, and may call attention to the activity of listening and looking. Often it signals pause with purpose, and this 'purpose' can be seen in the body language of Forsythe's dancers, where the acuteness of their concentration makes them seem to 'vibrate' with mind-body energy.[3]

The character of Forsythe's stillness is diverse. It may be emphatic and pictorial, or emphasised by the spatial juxtaposition of stilled objects and movement around them. It may register when the arms move but the feet do not, or when progressive travel is slow to

the point of imperceptibility. It may serve as dramatic interruption, or stretch from pause to gap to provide dance's equivalent of punctuation marks. It may function as a philosophical statement through invisibility, or because of the withdrawal of a work from the repertoire, which means it is permanently stilled.

**Forsythe's stilled point**

While it is impossible to know what influence, if any, Sontag's essay played in the making of *Eidos:Telos*, it is noticeable that all three acts start in stillness, which is unusual for a choreographer who often seems to begin in mid-action. Still more rarely does Forsythe bring his works to an end by obvious means, and this makes his vocal 'stop' at the close of *Solo* something of a curiosity.

Sometimes stilled objects become the means by which the dance is generated, as can be seen in the site-specific *You made me a monster* or, alternatively, the stilled objects are themselves activated by people moving about in the space designated for *Scattered Crowd*.[4] These last two works were seen in London recently, during a 3-week season entitled *Focus on Forsythe*. The unseen *Monster* was cancer, which in 1994 caused the death of Forsythe's 32-year old wife, and audiences and performers were together on stage at Sadler's Wells becoming co-producers of motion.[5] We stood around tables laden with sculptural 'bodies', and we were asked to fold paper cut-outs into sections of the human skeleton, and as we bent buff cardboard into ribs and femurs and hung them on these strangely shaped 'bodies', so three members of the Forsythe Company translated these inanimate objects into dance.

Out of that quiet space emerged a roar of grief, with the decibels of human yet inhuman vocalisations enlarged by microphones affixed to each dancer. Out of inactivity, suddenly in our midst came movement that was plastic, boneless and fast, and given an embodied craziness that involved apparent surrender of the ego. Divisions between the public performer and the private individual were no longer distinguishable, for a metaphorical journey had taken place, travelling between the stilled objects and the mind\body of the dancers. It was an extraordinary journey.

This was in contrast to *Scattered Crowd* which took place in the Midland Goods Shed, a derelict London warehouse, where the arbitrary movement of members of the public turned thousands of stilled, helium-filled balloons hanging from on high into a dancing universe. Here too the combination of textures, tones, and light in relation to the re-organisation of a vast space proved extraordinary,. This was an event extending beyond the bounds of dance, art gallery or theatre which, like *Monster*, pointed to a philosophical enquiry into the nature of dance.

**Dance and sound**

It was while he was a dancer with the Stuttgart Ballet that, in 1976, Forsythe launched his choreographic career. His first work was *Urlicht*, a duet made to part of Mahler's 2nd Symphony. Twice, the man holds the woman as she balances on pointe in a deep backbend and this draws attention to the communion between seeing and hearing, between the living sculpture of the two dancers and the probing nature of the music.[6] And one of the things that was remarkable for a nascent choreographer was his courage in not overloading the dance, and in introducing passages of stillness.

Actually in all Forsythe's work the connection between the dance and music merit close scrutiny, and there are always connections, whether or not they depend on each other or they set out on (apparently) independent paths. This is evident at the beginning of *Artifact*'s (1984) second act when the dancers are positioned on three sides of the stage and apparently listening to the opening bars of Bach's Chaconne in D Minor for violin.[7] They frame the soloists, and our attention is held by the woman who stands in profile to the audience, holding her arms out horizontally with her legs in a *pointe tendu*. What I become aware of in this apparently seemingly position is the counter-tension running between the foot's point and the extension of the arms, and when Dana Caspersen takes this role the tautness of her position plus the strength of her gaze engages with the music in a way that is concentrated to the point of ferocity. In stillness there can be immense energy, and through Caspersen's stilled listening we hear and see more acutely, and recollect the observations of Cage and Balanchine about how seeing and hearing can be directed in different ways.[8]

Forsythe challenges ideas about the dance with his introduction of semi stillness for a non-travelling dancer, and there are times in both *Artifact* and *Steptext* (1984) when the dancers are stilled below the waist though their upper bodies are moving. *Artifact*'s character Other Woman, for example, stands and

gesticulates with her arms, and the stationary dancers lined up along the stage sides copy her gestures. In *Steptext*, the central woman executes a similar sequence, again without moving. In both instances the overtly active combines with the apparently inactive to produce incompleted stillness. When *Steptext* was transmitted on BBC Television (1997), and the camera turned its full focus on to the gesticulating dancer, it seemed as if director Ross McGibbon was forcing a debate on to viewers. For could the dancer who was standing still but moving her arms in such a precise and organised manner really be said to be dancing?

Again in *Artifact*'s second act theatrical divisiveness halts the visual action, for just when the dance is at its most driven, lulling viewers into belief about the inextricable relationship between dance and music, so the specially weighted curtain comes crashing down. The music continues to play, but because the dance has been removed from our sight,[9] we feel cut off from the performance. This for some people is an act of terrorism, negating the tacit contract between artists and viewers, and depriving the latter of the very activity they have paid to *see*. Others will understand the joke, and recognise that when the dance is returned the senses feel newly awakened.[10] Here the dance is stilled by its invisibility, but the artist is still 'speaking'.[11] It introduces a problem about identity and presence and whether, in the context of theatre, dance can be said to be present when it is out of audience sight. When, however, the curtain rises seconds later it is obvious that when we could not see them the dancers had had to rush into different places on stage. Here is another issue, for is this concealed process part of the choreography, and an acknowledgement that the identity of dance and dancers is never fixed but always becoming, and always dependent on the pull between past and future.

By constantly disorganizing our expectations, Forsythe is acknowledging the link 'profoundly binding philosophy and dance' to ask not only 'what can a body do'[12] but what can audiences see? Recognising this perhaps helps to make sense of a comment by another of *Artifact*'s three characters, Person in Historical Dress, who announces: 'Welcome to what you think you see'. She speaks the line with beguiling sweetness as if to underline the irony of uncertainty, and the provisionality of our own identity.

The factually titled *Solo* was made for television in 1995, with Forsythe as choreographer-improviser-performer.[13] It is characterised by movement ebbing and flowing through torso and limbs, allowing glimpses of fractional pauses to separate phrases and allow brief suspensions of motion that make it possible for the activity to change direction.[14] A raised elbow catches the dancer's eye and, as he glances at it, the connection radiating between eye and elbow somehow causes him to hang in a balance. He drops to the floor with an abrupt stoppage of the flow, and a change in level that is rather like the effect of the colon in writing: it allows a pause before the follow-on delivery.[15]

My main point in looking at *Solo* is to draw attention to what goes into the ending. In the closing moments, the camera moves in on Forsythe's upper body as he initiates the movement of one arm by pushing with the fingertips of the other. Bending the right arm to his left shoulder, his left hand catches his right elbow and slowly and deliberately causes the arm to extend forward. He clenches his fist, and turns it over, uttering, in the softest of whispers, a single word: *'stop'*. It is curious, this sudden direct communication through a spoken word, and it shifts our awareness of the enigma of Forsythe's strange, non representational dance on to the ordinariness of everyday language. Yet, there is potent poetry in the quiet delivery of 'stop'.[16]

**Foregrounded objects**

In Frankfurt in 2000, Forsythe presented a programme entitled *Reflect* featuring extracts from many of his longer works. Among them was a pas de deux from his 1988 *Behind the China Dogs* that was notable not only for its charged energy and the dagger-like trajectories of the woman's limbs, but also for the presence of a group of 'china dogs'. The dogs, which were positioned upstage right, served no obvious purpose, and yet they were evidently intended to be seen in a relationship with the dance's swinging limbs and off-centred balances. And of course, while they did not compel the viewer eye away from the dance, they made a spatial impact.[17] Perhaps the intention was to underline risk in the dance with a stabilising element, thereby creating a contrast between the active and the stilled.

Stilled objects made a notable impact on the space a few months later when the Ballett Frankfurt dancers took part in the opening ceremony of London's Tate Modern, and performed the table dance from *The Questioning of Robert Scott* (1986). The organisational structure of 24 rectangular tables dominating the space, forced rigorous questioning of

how the dance could use that space. What the viewer then saw from the tables linked into a composite whole was a flatness that argued against the dance's expected spatial freedom. Yet if the tables might have been seen, in the Sontag sense, as 'punishment', in Forsythe's eyes they served as 'opportunity'. They showed the possibility of a dance freed by new initiatives, at the same time as they provided an intriguing crossover between visual and performance art.

What different expectations are suggested by titles such as *The Questioning of Robert Scott* and *One Flat Thing, Reproduced!* This same table dance had been shown weeks earlier at the Theatre de la Monnaie in Brussels, when it was called *One Flat Thing, Reproduced,* and it has been known by this name ever since. It begins in a spirit of energy, with the dancers running on from the wings pulling the tables with them. The roar of sound made by the table legs is in contrast to the stillness that follows as the tables are transformed into an object in the dance space.

**Stilled gaze and alert eye**

In Brussels, a second work was extracted from *Robert Scott* called *7 to 10 Passages*. At its start for ten men and women were lined across the upstage space, standing silently and facing the audience. Almost imperceptibly, one body started to lean and another to sway and the movement expanded as limbs and torsos began weaving in slow rhythms. Yet always the activity was minimal and parts isolated, and there was no attempt to develop into full body mobility or of motion swelling into group unity.

When the dancers moved to the front of the stage, there was a shift from the linear order into patterned difference, with individuals dropping back, some continuing forwards and some moving into stillness - and it could be asked, did they move into stillness or simply stop moving? They began changing levels, folding forwards, extending sideways or collapsing to the floor in fractured phrases.

Gazing on this minimal but dense activity, the eye instinctively sought organising principles that would enable the bigger effect of the dance to be recognised. It caught the interplay between stop and start; it noticed a ripple running along the line when members of the group raised their arms at different times and in different alignments. It saw the activity of limbs reaching outwards from the body, and though the movements seemed to happen arbitrarily, there were links and associations to be made from watching the dance as it escaped from view. The stilled moment became all the more noticeable when only one of the dancers was moving by emphasising the presence and linear order of the other dancers. The quality imposed itself, because of the unforced impetus and the communicative effect of ten dancers obviously concentrating on different tasks.

While as I have said there was no attempt at unity in *7 to 10 Passages*, what was present in their opening stillness was an 'at-oneness' suggesting a community grouped together in tacit harmony. Yet as the dancers edged forwards, all the time re-sculpting themselves, there was reason to wonder what they and their minimalist dance were telling us. With the forward facing dancers holding viewers in their gaze came an extreme example of communicative binding.[18] People can become impatient when they feel alienated by Forsythe's work, but it would take a brave observer to walk away from this performer gaze and break with what was transpiring (both blatantly and obscurely) between stage and auditorium. Escape would mean exposure (and those in the audience who do depart from Forsythe's performances usually creep out under cover of darkness – apart from the few who stomp out in protest at his unconventional theatre).

The carrying out of tasks in *7 to 10 Passages* was improvised, enabling each dancer to respond to something that felt individually right to her or his body. This makes a contrast with the balletic principle of conforming to externalised criteria that become instinctive during the years of training. Forsythe's dancers do not generally put on 'false' expressions (though of course, like any dancer, they will conceal pain). They are charged with different responsibilities that are, it is true, externalised, but that are executed with an inner awareness of the shape and density and momentum expected.[19] Whether the tasks are improvised or structured, they are connected to motorised knowledge in the body, and a rehearsed familiarity of what the movement needs to feel like.

The eyes and their usage are an important part of ballet's geometry, not least for the contribution they make to balance and equilibrium. As could be seen in *Solo*, the direction taken by the eyes enabled the body to keep falling out of the vertical. The radiation of the eyes, the point where the dancer looks, gives the movement its focus, holding the contrary motion that runs through the body. In Forsythe's ballets the dancers' eyes are often, to use his word, 'disfocussed'. Rather than securing the geometric organisation of verticality and turn out in a relationship with the

proscenium arch, in which the eyes look outwards but force the attention on the dancing body, the 'Forsythian' eyes often focus inwards. It is here that the movement is felt proprioceptively and that the body is attuned to an inner state and listening, perhaps to an inner music.[20]

Much has been written about the audience gaze, and relatively little about the part that performers' eyes play in the dance.[21] If in stillness, the dancers' eyes are closed, it is often to cut out external activity. It enables the dancer to be in touch with her/his physical-psycho being. In that case we do well to look more closely at what the dancer awareness is taken up with. If the eyes are open, they may be stilled, or they may signal the action that the dancer is about to engage in. In helping the dancer, the performers' eyes also help audience to see the dance.

**Conclusion**

In summary, stillness is a component of action, which has been explored not as an impoverisher of the dance but as a significant contributor to the semiotic network. It is an aesthetic power riding through negation and suffused with meaning. It is an invitation to see and hear more clearly and to reject the tyranny of expectation, which can be the most static way of looking at dance. It is linked to ideas of what is caught into the physical-mental-spiritual beingness, and to the activity involved both in keeping still and in watching the apparently passive act.[22] In stillness there is a different way of making contact with the audience, another kind of power.

On Forsythe's terrain, stillness serves not so much as waiting for something to happen as an indicator of always becoming, or what Deleuze refers to as the pull between the past and future (1993). It compels viewers along a pathway rich with relationships and connections, letting us discover the mobilisation of concepts and beliefs and the ontological status of stillness in Forsythe's complex, labyrinthine, multi-layered dance. Energy is imparted indicative of internal architecture: ideas are mobilised and senses ignited. They enable us to see the dance's power beyond what is obvious and overt, for as TS Eliot pointed out, 'at the still point, there the dance is' (Burnt Norton).



Notes

[1] See Cage, 1987: 149.

[2] The image popularly associated with the stilled dancer is balletic and heroic, or of a hierarchical directing of the focus from the group to featured soloists.

[3] The effort required by the body in standing still is discussed by Mabel E. Todd in *The Thinking Body* (orig 1937) in her chapter on *Reacting Systems* (see particularly p37), and what the thinking body carries (see p 295).

[4] Since each performance text is discrete, and specific to its venue, these can both be dated 2009.

[5] The auditorium at Sadler's Wells was left in darkness, and separated from the stage by a gauze curtain.

[6] A short extract of *Ürlicht* is now in the public domain and, at the time of writing, could be found on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04_J8JYSv44, danced by the Stuttgart Ballet's Laura O'Malley and Jason Reilly. For years it has not been possible to show clips of most of Forsythe's work, and I must admit that some of the examples for this conference presentation were selected on the basis that I could illustrate points on film. Moreover, in identifying stillness in Forsythe's work, I have selected examples from performances that I personally attended, for to attempt a wider, linear analysis would demand more time and space than possible here. Most references are to work by the former Ballet Frankfurt, other than the two site specific works mentioned, which were mounted by the current Forsythe Company.

[7] An extract from Artifact , danced by the Portuguese Companhia Nacional de Bailado, can be seen on: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASMI5DStw7Y

[8] This can be seen as an illustration of what Balanchine (who was also a distinguished pianist) was talking about in his celebrated remark, 'see the music hear the dance'. Quoted in Schorer, Suki, George Balanchine as a Teacher in Ballet International, Issue 10 October 1999: 62, and also referred to in Jordan, 1999.

[9] Bach's Chaconne in D Minor for solo violin. In all the curtain falls and rises again six times.

[10] There is a sense that when you are deprived of something you are able to appreciate it more fully when it is returned.

[11] Sontag writes about how the artist continues speaking in ways that her/his 'audience cannot hear' (184).

[12] Lepecki, 2006: 41.

[13] Solo lasts a relatively short 6 minutes and 43 seconds. It is available on dvd, under the title *Evidentia*, which was an initiative of Sylvie Guillem's.

[14] The weighted impetus and trajectory as they are coordinated and swing through the limbs reveal strange configurations both active and stilled that are often associated with lunacy.

[15] It stresses the impact of oppositional phrases, or of setting one planal level against another. The force of this abrupt contrast is felt first in the dancer's kinaesthetic awareness, and then in its metakinesic transfer to the viewerThe term metakinesis was coined by John Martin, 1989.

[16] Whether the word is intended to add to the dramatic moment, or to release the tension from an intense 7 minutes of dance, it is strangely memorable.

[17] The writer Senta Driver said in personal communication that she had a theory that the dogs were originally positioned in front of the dance when the work was being created for New

York City Ballet, and that at the eleventh hour this may have been changed (2000).

[18] For discussion of this kind of communicative binding see reference by Juri M Lotman, cited in Marco De Marinis (1993: 143).

[19] In works that come close to the conventional ballet aesthetic, their expressions will come closer to that of a ballet dancer who must at all times suggest ease of movement, with not a hint that it might be difficult or painful.

[20] See Lepecki, 2006: 41.

[21] There was, however, an article by Richard Glasstone published in the *Dancing Times* that looked at how eyes help the dancer. It was called: Thoughts: Uses of Eye Focus (January 2000:351, Vol 90, no 1072).

[22] For discussion of completion in stillness see Sontag and fertile relationships (1983:1999).

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# The Embodiment of Fractured Coalitions:

# Choreography as a Contact Zone of Histories

*Seónagh Odhiambo*

## I. Introduction: Dissipated Origins in the Lived Body[1]

Gianni Vattimo (1988) argues that certain histories and even conceptions of time must be de-privileged in the postmodern era. He describes experience in contemporary western societies as *post-histoire* (or "post-history"), a term that was first introduced by Arnold Gehlen. Referring to Gehlen's (1980) description of the secularization of progress, in which he says progress led human beings from Christianity (the history of salvation) to secularization (a description of "progress" or a search for a worldly condition of perfection), Vattimo calls for the de-privileging of a unitary notion of "history" in discourse. He says in the *post-histoire* era there are now only "different levels and ways of reconstructing the past in the collective consciousness and imagination" (Vattimo, 1988, 9). This shift to *post-histoire* marks "an end to historiography as the image, albeit a constantly varied one, of a unitary process of events, a process which itself loses all recognizable consistency when deprived of the unity of the discourse that formerly defined it" (ibid., 9).

Vattimo's point that progress was narrated in history to create an image of a unified progression of events can be extended to the way progress and "origins" were narrated in dance history, so the dissolution of dance origins also marks the end of dance historiography as an "image…of a unitary process of events." In response to this and related scholarly arguments, dance scholars have refigured the dance canon. A formerly accepted hierarchy of dance traditions is now in question, and several scholars brought anachronistic racist assumptions to light by redefining what was previously termed a "universal body" [2]. Now dance scholars more often discuss relationships of influence between a dance tradition, its social context, and influences of other traditions[3]. As these kinds of significant changes take place in the "body of knowledge" it is important to consider the "bodies of dancers," how their lived experiences of the refigured interrelations between knowledge, learning, and social change can point scholars to conceptual breakthroughs.

If contemporary experience is *post-histoire,* then it follows that "history" (or histories) should now be explored differently. However, in academia we still struggle with remnants of the "history of progress." Foremost is the idea of a binary, that persistent *idée fixe* that draws discursive boundaries between western and non-western, mind and body. So embedded in everyday thinking and current discourses are such binaries that these are assumed to be "true." Even though the idea of a binary between western/non-western is still persistent in western discursive practices, contemporary embodied experiences contradict this *idée fixe*. For example, the contemporary urban person may reference more than one country as "home," speak two or more languages, and often travels frequently. Part of the *post-histoire* era, many North American university classrooms also house students whose origins can be traced around the world, and whose diverse cultural memories are articulated as reference points. Mary Louise Pratt (1999) described this contemporary *post-histoire* classroom as a "contact zone" where diverse histories and cultural memories collide and intersect[4].

I developed a four month long choreography study in what can be called a contact zone classroom, and in this study I asked 11 women dancers questions in an effort to cloud the fixed discursive "truth" of binary distinctions, particularly the binaries between western/non-western, mind/body. Together dancers and I theorised and attuned to their contemporary experiences of *post-histoire*. I wished to develop a "radically international"[5] approach to world dance studies. When thinking of how I as a non-African woman would respect the cultural roots of African

movement from an oral tradition that I had learned from elders when I lived in Africa, or movement from African dance classes in North America that I brought to the choreography, I saw dance fusion in the choreography process as a critical opportunity I thus involved the dancers in considering and respecting African societies from which we borrowed movement, including the oral traditions attached to African movement. In summary, I regarded 11 women dancers as they conceptualised, pondered, and embodied African and western dance movement, all the while questioning binaries that appear in western discourse.

The students explored some of these ideas in their journals. In this sense we borrowed from African aesthetics and philosophy where the body theorises meaning and conveys historical information, and where mind and body are not separate[6]. By emphasising how learners bridge the somatic body (the body as we experience it) and its cultural/historical representation, this choreography process provided a method of analysis and discovery about how dancers can learn through "inter-embodiment." One dancer wrote that this dance "was essentially...comprised of movement stored in our bodies which told something our story. For the first time in my life I felt that conversation of the physical was more present than the verbal" (student journal). In a sense she encapsulated the essence of learning through inter-embodiment, a view that theories of knowledge can come out of the intertwining of psychical and corporeal understandings. Inter-embodiment depends on a theory of the body/mind connection that recognizes knowledge and theory can be built through the intermingling of lived bodies (e.g., Grosz, 1994). The way that theories of knowledge arise from the intertwining of psychical and corporeal understandings is explained by Stephanie Springgay and Deb Freedman (2007) who draw from feminist philosophies about the body like Grosz to pose a theory of inter-embodiment. The authors believe knowledge is created in the intermingling of bodies (in classrooms, public spaces). Therefore, when understood as part of the contact zone, inter-embodiment constructs bodies and creates knowledge because "body knowledge is not created within a single, autonomous subject (body), but rather that body knowledge and bodies are created in the intermingling and encounters between bodies" (Springgay and Freedman, 2007, xxi).

I argue here that a description of the contact zone process—where dancers and I explored an alternative way of theorising disciplinary boundaries between "world dance" and "modern dance" through inter-embodiment—can be used as a reference point for a developing methodology to approach "world dance." This highlights the importance of questioning these established frameworks for "looking" at world cultures. Theresa Buckland (2006) believes dance scholars must question inherited concepts of "culture" and "world dance" as clearly as anthropologists often question their own implications in the methodologies they choose when studying so-called world dances[7]. The problem is that some dance researchers have tended to approach world dances unquestioningly through the disciplinary framework of early anthropology[8]. Like me, Buckland suggests the importance of methodological specificity, saying approaches to world dance must "refute an overarching tendency toward monolithic conceptualisation of world dance cultures" (Buckland, 2006, ix). In discussing a choreography process as a metaphor for how to look at world dance I am suggesting a methodology, a way of thinking in analogous terms. That is, by considering "the body"—that material construct in discourse—through the analogy of these dancers' lived bodies, I emphasise dancers' diverse lived experiences of *post-histoire* in the contact zone. The dancers enact a (lived) symbolic reference point, a contact zone of diverse histories and dance aesthetics.

Now the purpose of discussing this danced contact zone is better understood. Effectively, the dancers' voices are some of the "new streams" entering an "old pond" of aesthetic and philosophical inquiry, to quote Sondra Fraleigh (1999)[9]. As Fraleigh indicates, aesthetic perception in the "old pond" is framed by familiar (western, masculine) philosophical and aesthetic discourses, but witnesses to world dance may wonder how to judge, observe, and critique diverse dance traditions since "familiar" cultural standards do not always apply. Consequently, in this dance process I indicated the importance of developing awareness about the power of familiar philosophical and aesthetic discourses, as well as

cultural influences and historical memories, on the perception of the dancer/philosopher (whom Fraleigh likens to a frog). As a witness beside the pond of philosophical and aesthetic inquiry, the dancer/philosopher (who, like frogs, enjoys jumping) "seeks an insight that will move her understanding beyond mental habits and assumed authority" of those influences that hold "a limit, a habit, the familiar and safe knowns" (Fraleigh, 1999, 211-212). The emphasis for both Fraleigh is on phenomenological inquiry, upon the sensation of dancers' lived bodies as much as on reasoning; upon questioning discursive practices more than on determining answers.

Diverse experiences dancers had in the contact zone provide an active metaphor—a reference point from which to theorise an alternative to familiar western philosophy and aesthetics through dancers' phenomenological inquiry. Over the semester dancers embodied a diverse array of aesthetic traditions. When witnessing them (as a fellow frog beside the pond) I recognised a sensation of the *post-histoire* era. However, the emphasis I place upon the diversity of this contact zone should not be thought to detract from the important body of knowledge that developed as modern and post-modern "dance history"[10]. Instead of negating what we in dance have termed as modern dance "origins," dancers' diverse experiences of history raise meaningful questions about how to write a "genealogy" of dance history.

**II. Genealogy as Methodology: Simultaneity, Refiguring the Lived Body and Jumping Levels**

Michel Foucault (1969, 1971) is widely recognised as the father of genealogy, or an archaeological approach to history. In fact, Vattimo's (1988) *post-histoire* concept depends upon Foucault's insight, and many dance scholars have also taken Foucault's works as a foundation for the re-configuration of historical "origins" in dance[11]. However, the re-configuration of historical "origins" is not what Foucault intended. He explicitly positions himself against the idea of history as a linear development, and against evolutionism which he describes as "the search for 'origins'" (1971, 370). He argues that a genealogist looks beneath the metanarrative of history at what is not normally thought of as history, what is underneath the surface, and what "remained unrealised" (ibid., 369) in the events of history. The genealogist thus works *against the packaging of historical narratives* and disturbs the surface of what Fraleigh would call the "old pond." Like a genealogist, in the choreography process I worked against the packaging of historical narratives as dancers and I sought to communicate beyond an *idée fixe* of binaries in positivist discourses through non-dualism.

Given more space, I would separate out how I identified streams of change and negotiation *as they occurred* for dancers in the "contact zone," where identity was multiple and changing. The dancers encountered multiple personal and cultural histories, various dance traditions, meaning in African dance, and theoretical ideas[12]. Along the way, through various exercises, they communicated about the complexity of this experience through dance expression. Unexpectedly, toward the end of the process many of them also described a sense of their own "empowerment" that occurred through the dance process. This went beyond my explicit intent as an educator and choreographer, but what their sense of empowerment hints at is that as an educator I follow the path of the critical pedagogue—most notably Paolo Freire (1971) who originally laid the groundwork for a process he termed *conscientization,* a term to highlight the point where learners gain a greater consciousness about how power operates. Therefore, not only the theorists mentioned previously but also Freire (1971, 1994), and others who came after[13], assisted dancers to "disturb what was previously considered immobile" and "fragment what was thought unified."

Hence, with Foucault's genealogy as a premise and from my point of view as a critical pedagogue I worked toward possibilities of transforming prejudices and prejudgements in the contact zone. The theoretical possibilities afforded by this process were availed through the dancers who offered powerful contemplations. In bringing these streams into the old pond, the dancers contribute to philosophical discussions. Inasmuch as they gave, the dance also gave back to them. One student wrote of this relationship between dancing and theorising: "Our bodies are symbols in almost every way—sexualised, aged, abled, gendered, and raced. However, our bodies also create their own meanings….[onstage] the bodies move around each other weaving and unweaving. This [dance]

must be a language constantly being recreated....I'm going to take it into my body and let it spread like fire" (student journal).

**III. Choreography as Engaged History**

The women had diverse interests and training. Some had not worked very much with theoretical ideas but were capable of working in several distinct dance traditions (ballet, hip hop, African, modern, Afro-Caribbean), while others had strong intellectual skills with less dance experience. The process was a means to explore a concept of the "transnational" and the choreography process was held together in part through several exercises that helped students connect to this meaning in the dance.

For example, during the first section of the course I helped dancers create short solos within their respective dance traditions, and during this period a sensation of the contact zone was established. To start I used theatre exercises derived from critical pedagogue Augusto Boal (1985); dancers created "movement pictures" and turned these into longer phrases, slowly developing solo dances. Their process of creating and performing these solos with and for each other was a way to learn about one another's personal and family histories, as well as danced identities. The few who identified as "non-dancers" created movements that were sometimes (not always) more pedestrian, whereas some dancers' movement vocabulary was extremely advanced in one or more traditions. Consequently, the process provided a way to assess the unique strengths of each dancer. I later incorporated aspects of these personal movement stories into the dance, either with a recurring motif or a short phrase.

To assist theorising about the *post-histoire* experience, I also accentuated a personal/historical link to each dancer's cultural past through her lineage. To this end, each dancer introduced her grandmother to the larger group through movement pictures. Some of them had a strong sense of knowing their grandmothers and others did not, but we discussed this in terms of immigration and identity formation, even redefining for some dancers what "family" and "grandmother" meant. Afterward, I discussed the civil rights movement and its importance to American history, thinking that their grandmothers would have been adults at that time. I wondered aloud with the dancers what it meant that we as a group were situated in a country in which this particular social movement had such a significant historic impact. I also asked if their grandmothers would have had a response to that moment in history when Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. They then developed the "grandmother movement," adding an emotional interpretation of what they believed their grandmothers experienced at this critical juncture in 1968. These imagined emotional responses ranged from fear to rage, or even indifference. For example, if a dancer's grandmother had been living in Africa or Europe she was probably less moved by the events as she referenced another *post-histoire*. In contrast, one dancer knew her grandmother had protested the assassination on Memphis streets. Another dancer imagined her grandmother inside an apartment, curtains drawn out of fear. During the next class—without judging their grandmothers' experiences—they danced powerfully for one another, including an interpretation of their grandmothers' emotional states, to the "I Had a Dream" speech.

This extended exercise provided a basis from which to discuss how each person is situated differently—according to history, culture and geographic orientation—in relation to significant historical events. The exercise helped focus our discussion on various engaged contemporary experiences of *post-histoire*, including how diverse experiences of the events of "history" are passed down through family stories, cultural lore, and dance traditions. Cultural memory was even seen to affect conditioned emotional responses, which we discussed as a common source of misunderstanding between some distinct groups. In addition, the exercise showed dancers the importance I place on engaging emotional sincerity and purpose behind danced movement.

Their grandmothers' responses could be observed in the body language of these young women. For instance, the timid fear that one young woman believed her grandmother would have felt during the 1968 riots following King's death was observed in her tentativeness way of talking about race. Likewise, a young woman from Africa was mistrustful of rage that sometimes arises in discussions of race. In a classroom conversation she linked this to a perception of her grandmother's distance from the history of civil

rights movement. By acknowledging and recognising their diverse experiences of *post-histoire* without judgement, perhaps the dancers were able to move more quickly toward a sense of shared learning community. In any case, this led us away from stereotypes and binary discussions that often characterise discussions of race[14]. As one dancer said, "You brought everyone together. That hasn't been done." In fact, this was the first time a mixed race cast had ever worked together on the campus.

Later the "grandmother movement" figured again in the process when I adapted a portion of each dancer's story and choreographed this upon a soloist. The soloist represents a sponge that metaphorically soaks up the suffering of the world, including historical consciousness. Various movement added into this solo over the semester also symbolises other important events in peoples' lives. For example, one student presented a tender moment wherein she recognised her sexual desire and came out as a lesbian. Another revelation occurred when someone on campus committed hate crimes during our process, and a dancer was compelled to create a "movement picture" about her response. Two others found it essential to include movement about Don Imus's racist comments on a radio show about the Rutger University women's basketball team in April 2007. I also contributed movement about various events such as my grandmother, a young family member who died of AIDS in April 2007, and a protest I witnessed in Africa. These varied stories were some of the personal/communal histories that intersected and collided in the contact zone. As one student put it, the soloist "soak[s] up all of society's tragic elements of suffering" (student journal).

When dancers shared their grandmother's movement with the soloist it also created another opportunity to discuss the concept of cultural appropriation that was so relevant to our dance. What did it mean to offer up "movement pictures" to another dancer who reinterpreted the movement in her own body? Because this soloist was also highly trained some students also wondered about the very questions are dance was about: Who counts as a dancer? What dances matter? Since dancers often felt they "owned" the original movement some of them wanted to say exactly what it should look like when performed. This provided a way to discuss the appropriation of African movement. What did it mean to perform movement from another culture? The movement was not "ours" but neither, did it seem, was any movement. It was more complicated to appropriate movement inter-culturally since not only will each body always look different when performing, the context and culture in which movement is performed absolutely changes the meaning of movement.

We asked these questions together that were sometimes liberating, at times unsettling, but all of this was a necessary part of engaging with the "history" narrative. Through the process, I created avenues for them to contemplate the *post-histoire* experience through movement. For instance, the movement from Africa offered them a chance to contemplate "danced metaphors" in much the same way one might consider poetry from another country. For example, students took the image of a bird from Zimbabwe that they imitated in the movement and developed meaning in their reflections about the process: "Every one of us in the dance class could read about the poverty and violence in Zimbabwe, but it is a very different experience to say *I am going to take this suffering into my body*. It is this process of allowing the body to do the learning that is critical to our dance piece" (Student journal, my italics). Critical pedagogue bell hooks (1994), whose essay we read in class, makes a related point. She writes that embodiment is a critical part of undercutting power dynamics and cultural biases in universities. She says teachers must also "return ourselves to a state of embodiment in order to deconstruct the way that power has been traditionally orchestrated" (hooks, 1994, 139). This is as true for me as the teacher as it was for these students, and their journal reflections about the process provided a way to keep questioning the way power operated through their inter-embodied processes. As one student wrote, "the dance demonstrated a reality that we were in the midst of living out. Communities are not static entities, they grow, change and expand, they have conflict and struggle...." (student journal).

**IV. Conclusion: Dancing, Theorising in the Sensible Transcendental**

In these ways, through inter-embodiment and somatic processes, we drew a genealogy of

"history" with dance. To remind, in this contact zone process dancers and I explored alternate ways of interpreting "history" and the inherited disciplinary boundaries between western and non-western dance. This means of theorising through inter-embodiment can be used as an analogy, a reference point for a radically international approach to world dance.

What I am discussing here is the importance of revisiting the "old pond" of philosophy and aesthetics through inter-embodied processes, particularly that metaphysical branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of existence, truth, and knowledge. Within binary patterns that developed in western discursive practices, women and people of colour were excluded from the transcendental functions of culture through the displaced corporeality of the subject. In other words, women and people of colour were considered to be passive and were connected with the body. "The body" is considered to be without the intellectual capacity of its "thinking mind" counterpart. Identified as bodies, women and people of colour were perceived to be unable to theorise and to think. By extension of this premise in western discourse, many European arts are considered separately from non-European arts. This includes ballet, which is said to have a transcendent capacity. "World dance" traditions, as I pointed out, are more often discussed and described in terms of a cultural function of bodies.

To change this symbolic exclusion of the "other" as body requires a full re-symbolisation of the body in western culture. This involves undoing the racial and sexual division of labour and the exclusion of women and people of colour from the transcendental functions of culture. The argument I am extending does not naively attempt a solution to this problem. However, understanding this, and using this dance process as a metaphor, I argue that inter-embodied encounters in which a genuinely inter-subjective dialogue occurs—such that occurred in the contact zone—are necessary for achieving full subjectivity and self-other relationships, or full cultural recognition of "the body" as an active agent. This work will be done in numerous ways, one of which I am discussing here. I used a choreography process as a means to counter how dancers' inter-embodied experiences have been devalued as contributing to theory, and this way I could ask important philosophical questions: Which dances matter? Who counts as a dancer? How is dance defined?



## Endnotes

1 The term "lived body" is used to identify the particularities of individual embodied experiences (e.g., learning, dancing). This is different from a "material body" that references the material-historical relations inside which one's embodied experiences are theorised and articulated. The material body, discussed as "the body" in this essay, refers to signs and symbols through which bodies are interpreted, and through which the status of particular bodies are determined in discursive practices.

2 See, for example, Dixon-Gottschild, Brenda (1996). *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance*. Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press.Dixon Gottschild, 1996; (2004). *Modern Dance, Negro Dance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (Softcover published 2006).

3 See, for example, Jackson, Naomi (2000). "Dance and Intertextuality: Theoretical Reflections" pp. 218-231 in Lisa Doolittle and Anne Flynn, eds. *dancing bodies, living histories.* Alberta: Banff Press.

4 The term "contact zone" was used by Mary Louise Pratt (1999) in reference to a class that she taught at Stanford. The class sought to understand the multiple identities of students in the room, presenting lessons that interpreted historical or cultural events from students' differing locations.

5 I borrow the phrase, "radically international" from Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003). *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practising Solidarity.* Durham and London: Duke University Press. Mohanty upholds the vision of international feminism, wherein discursive practices that were inherited are acknowledged in terms of their impact while at the same time distinct experiences, discourses and histories of women are considered. A *radically international* feminism suggests borders drawn between cultural knowledges, particularly those "drawn to mark legitimate and illegitimate knowledges, are often porous" (Mohanty, 2003, 189). If one reconsiders the way ideological, economic and historical relations created the need to "establish relations of rule that consolidate and naturalize the dominant values of a globalised capitalist consumer culture" (ibid., 189), then a view of borders as flexible and permeable not only enables a clearer sense of various women's distinct cultural identities, histories and "knowledges," but also enables an intercultural communication and flow of culture, history, ideas, or information that is respectfully located outside the idea of which cultures produce canonical or non-canonical discourses.

6 The body is central to an African aesthetic as discussed by Robert Farris Thompson (1974). For a discussion of how bodies are honoured in African dance traditions as presenting meaning and history see Welsh, Kariamu (2001).

"Commonalities in African Dance: An Aesthetic Foundation," pp. 144-151 *Moving history/dancing cultures: A dance history reader*. Dils, Ann and Cooper Albright, Ann, Eds. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

[7] For an excellent example of a self-reflexive approach wherein an anthropologist looks at his own implication in the dances he studies see Paul Stoller's (1995). *Embodying Colonial Memories: Spirit Possession, Power and the Hauka in West Africa*. New York and London: Routledge.

[8] A hierarchical view of culture existed in dance that suggested ballet and modern dance were "deemed by society to possess high aesthetic value were granted primary as sources for academic investigation" (Buckland, 2006, 5). Even though these terms have long been critiqued by scholars like Kealiinohomoku (2001 [1969]), these disciplinary frameworks developed momentum over the years.

[9] By conceiving a two way "conversation" between dance praxis (choreography, education) and dance discourse (history, aesthetics), I can be seen as furthering what Fraleigh (1999) termed a "concrete aesthetics" wherein she questions, through non-dualism, several limitations imposed on patterns of philosophical and aesthetic inquiry in the West.

[10] For many dancers, learning the movement stories of early modern dancers often creates a sense of intimate connection and an affinity with the individual and dance community. Ann Dils (1993) discussed this phenomenon in her PhD dissertation as the way dancers identify with a "collective history." Dempster (1998) also discusses how this sense of embodying history and tradition contributes to a way of thinking about dance history in terms of its "origins" in the traditions of 1930s dance "pioneers."

[11] For example, see Dempster, 1998 or Manning, 2004.

[12] The main texts used for the course were Ann Cooper Albright's (1997) *Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance.* CT: Wesleyan; hooks, bell (1994). *Teaching to Transgress*. NY: Routledge.

[13] For example, Augusto Boal (1985), Madeleine Grumet (1988) and bell hooks (1994).

[14] Critical pedagogues have often searched for ways to discuss race that do not end up in familiar binaries. See, for example, Britzman et. al., (1993). "Slips that show and tell: Fashioning multiculture," pp. 188-200 in *Race, Identity, and Representation in Education*. Cameron McCarthy and Warren Crichlow, eds. New York: Routledge.

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# Space of Listening, Site of Memory:

# Deborah Hay and the Hellerau Festspielhaus

*Selma Landen Odom*

*If I Sing to You*, choreographed and directed by Deborah Hay, challenges six experienced dancer-choreographers to probe the differences between sound and silence, movement and stillness. Here I tell the story of the April 2008 premiere of this full-length work commissioned by the Forsythe Company for the Hellerau Festspielhaus in Dresden, Germany. Since then it has been featured in Helsinki, Utrecht, Berlin, Paris, Melbourne, Frankfurt, Munich and Stockholm. In November *If I Sing to You* will have its American premiere in Performa '09, the third biennial of new visual art performance in New York.

The Festspielhaus, restored in 2006 after decades of use by the German police and Soviet army, was originally built in 1911 to support experiments in music education based on body movement. Today called the European Centre for the Arts, this austere building hosts avant-garde performances, installations, conferences and courses in the "garden-city" of Hellerau, located in north Dresden. Thanks to Hay's willingness to give access, I had the privilege of being there during the week leading up to the first performances of *If I Sing to You*. It was like a dream come true for me, a long-standing admirer of her work and historian of the Hellerau artists of a century ago.

Hay danced with Merce Cunningham, took inspiration from composer John Cage and was a founding member of the Judson Dance Theater during the early 1960s. Now revered as an independent choreographer and teacher, she leads workshops and performances worldwide. She has developed a steady stream of solo and group works through periods of intensive contact with trained and untrained people from diverse backgrounds. The author of three books, Hay articulates her process by rigorous writing, and she also partners with trusted associates to achieve funding and audiences for her dances. One such helper is Michele Steinwald, Canadian dancer-turned-administrator now at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and the original project manager for *If I Sing to You*.

A few years ago, Hay made *Single Duet* for herself and Mikhail Baryshnikov, who provided the two-week residency at White Oak Plantation where the group met in February 2008 to collaborate on *If I Sing to You*. She invited dancers she had worked with before from New York (Michelle Boulé, Jeanine Durning and Juliette Mapp), Seattle (Amelia Reeber), Finland (Vera Nevanlinna) and France (Catherine Legrand). They continued for two weeks at Florida State University before arriving in Germany to complete the work. All this came about after William Forsythe saw Hay's quartet *The Match* in Montpellier in 2005, an experience which made him say, "You brought me to a level of attention that I love. And you kept me there." Since 2006 the Hellerau Festspielhaus has served as his company's second home (the other is still Frankfurt), and, in keeping with his vision of encouraging new creation, he brought Hay to Dresden.

Toronto Dance Theatre's Christopher House is another choreographer-artistic director drawn to Hay's practice. He currently performs his adaptation of *News*, learned in her 2006 Solo Performance Commissioning Project, an annual retreat she runs in Findhorn, Scotland for professional participants. This connection gave a Canadian audience the chance to see Hay in one of her now-rare solo performances on October 27, 2007, following a week-long workshop with Toronto Dance Theatre.

I was riveted by the premiere of *Go*, which she explained in the program note was to "become the main body of material" for *If I Sing to You*. Hay, agile and small with thick, curly hair, looked comfortable in dark pants and a little jacket. The street shoes she wore made the timing and nuances of her steps audible as she attuned herself to the Winchester Theatre space. Her purposeful manner

allowed viewers to have a look at the intimacy of her performance, which is more about being than showing. Subtle shifts of weight and focus, occasional humming, the varying paths she took around, across and down onto the floor—all of these revealed someone ageless, alert and amused. Like a human sponge, Hay seemed able to absorb everything around her and give it visible form in an evolving sequence of detailed activity. The effect was calm yet eventful.

I was curious about how this solo would be transformed into a group work in the huge Festspielhaus, which I longed to see in its newly-restored state. I'd first seen it as center of a soon-to-be-abandoned Soviet Army base in 1991. The inside was a decrepit former gymnasium with layers of peeling paint when I returned for the filming of *The Liberation of the Body* (2000), a documentary about the music education practices of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze. I took Hay's solo *Go* as a signal. With a frequent flyer ticket, a tiny pension hotel room nearby and Hay's welcome, I watched her new work unfold in the site whose histories I've pursued through much of my research and writing.

Light from the high windows surrounding the hall poured into the deep rectangular space during the first run-through I saw. With white walls, wooden floor and no proscenium, only the raked seating at one end separates audience from performers. The architect Heinrich Tessenow planned this studio-theatre in consultation with stage designer Adolphe Appia, Dalcroze's close colleague, who visualized geometric "rhythmic spaces" with columns, levels and stairs as the ideal context for the moving human body. This is where Mary Wigman, Marie Rambert, Suzanne Perrottet and others launched their careers.

It was fascinating to watch Hay's dancers and the technicians adjust to the proportions and acoustics of the Festspielhaus. During performances, diffused white lighting with no visible cues evoked the natural light that made such a stunning first impression. "It's a lot of space!" Hay commented one day. Wisely, she took a "less is more" approach, sensitively respecting the scale and simplicity of the Festspielhaus.

*If I Sing to You* ran about an hour and twenty minutes without a break. After I had seen it several times, Hay gave me a copy of the eleven-page score text, which greatly enhanced my subsequent viewing. The choreography is arranged as a series of moments or moods, without narrative. Most sections last a few minutes, more or less the length of a song, and the full work comes across as a cycle of songs or poems written in a language of unfamiliar dance. It opens with the six dancers, all women, standing with their backs to the audience, engaged in conversation. Each decides, without consulting the others, to dress as a man or woman for a given performance.

The dancers' overlapping words are unrecognizable, mysterious. The phrasing corresponds to shifts of stance and inclinations of the head, interrupted a few times by gestures or steps that are pulled back, uncompleted. Gradually all face toward the front. In turn, one bursts into laughter, another continues chatting while lying down and a third sings in a crystalline voice, "If I sing to you, I will sing to you all the things that I see. Do you see? …" The song emerges magically, as if from life's smallest impulses, from among the multitude of thoughts ventured or withheld in human interaction. The initial choreography sets up the notion of listening as a baseline for what follows.

Several sections are larger, louder and faster, while others return to a quiet middle ground and yet others present extremes of stillness and silence. After the first song, for example, a new energy called a "phantom dance" in the score appears and sends people to the far reaches of the performing space, in a flurry of expansive action. They regroup in front, internalize this energy and modulate into the next section, in which they step pensively on their own paths, pausing and resuming at will, traveling away from and back toward the audience.

Here and in several other sections, assorted footwear amplifies the subtle variations in the dancers' stepping sounds as they make their respective journeys. They work in clusters but do not share the same pulse, except for one uncanny moment when everyone's ecstatically fast, random jigging is interrupted by two slower steps done in perfect unison.

If the complexity of feet contacting the floor is one source of embodied musicality, then the dancers' voices are another. *If I Sing to You*, in addition to conversations and songs, includes roaring and belching; cries, mumbles and whispers; a polyphonic chorale sung in ethereal voices; a piercing ritualistic chant danced by a

flailing woman; and a flash of fierceness as one soloist is transformed into a barking, growling dog. This is only a partial list. Recordings of the dancers' stepping and singing are played a few times at nearly imperceptible levels, like echoes in the distance. In the Festspielhaus every gradation of sound is clear.

Hay told me *If I Sing to You* grew from songs she invents for herself, which she finally decided to record so she wouldn't so easily forget them. "When I sing, I dance. When I dance, I sing," she added. I took this to mean that for her the body is the origin of both. She asked the dancers to sing for several months before they met as a group, making their own songs beginning with the words "If I sing to you." Finding a personal song through repeated practice gave them common ground for building this work. All of its sounds and silences come from the performers' voices and variegated footsteps.

Listening to the music and poetry of the body is a key to *If I Sing to You.* Of course the dancers have exceptional physical skills, but as Hay said to them at one point the work is not "about movement." She reminded them of the five questions they ask of the whole body—about their relationship to self, others, space, time and audience. Their priority, she mentioned later in an interview, is to "practice performance, rather than rehearse a dance."

Hay's method is to direct through words, without physical demonstration. Performers respond individually and collectively until they establish the work's sections and sequence, and sometimes they have to decide on the spot exactly who will perform certain tasks. This way of structuring, along with the dancers' gender variation through costume and makeup, enlivens each repeat. After seeing *If I Sing to You* ten times, I came away thinking the closest equivalent I've experienced is hearing jazz musicians play, where what matters is not the song but what they can do with it in the course of performance.

Hay remembered that one of her own songs included the words "If I sing to you, my song would be so still." Stillness shapes some of the most beautiful parts of the dance, such as the long pose in which the motionless dancers seem full of energy, larger than life, or the "chess game" in which they formally traverse the space to give and take hands one by one until all connect in a particular order. This process depends on the performers' ability to make what Hay called "spontaneous choices." Later on, one dancer riffs languorously on the words "… to you … Do you?" while a couple dances timelessly and others spread out like figures in a landscape. Here as before Hay's choreography frames stillness so that action as delicate as a dancer smiling as she strokes her hair becomes radiant. The unexpected quickness of humor, which punctuates the work as a whole, makes the sense of stillness poignant and full of life.

The evening of the premiere, I attended the opening of an exhibition on the Festspielhaus and Hellerau's history, from its utopian beginnings to its interdisciplinary art and digital media work of today. Photographs documented Dalcroze's investigation of the body in music there in the early years, when hundreds of international students came to learn from this innovative teacher. He cultivated skills for performing and inventing rather than perfecting technique or repertoire, as Hay would do later, differently. Resonances of past and present floated through my mind as I walked into the hall with Christine Straumer, who heads Dalcroze-based work at the Dresden Hochschule für Musik, to see *If I Sing to You*.

My time in Hellerau prompted reflection on what it means to map a cultural space. Meeting local architects who lead tours of Hellerau's buildings and charming curving streets was a high point. Germany's first planned community is once again a destination, a living museum of what was modern and visionary around 1900. Clemens Galonska, who enthusiastically introduces visitors to the Festspielhaus, and photographer Frank Elster recently joined forces to publish an informative bilingual souvenir book about it, *Gartenstadt/Garden City of Hellerau.*

This month, June 2009, Hellerau celebrated the 100th anniversary of its founding with a ten-day art festival. The ground-breaking for the Festspielhaus itself occurred in 1911, so I anticipate further commemorations in the future. Hellerau is a dynamic site whose histories and geographies are being actively re-imagined.

Deborah Hay epitomizes contemporary artist as nomad, it seems to me. She invested in the Festspielhaus to remarkable result, yet later I

enjoyed seeing *If I Sing to You* adapted to a much smaller venue in Munich.

This past winter she partnered with the lovely 1891 former church that houses Toronto Dance Theatre to make *Up Until Now*, the first full-length work she has made for another company. Hay crisscrosses the globe to choreograph and teach, fine tuning her work to exactly where she is. She knows well how to connect with physical spaces and intuit the potential of their human vibrations.

**Acknowledgements**

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# From Fairground Site to Website: the dancing body and visual technology in early film and YouTube

*Clare Parfitt*

The focus of this paper is the dance content on the popular video-sharing website YouTube, which allows users to upload their own or existing film clips, and broadcast them via the internet. The framework that will be used to analyse this material is taken from research in early film by the film scholar Tom Gunning, who has formulated the notion of the 'cinema of attractions'.[1] This is a concept that I have previously applied in my research on films incorporating the cancan, but I have only recently begun to apply it to YouTube, and this aspect of the research is therefore at a formative stage. In this presentation I intend to position YouTube in relation to the history of the cinema of attractions. In particular, I want to demonstrate how our understanding of dance on YouTube can be enlightened by a comparison with dance in the earliest form of the cinema of attractions: early film from the turn of the twentieth century. Ultimately, I want to argue that YouTube both emerges out of and transforms the historical relationship between the dancing body and moving image technologies.

Gunning's notion of the cinema of attractions is one of the most influential theories of early cinema. He argues that the short-format, non-narrative cinema that dominated the medium from 1895 until about 1907, was not merely a primitive form of narrative cinema that had not yet developed editing techniques, and not yet erected a 'fourth wall' to prevent the actors acknowledging the spectators. Rather, early cinema fostered its own, very different aesthetic, based on the principle of exhibitionism. Instead of developing a story, into which the spectator is drawn as a voyeur, Gunning argues that, "the cinema of attractions directly solicits spectator attention, inciting visual curiosity, and supplying pleasure through an exciting spectacle".[2] Like the fairground attractions alongside which early films were often exhibited by itinerant showmen, the cinema of attractions attempted to provoke physical reactions of shock, laughter and desire.

This aesthetic can clearly be seen in many early dance films, which replicate the heterosexual model of attraction between a female performer and male spectator, frequently used in live nineteenth-century dance performance. The dancers usually performed for the camera as if it were an audience member, looking out at the viewer with a presentational and sometimes seductive gaze, although some also performed with a more inward focus, pre-empting the voyeuristic, fourth-wall cinema that would soon become the norm.

Gunning argues that by the turn of the twentieth century, the cinema of attractions found itself in competition with narrative techniques, such as editing, character and narrative closure. Narrative cinema created a closed world to which the spectator was given access, as if through a keyhole. A new mode of spectatorship was fostered, dominated by psychological absorption, and only occasionally punctuated by direct address to the audience, such as in musical numbers and comedy moments. According to Gunning, by 1907 the cinema of attractions had been driven underground by narrative cinema, reappearing only in contained form in avant-garde filmmaking and in the song-and-dance routines of the film musical.

Following Gunning's theory, several film theorists have argued that the cinema of attractions made a return to feature filmmaking in the 1960s.[3] Linda Williams argues that Alfred Hitchcock's film *Psycho* (1960) led cinema back towards the aesthetic of the attraction by aiming to induce a physical reaction of shock and horror in its audience.[4] Martin Jay notes that many of the blockbuster films of the late twentieth century, such as *Jaws, Star Wars, Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and *Titanic*, bear out this argument[5]. In most of these films, dance was not a primary attraction, but in the 1980s dance made a return to the cinema of attractions in teen musicals, and in the emergence of the music video. As Teresa Rizzo has also argued, YouTube can be considered

the latest manifestation of the cinema of attractions, and one that develops this aesthetic in new ways.[6]

Like early cinema, YouTube videos are exhibitionistic. They attempt to arrest the viewer's attention through a range of techniques including direct address to the audience, exoticism, comedy and sexual allure. They also invite the viewer to physically respond in some way, whether through antonishment, horror or laughter, by forwarding an email, leaving a comment, or posting a video response, something I will return to later. This exhibitionistic quality can be seen in a popular YouTube video called 'Hey Clip' created by two Israeli teenagers called Tasha and Dishka, which has had 26 million views.[7]

There are a number of similarities between YouTube and early film that help to explain why they share an aesthetic of attraction. Both early film and YouTube emerged out of breakthroughs in moving image technologies, in the case of early film, the ability to record movement on celluloid, and in the case of YouTube, the ability to broadcast it via the internet. These breakthoughs allowed a sudden exploration of the possibilities of recording, sharing, and viewing films, but within the constraints of a short format and low budget imposed by the formative nature of the technology. Early film and YouTube pre-date and post-date the establishment of cinema as the dominant viewing context for film in the twentieth century, and therefore both have been adapted for a range of viewing locations outside the cinema. Early film could be seen in fairgrounds, department stores, community halls, churches, opera houses and dime museums, while YouTube has gained mobility from the transfer of film out of the cinema and onto the computer screen and the mobile phone, allowing viewing to take place virtually anywhere.[8] Both early film and YouTube also exhibit a sense of the expanded audience stretching across space and time that is opened up by their technologies. For example, Felicia McCarren says of Loie Fuller's early film work that she "dances for an eye that the camera only points toward but that film will eventually make possible: the global market for technobodies, the publics created across the century" (2003, p. 63). Similarly, anthropologist Michael Wesch says of YouTube that, "

> you can say that this is all hype, that these are just people dancing and having fun, but think about what they're dancing in front of. They're dancing in front of about a billion boxes in places all over the world that are networked together and allowing us to connect in ways we're never connected before.[9]

According to Wesch, dance is one of the most commonly used tags on YouTube, tags being the words attached to a video that help to identify what type of video it is. To get a sense of the range and types of dance material that are posted on YouTube, on 7th April this year I watched the 120 most viewed clips that are returned from a search for the word 'dance' on the YouTube website, and grouped these into some categories that I devised to get a sense of the spread of this content. By far the largest percentage of videos returned from a search for 'dance' on YouTube are music videos, which comprised nearly half of the sample. The next largest percentage, at 23%, were what I have called original, user-generated performances. These include films created specifically for YouTube, as well as films created for a different purpose, such as recordings of live performances or competitions, later posted on YouTube. Clips from feature films and television each represented 6%. However, what I want to focus on in the remainder of the presentation is the 17% of YouTube videos that rework existing YouTube or professional video material. In these videos users either re-embody a previous piece of screen choreography, or choreograph or improvise new dance material to accompany a popular song, which they usually lip-synch. The existing videos that they choose for this treatment are usually previous or current forms of the cinema of attractions, such as film musical numbers, music videos and other YouTube videos. These reworkings are premised on the fact that video, DVD, digital video recorders and now YouTube have increasingly facilitated playback on demand – the ability to replay a film, television programme, music video, or homemade video at any time, and therefore become intimately familiar with it. This has been accompanied by the increasing availability of handheld video and digital video cameras, and video-editing software. The result has been a new way of responding to movement and sound on screen – not talking about it, or writing about it, but filming your own physical response.

A good example is 'Hey Clip' mentioned earlier, which was Tasha and Dishka's response to 'Hey' by the Pixies, lip-synching the lyrics while creating their own movement and editing. The practice of reworking a familiar text is nothing new, but YouTube allows the process to be taken a step further. When 'Hey Clip' was posted on YouTube, it became very popular among what Wesch calls the YouTube community, regular users of YouTube who follow each others' video blogs and 'vlog' themselves. Users, from all over the world posted their own reworkings of 'Hey Clip', translated through the gender, sexual, ethnic, cultural and national inflections of their own bodies.[10] In this way, internet users have generated a new way of interacting with image and sound media. The cinema of attractions in early film had invited the spectator to respond directly and physically to film, though shock, astonishment, laughter and sexual attraction. But YouTube users turn the camera on themselves, and throw the images they see back out to the world, reworked through their own bodies, and interlaced with complex layers of comedy, irony, parody, self representation, and homage.

Sometimes these reworkings have a political motivation, such as videos in which dance is used to comment on US politics or the war on terror. And sometimes they act as a space for cross-cultural translation, commentary, dialogue, and conflict. For example, Michael Jackson's Thriller video has been reworked on YouTube by Indian actors, inmates in a Philippino prison, passengers on a London tube train, and Australian librarians, among others.
The Indian thriller becomes a Bollywood routine, while the mass synchrony of the inmates displays bodies disciplined by a strict prison regime. The written comments that users make on videos such as these are often far less subtle than the physical performances, displaying sexist, racist and homophobic attitudes. This perhaps indicates the capacity of these screen dances to embody creative tensions that become polarised and antagonistic in verbal discourse.

In some cases, this practice of re-embodying existing dance videos gathers momentum, creating an international dialogue between YouTube users through the medium of video dance. A good example is the 'Crank Dat' dance.[11] This was choreographed and recorded as a homemade music video to accompany a rap track composed by 17-year old DeAndre Way, better known as Soulja Boy. Users all over the world re-embodied the dance, including, a children's ballet class, the same Philippino prison inmates, and MIT professors The rapid transmission of the dance around the world from body-to-body via email and hyperlinks was described in the press as 'viral' and a 'global dance craze', repeating previous nineteenth- and early twentieth-century moral panics over the uncontrollable, apparently pathological spread of dance across social boundaries. The dance became so popular that it led to Soulja Boy being signed by a record label. However, the majority of YouTube reworkings seem to have no commercial aspirations. Wesch states that a large percentage of YouTube content is actually meant for less than a hundred viewers.[12] Rather, these YouTube reworkings appear to make manifest the pleasure of subverting the one-way relationship between image and spectator by embodying the image, translating it according to your own identity and style, and redistributing it to the world.

This pleasure can be theorised using the recent thought of the film theorist Laura Mulvey. Mulvey's earlier, more famous work on the male gaze argued that the linear flow of narrative cinema could be disrupted by the musical number, often gendered as a female attraction.[13] However, in her latest book *Death 24x a Second*, Mulvey proposes that digital film, particularly DVD, allows new ways of disrupting linear narrative, and questioning the authority of the camera's all-seeing eye.[14] She argues that digital film, divided into chapters, and layered with bonus commentaries and outtakes, creates the possibility of delaying the authority of the narrative, replaying it, dissecting it, and reconstructing it. In Mulvey's words, "the delay in the film's flow acts as a 'conduit' that then flows into multiple possible channels from personal memory to textual analysis to historical research, opening up the past for a specifically cinematic excavation".[15] The spectator is no longer the physically passive recipient of the narrative, but becomes an active reconstructor of alternative narratives, tangents and histories, directed by their own memories, politics and interests. In YouTube, this demolition and reconstruction of familiar narratives becomes an aesthetic ideal. The feature length narrative is carved up into sections of no more than 10 minutes. The clip, the musical number and the music video are privileged. And the highest accolade is for a video to be repeatedly viewed,

deconstructed, and remade on new bodies, with new politics, from a different global position. The all-seeing cinematic eye opens up into a multi-way cinema in which bodies and their meanings are constantly reworked, transposed and renegotiated between users who are simultaneously spectators and actors. Importantly for us as dance scholars, this negotiation happens to a large extent through bodily performance, not just though words. Their performances are not always polished. But their provisional quality indicates their status as contributions to a global conversation, rather than definitive statements. Like the early cinema of attractions, the existence of YouTube as a medium for this conversation may be a temporary phenomenon In March, music videos were banned on the British version of YouTube due to a breakdown of negotiations between Google and the Performing Rights Society for Music, and there are rumours of YouTube allowing videos longer than 10 minutes to be uploaded onto the site. However, if YouTube is to internet dance what the early cinema of attractions was to cinema, then this could be just the first manifestation of a newly configured relationship between dance, spectatorship and screen media.



## Notes

1 Gunning, Tom (1990) 'The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, the Spectator and the Avant-Garde', in Elsaesser, Thomas, ed. *Early Cinema: Space, Subjectivity and Narrative*, London: British Film Institute, 56-62.

2 Gunning, 'The Cinema of Attractions', 58.

3 For example, Hansen, Miriam Bratu (1995) 'Early Cinema, Late Cinema: Transformations of the Public Sphere', in Williams, Linda, ed. *Viewing Positions: Ways of Seeing Film*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 134-152; and Jay, Martin (2000) 'Diving into the Wreck: Aesthetic Spectatorship at the Fin-de-Siecle', *Critical Horizons*, Vol. 1, No. 1, February, 93-111.

4 Williams, Linda (1998) 'Discipline and Distraction: Psycho, Visual Culture, and Postmodern Cinema', in Rowe, John Carlos, ed. *"Culture" and the Problem of the Disciplines*, New York: Columbia University Press, 87-120.

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7 Mizel, Lital and Frimmerman, Adi (2005) Hey Clip [online] Available from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-_CSo1gOd48&feature=PlayList&p=E8A34A50B5409CEA&index=0&playnext=1 Accessed: 07/04/09.

8 Anon. (2008) Early Cinema: Exhibition and Early Viewing Contexts [online] Available from: http://www.filmreference.com/encyclopedia/Criticism-Ideology/Early-Cinema-EXHIBITION-AND-EARLY-VIEWING-CONTEXTS.html Accessed: 07/04/09.

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10 For example, Smith, Kevin (2006) Hey [online] Available from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88LoOs-sIEs Accessed 07/04/09.

11 Way, DeAndre (2007) Crank Dat [online] Available from: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pGJCkCDK5A Accessed: 07/04/09.

12 Wesch, An Anthropological Introduction to YouTube.

13 Mulvey, Laura (1989) 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', in Mulvey, Laura, ed. *Visual and Other Pleasures*, Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press, 14-26.

14 Mulvey, Laura (2006) *Death 24 x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*, London: Reaktion Books.

15 Mulvey, *Death 24 x a Second*, 26.

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# Sensing weight - Topographies of proprioceptive-kinesthetic sensations

*Susanne Ravn*

This paper examines the way in which dancers trained in different techniques sense the weight of their bodies in different ways. It focuses on how the dancers' inner sensation of their bodies' physicality, specifically of the weighted physical mass, can be characterised as different proprioceptive-kinesthetic topographies. Beginning with some phenomenological clarifications the paper will continue by presenting different dancers' description of how they relate to and sense the weight of their bodies when dancing. The descriptions will thereafter be taken into a phenomenological related discussion focusing on how proprioceptive-kinesthetic sensations are socially mediated in the discursive practices of the different dance environments.

**Phenomenological clarifications**

I use the notion *the physicality of the body* to refer to a facticity of the subject's being in a phenomenological sense. Put in other words, the notion addresses that the physicality of the body anchors and conditions the subject's experience in a very fundamental sense. The physical mass forms an essential aspect of the physicality under normal conditions influenced by gravity- and it is in that sense weighted.

The subject's experience of the weighted physical mass includes at least two dimensions. On one hand, the weighted physical mass is handled pre-reflectively in any kind of movement. It is thereby not present to the subject's perceptual awareness when any movement is dynamically balanced and coordinated in relation to gravity.[1] The handling of the body's physical mass is, using Drew Leder's term, *ab-sent* to subjects' experience[2] – and using Shaun Gallagher's terminology it is *transparent* to the subjects' experience.[3]

On the other hand, descriptions of lived experiences of, for example, dancers often emphasise how the dancer relates to and senses the physical mass of the body reflectively. Autobiographical,[4] anthropological[5] and sociological[6] writings in dance research have revealed how the handling and sensation of the physicality of the body is related to differently in dance genres and styles. The weighted physical mass is, in these descriptions, actively present and forms part of the dancer's experience and sensations of his or her body. It is this latter dimension of experience I will elaborate on in the paper when describing the proprioceptive-kinesthetic topographies of the dancer's experiences.

I use the notion *proprioceptive-kinesthetic sensations* throughout the paper. Proprioception is in ordinary descriptions referred to as presenting a sensation of bodily position and posture[7] whilst kinesthesia is most often referred to as defining an inner sense of movement.[8] However, as proprioception somehow also includes a felt sense of muscular tension[9] it is often difficult to distinguish between proprioception and kinesthesia. Rather than going into a discussion and clarification of proprioception versus kinesthesia proprioceptive-kinesthetic sensations is here used to denote *an inner sense of the body's position and movement.*

**Generation of empirical data**

The dancers' descriptions of their movement technique and their sensing of movement form a part of my PhD thesis.[10] The 13 professional and very experienced dancers involved in the project work with relatively different kinds of dance techniques and styles: 4 of the dancers work with classical ballet (The Royal Danish Ballet); 7 of the dancers work in relation to various styles of contemporary dance; and 2 of the dancers related their work to techniques based in Butoh and Body Mind Centering (BMC). The dancers are based in different cities in Europe.

The empirical data has been generated through observation, active participation and semi-structured interviews conducted over a period of 17 months. Active participation means here that I participated in workshops and training with the different dancers - except when following the dancers from The Royal Danish Ballet. As a practitioner my own dance background is extensive and covers a number of dance styles. The generation of data and the subsequent processing and analysis was based on an interveawing of ethnographical methods and phenomenology.[11]

**Four ballet dancers: weight as balanced and aligned**

For the four ballet dancers the control of the balance of the body in relation to a vertical is central to their control of their weighted mass. In their descriptions the ballet dancers centre their technical reference points of movement round a certain placement of the torso and limbs in relation to the centre of the body and the vertical. They refer to the centre of the body as being located a little below the navel and they deal with '*alignment'*[12] as an ideal vertical balancing of the limbs. The four ballet dancers indicate that the centre connecting to different reference lines within their bodies constitutes what they refer to as '*placement'*. During daily classes they continuously scrutinize and check their sensing of their placement and alignment through a combination of seeing and proprioceptive-kinesthetic sensation. That is, they work on combining what they see in the mirror with an inner sensation.[13] However, even though they scrutinize and constantly check their sensing of their bodies using an objectifying approach, neither placement nor correct positions are themselves the goal of control. They claim that placement is to be felt as '*natural'* or rather naturally 'there', when moving. In different ways they emphasise how a dynamic approach to movement is important when dancing. As one of the dancers describes:

> *'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. In a way it was about the musicality of movement.'*

When dancing the sense of balancing the physical mass of their bodies is not connected to checking inner reference lines of alignment. The scrutinization of inner experience as used in training especially at the barre is no longer in focus. Rather their sense of mastering their body as weighted mass when dancing is connected to what they describe as a '*second nature*' and which they characterise as a special habit and a specific consciousness of their body. Implicitly they relate this 'second nature' to a specific sense of feeling right. In their descriptions the inner sense of placement and alignment appears as a sort of reference background and the sense of feeling right, as a specialised overall feeling of the body, is necessary for dancing the musicality of movement.

**Seven dancers working with contemporary dance: partnering gravity**

The experience of the body limbs being weighted in movement formed part of the warm up on most days in the different kinds of training and workshops I participated in with these seven contemporary dancers. Different focus and approaches could be identified according to the different combinations of technique that formed each dancer's history.[14] For most of these seven dancers – movements are explicitly described as directed by gravity working on the body. For example, one of the dancers explains:

> *'In a more practical sense I try and take my starting point in really basic rules in the body associated with weight and gravity. When, for example, I stand, a lot of it is about putting the body in a position in which the muscles do not need to work and that instead you kind of stand and are able to*

> *balance more on the skeletal structure – in other words to use the body's construction more than the body's strength. I try to find something where it's all about, like, positioning things. Often it's a matter of letting go joints, so that you aren't standing and lifting combined with trying to get the weight down in the feet.'*

This same dancer also explains how he finds that movement as physical movements, for example, vertical bouncing, also *'speak back'* to him. In that sense, he claims that movement feels like something.

The sense of weight is for some of these dancers related to a sense of giving up control of movement to let the body be connected to gravity. This 'giving up of control' is then specifically addressed as a '*moment of suspense'*. One dancer describes how these moments of suspense are magical to him and allow for another sensation of his body that is closely linked to a '*sense of feeling present'*.

In different ways, the seven contemporary dancers attend to their bodies and to the weighted physical mass, focusing, initially, on an internal sense of their bodies. In movement, gravity is not to be 'defeated' by activating controlled elongation and creating lines out into space from the centre of the body (as is the case for the four ballet dancers). It is rather considered a partner which are to be used to led and guide any movement. Nevertheless – the dancers' descriptions of their sensations can, like the ballet dancers' descriptions, be recognised as including both a scrutinization of proprioceptive-kinesthetic sensation and an overall feeling of their body.

**Two dancers working with Butoh-related techniques and BMC: weight as different kinds of quality**

For the two dancers working with Butoh related techniques and BMC the weight of the body is firstly considered one practical aspect to control to be able to manoeuvre the materiality of the body. The dancers refer to this aspect as '*grounding*' and as a way of keeping the balance of the body in a centred connection to the ground. They do not pay grounding any particular attention during training. Grounding is taken for granted, related directly to a sense of the vertical and considered central to their techniques. One of the dancers emphasises that to her it is important that the movement can be stopped so that she does not automatically 'stay' in the movement, but rather grounds the flow of movement in her sense of the vertical. She describes:

> *'The reason behind why you do things is based in grounding. If you lose your grounding, you do just for the sake of doing – and you lose the sense of where I am actually heading, because you have actually forgotten why you are heading anywhere. When I did release technique – then a lot of it was about there being an unbroken flow. That it came from a place and it went to a place without being broken. I do an awful lot of work with the break – with the vertical in reality intervening and blocking everything. The vertical is the vision – is the anchor. It is not movement for movement's sake. I use the metaphor of the vertical for the concept of thought behind the vision: the anchor.'*

Weight becomes of special interest to this dancer in movement when she turns her awareness to weight as forming part of the organic presence of the body – a fluent aspect of the body. Weight is, for this dancer, related to as an organic condition of a certain material – an organic presence. As part of her Butoh related technique she has trained to transform her organic presence so she performs the energy of external material. Movement is based on the sense of materiality and, by extension, two different kinds of materiality like, for instance, a stone or the mist, emerge as different qualities in movement. She describes:

> *'You can choose to say, that kind of mist is what I would like to work with, and then you can try to fill your body with the image of that mist. In other words, I try to become that mist, try to transform my weight so that it corresponds to the weight of mist, my sense of transparency, my sense of moistness, my sense of moving in spirals - and perhaps the white colour, and then that's the quality the body moves with and in. The body tries to become it.* […] *Weight is of the essence. What is the weight of mist? What is the weight of the stone? It is absolutely essential for the kind of quality and energy you are working in. What kind of weight is it you are pouring into your body?'*

For these two dancers the weight of their physical mass is both to be grounded and at the same time weight is also an organic aspect of being a lived body and is related to as a sense of energy and quality in movement. When working with the latter aspect they specifically describe how they work on making themselves 't*ransparent'* to what might appear from the environment – and in a wider sense the universe. In the dancers descriptions of how they work with transparency they describe 'to be transparent' as related to a shift in how they feel their body. Their sense of 'being their body' feels differently when being transparent compared to being their body in normal life that is daily activities outside the studio.

**Discussion**

According to Gallagher proprioceptive-kinesthetic experience is usually a pre-reflective and non-observational awareness that allows the body to remain experimentally transparent to the agent who is acting. He indicates that if proprioceptive-kinesthetic sensations are experienced by the subject this means that inner somatic dimensions of the body are taken as *intentional*[15] *objects of experience,* meaning that the dancer consciously relates to his or her body as if it is an object to control by directing attention to specific sensations.[16] This is what is at stake when the dancers describe how they specifically attend to proprioceptive-kinesthetic sensations. As part of their training they all *scrutinize* their sensation. However, their descriptions also reveal that they direct and give meaning to this scrutinizing process differently depending on whether they focus on 'balancing and placement'; 'partnering gravity'; or 'being grounded.' Although the scrutinizing aspect of proprioceptive-kinesthetic sensation adheres to the same objectifying aspect of experiencing the physicality of their bodies, it exhibits different kinds of *content* between dancers.

Besides the scrutinizing aspect of their experience all the dancers emphasised another dimension of their inner sensations, which relates to what their body feels like when their dance technique works. Here, the sense of their physicality appears to them as an overall sense of their bodies. In this dimension of their experience the dancers do not objectify the physicality of their bodies, for instance by taking many objectifying sensations of physicality and combining these into one unified sensation. Rather this aspect of the dancers' experiences refers to what it feels like to be this body – as if describing the overall character of an inner sensory landscape. This overall sense of their bodies differs in between the dancers: the ballet dancers' sense of their second nature denotes a different kind of overall sense of their bodies than the contemporary dancers' sense of feeling weighted – and present, and the Butoh related dancer's sense of being transparent. In terms of Dorothée Legrand's phenomenological work on self-consciousness, this overall sense of their bodies reveals how the body's physicality can be experienced in a non-objectifying manner.[17] The dancer's overall sense of their bodies thereby suggests a perceivable aspect of the dancers' subjectivity.[18] Generally, subject-related dimensions of first person experiences are related to the subjects' experience of the world, as this is anchored to the subjects' bodily perspective. It

indicates, as Legrand explains, that, "I am conscious of myself only insofar as I experience these contents of consciousness as experienced by me: I am the subject of the visual perception of the trying to move, of the thought and of the pain."[19]

This means that in the subject-related dimension of experience generally referred to in phenomenological explorations, the body is absent as intentional object. In her work Legrand has identified a further, perceivable, dimension of subjectivity. This suggests a third dimension of experience, additional to the subject-related and object-related dimensions of experience described above.[20] It is this third dimension which is evident in the dancers' descriptions of their overall feeling of their bodies when dancing.[21]

Since the 1990's anthropological analyses of senses and sensing have focused on how the relative importance of some modes of perception over others varies over cultural settings.[22] Recently Caroline Potter's anthropological based description of the embodied process of becoming a contemporary dancer emphasised how proprioceptive-kinesthetic sensation can be described as the ultimate goal of the dancer's training – and that it is a socially constituted sense of motion. Becoming a dancer is based on a becoming that is socialised into a community of knowing practitioners.[23]

The dancers in this project present and exemplify how proprioceptive-kinesthetic sensation takes form differently according to their different practices and ideals of movement. The diversity in the *content* of their proprioceptive-kinesthetic sensation is present both when the physicality of the body is scrutinised and when it is related to as an overall feeling of the body – when the body is taken as an intentional object of experience and when the physicality of the body is experienced in a non-objectifying manner. The difference between the dancers' content of experience can thus not be reduced to a question of different kinds of coding of their sensations. Rather the difference is also to be found in their overall sense of what it feels like to be their bodies.

The dancers' descriptions of proprioceptive-kinesthetic sensations of the weighted mass of their bodies might appear to the subject as if they derive from an internal process of the body-subject's being. However, the different descriptions of these dancers, indicate that proprioceptive-kinesthetic sensations are, like any other mode of perception and any other sense experience, to be understood as being socially made and mediated.[24] Sensing is formed by and forming part of a *shared process*[25] thereby implicitly emphasising that perception and experience always "involves a reference to the *world*, taking that term in a very wide sense to include not just the physical environment, but the social and cultural world".[26] This shared process includes also sensations of inner somatic dimensions – such as proprioceptive-kinesthetic sensations of the weighted physical mass of the body.

**Conclusion**

In the presented study I have undertaken an empiric-phenomenological study of proprioceptive–kinesthetic sensation based on 13 professional dancers' experiences. The dancers' descriptions supports Legrand's notion that three dimensions of experience are to be implicated in phenomenological explorations of experience. In this third dimension of experience Legrand, emphasizes how the body's physicality can be experienced in a non-objectifying manner. It thereby specifically relates to the dancers' descriptions of how their body feels like – as an overall feeling of the body. The paper reveals how the *content* of the dancers' sensuous experience of weighted physical mass differs according to their different movement techniques and training histories. The content differs both in relation to the objectifying dimension in which they scrutinize their sensations and in relation to this third dimension of experience which can also be described as an overall feeling of their bodies. In that sense two reflective dimensions of topographies of proprioceptive-kinesthetic

sensation can be recognised – and each dimension differs in between the dancers. The paper thereby exemplifies how proprioceptive-kinesthetic sensations are socially mediated – how perception always involves a reference to the world.



Notes

[1] Merleau-Ponty, 1998/1962, p 90; Gallagher p 45 ff.
[2] Leder, 1990, pp 13-15.
[3] Gallagher, 2005, pp 73-74.
[4] Claid, 2006.
[5] Bull, 1997.
[6] Thomas, 2003; Foster, 1992.
[7] Gallagher, 2005, p 46.
[8] Potter, 2008, p 445-449, Sheets-Johnstone, 1999, p 138-139.
[9] Paterson, 2007, p 4.
[10] Ravn, 2008.
[11] Ravn, 2008, p 120 ff.; Legrand and Ravn, 2009.
[12] Quotations are presented in italicized font and in quotation marks.
[13] Ravn, 2007.
[14] In accordance to the discussions of Bales and Nettle-Fiol (2008) the dancers' techniques are best described as eclectic - based on many different kinds of specified techniques according to each dancers training history and experience of performance. Generally release technique played a relatively major role for the contemporary dancers, but also, for example, ballet training, martial arts, Hawkins technique, Alexander technique, African dances and jazz formed part of their experiences (Ravn, 2008, pp 89 ff).
[15] In accordance to Gallagher and Zahavi's writing, intentionality is to be understood as an "ubiquitous character of consciousness, and it means that all consciousness […] is consciousness *about* or of *something*. In that sense experience is never an isolated or elemental process. It always involves reference to the *world* (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008, p7 authors' italics). Merleau-Ponty's explorations of perception and thereby intentionality is inherent in Gallagher and Zahavi's description. Based on Husserl's phenomenology Merleau-Ponty describes intentionality as what gives form to "the antepredative unity of the world and our life" (Merleau-Ponty, 1998/1962, p xviii). In his elaboration on perception Merleau-Ponty specifically emphasize how motility is to be understood as basic intentionality (ibid. p 137).
[16] Gallagher, 2005, pp 73-74.
[17] Legrand 2007a, 2007b.
[18] Legrand and Ravn, 2009.
[19] Legrand, 2007b, p 588.
[20] Legrand, 2007b, p 577.
[21] Ravn, 2008, pp 275 ff.
[22] Elizabeth Hsu, 2008; Edward Howes, 1991, 2003, 2005.
[23] Potter, 2008, p 461.
[24] Hsu, 2008; Chau, 2008.
[25] Seremetakis, 1994.
[26] Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008, p 7.

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# A Call to Arms: Isadora Duncan's Military Works

*Elyssa Dru Rosenberg*

The year was 1914. Isadora Duncan was living at Dionysian, her school at Bellevue. A little over a year after her two children had died, she was pregnant again, and running a school full of students. That summer, war broke out in Europe. Almost immediately thereafter her baby was born, and lived only a matter of minutes. Seeing war and destruction around her and immersed in her own deep sorrow, Isadora donated the school to France to use as a military hospital and sent her students to New York for protection. She followed soon after.

Over the next few years, as the "War to end all wars" tore through Europe, Isadora created several dances meant to inspire her audiences to rise up and fight. In the *Pathetique*, to music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, *La Marseillaise,* the French national anthem, and the *Polonaise Militaire*, to music by Frederic Chopin, Isadora motivated her audience to continue the fight. In these dances, Isadora developed a new, more grounded and strong style of moving, but continued to integrate the flirty, sexually implicit movements that had made her famous. This paper will explore the historical circumstances that led to the creation of these three dances and the movements Isadora[1] chose to convey her message. The first part of the paper will describe Isadora's travels throughout the war years and where and when she first performed these pieces. The second section will delve more deeply into the choreography of each in an effort to show how she succeeded with the specific methods she chose to employ.

Drawing from history books, newspapers, interviews and the dances themselves, this paper examines how, in creating these three dances, Isadora was influenced by the countries and times in which she lived. This paper will also address the use of the feminine in these militaristic dances, and how Isadora demonstrated choreographically what she was able to accomplish through her embrace of the socially constructed feminine in her daily life. Ultimately, this paper will argue that the context in which and around which these dances were created provided a platform for Isadora to not only fight for a cause in which she believed but also to be reaccepted in her native country.

**Isadora Duncan during the War Years**

In 1912, Paris Singer, Isadora's lover and the father of her second child, Patrick, purchased a property in Bellevue, outside of Paris.[2] Originally a hotel, Singer planned to make the space into a hospital. But in April of 1913, Isadora's two children, Deirdre and Patrick, were killed when the car in which they were passengers rolled into the Seine and sank.[3] In her immense grief, Isadora turned her attention away from dance and traveled to Rome. In December of 1913, Isadora realized she was pregnant.[4] Her grief diverted with the joy of her pregnancy and in January of 1914 she accepted Singer's invitation to return to France and create a school at Bellevue.[5] Upon opening the school in France, Isadora issued a call for students, both girls and boys. Several girls and one boy were chosen for the school. The Isadorables, Isadora's six most-successful students from her original school in Germany, who later became her protégés, arrived at Bellevue soon after to help Isadora teach the children.[6]

For seven months, the school at Bellevue, which Isadora called Dionysian, flourished. On June 26, 1914, the Bellevue students performed publicly for the first time at the Trocadero.[7] Two days later, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was killed, igniting a series of events that would eventually lead to the First World War. On August 3, 1914, Germany declared war on France. Within days, France was mobilized and Isadora was in labor. Tragically, Isadora's baby died almost immediately after birth. In her despair and seeing the devastation of the war around her, Isadora donated Bellevue to the Dames de France to use as a military hospital and sent her students to New York for safety.[8]

On August 9, 1914, the Isadorables arrived in New York with eight American children and "19 children of other nationalities."[9] In November of that year, Isadora followed. She reestablished her school in Rye, New York[10] and scheduled performances featuring the students and herself. On December 3, 1914, the Isadorables and 13 other children performed at Carnegie Hall.[11] Isadora finally returned to the stage, for the first time since

the death of her children, in January of 1915. In her performance at the Metropolitan Opera House, the New York audience saw a much different dancer than they had seen in previous years. At this time, Isadora premiered Schubert's *Ave Maria*, the first piece choreographed about the death of her children. On January 13, the New York Tribune reported, "Miss Duncan wins with new dance."[12]

In March of 1915 as Isadora prepared to leave New York for Greece, Otto Kahn, founder of Deutsche Bank, offered her a season at the Century Theatre, where she could perform for poor New Yorkers.[13] The new season began later that month to mixed reviews.[14] Presenting a Chopin program, a Schubert, Brahms and Beethoven program and a Gluck Iphigenia and Orpheus program, it was Isadora's Chopin program that received the best reviews. In reaction to one of the other programs, one audience member explained, "It was all high art, full of moral uplifting….but to one in the audience, at least, it was boresome."[15] Another, excited by the Chopin program exclaimed, "We don't go to the theatre to be made sorrowful, but to be made happy!"[16] The Century Theatre season was short-lived, however, as the fire department discovered that, due to Isadora's lack of funds, the students were living in the theater.[17] In her efforts to put on a show meant for the poor, Isadora had charged only two dollars for orchestra seats and a dime for seats in the balcony.[18] As a result, she was out of money. Owing $12,000, she desperately appealed to the nation to help her.[19] But few came forward.

Feeling betrayed by America, her native country, Isadora returned to Europe with her students in early 1916 where she began performing and throwing parties in Switzerland to raise funds for France's war effort. In Switzerland, she prepared for a new season at the Trocadero, to benefit the Armoire Lorraine and produced by the French Ministry of Fine Arts. At the Trocadero she premiered *La Marseillaise* and the *Pathetique.*[20]

Later that year, after a brief tour in Argentina, Isadora returned to New York for an extended stay. In November of 1916, she put on two small shows, where the *Pathetique* and *La Marseillaise* were performed for the first time in the Unites States of America.[21] Then in March of 1917, she performed the full Trocadero program at the Metropolitan Opera House to an audience of more than 3,000 people. On March 7, the New York Tribune reported that Isadora had a new dance style. At the end of the program, Isadora, "Draped in an American flag, and in little else,"[22] performed the *Star-Spangled Banner*, while the enthusiastic audience sang. Later that month, she repeated the Trocadero program at the Metropolitan Opera House, this time adding the *Polonaise Militaire*. These performances ignited a flood of patriotism from the audience, and each night she left the stage to great acclaim.

In April of 1917, Isadora traveled to Washington, D.C. to hear Congress declare war. In his article in the New York Tribune describing the House of Representatives discussion of the war on April 5, 1917, C. W. Gilbert wrote:

> Representatives are simpler people than Senators, and the talk in the lower house was simpler and more immediate than the talk yesterday. You got what you didn't get in the Senate, a 'close-up.' I am driven to movie metaphors- of the vanishing America, the America of self-sufficing provinciality, the America that believed in the Atlantic Ocean and called it Washington's farewell address, the America that felt it set an example to all the world in the ways of peace, the America that contemned the perilous contentions of Europe and felt itself superior and remote, the America with the corner grocery store vision of international relations, the America, the summum bonum of whose woman—I quote Isadora Duncan, who was a listener in the gallery—'was to sit on the front porch and gossip, the passing America that was—let us be exact—the only America three years ago.'[23]

But over the course of those three years, America had changed. And on April 6, 1917, the United States entered the Great War. On April 11, Isadora performed again at the Metropolitan Opera House in a program including *La Marseillaise* and *Polonaise Militaire*. The mayor of New York and many consular officials were in the audience. At the end of the performance Isadora and her students improvised while the orchestra played "My country tis of thee." Throughout that month, as Isadora and the Isadorables danced at the Metropolitan Opera House, the performances were billed as "The Spirit of a Nation Drawn into War."[24]

**Isadora's Military Works**

When Isadora first performed the *Pathetique*, *La Marseillaise* and the *Polonaise Militaire,* in America, the New York Tribune reported that she had a new style.[25] Indeed, compared to her work before the war, and especially before her children died, it was a very new style. Isadora believed that all movement should stem from the solar plexus, because that is where she thought the human soul was housed. Much of her early work focused on Greek mythology or on nature. Her movements tended to be very smooth, rounded and flowing. While she acknowledged the weight of the body, her movements tended to be light and lifted.

The military works however, are characterized by sharper, straighter gestures with a constant emphasis on the downbeat in the music. In an effort to show how Isadora both portrayed her intended message in the new style and capitalized on the femininity that had made her popular throughout her life, this paper will now examine the elements that characterize these dances as militaristic, portraying their intended message, as well as the elements that represent the feminine.

***Pathetique:***

Isadora first performed Tchaikovsky's *Pathetique Symphony* at the Trocadero performances in 1916. The *Pathetique* is made up of three sections, the *Congrazia*, the *Allegro Molto Vivace* and the *Adagio Lamentoso*. Isadora told American journalist Frederick W. Crone, that she first danced the *Pathetique* before wounded French soldiers, calling it "The soul of a nation in travail."[26] This paper focuses exclusively on the second section of the dance – the part that was presented to audiences as "The story of the present world struggle."[27]

In this section, the dancers, dressed in red tunics act as soldiers fighting in a war. The lead dancer (the Isadora figure) enters through the middle of the upstage curtain and gestures to the audience and the offstage dancers repeatedly to enter and fight. While this nearly ten minute dance is packed with symbolism, this section will focus specifically on three aspects of the piece, namely: the pointing lead figure, the dancers hiding from falling bombs and the symbolism of the flame in the group's circular movement.

Throughout the first part of the dance the lead figure gestures and points, mostly at the dancers about to enter from the wing. As the dancers enter they constantly come from the upstage left corner and move diagonally downstage right (a diagonal used in much Duncan choreography). However, as the music builds, eventually the lead dancer turns her focus to the audience, pointing as she has at the dancers, now repeatedly at various sections of the audience. In this way her gesture indicates, that not only is she calling the troops, represented by the dancers, to arms, but those watching as well. The dancers/soldiers, following the orders of their leader, enter repeatedly from the corner, leaping or skipping, often holding an invisible flag.

The most abstract part of the dance is also the most transparently about the war. About three quarters of the way through the piece, the dancers duck, looking up, covering their heads, as the music quiets. Through fear on their faces, protective hand gestures, and their crouching bodies, they represent soldiers hiding from air strikes.

Toward the end of the dance, as the group, thus far symbolizing soldiers, move together, they begin incorporating elements of movement that Isadora has previously used in choreography to symbolize the feminine. In works like *Blessed Spirits* and *Cymbals*, Isadora used a flame-like gesture repeated here by the group. This gesture has been described by Carrie-Ellen Tron, a fourth generation Duncan dancer, as having represented not only the flame of God, but also the literal shape of a woman's uterus symbolizing a woman's ability to give life.[28]

***La Marseillaise***

La Marseillaise was also first performed at the Trocadero in 1916 and then soon after in the United States. Later in her life, Isadora wrote "It was a call to the boys of America to rise and protect the highest civilization of our epoch, that culture which has come to the world through France."[29] Unfortunately, as Isadora always performed this piece herself, never teaching it to her protégés, the actual movements have been lost.[30] We have only sketches, photographs and reviews with which to piece together this dramatic and influential piece that was likely the best example of her new style. According to Ann Daly, with this dance "Duncan portrayed the departure of the troops to battle against the invaders, and as the dance went on, she was beaten to her knees, yet unconquered, and rose to a triumph at the end."[31]

Upon seeing the piece in 1916, Carl Van Vechten, wrote, "In a robe the color of blood, she

stands enfolded; she sees the enemy advance; she feels the enemy as it grasps her by the throat; she kisses her flag; she tastes blood; she is all but crushed under the weight of the attack; and then she rises triumphant with the terrible cry, *Aux armes citoyens*."[32] In the dance's final pose Isadora stood with her left breast exposed, which Peter Kurth describes as having been reminiscent of Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People*.[33] Here again, Isadora's movements were meant to represent an army, but ultimately, she demonstrated the feminine with the exposure of her breast.

***Polonaise Militaire***

The *Polonaise Militaire* , like the second section of the *Pathetique*, features a main figure and a group. The downstage right diagonal figures strongly again in this piece, as the main dancer moves repeatedly down that diagonal, gesturing to the soldiers to follow. From the start of this piece, this dancer points to the audience, drawing them into the piece and making them aware from the start that this message is intended for them. Like in the *Pathetique*, the group in the *Polonaise* represents soldiers following the orders of their leader. Also, like the Pathetique, they skip and leap, often holding an invisible flag. However, here, the feminine figures through the dancer's hip movements and focus. In a movement repeated throughout, she skips with an emphasis again on the down beat, rocking her hips as her feet hit the ground. The first time she does this she focuses inward. Then slowly her focus turns toward the audience, looking at them with her head cocked, or her chin tucked in an overtly flirtatious manner. When the group eventually enters, they repeat this movement; however, they look directly side to side.

**The Feminine in the Military**

When Isadora Duncan returned to New York during the Great War, she was met by radicals in the East Village, eager to have her back their cause. According to Peter Kurth, "Village feminism was a politics of the body, not the voting booth."[34] Therefore, when Isadora arrived, they greeted her, according to Max Eastman, as "The extreme outpost of the movement for woman's emancipation."[35] However, surprisingly, Isadora was not a suffragist, believing that through manipulation, women could have all the power they needed. In February of 1915, Isadora said, "We women can get anything in the world we want without the vote."[36]

Isadora did not believe in marriage. She did believe in a woman's right to be a mother, whether or not a man was present in her life. She had three children out of wedlock and while in Germany, she became active in the Muttershutz or Mother Protection movement. This movement, "Aimed to reform the institution of marriage and to champion the victims of that institution, namely unwed mothers and their children."[37] While she believed a woman should be free to express herself, to dress as she chose, to express her sexuality and to raise children as she saw fit, Isadora did not believe that men and women should be the same. This is not expressed as clearly choreographically in any of her works as it is in these military works in which she was literally representing male soldiers on stage, but always making sure to remind the audience of her femininity.

While she could not fight and could not vote, Isadora always managed to get what she wanted through her art or often through her sexual appeal to men. She exploited the concept of the social construct of the feminine throughout her life in her personal interactions as well as in her work. And in both, her sexuality proved a persuasive tool. Through her numerous romantic and sexual relationships, with a variety of socially elite men, she made connections that ensured her stages on which to perform, money with which to live comfortably, children to fulfill her longing for motherhood, and schools in which she could pass on her legacy. When she was in financial distress, Isadora would complain that she needed to find a millionaire to help her. By seducing these millionaires, she would convince them to finance her every whim. Paris Singer, heir to the Singer sewing machine fortune, who purchased Bellevue for Isadora, was one such millionaire. For years Singer financed Isadora's life, always coming to her rescue and offering her endless gifts. In December of 1916, Singer even purchased Madison Square Garden[38] and offered it to Isadora to create a school. Although, Isadora claimed to love Singer, the father of her son, Patrick, she wrote, "As my Millionaire was not an artist, my soul never belonged to him. It belonged sometimes to other artists, which made him very angry. In me he found a kind of defiance of his will. I supposed that fascinated him."[39] From such an explanation it would seem that Isadora did

not care for Singer the way she did for other men she loved, however, he was "fascinated" by her, and willing to give her his money.

Through the symbolism of the flame, showing a woman's power to create life, through overt flirtation with her audience, and even baring parts of her naked body on stage, Isadora used the feminine in her military works to demonstrate a woman's power and strength, even if that strength only existed through manipulation.

**The Great War as Inspiration**

When Isadora Duncan came to New York in 1915, there are those who report that she was not as popular because she had lost touch with the times.[40] During the Great War, she changed her movement style from flowing and lifted, to grounded and politically charged. And indeed it was not until she began creating dances that actively addressed the war, that she became popular again in the United States.

Ultimately, however, Isadora did not choreograph these dances to be popular; she choreographed them to make a statement. Just days before performing *La Marseillaise* and the *Pathetique* before thousands of Americans, she asked of the dances, "Can Americans understand this? Does the spirit of La Marseillaise, the spirit of France mean anything to them?... I read the newspapers. I look around, and I wonder. They light up Miss Liberty down in the harbor, but our ships stay at home because they're told to. Is that American? Is that the American spirit?...I haven't been much in America lately, but I think America understands, or I wouldn't undertake to dance [La Marseillaise] here."[41]

In 1918, just weeks before the end of the Great War, Isadora began choreographing a Soldier show called "Good luck, Sam!" to music by George M. Cohan. According to the New York Tribune, "If the war had only kept on a little longer…some dramaturgic diagnostician might have got round to classifying the soldier shows. Between some Duncan dancers and a military strong man, "Good luck, Sam!" might qualify in the Greco-Roman kind… but [it] is really that most popular and prevalent kind of doughboy drama, the sublimated college show."[42] The fact that Isadora would take part in such a blatantly patriotic show demonstrates how the support she received for these military works helped her connect back to the homeland which had shown her so little support in the past. Through these military dances, she not only encouraged her audience to enter the war in Europe, but she also transformed her art into a new, more grounded, more weighted, and more overtly political style. With newspaper reporters quoting Isadora while discussing Congress' decision to enter the Great War, it is clear what a profound success her work was and what an impact she had on the culture that witnessed it.



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[1] This paper often refers to Isadora Duncan as Isadora, rather than Duncan, as is conventionally done. The reason for this comes from Isadora herself who once explained that Duncan referred to her father, while Isadora referred to her. (Daly, Ann: *Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan and America.* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1995), 163)

[2] Peter Kurth, *Isadora: A Sensational Life* (Boston, New York, and London: Little, Brown and Company, 2001), 311

[3] Kurth, *Isadora,* 292-295

[4] The father was Romano Romanelli, a sculptor from Florence.

[5] Kurth, *Isadora,* 310-311

[6] Kurth, *Isadora,* 312

[7] Kurth, *Isadora,* 315-316

[8] Kurth, *Isadora,* 319

[9] "12 Ships Tied Up; Refugees Gloomy," *New York* Tribune (1911-1922);August 9, 1914**;** ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Tribune (1841-1922) pg. 3

[10] Kurth, *Isadora,* 323

[11] "Isadora Duncan's Pupils in Dance" *New York* Tribune (1911-1922); December 4, 1914**;** ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Tribune (1841-1922) pg. 9

[12] "Miss Duncan Wins with New Dances" *New York* Tribune (1911-1922); January 13, 1915**;** ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Tribune (1841-1922) pg. 9

[13] "Would Aid Youths in Picking Trades" *New York* Tribune (1911-1922); March 3, 1915**;** ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Tribune (1841-1922) pg. 5

[14] "Miss Duncan Might Teach Educators" *New York* Tribune (1911-1922); March 26, 1915**;** ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Tribune (1841-1922) pg. 7 and Kurth, Isadora, 336

[15] Kurth, *Isadora,* 336

[16] Kurth, *Isadora,* 336

[17] "Isadora Duncan's Dancers Evicted as Art and Fire Rules Clash" *New York* Tribune (1911-1922); April 24, 1915**;** ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Tribune (1841-1922) pg. 16

[18] Kurth, *Isadora,* 335

[19] "Isadora Duncan Appeals to Nation" *New York* Tribune (1911-1922); May 6, 1915**;** ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Tribune (1841-1922) pg. 1

[20] Kurth, *Isadora,* 343

[21] "Music Programmes of the Current Week" *New York* Tribune (1911-1922); November 12, 1916**;** ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Tribune (1841-1922) pg. C5
[22] "Isadora Duncan Reveals a Change in Dance Style" *New York* Tribune (1911-1922); March 7, 1917**;** ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Tribune (1841-1922) pg. 9
[23] "The Passing America", C.W. Gilbert, *New York* Tribune (1911-1922); April 6, 1917**;** ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Tribune (1841-1922) pg. 1
[24] Kurth, *Isadora,* 360
[25] "Isadora Duncan Reveals a Change in Dance Style" *New York* Tribune (1911-1922); March 7, 1917**;** ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Tribune (1841-1922) pg. 9
[26] "Does the Spirit of France Mean Anything to America?" Frederick W. Crone, *New York Tribune* (1911-1922); March 4, 1917**;** ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Tribune (1841-1922) pg. D2
[27] Kurth, *Isadora,* 344
[28] From a conversation with Carrie Tron, 2000
[29] Kurth, *Isadora,* 344
[30] From an interview with Carrie Tron, conducted January, 2004
[31] Daly, A: p. 186
[32] Kurth, *Isadora,* 345
[33] Kurth, *Isadora,*. 345
[34] Kurth, *Isadora,* 326
[35] Kurth, *Isadora,* 327
[36] "Incense Scented Plea for Ida Walters's Life" *New York Tribune* (1911-1922); February 5, 1915**;** ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Tribune (1841-1922) pg. 3
[37] Daly, *Done into Dance,* 163
[38] "Groves in Greece Rival Garden Here for Miss Duncan" *New York Tribune* (1911-1922); Devember 29, 1916**;** ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Tribune (1841-1922) pg. 5
[39] Kurth, *Isadora,* 258
[40]In his book, *Isadora, A Sensational Life*, Peter Kurth says that when Isadora first returned to the US, during the Great War, Henrietta Rodman, the Village Feminist, said that she had lost touch with the times. While Isadora's work was not as well received in New York in 1915, this implies that it was *because* she had "lost touch with the times." However, this quote comes from a New York Tribune clipping, date unknown, and there is no evidence of such a quote from the Tribune at that time. However, while this Rodman quote cannot be verified, it does seem that Isadora was not as popular in New York in 1915 as she later became when she began focusing on the times in which she lived and performing these war-related dances. (Kurth *Isadora,* 330)
[41] "Does the Spirit of France Mean Anything to America?" Frederick W. Crone, *New York Tribune* (1911-1922); March 4, 1917**;** ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Tribune (1841-1922) pg. D2
[42] "Good Luck, Sam!" *New York Tribune* (1911-1922); November 26, 1918**;** ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Tribune (1841-1922) pg. 9

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# Nomadic Diagrams: Choreographic Topologies

*Sarah Rubidge*

The primary aim of this performative paper was to respond from a choreographic perspective to geographer Nigel Thrift's challenge that nonrepresentational theory is best interrogated through performative means (Thrift, 2009). Drawing on experiential knowledge gained from my work as a choreographic installation artist, this paper constituted an experiment in interweaving theory and artistic practice such that full value was given to both. The paper took the form of a series of movement activities, interspersed with a spoken discussion of the theoretical concerns inherent within them[1]. In contrast to many performative papers, the performativity was the province of the participants, not the presenter, for I delivered the theory between activities in order to bring to the participants' attention the concepts they were exploring through their collective action[2].

**Introduction**

Nonrepresentational theory is a term coined by Thrift (2009) to describe those modes of thinking that do not depend on verbal discourse to articulate their concerns. These include the modes of thought employed in artistic practice. Movement is used as a leitmotif throughout Thrift's discussion. Non-representational theory suggests that human movement and our "rhizomatic, acentred" brains co-evolve, arguing that much of our thinking does not involve the internal manipulation of conscious reflection or picture-like representations to make sense of the world. Of particular relevance to this paper, it also maintains that intelligence is a distributed and relational process in which a range of 'actors' (including texts, devices or objects. people) are active participants. Finally, it suggests that space, a central means of understanding, and operating in, the world, is not *a priori* but evolves from performative activity. It is the last two arguments that this performative paper addressed through practice.

Geographers have become increasingly interested in movement, the body, and performativity. Derek McCormack (2008;p1822) notes that:

> …bodies move in more ways than one: they move physically, but they also move affectively, kinaesthetically, imaginatively, collectively, aesthetically, socially, culturally, and politically. [B]y moving in these different ways, bodies can 'produce' or generate spaces [inasmuch as] the quality of moving bodies contributes to the qualities of the spaces in which these bodies move.

This represents an explicit acceptance that space in not simply something that surrounds us, or we occupy, but that it is generated by those who inhabit it, and is affective, qualitative, as well as material. Understood in this way space is less a noun than a state of affairs.

It is this kind of space that de Certeau (1988;p112) identifies when he notes that

> …space [only] exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities and line variables. This space is composed of intersections of mobile elements …actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it.

This is relational space, a spatio-temporal space active with rhythms that translate into a qualitative, and thus affective, dimension. This is choreographic space.

My interest in the notion of space as relational arises from the consonance between Thrift's theories and postmodern choreographic processes, particularly non-linear group choreographies. These are characterised by a complex interweaving of trajectories, vectors, rhythms and the multidirectional dispersal of dancers across the stage and are evident in the work of artists such as Merce Cunningham, William Forsythe, and Trisha Brown, particularly earlier works such as *Set and Reset* (1982) and *Opal Loop* (1980). These works, and the choreographic strategies that gave rise to them, incorporate some of the central characteristics of nonrepresentational thought.

In many ways this paper is a also means of coming to understand the relevance of the choreographic decisions made during the collaborative processes that led to the digital installations that I have been working on for 15 years. Retrospectively, it became apparent to me that the conceptual analyses of space and of thought undertaken by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Henri Lefebvre, Nigel Thrift and Michel de Certeau were embodied in the complex, immersive

interactive environments that dominated my artistic practice during this period. The installations present as choreographic topologies through the shifting inter-connections established between a) the individual behaviours of the participants and the interactive system and b) the participants themselves. These create a complex relational network of behaviours between participants and the interactive system through which the installations were actualised as events.

For this paper movement activities were devised that emulated these processes. These interrogated, through practice, the ideas that permeate the work both of these writers and the installations – notions of the diagram and nomadic thought, distributed intelligence, the concept of topological space, Thrift's view that space itself is generated by performative activity, and Deleuze and Guattari's notions of the 'diagram' and 'nomadic' thought (1987).

This use of the term diagram refers to an 'organisational technique' (Deleuze:1986,p.32) rather than a reductive representation such as an architect's diagram or a map[3]. Indeed, the notion of *the***,** or *a*, diagram, is misleading, for the diagram is not an entity like a map, or if it is, it constitutes an entity-in-the-making. Therefore it is perhaps better to say that one diagrams whilst simultaneously generating *a* diagram, a processual entity which by its very nature never achieves a final form.

This diagram is mobile, relational, affective, comprising an active, intricate interweaving of multiple strands of thought, activity, behaviour and concepts, and can only be generated by engaging in diagrammatic activity (Ednie-Brown:2000). This new form of diagram does not *reduce* experience, like the map or the plan, but *enriches* it as it establishes resonances between the individual elements that interweave within it, generating affects and connectivities, and the very space within which we move.

The diagrams produced during our movement activities manifested as multiplicities constituted from diverse paths and differential forces,

> …a succession of spatial accidents, bifurcations, loops, crossroads between various spaces that ha[d] no common measure and no boundaries in common." **(**Gibson**,** in Thrift:2007,p.119)

Crucially these diagrams are embodied, experiential**,** not something to be observed and studied, but something that must be experienced at first hand.

We interrogated these theoretical notions by working through a series of linked movement activities that explored the way in which certain choreographic strategies constitute a choreographic diagram, a movement of collective, potentially discursive, thought.

I set a choreographic frame for the movement activities, asking the participants to underplay the 'dancerly', in order to see whether simple movements could give rise to an intricate collective movement of thought, and through it a complex diagrammatic/ choreographic entity. The participants were asked to:

- consider themselves as just one of MANY individuals engaged in what Steve Paxton refers to as a 'small dance'[4].
- concentrate on the processes of navigating the space, rather than on the actions performed in order to navigate the space (thinking not so much of dancing, but of wayfaring).
- consider the emerging textures of the motion, and the effects these have on the texturing of the environment, rather than focusing on movement as expression.
- avoid the temptation to make things happen (individual thought), rather let things happen in order to open the way to the generation of a collective movement of thought.
- Finally, avoid actual contact, however close they might get to each other, concentrating instead on the spatial tensions that obtain between them.

These instructions established the conditions that could generate a multiplicity that

> …deploy[ed] itself beyond the individual, on the side of the *socius*, of preverbal intensities, indicating a logic of [porous] affects, rather than a logic of delimited sets. (Guattari:1992, p.9)

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*Initially, a preliminary practical experiment was undertaken in order to reframe the qualities of the environment in which the performative paper took place by giving it an affective dimension.*

### *1st MOVEMENT ACTIVITY*

- *Find an empty space in the room. Close your eyes.*

- *Imagine that you are in an expanse of land…a desert, moor, plain, ice field… imagine that there is nothing that stands out as a marker our between where you are standing and the horizon, only a gentle curving of the ground from time to time.*
- *Turn slightly to find a different view of the landscape…allowing its understated topography to form itself up in your mind.*
- *Move within this new space….endowing certain areas with a texture….a temperature on the surface of the ground…or in the air…or an emotional or affective sensation.*
- *Remember the location of these affective 'islands'.*
- *Send your attention to your horizons, where sky meets land…what lies there?*
- *Feel the environment on your skin.*
- *Open your eyes. The imaginary topography that you have just generated is available for recall to disrupt your sense of the material space you are moving within.*
- *Take a pen and paper and trace the shaping and texture of this imaginary topography on the pieces of paper…use shading, words, anything to provide a map that reflects your imaginary land.*

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This activity generated the starting point for the collective diagrams that emerged during the practical experimentation. By engaging with their individual performative diagrams the participants were creating collective choreographic entities. As such they explored performatively the notion that intelligence is distributed. The intricate relations, and rhythmical and affective interplays that obtained between the conceptual, physical and affective forces as they moved determined the expressive force (content) of each emerging choreographic form. What was important was that content (expression) did not precede the form, nor form content, rather the two co-evolved.

The performative diagrams that the participants created were therefore not a descriptive plan, but a starting point for activity. Both form and substance of the diagrammatic/choreographic entity could only emerge from the collective diagram's gradual actualisation. Collective diagrams have a double aspect, being both experienced affectively from within as a movement of individual thought, connectivities, interrelations and sensations, and observable from without as a fluctuating form. The resonances that emerge from the interweaving of several individual diagrams (movements of thought) give rise to observable choreographic entities.

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**2nd MOVEMENT ACTIVITY**

- *Recall the imaginary topography that you generated earlier. Reclaim this imaginary space both spatially and affectively.*
- *Move within in, feeling its textures, its topography.*
- *Re-identify your 'islands' of affect.*

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The affective space generated on these movement activities is a nomadic space, a multidirectional environment, akin to the depths of the desert, the Arctic wastes, the Mongolian steppes, a space without predetermined conduits or bounded regions, a field of possibilities unmarked by human intentions.

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**3rd MOVEMENT ACTIVITY**

- *Keeping this space in your mind's eye. Find a space in the room that feels comfortable to you. Close your eyes. Allow your proprioceptive senses to take over….sense the proximity of artefacts, people, light, shade. When you find a space that feels comfortable, keep feeling the space…the feeling of comfort might change if the configuration of the group changes.*
- *Concentrate on the back of your body as well as the front. Let the space be felt on your skin.*
- *Keep moving position until you find just the place you want to be. Don't expect the first place you stop in to be the final one…what feels right might change as the environment shifts around you…take your time.*[5]

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The space that the participants generated during that movement activity became a space of forces rather than fixed co-ordinates. It was experiential, haptic, rather than Euclidean or Cartesian. The individuals moving within it became an integral part of the relational structures between forces that generated the space, the space itself becoming a manifestation of the forces that we exude as living beings, forces that go beyond the confines of the skin. The space was not something around them, nor were they additions that inhabited the space, rather "both body and space…were experienced as alive with potential movement" (Manning:2009,p.15.)

Theoretically the space generated constituted a nomadic diagram. Nonmetric, acentred, rhizomatic, it

was a space that "provided the room for vagabondage, for wandering and drifting between regions...in a polyvocality of directions." (Casey:1998,pp303/4). As the linkages between the participants changed their alignments, the relations and strengths of the forces moving between us changed. This was an affective space, but one with no overt expressive intent. At every moment, this mutating environment had to be navigated as if for the first time. Such a space can only be understood through physical engagement, for we do not see this kind of space from a distance, but are always within it, part of the mutating environment we create as we move. An observer, however, can perceive the group as a fluctuating, diagrammatic entity that shapes the material space that it inhabits.

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*Participants were then asked to consider themselves as an element of the environment, an integral part of the topological space that it had become. In this way they would become part of a collective movement of thought, and not simply someone intent of achieving their personal expressive ends.*

We took one step further into this experiment in non-discursive thinking, and began to explore the notion of choreographic topologies

**INTERIM MOVEMENT ACTIVITY**

- *Choose another place. Keep shifting to a new place as and when the environment changes its configuration.*

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My choice of title for this workshop was not accidental, for a choreographic topology and a nomadic diagram are so close as to be almost one and the same thing. Topologies, like the diagram, are dynamic[6]. Although it has structural characteristics, a topological entity is not a structure, rather it is a structure 'taking-form', constituting "a continuity of transformation that alters the figure, bringing to the fore not the co-ordinate form, but the experience of it" (Manning:2009,p.165). We feel the vectors that stretch, curve, bend as the surface of the entity shifts.

Manning's introduction of the term experience extends the use of the term topological beyond the purely mathematical *geometric topology*. The latter is best represented by the notion that a form is topological if its surface shape can be transformed from one shape to another by stretching it or bending it – but never cutting or rending it. (It is sometimes known as 'rubber-sheet' geometry.) By judicious stretching and bending a coffee cup (which has a hole in its handle – on the side) can be transformed into a doughnut (which has a hole at its centre).[7] The architecture of the surface topology of entities such as this/these is thus not static, but dynamic.

In *architecture* the use of the term topology is also used to refer to dynamic geometrical designs, such as those created by Greg Lynn (1999) or Zaha Hadid (2009). Here a mesh-like design is stretched and deformed in order to create a building that seems to flow in space. However, it has also been used to refer to spatial effects such as social, spatial or phenomenological interactions which cannot be described by topography. For example, perception of a dynamic architectural space can be generated by the movement of a crowd in a piazza, or created by the changing texture of light in a room as the sun moves across the sky and hits different surfaces of the building. This becomes part of the topology of that space.

Finally, in the last few decades the notion of *network topology* has emerged to accommodate the structures of computer, neural, communication and social networks. Network topologies articulate the pattern/s of interconnection, both physical (material) and logical (virtual), between the elements (nodes and linkages) of dynamic networks. Communication networks are defined by the *traffic of communications* and "by identifying from moment to moment what is connected to what, rather than identifying the geographical alignment of those connections." (Castells (1996) in Adams:2009,p.2).

These networks can be relatively stable physically (e.g. the landline telephone system). Here the nodes (the telephones and the transmitters from which signals are sent) are geographically stable, but the pattern of linkages (transmissions) between the nodes change according to who is connected to whom. Or the network can be dynamic (e.g. the mobile telephone system). Here neither source nor recipient of the signal is geographically stable. Thus not only are the linkages mobile but also the nodes themselves. The link between nodes (phones) could be generated from any transmission mast, anywhere, to any other transmission mast, anywhere. Nevertheless, the basic property of the topology of the network (i.e. the open system of relations that obtains between nodes) remains.

Similarly, in a social network at any given time the topology of the network remains structurally, though not physically stable, for the nodes (people) are

constantly relocating geographically[8]. In addition, because the people in one social network might share connections with people who also operate in other social networks, an interweaving of multiple networks occurs, leading to an intricate system of relations.[9] This eventually creates a porous, multidimensional, rhizomatic, network of communication. Such networks generate a "topology of flows" (Castells, in Adams:2009, p.2), which emphasise the *flows* of connection between the elements to generate a spatio-temporal topological space. This is clearly relevant to the notion of a choreographic topology.

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*We then experimented with generating a space of flows.*

### 4th MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

- *Re-find your 'perfect' place in the room. Recapture the affective space that you identified at the beginning of the session. Remember your 'textured spaces' and respond as you pass through them.*
- *Individually, and without signalling your choice, identify one person in the room – they can be close to you or on the other side of the space. As you move maintain the distance between you and your unwitting 'partner' and move at exactly the same speed.*
- *Move slowly to start. Feel the link between you, and the ebb and flow of the proximities of your companions as they follow the same instruction.*
- *Momentarily pause from time to time (either from your choice, or your 'partner's' choice. Count at least 10 seconds before you move on.*
- *As you move on make a tiny gesture. Pause again. Select another individual, maintain an an even distance. Keep moving, be willing to move faster when you feel more confident.*

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### 5th MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

- *Find another space in the room that feels comfortable to you. As before, keep moving until you find that this is just the place you want to be.*

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Observers of this choreographic topology perceive shifting relations of forces within the group. By generating a flow of relations between forces, and thus affects, we simultaneously created and activated a topological space, modulated by the participants' proximities, rhythms, trajectories, pauses, sensibilities, feelings, intentions as they attempted to find their 'perfect' place in the room. The choreographic entity thus constituted itself as a dynamic relational space – part form, part process, part texture.

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### *6th MOVEMENT ACTIVITY*

- *Repeat the 5th movement activity. This time consciously watch, listen, feel as you move.*

*Be particularly aware of the proximity of people close to you and what affect this has on your sense of the environment, "your entire being alert to the countless cues that at every moment prompt the slightest adjustments to [y]our bearing [in the space]." (Ingold:2007,p.78)*

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This simple one-rule choreographic improvisation established a fluid active cartography…one that did not *represent* a pre-existent world, but generated a fluctuating, inhabited environment which was simultaneously entity and process. We generated the choreographic entity which *actualised* the relations between forces that were taking place "not above, or outside, it, but within the very texture of the entity that [it] produced" (Deleuze:1986, p.37). In any space the multiple rhythms that permeate it (visual, sonic, olfactory, haptic, cultural or social) create an affective layering, and thus generate a textured sensory environment (Manning:2009, p.139). These qualitative textures may not be consciously felt in our everyday life (nor always in a dance context, for dancers may not pay explicit attention to the intricate interweaving of rhythms that make up the dynamic network of movement of the group).

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*We continued to explore these ideas.*

### 7th MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

- *Return to creating a connection between you and another member of the group (4th Movement Activity)*
- *Occasionally shift that connection to someone else. Keep feeling the spaces between… and changing the person with whom you are connected*
- *Repeat, maintaining the distance between you and your 'partner'. Identify the affective flows that emerge in the interplay between you and your partner' to generate an affective social network.*

- *Allow the links with others in this open-ended relational system to generate a more complex space.*
- *Now remember where your affective 'islands' are.*
- *Allow these to affect your way of moving in those spaces. These become your way of 'worlding' the space.*

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de Certeau (1992,p.93) observes that

> …the networks of moving, intersecting [individual] writings compose a manifold story that has neither author, nor spectator.

This collectively generated 'story' is characterised by the rhythms and trajectories generated by the interplay between individuals' intentions as they navigate space. These intentions are constantly being reconfigured through the rhythms and trajectories generated as participants abandon proposed pathways when they are interrupted or appropriated by others, and commence new directions of intent. A composite rhythm emerges that propels the force of movement, and thus the topology of the space. As such, a collective choreographic entity evolves from the collective movement of thought created by the interweaving of individual subjectivities.

But Deleuze (1986;p34) asks us to take one step further, for he suggests that such an event is not entirely at the mercy of an obedient collective thought for

> …there is no diagram that does not also include, besides the points that it connects up, certain relatively free unbound points, points of creativity, of change and resistance.

These can generate an unexpected, potentially subversive, coalescence of individual movements and intentions within the emerging space, which shifts the directional force of its flows. As this takes place the activity creates a very particular cartography – one permeated with lines of desire or intention. This cartography is

> …composed not only of cognitive references [but also] rhythmical and systematological ones, within which it position[s] itself in relation to affects…and attempt[s] to manage its inhibitions and drives. (Guattari:1992, p.11),

embodying a different tenor to that of cartography as representation.

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## 8th MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

- *Recall the spatial locations of the affective 'islands' you created earlier. Trace your spatial cartography mentally out in the space, observing where your individual cartographies pass through those islands.*
- *Action this spatial and affective cartography through improvisation*

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## 9th MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

- *Repeat the 8th movement activity, but phase the commencement of your individual cartographies. Take a moment…close your eyes. When you feel ready, begin to re-trace your personal spatio-temporal and affective cartography.*
- *Become aware of when your cartographies interweave with those of others.*
- *Thread your way through the emerging environment … create new cartographic traces.*
- *Conceive your experiential cartographic trace as a continuous gesture in space and time, and yourselves both as moving points and 'attractors'.*
- *Pause if you feel that you are deliberately trying to shape the emerging choreographic space, or have 'lost your way'. Move. Feel your own rhythms, and the ebb and flow of the rhythms that surround you.*
- *Allow your personal lines, flows and affects to be transformed as other lines, rhythms, movements act upon them.*
- *Slowly bring the event to a close.*

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This last activity produced a complex social space, "produced by forces deployed within the spatial practice…embody[ing] properties which could be imputed…[only] by the occupation of space." (Levebvre:1992,p.88). Observers see

> …rhythms in all their multiplicity interpenetrate one another…in the body and around it, rhythms forever crossing and recrossing, superimposing themselves on each other, always bound by space. Through the medium of rhythm an animated space [came] into being, [a space] which was an extension of the space of bodies."(Lefebvre:1974.p.205)

Here the textures of the individual and collective environments subsumed by the earlier cartographic exercise were reclaimed, returning to the maps their mobility and affective textures.

## Conclusion

It is notable that Thrift and his colleagues have proposed, but not undertaken, the practical experimentation with their concepts that they recommend in their writings. In this performative paper we gave material substance to their claims, by weaving theory into the body of a performative experimentation with theoretical concepts. However, rather than solely dealing with non-discursive thought (Thrift:2007) the movement activities were structured in such a way that, for the experienced, theoretically informed dance practitioner, a form of non-verbal discourse emerged within the performative activity. As such, the movement activities, without reverting to representational thought or symbolism, constituted a discursive interrogation of the insights offered by Thrift and his colleagues.



Notes

[1] Feedback from participants indicated that I did not achieve a comfortable balance between the delivery of the practice and of the theory. The latter followed a relatively formal standard presentation mode, which forced an uneasy shift from a performative state of mind to focused attention on complex conceptual issues. My management of this shift made it difficult for participants to achieve the transition. A more relaxed delivery of theory, without compromising the conceptual content seems to be needed. It was also suggested that I should participate actively in the movement activities, not direct them from without. This strategy would allow me to assess sensations more accurately, also appropriate timings of the transition between the two modes of attention, affording greater insights into the relevance of the activities to the theoretical content, and whether the movement activities achieved their theoretical ends.

[2] Practical activities and theoretical discussion are identified typographically (*practical activity in italics,* theory in standard font).

[3] Maps originally emerged from the act of travelling, that is, from a practice. Eventually they became substitutes for the practice, erasing the ”way of being in the world” that gave rise to them.

[4] See http://myriadicity.net/ci36/satellite-events/the-small-dance-the-stand.

[5] Manning (2009,p.14) argues that “proprioception provides us with the clues that proceed our cognitive understanding of where we are going.”

[6] Topography refers to the surface shape and features of a region or entity (as in a relief map) and to features in the landscape such as vegetation, human-made features, local history and culture.

[7] See http://plus.maths.org/issue10/features/topology.

[8] That said, social systems are subject to regular change in their structure as connections emerge and disappear.

[9] It is from this that the notion of ‘six degrees of separation’. emerges.

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# IN SITES PACIFIC…INSIGHTS SPECIFIC?

***Mary Lee Sanders***

*The following is a transcription of a panel presentation (In-site: Body, Place, and Memory) which was delivered on June 20, 2009 for the TOPOGRAPHIES: Bodies, Sites, Technologies conference.*

## INVISIBLE ANCESTORS

Poem by Homero Aridgis, Letter from Mexico

American Sign Language translation and demonstration by Mary Lee Sanders

INVISIBLE ANCESTORS

WALK WITH US

THROUGH THESE BACK STREETS

CAR NOISES

THE STARES OF CHILDREN

YOUNG GIRL'S BODIES

CROSS THROUGH THEM

WEIGHTLESS VAGUE

WE TRAVEL THROUGH THEM

AT DOORWAYS THAT NO LONGER ARE

ON BRIDGES THAT ARE EMPTY

WHILE WITH THE SUN ON OUR FACES

WE TOO

MOVE TOWARD TRANSPARENCY

I am a lifelong Californian, ocean and island loving. My earliest movement memories are composed of barefooted runs on sandy beaches, and the ecstatic sensation of being lifted by the powerful surf of the Pacific as it rushes to shore. My affinity for the ocean and marine environs has continued to be expressed through several decades of choreography on ocean sites. These works are inclusive of leadership in community rituals, facilitation of intergenerational/cross-cultural environmental dance explorations, and dancing with, and in response, to the non-human entities of nature. I have always used sign language in my choreographies, drawing from my earliest childhood attractions, and its subsequent maturing focus through university fields of study ( These fields include: Exceptionality in Human Development, Music Composition, Deaf Education , and most particularly, Dance Ethnology,… with a personal focus on the use of gestural language in dance and choreography.)

It is this "more than verbal language" in a "more than human world" that is the subject of a continuum from dreamscape to shorescape to embodiment. I will introduce my personal explorations in this area, and considerations of its underlying significance.

California beach names (Laguna, Santa Monica, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Jalama, Point Dume, Zuma, and Malibu) change to another time, and another shore with other names (Squibnocket, Chappaquiddick, Sanchekantacket, Manitouwatootan, and Lucy Vincent.)

**PAST LIFE REGRESSION, MARTHA'S VINEYARD, spring 2004**

I awaken in a crisp, simple, sunlit room of light colors, of wood and squared corners. I pass through the doorway of this room, down the narrow stairwell, and into more light-drenched colors and squared edges, and sharply contrasting shadowed angles. I am alone here; still more of a child than a woman, but with responsibilities for this home and land while all other family members are away.

I entered this time and place, the mid 1700's, on this island off the coast of Cape Cod.

I descend the light filled stairwell. I see the simple dining table. I am able to read and write and complete a few chores. Through the window in the distance I see a trading party approaching our entrance gate, the family name upon it. I see myself running to greet the travelers. I hear words in a language other than English, as well as in English. I am adept at using a signed language as well, and I am capable of conversing with all members of this party, who are native to this island. I understand that I am to leave with them as my family is not returning soon. I cross the gateway, leaving for another place. We walk in the sunlight through clearings surrounded by briars and tangled woods. As we walk with oxen and carts and horses, I put my hands upon the bodies of the oxen. I feel their bodies heated through the palms of my hands, as if storing sunlight. I feel their muscled movement with every step.

If I have a name, it was once English…and I came from a prominent island family. Now I am referred to by my gifts and skills, principally as a healer, and someone gifted with animals, and unafraid of exploration. I belong between worlds as an interpreter, always moving between. When the chance arises to return to my extended family, I am the one who chooses to remain with my friends, moving between one place and the next. Seeing, scouting, tracking, perceiving and gathering information…

One expedition is different. I wait, as always, unseen and hidden. I can sense more danger than usual. From the thicket, I see our party running swiftly from the others' encampment. They are fleeing as they are being chased. Something has gone wrong. I also begin to run, following them, but I am too far behind to catch up to their lead. I try in vain, but the one in pursuit is gaining on me. I feel a piercing enter my back as I fall onto dried leaves, face forward. This is my death, almost impaled upon the dry leaves of the forest floor.

I see my body lying in these woods, and my attacker approaches, intending to mutilate my lifeless body. A white wolf appears and prevents this act. He lies upon my body guarding it and keeping cover. I sense his weight and his warmth. No one approaches.

Eventually he devours me, and my being is transported into, or merged within his. I see, in the most literal way, through his eyes.

He comes upon the people who have adopted me, gathered in the distance beyond the woods and thicket. I witness through his body, my own death ritual. A scaffold is encircled.

There is no pain, only a distant acute sensing through new perception. ..

I am a curious witness to my own dissolution/absorption/transformation.

**CONTEXT OF THE VISION/REGRESSION**

Some of you, reflecting on my vision's tale, might say that this Past Life Regression was probably symbolic, worthy of some psychological probing, based upon a highly personal language of dream images, and related to issues that I was experiencing at the time of the regression. Others may see it as the result of a very active imagination, charged by the poetry of place, and seeking connective elements to form a whole. Some might suggest that this was, in fact, the actual memory of a previous incarnation, another lifetime set in the removed past.

After this experience, I recorded and investigated my own vision. I did not dismiss it. I was particularly intrigued that this particular approach had been instigated by two seemingly conservative island librarians who recommended this option to our dance company. I had been trying, fruitlessly, to find pertinent research materials in the island libraries during my dance residency there, and it was my frustration that prompted the unexpected guidance. My vision *did* give me pertinent information that I could subsequently access in written records and materials: a setting (a specific locale on this particular island), a specific name and surname, rare communication modalities in a rare society, and a time period. These investigations, through the written genealogies compiled on early island families, found that, indeed, there was an ancestral relative closely fitting the description of my regression. She lived during the specified time period on this island. Furthermore, she was married into a family known for this high incidence of deafness (a recessive trait that affected this island through consanguinity, so that a quarter of the people of this community were deaf, and sign language was used by the deaf as well as the hearing with fluency.) The main character in my regression came from a family of English missionaries to the Wampanoag people, I could find that at least generations of the males of her family were highly skilled in many European languages, preached in the language of the native islanders and translated English bibles and sermons into the indigenous language. I found no written records that my character was a healer, but her father (or grandfather) was known to heal through miracles. He was 'lost at sea', and this event was also experienced within the early context of the regression."

Oxen and carts were available on the island, with active trade, and there was some marriage between native islanders and the Europeans. The Mayhews, like founder Thomas Mayhew (my regression character's ancestor, as well as mine), had a positive relationship with the native islanders, although his relationships with fellow Europeans were strained (as documented by numerous court cases.) I did not find a record of how my character died, and I am considering that she might partially be a composite with another colonial relative of the same period, who was a taken captive as a young girl along with her sister in South Carolina's Long Cane massacre of 1760, and who lived into adulthood as Cherokee.

If this vision were a singular experience, perhaps it could be left to rest as a mysterious coincidence. However, this "epiphanal" event revealed an *extensive* pattern in my own genealogy, and shed a new, brilliant light on an old question. It resulted in what I believe is the new insight on my original thesis of over 25 years ago (in UCLA's Graduate Dance Dept, in Dance Ethnology). As someone who had been attracted to sign language all of my life, from early childhood on, I incorporated sign language into my choreography, and into my teaching materials for diverse populations and non-English speaking children, in performances in the Pacific Coastal environment, and in community rituals in nature. The subject of my research became: *Aesthetic Expression from Functional Symbolism*. I asked: Why do some hearing choreographers, not immersed in Deaf Culture through family, relationship or career, seek to incorporate sign language into their creative works…even with "hearing- only" audiences? Although there was no lack of meaningful answers to this question, I never really felt there was completion.

My father, whose line I am describing, did not even know the last name of his Grandmother. He only knew that the family had been in this country for a very long time. Not only did this Past Life Regression highlight a historical family member, but continuing

genealogical research has started to fill in a web- like series of patterns and constellations pertinent to my original thesis question, and deeply related, and significant to my own lifelong affinities and passions.

*It seems that my genealogy (without any prior conscious knowledge) had been reflected in my body of choreographic works, and what I took to be the muse of creativity at work…was actually the mining of my own ancestral memories!*

On a timeline of significant occurrences in The history of Sign Language in America *(inclusive of indigenous sign languages of the deaf , ASL, and native sign systems, including Pan American Sign Language, which was once a lingua franca, Hand Talk etc)* my ancestral family figured prominently and recurrently! Included in this family tree are Colonial immigrants from Kent, England with a high incidence of the recessive trait for Deafness, their migrating family members who populated the signing island of Martha's Vineyard from 1630's, the espionage agent, Sir George Downing a hearing man who led an international ring of Deaf spies in Cromwell's time, explorer/astronomer/mariner Thomas Colhoun of the Long Expedition… a researcher of native signs (resulting in one of the earliest books on Native American sign language), and ancestors living with or married into indigenous families with signing traditions, Carolina traders, and pirate-explorers. Signing communities are rare (there are only a handful in the world today), and although Martha's Vineyard Sign Language is considered extinct, it had a long and notable history of close to 300 years. I believe that this exceptionality has proven itself rare enough to be valuable in tracking transgenerational memory.

I became completely absorbed by what was rising to the surface. I sought (and continue to seek) an understanding of the experience as well as insight from others who may have also stumbled upon this "ancestral phenomena." I found a kindred spirit in the work of Dr. Anne Ancelin Schutzenberger of France who has contributed theories and therapies of transgenerational transmission, geno-sociograms, and continues her pioneering work in psycho-genealogy. Now in her 90's she continues investigation through psycho-drama and the charting of transgenerational constellations. Buckminster Fuller (of the geodesic dome) was also an avid genealogist. I reviewed some of the archives of his genealogical compilations (housed here in Stanford's Special Collections) and noted a penciled term scribbled on the side of a sheet of paper: "*Syner-genetics.*" I do not know if he coined this term, or if it was created by someone he corresponded with, but I do think this term might apply to the phenomenon discussed here.

Our family's long American presence must have carried with it burdens of colonization, and the liminal memories and amnesias associated with painful pasts. Jeannette Marik Margo suggests that certain pasts remain symbolically coded but consciously forgotten, and that the semiotic layers of intra-group memories protect against dissonant history. But liminal memory remains (not remembered, not forgotten) and is symbolically expressed in the "*twilight modes of consciousness."*

**ATTRIBUTES OF THE CREATIVE DANCER/CHOREOGRAPHER for AUTO-CHOREOLOGY**

The creative dancer, particularly the choreographer, who has no prior knowledge of personal lineage, is uniquely suited to this transgenerational investigation through "*Auto-choreology*", a term I have coined to describe the self study of one's one body of choreographic work as related to "dance as a way of knowing." Many of us, for a myriad of reasons, are separated from our deep ancestry, and even surface genealogies. If we do not belong to intact traditions that honor ancestors, keeping familial histories known and sacred, we are seemingly bound in an origin-less present. But this does not mean that the longing (and even the knowing) does not still exist within us. Dance, as our mode of expression and inquiry, may be uncovering the "dormant potential in genetic memory." Darold Treffert MD suggests that genetic memory is one of several types of memory, and it is how one remembers things one has never learned.

Who is more suited to mine the mysteries of soma and psyche than the dancer engaged in the subtle worlds?

The dreamer who dances is self-documenting: valuing, storing, logging, dialoguing with, creating from… the storehouse of the subconscious, and is already making use of the essential materials…perhaps not deciphering the components as part of an ancestral puzzle…but valuing these pieces as personally relevant, mysterious, and worthy of visceral

exploration. The treasure is treasured…but not deciphered.

Place Memory: When attuned, the place is fully communicating, and the other beings (non-human) are attentive to the event. Ancestrally speaking, places are charged with information that may resonate to a dancer who reengages with ancestral grounds, but I also believe that evocative places and movements…reminiscent, but not specific, can arouse memory and catalyze epigenesis. The multiple intelligences which exist in the nature around us are communicating with the multiple intelligences of the fully engaged dancer.

The creative person, intrinsically motivated, may be more likely to actively correlate to subconscious genetic influences (innate affinities and passions.) In this vein, it is worthwhile to pursue theories of behavior genetics, epigenesis, genetic memory, niche finding, transgenerational transmission, psycho-biology, and psycho-genealogy. It may be wise to consider the cultural amnesia experienced by both colonizing and colonized societies and the many legacies left in our subconscious realm…to create from, to dialogue with, to acknowledge, to heal.

I am left to re-interpret, with new eyes, and from a very different vantage point, my early research. What I formerly studied in an objective way, has transformed into a highly personal exploration. My recent ethical decision to study my own family's history, rather than to study "the Other" as an ethnologist, has spiraled back onto itself. The historical elements/communities in the timeline of Indigenous American Sign Languages (including Native American and Deaf Manual Languages and codes) grace our family tree! It is this "more than verbal language" in a "more than human world" which continues to be my research focus. It's continuum from dreamscape to landscape and back again takes this exploration from the evocative to the invocative, and ventures towards what some may describe as provocative.

Perhaps there is no……. "OTHER!"

"DANCE IS A WAY OF KNOWING"

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# The circulari project


## *Text by Gretchen Schiller*
## *Project made in collaboration with Paula Meijerink.*


**Introduction**

What kinaesthetic sensations do we transplant as we move from one place to another? How do these circulate and become inscribed in our bodies and in lands we cultivate?

The ***circulari*** art project finds its inspiration from the kinaesthetic scores or corporeal maps we gather, generate and leave behind as bodies move through urban and rural landscapes. With ***circulari***, the choreography takes the form of an inverted grapevine field where the dancers are not people, but uprooted grape vines or *cèpes*. These organic materials originating from a specific agricultural landscape in the south of France were uprooted, inverted and imbued with kinaesthetic qualities. In this transplanted and transformed landscape the choreography is manifested by interpolating movement between the 'bodies' of the cèpes using compositional groupings of solos, duets and trios (Image 1) in a landscape grid.

***circulari*** like my past art practice transplants, transfigures and transforms kinaesthetic qualities across material forms. For instance ***trajets,*** (2007) co-directed with Susan Kozel is a video dance installation, a movement ecosystem of moving screens which respond to the movements of the public, much in the way that water propagates and ripples around your body when you wade in a pool of water. ***Shifting ground,*** (1998) on the other hand, is an interactive installation where three filmed dancers of separate geographic and kinaesthetic cultures are choreographed in a video dance together with an interactive interface. ***circulari*** unlike these works, challenges my practice as it uses organic, yet inanimate materials as choreographic objects and integrates methods from landscape architecture.

Within the context of this conference *Topologies, Bodies, Sites and Technologies,* I would like to highlight the idiosyncratic nature of this choreographic and landscape architecture project by first summarizing a selection of historic and contemporary choreographic examples that couple the body and landscape. The second part describes the process of making ***circulari*** and introduces the theoretic outcomes and future artistic itineraries. The lecture demonstration includes over 20 images and video[1] (many not included in the proceedings) and concludes with a physical slow motion walking exercise outdoors inspired and inherited from Japanese choreographer Kei Ta Kei.

**Part One: Historic and contemporary examples.**

There is little written on landscape and choreography[2] and the examples cited below serve not as a genealogy of the genre, but instead as evidence of ways in which the body and land, so to speak, materialize new choreographic works, methods and concepts. Within the context of this presentation a non-exhaustive selection of examples provide a thematic platform to help articulate the singularity of the ***circulari*** project. These examples include the works of contemporary British company Igloo (Ruth Gibson and Bruno Martelli, http://www.igloo.org.uk/) Japanese Eiko and Koma (http://www.eikoandkoma.org/), American Anna and Lawrence Halprin (www.annahalprin.org), Austro-Hungarian Rudolph Laban and the Monte Verita dancers, and the French King Louis XIV (if we can call him a choreographer). Hervé Brunon, art historian with the Centre Nationale Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in the article, *Lieux scéniques et chorégraphie du parcours: les jardins de Versailles et la danse sous Louis XIV* in the anthology Comme une danse illustrates relationships between choreography and landscape design in the courts of Louis 14.th Brunon exposes the ways in which a movement map was created to guide the visitor's paths through the gardens in Versailles. These share visual features with the Feuillet's dance notation systems of the 17th century. Here there were indications of where one's body stopped to gaze at a particular fountain and then turned to appreciate another feature of the garden. There was also sound that accompanied each step of promenade in the garden. (Welcomme 2007: 92-99) Here as Brunon illustrates, with visual examples, dance notations and garden/landscape viewing gudes

shared a common mapping or *kinaesthetic* navigation.

A few centuries later, mapping new choreographic territory was underway with Rudolph Laban and his dancers in Monte Verità Ascona, Switzerland between 1913 and 1918. Here dancing (naked) in the natural settings of the land was an integral part of the spiritual quest for understanding new movement and choreography. Here the landscape was a sort of *fertile stage and source of spiritual inspiration* for living and dancing. This lead to the development of 'new dance' as the land inspired a new way of being, expressing and describing the body[3]. With the contemporary work of Igloo, on the other hand, new digital and analogue landscapes are not only sources of inspiration, but are constructed and materialized as new hybrid artworks/landscapes. In their artwork, *Summerbranc*h (2006) they explore movement and stillness in nature coupled with a variety of digital tools to materialize new choreographic *landscapes or danscapes*. Other works such as *Back Strikes Empire* (2006) and *War Stars* (2002) were filmed in the natural settings of Western Australia and Iceland. Their work staged as games, performances, and installations create alternative landscape-choreographic metaphors. Another contemporary company Eiko and Koma, based in the United States integrates landscape spaces that partner the dance movement. Their performance work *River* (1995), the outdoors version, for instance is staged in water. [4]*River* is staged in a natural setting where the choreography is a *mise en scène* or perhaps a *mise en mouvement* with the qualities of the bodies and the movement of the water. Seminal and contemporary choreographer, Anna Halprin, also makes *mise en movements* with dancers in particular environments which date back to *Automobile Event* (1968) where dancers are invading cars in urban settings, or with *Seasons* (2003) where bodies in netted bags hang like cocoons in the trees of a forest. This choreographer went beyond making work in landscapes and developed with her husband, Lawrence Halprin, a landscape architect, a new devising method, namely RSVP (Resource, Score, Valueaction, Performance). This method used by choreographers and urban designers alike, illustrates how ideas of landscape design and choreography together have become *compositional strategies of creativity and planning*. The RSVP method does not only serve the dance community but has been used as a creative method in urban design. With the works cited above, we can see how the coupling of choreography and landscape led to new *landscapes/dansecapes* (Igloo), *mise en mouvement* with nature (Eiko and Koma), *transdisciplinary methods of devising landscape design and choreography*, (The Halprins) *a source of physical and spiritual inspiration (Laban- Monte Verita)* and a sort *kinaesthetic navigation or mapping (Louis XIV).*

**Part Two: The working process**

Before collaborating with the landscape architect Paula Meijerink I exercised an eclectic range of research methods which included observing the public in transit at train stations, to filming flocking flamingos in the Camargue, France to observing darting schools of fish underwater. With time, I found that my interest did not lie in 'representing these collectives' but instead in extracting choreographic and kinaesthetic understandings of collective behaviour. I discovered through observation and readings that tendencies of collective dynamics create unpredictable but organised dynamic behaviours such as displace-come together-pull apart. (Feder 2007: 28-30) Building on this notion of displacement and kinaesthetic transformation of sensation, landscape architect Paula Meijerink and I began discussing the notion of transplanting kinaesthetic sensations and patterns of mass transport and agricultural spaces. We discussed for instance how the movement of masses on the train not only affords a place to transport the body but it also offers the rider with a particular type of body or kinaesthetic-dwelling of a moving landscape.

Paula Meijerink grew up on a farm in Holland and I had an upbringing living in different geographical and linguistic backgrounds. Both of us began discussing the ways in which we could think of displacement as well as transformation of place and embed particular movement qualities into physical space design. During our research we considered the qualitative tensions and rhythms inscribed in moving landscapes from different places and experiences of transit. The creative process began to evolve and we focussed on, *mass movement in rural and urban sites, kinaesthetic inscriptions between the landscape and the body, the particularity of a place and the 'natural resources' or 'site's resources,*' and finally the *idiosyncratic*

*socio-cutural and cultivated inscriptions of a landscape*. We set off to begin the residency at L.A.C Lieux d'art Contemporain in France in the summer of 2008 for the first phase of the project with a series of ideas and sketches and the decision to use local 'natural' resources. We were given the opportunity to create an outdoors installation beside the L.A.C gallery: a converted wine cellar.

Upon arrival at L.A.C we found two types of landscapes or agricultural motifs that contradicted each other. The fertile grounds of vineyards pulled your gaze from one lush field to another. The other was less fluid, punctuating space with heaps of uprooted cèpes lying dead in piles on the field. We understood later that theses piles were uprooted cèpes waiting to be removed or burned. From a distance, the cèpes looked like a heap of bones-horizontal, dead.

The landscape rhythms of this particular region took on another sort of kinaesthetic tension and itch: from grapevines to graveyards. The economic culture was such that these cèpes had been uprooted and discarded to control wine production. The vineyard owners received financial compensation for controlling the production and uprooting the cèpes as proof of their good economic behaviour. These piles of roots would be used for summer barbeques or heating during the winter months.

When I picked up the *to be barbeque fuel* I felt as if I was holding onto a sculpted body, a limb, amputated, but somehow still carrying the memories of the winds, rains and sun that had brought about its curves and contortions. As I began picking up these 'cepes-body-parts-roots' closer to my own body I found that each had a particular expressive potential and a sort of resilience. Perhaps these uprooted cèpes would resist their death and find another sort of performative life?

At first Meijerink's intent was to use a few hundred cèpes as a support structure for a porous video wall that the public could appreciate as a sculpture or a video screen. As we began working with these cèpes, however, we ran into problems. We found that the dense nature of these cèpes contradicted our metaphor of a breathing porous transformed wall. We were humbled by our ignorance of the particular nature of this material. We were trying to make it do something that was against its material qualities. With the help of the architect Thierry Beaudoin, the porous wall was abandoned and instead, we became interested in the singularity of each cèpe standing up looking alive again, alone, but with others.

Could we bring them back to life through verticality? We turned them upside down, cut them across with a chain saw and painted the cut bleeding red like the vessels of the body (Image 2 and 3). Each cèpe was analyzed and cut based on its potential to somehow support its own weight. During this process, I felt the tensions, turns and rhythms of each cèpe. Moving from the foreign to the familiar the cèpe-body began to trigger movement memories in my own body. The cèpes were movement mnemonic devices. As I was choreographing the dynamic relationships between the cèpes and 'planting them upside down' I was also reminded of Doris Humphrey's choreographic statement that verticality is life - horizontality is death and that the dance took place between these two places…the arch, the suspension. How could a dance take place between two pieces of still uprooted roots? Somehow it was my body's interpolation of movement and the potential of the dynamic tensions of stillness that afforded a kinaesthetic structure. We laid out a grid, a common landscape architectural practice for Paula Meijerink which echoed the original spatial organization inherent in the vineyards. The solos, duets and trios took place along the x-axis. By transforming their position from horizontal to vertical, giving them a form, we had planted a new grape garden, upside down from their original positions bleeding with another layer of blood pouring and spilling into the field with a video projected during the evening performances. What I began to realize was how the absence of literal movement created a desire for movement. The curves and dynamic trajectories inherent in each cèpe and the oppositional and counterpoint positions of their neighbours created a kinaesthetic pull in the landscape. Inanimate objects could be animated through a potential of dynamic stillness. (Image 4)

With *circulari phase one* the leitmotifs of the bodily and organic collide and bleed across each other as a dynamic landscape. While we were satisfied with this collaborative project we realized that we had many more plans to develop and that we needed more time. We want to add yet another layer of movement with miniature video and sound sources grafted to the cèpes. But we now know that this will involve more technical consideration.

The next phase of the project is to produce

another incarnation of the artwork as well as publish a short pictorial book highlighting the concepts we are discovering together through this collaboration. The installation plans (Images 5 and 6) are sketches of another incarnation of the project - a spiral promenade and nesting structure. Paula Merjerink is also looking at the wine production sectors in the world and the changing landscapes due to the economic production of wine markets.

To conclude, prior to this project Paula Meijerink had never considered this kinaesthetic aspect of landscape, and I had not thought of the economies of the production in landscape design. Today, we ask ourselves is this a movement landscape, a kinaesthetic sculpture, a new video vine or a video garden – or simply a work where roots are uprooted and transformed from one place to another. Regardless, we agree with Gertrude Stein that "Its great to have roots as long as you can take them with you."

**Exercise- Stillness and Slow motion**

To conclude the lecture demonstration I asked the participants to take off their shoes and engage in a slow motion thirty minute walk from the inside of the studio to the outdoor space. I inherited this exercise from Japanese choreographer Kai Ta Kei's class that I undertook at UCLA while doing my MA in choreography. It physicalises the slowing down of time offering a way to experience stillness outdoors.

This slow motion walk, like ***circulari,*** allows me to approach stillness but never really achieve it. It takes me closer to tiny shifts of movement effort, pulse and tension which linger in our bodies and space permanently even when we are seemingly still.

**Images**

Image 1. Duet Cèpe.

Image 2. Painted Cèpe.

Image 3. Paula Meijerink with chain saw.

Image 4. Field at night

Image 5. Field of Cèpes

Image 6. Circulari Phase Two

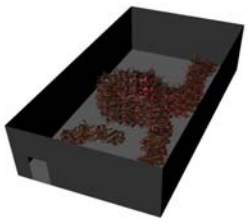

Image 7. Circulari Phase Two Cross Section.

**Acknowledgements**

I would like thank the wonderful collaborator Paula Meijerink and architect Thierry Beaudoin, Laure Fernandez, L.A.C, WANTED, Frank Leblanc, Push Push, Laurent Sales, the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, mo-vi-da, the School of Arts Brunel, West London and the Centre National de Danse, Paris for making this project possible.

Notes

[1] For more informatin on the project see: http://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/acad/sa/artstaff/drama/gretchen

[2] With the exception of the thematic book concerning dance and landscape. " Comme une danse" Les carnets du paysage published in 2007.

[3] (http://www.csf.ethz.ch/about/history/highlights)

[4] For more on this work and others see their website: (http://www.eikoandkoma.org/index.php?id=1460).

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www.physicstoday.org

# Threshold Spaces:

# Movement Topologies in Dance Cultures of the 19th Century

*Stephanie Schroedter*

From the aspect of threshold spaces and movement topologies in ballet pantomimes of the 19th century I would like to present a branch of my project "Music in Motion", which concentrates on movement spaces in the theatre and everyday cultures as well as on movement rhythms and movement images.[1] The project focuses paradigmatically on Paris between 1830 and 1870. In this context, various interactions between dance and music will be juxtaposed on different levels of cultural activity within equally disparate cultural contexts. I am perfectly aware of the problematic nature of this Eurocentric point of view. Nonetheless, I accept it as a challenge to illustrate general points with the help of special cases, or rather, formulated spatially, I will concentrate on the local to illustrate the spatially extensive.

In doing so, I would like to use an angle which is methodologically indebted to the 20th and 21st centuries[2] in order to approach dimensions of 19th century dance culture reception and, in particular, perception. In the end, it is about the historicity of different kinds of hearing, seeing and moving in different combinations, none of which have been explicitly documented in dance notations, musical scores, pictures or written commentaries. Nonetheless, an outline of this historicity shimmers through all the sources that I include in my research.

In this delicate investigation, time and space are not played off against each other, but spatial connections are established within time in order to illustrate their concurrence. On this basis I will develop a spatial concept which does not primarily establish the dance localities of the cultural metropolis Paris but rather lets them come into view and into the ear as a metaphor for dance-musical movement dynamics. These movement dynamics create, or rather manifest, boundaries just as they cross them in order to connect movement spaces which are symbolically representative, real, imagined, or rather imaginary.

Under these methodological conditions I concentrate on social dance events taking place on the stage as well as on dance in social contexts outside the theatre, which often reflects if not even influences theatre events. Thus the ballroom is equally as interesting as the musical salon with its stylized dance compositions, since both stand paradigmatically for alternative spaces of hearing, seeing and moving closed to the theatre. Each of them, however, illustrates specific concepts of movements between hearing and seeing.

In order to trace connections between these levels of cultural activity, I focus within the field of music and dance theatre[3] on those social-, character- and national dances which are used as topoi on the stage and which are at the same time very popular in social dance and in the socially important musical salon. In this respect social dance built a bridge between the theatre and dance/music cultures outside the theatre.

Typically social dance scenes within an opera or ballet are positioned at dramatic turning points, thus allowing anticipation of catastrophe if not even causing this catastrophe. Despite their superficial vivacity they thus refer to something of vital relevance existing beyond what is happening on the stage. In other words, they represent, or rather symbolize, a threshold space between theatre and society – or reality, fiction and desire – which oscillates between dream and trauma.

From the perspective of the aesthetics of perception, these dramatic threshold spaces also represent in-between-spaces of aural and visual movements that can be perceived only sensually. The meanings of these scenes do not reveal themselves through the libretti, which lost their direct connection with the stage in the course of the 19th century to become a more literary genre. Likewise, the meanings of these staged social dances cannot be deduced only through the dance or primarily from the music, but first and foremost by a tension-filled interaction between music and dance, which needs to

be heard as much as to be seen for the comprehension of its aesthetic intention.

To describe these facts more specifically, in order to detect how the music illustrates the (movements of the) dance and how the dance visualizes the (movements of the) music, a combination of synaesthetic hearing and kinaesthetic seeing is necessary, one which focuses the acoustic and optical movements in their pictorial and physical embodiment to establish dynamic movement spaces.

I juxtapose these staged social dances that are of a symbolic nature with the fascinating, colourful and patchwork ball culture of Paris between 1830 and 1870. On this level of dance activity optical impressions are less relevant, although pictures emphasize impressive ballroom decorations as a large number of contemporary graphics show.

*Bal d'Asnières*

Instead it is obvious that in the popular social dance culture spatial dynamics, which originate from music set into motion, are of great interest. Above all, kinetic hearing is necessary for this, since it understands and translates music primarily as rhythmical movement. This is also shown in many illustrations, although they document this phenomenon mutely:

*Bal masqué de l'opéra.*

Whether as a dance arrangement of opera or ballet melodies or as a new composition which stylizes dance, the dance music of the musical salon opens up hearing spaces for the imagination of movement. Dance gestures and figures are now translated into musical ones, which develop a logic of their own in order to gain independence from the original dance movements – without denying them. As a consequence, hearing spaces of movement imagination are opened up, which require, or rather promote, a subtle combination of synaesthetic and kinetic hearing. In this context, imaginations of movement are either stimulated by one's own kinetic experience and fantasy or they are caused by the memory of a stage event as the titles of the corresponding music pieces emphasize, often beginning with "Souvenir de …".

I would like to call this specific combination of a synaesthetic and kinetic hearing an imaginary kinaesthetic hearing, which promotes a specific hearing, if not even specific hearing poetics and politics. Due to the missing visualization of a scenic performance, the listener's ideas and imagination gain a higher status than a spatially concrete realization.

I am now turning to concrete examples which are to illustrate at least roughly what so far has been formulated theoretically, or rather methodically. For this I will focus on 'devil's ballets' like *Le Diable boiteux*,[4] *Le Diable amoureux*,[5] *Le Diable à quatre*,[6] *Le Violon du Diable*[7] and *Diavolina*[8], which seem to form a diametrically opposite pole to the ethereal ballets of the 19th century, for which *La Sylphide* and *Giselle* stand as prototypes. But the earthly 'ghost empires', which are shown in the devil's ballets, are no less revealing in terms of then-contemporary dance aesthetics. Like the ethereal ballets, but with different methods, they refer to a reality that is hidden behind the realities of everyday life and is also directly linked to them. Also in the devil's ballets daydreams of everyday life are the basis for dream spaces of the theatre which develop traumatic features. Since all of these threshold spaces between dream and trauma are mainly signalized by stylized social dances[9] that lead to changes of awareness and a loss of control, the dividing lines between a theatricalized society on stage and social dances – which by their dynamics escape concrete realities within theatricalized ballrooms – merge increasingly. At this point movement topologies of the 19th century show themselves particularly capable of crossing borderlines between a fictitious reality and a real fiction, or between inner and outer spaces,

which flow into another just showing two sides of one coin.

*A young girl meets a devil at a bal masqué.*

However, the connections between the social dance scenes in the devil's ballets and various movement spaces of the Paris ball cultures of the 19th century,[10] which overcome social barriers, are not restricted to narrative, or rather psychological, intentions. Numerous arrangements of ballet melodies for social dances not only prove their extensive reception, but also, and in particular, the (dance) active perception of these ballets in the ballroom, often combined with a theatricality which is underlined by corresponding masks and costumes. It is remarkable that these facts are reflected most impressively in the numerous arrangements of *Le Diable à quatre*, although this devil's ballet does not turn out to be as attractive/ horrible as the dramatically complex plot lines in *Le Diable amoureux* and *Le Violon du Diable* for instance. (Compare the following page.) What could be of crucial importance for these facts, apart from the choreography by Mazilier, is primarily the music by Adolphe Adam, who composed catchy melodies. This again suggests that arrangements of ballets for the ballroom were more important for the reception of these ballets and, above all, for the public's perception of them than the narrative content of the libretti, which tend to be overrated in this regard from today's point of view.

With respect to the excessively printed arrangements of devil's ballets for simple or refined chamber music use, the following question arises: what are the consequences for the hearing experience due to the quite paradox phenomenon of an exclusively acoustic perception of a dance composition which originally was based on strong optical and physical stimuli? In this context, it seems to make sense to differentiate, for now, between various ways of hearing music, or specific 'hearing manners'. Music that illustrates stage events and directly corresponds with body movements must inevitably be heard differently than music which is intended to be understood without scenic or, especially, physically moving visualisations, even though this music's roots are located there. Synaesthetic hearing and kinaesthetic seeing, which are necessary for understanding ballet performances of the 19th century, as well as the kinetic experience of dance in the ballroom are by no means neglected by the degree of abstraction and imagination of dance in salon music, but expanded by a hearing which brings the corresponding sound spaces and movement images to mind or develops them through fantasy: they are no less than an important condition for the imaginary kinaesthetic hearing in the musical salon.[11]

To conclude, on the basis of an analysis of symbolical, real and imaginary, aural and/or visual movement spaces in dance/music cultures of the 19th century, my project is concerned with techniques, constructions and strategies of inside or outside movements between hearing and seeing. In this context, I am less interested in a mapping (or rather a cartography) of bodies in space, than in a space mapping or "making space" through visual and/or aural movements, thus referring to socio-cultural and socio-political spaces of power as well as to conflicting spaces within the aesthetics of perception regarding hearing, seeing and moving.

## Arragements of ‚Devil's ballets' for the Ballroom and Musical Salon

***Le Diable boiteux***

Hünten. *Le Camelia, petite ronde pour le piano sur une valse du ballet …*, Paris n.d.
Hünten. *Le Datura, petite rondo pour le piano sur une motif du ballet …*, Paris n.d.
Hünten. *Le Muguet, petite ronde pour le piano sur une air de danse du ballet …*, Paris n.d.

***Le Diable amoureux***

Lemoine. *Deux Quadrilles … pour le piano*, s.l.n.d.
Lemoine. *Deux airs … pour le piano op. 40*, Paris [1842].
Reber. *Danse des Pirates et des jeunes filles … pour piano à quatre mains, Suite à 4 mains No. 2 op. 31*, Paris [1876].
Reber. *Pas de deux du ballet … pour piano à quatre mains, Suite à 4 mains No. 6 op. 31*, Paris [1876].
Reber. *Pas de deux du ballet … pour piano à quatre mains*, Paris [1877].
Reber. *Valse du ballet … pour piano*, Paris [1876].
Reber. *Valse du ballet … pour piano à quatre mains, Suite à 4 mains No. 4 op. 31*, Paris [1876].
Reber. *Valse du ballet … pour piano à quatre mains*, Paris [1877].
Osborne, George Alexandre. *Fantaisie (brillante) pour piano sur un motif du ballet … op. 34*, Paris [1841].
Rosellen, Henri. *2 Divertissemens pour piano sur les plus jolies motifs du ballet …, op. 33*, s.l. [1841].

***Le Violon du diable***

Klemczynski, Julien. *Duo brillant pour piano et violon op. 74*, Paris [1849].
Le Carpentier. *108e bagatelle pour le piano sur …*, Paris [1849].
Musard, A. (fils). *Quadrille sur … arrangée pour le piano (avec accompagnement de Violon, Basse, Flûte et Cornet)*, Paris [1849].
Musard. *Californie. Polka du … pour le piano*, Paris [1849].
Musard. *Suite de valses sur … pour piano (avec accompagnement de Violon, Basse, Flûte et Cornet)*, Paris [1849].
Pasdeloup, Jules Etienne. *Pas de fleurs. Rédowa du … pour le piano*, Paris [1849].
Saint-Léon, Arthur. Variation [sur *Le Violon du Diable*, Ms.], Ms.autogr.

***Le Diable à quatre***

Adam. *Airs de Ballet du … arrangés pour le piano*, Paris n.d.
Coard, Emile. *Grand Pas arrangé pour musique militaire*, Paris n.d.
Fessy, Alexandre Charles. *Mazurka arrangée pour le piano*, Paris [1854].
Fessy. *Polka du … arrangée pour le piano*, Paris [1854].
Fessy. *Polka du … arrangée pour le piano*, Paris [1862].
Fessy. *Première Polka sur les Thémes du … pour le piano*, Paris [1854].
Herz. *Valse du … pour le piano op. 46*, Paris [1845].
Kontski, Antoine de. *Nouvelle Mazurka Polonaise dansée dans … pour le piano*, Paris [1862].
Lamotte, A. *Quadrille pour orchestre (1r & 2e violon, flûte, 1r & 2e clarinette, cors ou sax horns, 1r & 2e & 3e trombones, ophicleide, 1r & 2e piston, alto, batterie, vcelle & c-basse)*, Paris [1863].
Le Carpentier. *Bagatelle sur … pour le piano*, s.l. [1853].
Le Carpentier. *Bagatelle sur … pour le piano*, s.l. [1858].
Le Carpentier. *Bagatelle sur … pour le piano* (146e Bagatelle), s.l. [1862].
Le Carpentier. *Quadrille pour le piano sur les motifs du ballet … (avec violons, flûte, flageolet ou cornet ou sol)*, Paris [1845].
Le Carpentier. *Quadrille pour le piano sur les motifs du ballet …*, Paris [1876].
Leduc, Alphonse. *Quadrille brillante composé sur … pour le piano (avec violons, flageolet, flûte, pistons)*, Paris [1845].
Robillard, Victor. *Polka pour violon seul (= Les Fleurs magiques, Choix de Danses Favorites No. 8)*, Paris [1857].
Rosellen. *Deux Rondeau pour le piano sur le motifs du ballet … op.77*, s.l. [1845].
Rosellen. *Fantaisie brillante … pour piano op. 77*, s.l. [1862].
Rosellen. *Polka … pour le piano*, Paris n.d.
Strauss, [Johann (Fils)] et Blancheteau. *Polka-Mazurka sur les motifs du … par Strauss, orchestrée par Blancheteau (1er & 2d violon, alto, 1er & 2e clarinette, vlle et contrabasse, 1er &2e & 3e trombone,1er & 2e piston, flute & flageolet, batterie, cors ou sax-horns en fa, ophicleide)*, Paris [1863].
Strauss, [Johann (Fils)]. *Polka mazurka*, Paris [1862].
Tolbecque. *Deux Quadrilles composées pour le piano (avec accompagnement de violon, flûte ou flageolet, pistons)*, Paris [1845].
Tolbecque. *Suite de Valses pour le piano sur …*, Paris [1845].
Wachs, Frédéric. *Polka de … (N° 27 de „Corbeille de fleurs. Transcriptions faciles pour piano")*, Paris [1877].

## Notes

1 This project is supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).

2 For an overview compare, for example, Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns. Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften*, chapter "Spatial turn", Reinbek bei Hamburg $^{3}$2009, pp. 284; Sigrid Weigel, "Zum 'topographical turn'. Kartographie, Topographie und Raumkonzepte in den Kulturwissenschaften", in: *KulturPoetik*, vol. 2/2, 2002, p. 151–165.

3 The term music and dance theatre is used here for different opera and ballets types of the 19$^{th}$ century.

4 First performance: Paris 1836. Choreographer: Coralli. Composer: Casimir Gide. Librettist: Edmond Burat de Gurgy und Nourrit.

5 First performance: Paris 1840. Choreographer: Joseph Mazilier. Composer: François Benoist, Napoléon-Henri Reber. Librettist: Marquis de Saint-Georges.

6 First performance: Paris 1845. Choreographer: J. Mazilier. Composer: Adam, L: de Leuven (Adolphe Graf Ribbing).

7 First performance: Paris 1849. Choreographer and librettist: Arthur Saint-Léon. Composer: Cesare Pugni.

8 First performance: Paris 1863. Choreographer and librettist: Saint-Léon. Composer: Pugni.

[9] Here, in a general sense, character and national dance are included along with conventional social dance.

[10] Paris ball culture encompassed all areas of life: the glamorously staged balls of the Paris Opera at Carnival, the private balls of the upper class bourgeoisie (who while particularly concerned with their reputations were also fearful of losing their privileged status), the newer open balls that became mass attractions in bigger cities (which while open to people of all classes still required a certain fee for entry), and finally the simple guinguettes of the Paris Barrières, at which people were able to get by without much luxury (but also with much more wine consumption).

[11] Against this backdrop, today it seems to be very difficult for us to understand the dance compositions for the musical salon without having the 'original' perception, which was influenced by theatre and ballroom events.

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# Dancing on the Holodeck

*Sherri Segovia and Catherine Turocy*

*Dancing on the Holodeck* is an idea for an educational/art game for learning and doing social dances. It uses emerging web-cam and motion capture technology and intelligent agents as non-player characters (NPCs). NPCs are a major element of the game and function as teachers, partners, classmates, admirers, barflies, aliens, celebrities, and heads of state. Using the science-fiction concept of the holodeck from Star Trek, dance selections span different cultures and genres from pre-history, to the present, to imaginary/alien styles of the future. Not to be confused with dance as a performance art or ballroom exposition, in this game players learn casual dances that people have traditionally shared in social settings throughout history.

For a truly immersive holodeck experience, high fidelity graphics, sound and kinesthetic realism are essential to the aesthetics of the game. The discography must be inspiring for dance, and be original, rich recordings of popular styles from many eras, including some that haven't happened yet. New dances and discography will be downloadable to continuously expand the repertory of the game over time. The main console will include a set of core dances rated "E" for everyone. Some downloadable dances may have mature ratings due to their settings in nightclubs and bars. No previous dance experience is required. In fact, the hardware would allow modifications to make it feasible for elderly and disabled players as well. The game is for one to four players and has three modes: 1) dance class, 2) invitational, and 3) free style.

Players who are beginners can use the class mode to learn a specific style and control the pace and directional facing of the teacher. Likewise, the teacher NPC, endowed with artificial intelligence, will adjust the level of instruction and encouragement according to the motion-captured accuracy of the player. Meanwhile, players see real-time, 3-D animated versions of themselves dancing in the context of a class populated with other "students." These are NPCs whose abilities might be better or worse than the players'. With web-cam technology no floor pad will be required. Players have the freedom to move as they will and learn by imitation–matching their movements as closely as possible to the teacher and other NPCs in the class.

The invitational mode immerses players in short story scenarios in which social dances shape one's interpersonal relations and political status. Source material for these scenarios comes from mythology, cultural or folk tradition, history, literature, science fiction, pulp fiction, and fairy tales. Players must pass through a minimum class time to get invited to (i.e. "unlock") dance events, balls, night-clubs, or discos. Here, players will encounter challenges such as doing the best tango to win the girl/guy in a 1914 milonga in Buenos Aires, or failing that, dance one's best galliard to entertain a dungeon keeper enough to escape. The Cinderella story will require learning to waltz, while starting a Texas line dance might get one noticed (hopefully favorably) in an alien disco.

Dancing in the free-style mode allows players to mix and match venues, partners (if needed), music, and styles of dance including self-styled choreography. The player can choose to dance with or without NPCs and dance as long and freely as one wishes. This mode can be recorded and saved for play-back, or sent to other players over an internet connection. Eventually, the game will support multi-player dance events in virtual space.

With an emphasis on dance, the holodeck provides a metaphor for the core experience. It is an immersive and interactive way to give players the exhilaration of dancing well, in rhythm, to excellent music with good friends—human or not.

Why this game? Archeological records show evidence that people have danced since the earliest traces of human life. We believe that dancing together is a form of meaningful play that in the present moment is largely inaccessible to the general public. Further, we believe it is under-represented in the gaming industry. The mega popularity of Dance Dance Revolution, reality TV dance shows, and events like the T-mobile train station dances, is evidence of the ongoing human fascination and enthusiasm for dance. Here are the lessons in a box.

 *For more information and updates*: www.dancingon.net.

# Àurea de Sarrà, placing dance between words and ruins

*Begoña Olabarria Smith*

When talking about Sarrà is unavoidable to make a reference to Isadora Duncan (specially being so close to San Francisco) and talking about her, Ann Daly in her groundbreaking book *Done into Dance*, explained how this artist managed to bring Dance from the margins to the centre of cultural life in Europe and the USA by aligning her dancing with upper-class ideals and invoking a pantheon of great minds[i]. In doing so, she was not alone; other Early Modern Dancers followed her example. One of them was Àurea de Sarrà, who danced before Heads of State and famous archaeological sites and gave conferences in the most intellectually recognised associations of those years such as the Ateneo de Madrid or the Real Círculo Artístico de Barcelona. She also became the choreographic exponent of the Catalonian Cultural Movement called Neucentismo, which fought against what they considered the excesses of the Modernism and claimed a return to the classicism of Greece and Rome.

Born in Barcelona in 1883 in a wealthy family, little is known about Àurea's education, but one can be assumed that she was educated as the average bourgeois girl (She could speak French) and that regarding dance she was autodidact as many of her predecessors and contemporaries.

She made her debut in 1920, in the Eslava Theatre, nowadays a disco, but in those days besides a music hall it was the place where Gregorio Martínez Sierra installed his Teatro del Arte. Although it could seem that her art was old fashioned considering Isadora Duncan had come to Spain in 1915 and Tórtola Valencia had made her debut in Madrid four years befores that, if one takes a look to the kind of dance spectacle that were common in those days, one realises, that Àurea's was not very different to the rest of the "Exotic Dancers"[ii].Reading the articles about that first show, one can see that Àurea made quite an impression, and that wasn't only because she was blond (which considering that this was Spain, a golden hair like hers wasn't ignored) what impressed the critics best was her authenticity, Harmony, Rythm and Elegance[iii]. And these characteristics were enough to make her to be considered 10 years later one of the few exotic dancers in Spain who could be taken seriously[iv] according to Carlos Fortuny (the others were Tórtola Valencia and Charito Delhor).

But Àurea de Sarrà is not remembered as an "Exotic Dancer", she is considered the "Spanish Isadora". How is this possible? Well the truth is that during her career her dance changed as she grew as a dancer. I'll try to explain how she became The great Tragic of Dance and I'll star quoting a negative critic:

> *It's about having enough money to travel and to have made some nice-dresses and to pay a photographer to make some pictures of you at the top of an Aztec temple, at the feet of the pyramids or in the arena of a Greek temple. (...)*
> *When you have some photographs of this kind, and have the friendship of some intellectuals who can be bribed into writing articles and good critics about you, then, you have it all done. It's about give a booklet away where you write some historical and literary nonsense about the religious character of the antique and exotic dances, and you'll have fooled the simple-minded.*[v]

Just Cabot was not the only journalist who didn't like Àurea's style, in fact one can read this critic within the new cultural and artistic ideas that had arrived to Spain some years before: by the 1930s the *Neucentisme* was loosing prominence in Catalonian cultural life in favour of the *Avant-Garde*; in fact in 1928 Salvador Dalí, Sebastià Gasch and Lluìs Mantanyà signed

the Yellow Manifest in order to "point out the grotesque and sad spectacle of the Catalonian intellectuality, locked in a putrid and closed atmosphere[vi]" they mention "The pseudo-classical dancers" making a clear reference to Sarrà[vii]. But in Cabot's text I find several remarkable facts:

First of all, Cabot's general impression about Àurea is that of an artistic fraud, which clearly opposes the opinion of those critics who talked about her for the first time ten years before him.

But far more significant than this, is that he describes as a phoney marketing tactic to trick the incautious several aspects of Àurea's work which can be interpreted as paramount in her creative process and choreographic conception as well as part of her strategy to elevate dance to the same level as the rest of the arts[viii]; as Isadora Duncan had already done.

What he called "nice dresses" was part of one of her characteristics that differenced her from other dancers of the kind: her rigorous *mise en scene*[ix]: She put special interest in the musical arrangements, clothes and scene; her dresses richly decorated with fabulous jewellery were, indeed, worth of being exhibited in a gallery[x].

Most of the criticized pictures Àurea showed in the booklets, were taken during her travel (also criticized) to Egypt and Greece in 1926, that she had made in order to "study and understand dance[xi]" And this travel became a milestone in her career. During her stay in Egypt she created her pieces *The King's Dancer* (which she presented before King Fouard II of Egypt) and *Ramses' Favourite* inspired by her visit to the Valley of the Kings and the Tomb of Ramses II. In Greece, where she got the Prize of the Phoenix[xii], she created several pieces all of them inspired by visits to different temples: *Demeter* that can be considered her most important piece, was created as part of a celebration of a pilgrimage to the temple of that Goddess in Eleusis, in the booklet of her shows she described this moment as "one of the happiest[xiii]" of her life; *Circe*, created in the temple of Sunion, *Bacchants* in the Theatre of Dionysus and *Antennae*, *The Caryatides* and *Victoria Aptea* in the Acropolis. She described all of these pieces as "embodiments" and what she felt in those places is that "she was carried away to other horizons and that her soul was intoxicated with that greatness built by human hands[xiv]". She also explained how these dances "were more than a mere spectacle: it was an ecstasy in which the artists and spectators, altogether, felt transported to the divine spheres[xv]."

What can be deduced from her words is that she lived her dance not only as a representation but as a ritual, so the fact that this travel was made was not only a commodity but a way to make the ritual possible, and the photographs could be seen not only as the publicity-technique (which was common practice between dancers around the world) but a way to prepare the audience to the ceremony they were about to be part of.

Cabot mentioned, as well, that she used her intellectual friends and her writing to "fool the simple minded" that's a possible lecture, but another way to see this, is that as Tórtola Valencia in Madrid with her relationship with the so called Generation of the '98 or Grete Wiesenthal and her collaboration with Hugo von Hofmannsthal and the rest of the Wien Secessionist just to mention a couple of examples, Àurea de Sarrà was trying to relate Dance with what was already considered an elevated Art: Literature and the written word.

With this goal in mind, Àurea besides her conferences and writing on Dance, started collaborating with one of the members of the Neucentisme Circle, Ambrosi Carriòn. This collaboration started in 1928 and lasted until the end of her career. She began by "translating" his poem *Niobe* into movements, this piece was also part of a new invention by Eugeni Tarragó: the Kinodeion[xvi]; in words of the inventor the kinodeion was "Synchronized Poetry" and consisted in a poetry recital accompanied with music and films[xvii]. In 1932, her collaboration became stronger and Àurea started giving poetry readings of Carrion's work[xviii] and in some occasions, she included his poetry after her dancing.

But probably the most important moment in Àurea's career came when she combined these two features essential in her vision of Dance: her relation with Carrion

and her performance in natural sites. This happened in 1930 within the International Exhibition in Barcelona. There she organised with Carrion the *Classic Festivals Aurea* in the Greek Theatre[xix]. This venue was built in 1929 by Ramon Raventós for the Exhibition, and imitated the structure and spaces of a Greek theatre, The theatre, and in fact, the whole exhibition, was dominated from its conception by "the cult to the Ancient, to the Classic Spirit[xx]" That's why, even when this site was not a historical place was a perfect one for Àurea and her troupe (as for the first time Àurea didn't dance alone but had a whole company with her) to make her ritual dances joined with the words of Carrion.

As I've already said, Àurea de Sarrà is considered the Spanish Isadora, but I hope I have proved that she was more than an imitator not only because she didn't omit everything that was severe or the actual meaning of Art as Duncan criticized of her imitators[xxi] but because she took a slightly different path to arrived at the same point: "giving dance back her human values and dignity[xxii]" while being able to express herself "with the harmony of rhythmic and severe movements[xxiii]". Being able, this way, to create in the Spanish context.

**Ackowledgements**

I'd like to thank Mariàngella Vilallonga, and Carmen Giménez Morte for their confidence and support and for the continuous dialogue that made possible this paper.



1 Daly, Ann, 1995. p. 16

2 Her first show consisted in the pieces with Spanish and Orientalist Themes as show the titles:
*The Pavane* (La Pavana), *The Injured Toreador* (El Torero Herido) *Her Eyes Run Away* (Sus Ojos Huyeron) *Art and Love* (Arte y Amor) *Salome* (Salomé) and a *Dance by Granados* (Danza de Granados)
*El Imparcial* Madrid: May 10, 1920.

3 *El Imparcial*: Madrid, 9 de Mayo de 1920
NS, 1920: "Àurea" en *Nuevo Mundo*: Madrid 4 de Junio de 1920.

4 Fortuny, Carlos, 1923: "Cómo se hace una Bailarina Exótica" in *Nuevo Mundo*: Madrid, 23 de Mayo de 1923.

5 "És questió de tenir diners per viatjar i que encara en quedin per uns quants vestits d'època (d'una època u altra) i pagar un fotògraf que us retrati a dalt d'un temple azteca, al peu d'una piràmide o al mig d'un temple grc. No a tot aarren es troben les comoditats de l'alhambra de Granada, on ja lloguen xilabes i turbants per retratar-se al Pati dels Lleons vestit de moro."
"Quan tenin unes quantas fotografies d'aqueses, i intimen amb uns quants intellectuals i sorbonagres qui puguin collocar articles, ja ho tenin tot fet. Es qüestiò de tirar al drot uns prospects amb tot aquell mano literari i històric del caràcter religiós de les danses antigues i exòtiques, i els baban mossejaran lèsquer." All translation by the author unless otherwise indicated. Cabot, Just, 1930:

6 "Nos limitamos a señalar el grotesco y tristísimo espectáculo de la intelectualidad catalana de hoy, encerrada en un ambiente cerrado y putrefacto" Dalí, S., Gasch, S., Montayà, L., 1928

7 In fact, on the first rough of the Manifest, included a direct allusion to Àurea de Sarrà but when one of the censors of the Primo de Rivera's Dictatorship read it , he said: "It's enough you pick of the Society Bernat Metge, but with pour Àurea de Sarrà, who have to make a living dancing!" Permanyer, Lluís, 2008. p. 9

8 In her conference "L'Art Noble de la Dansa" Àurea said that "dance is a very noble Art that can be compared to the rest and can make feel Beauty with the same intensity than Poetry or Music, Paint or Sculpture".
"Aleshores la dansa és un art nobilissim que pot ésser comparat amb els altres arts i fer sentir la bellesa amb la mateixa intensitat que la poesia o la música, la pintura o l'escultura." Sarrà, Àurea de, 1929.

9 Pons, 1928.

10 *La Vanguardia* Jueves, 24 de Marzo de 1927. p. 7
*El Imparcial* Sábado 7 de Abril de 1928 p. 8

11 SARRÂ, Àurea de, 1929.

12 Vilallonga, Mariàngela, 2008

13 Sarrà, Àurea, undated. p. 3

14 SARRÂ, Àurea de, 1929.

15 Ibid.

16 *La Vanguardia* Barcelona: 9 de Julio de 1929. p. 17.

17 Karl Toepfer in his book *Empire of Ecstasy* tells about another initiative that combined Poetry and Dance. This took place in Prague in 1926, and consisted in the publication of a poetry book *ABECEDA* written by Viteszlav Nezval and Karel Teige and illustrated with photographs of the dancer Milca Mayerova. They also performed these poses live at various Prague poetry readings.
Toepfer, Karl, 1997. p. 377

18 N.S., 1932: "La Poesía d'Ambrosi Carrion per Àurea de Sarrà" en: *Teatre Català* Barcelona, 28 Jan, 1933 n. 18. pp. 57-58

19 Briamo, 1929. p. 3

20 Àurea de Sarrà was the first artist who used this theatre with her festivals. These were celebrated on three different days and with different programs as follows:

1st festival (29th June) Premiere of Carrión's Poems "Mediterranea" and "Fedra"

2nd festival (6th July), "Niobe" and "Les Veremes"

3rd festival (18th July), with "Fedra" and "Demeter"

21 Duncan, Isadora, 1927. p.353

22 Sarrà, Àurea de, 1929.

23 Sarrà, Àurea de, undated..

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NS, 1927: L*a Vanguardia* Jueves, 24 de Marzo de 1927. p. 7

NS, 1927: *El Imparcial* Sábado 7 de Abril de 1928 p. 8

N.S., 1929: "Presentación del 'Kinodeion'" in: *La Vanguardia* Barcelona: 9 de Julio de 1929. p. 17

N.S., 1932: "La Poesía d'Ambrosi Carrion per Àurea de Sarrà" en: *Teatre Català* Barcelona, 28 Jan, 1933 n. 18. pp. 57-58

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# Romantic Topography and Modern Technology:

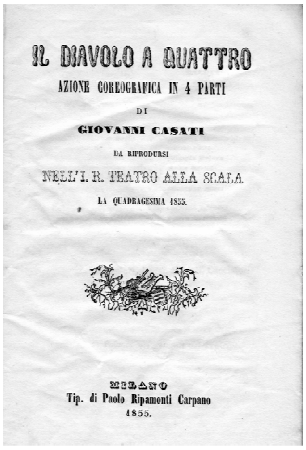
# Charting the Nineteenth-Century Repertory

*Debra Hickenlooper Sowell*

My presentation today brings modern database technology to bear on the issue of repertory trends in the nineteenth-century ballet. Such an approach, rooted in genre classification and quantitative analysis, may seem at odds with traditional practice in historical dance research. But as this year's Call for Proposals affirms, modern technologies provide new means for imagining dance topographies. In recent years, with the help of technologically skilled research assistants, I have developed a database with information gleaned from over 800 nineteenth-century Italian ballet libretti contained in the Sowell Collection, augmented by an additional 200 representative title records from the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of The New York Public Library. This database yields easily searched performance and production information from over a thousand extant libretti. While I make no claims for statistical significance as I present these findings, I am confident that they do indeed demonstrate some legitimate trends in the Italian ballet of the 19th century—trends which, when identified, may improve our understanding as scholars.

The printed ballet libretti that were sold in conjunction with performances in nineteenth-century Italy contained not only plot summaries but also production information beyond the title and choreographer's name to include composers, designers, company and cast lists, prefaces to the reader, and so on [Figure 1]. On the title page, a ballet's title was often followed by a genre label or brief descriptive phrase indicating the nature of the spectacle [Figure 2]. According to Sarah Davies Cordova, at the Paris Opéra a ballet's subtitle, such as *ballet-pantomime* or *ballet-féerie*, "alluded to the hybrid nature of their mimed and danced form."[1] My study today explores this labeling phenomenon more fully, with a special emphasis on Italian practices, both in respect to French and English models and in respect to changes in the repertory and its labels over time. What did these genre labels attached to a ballet signify to contemporary audiences, and how may they enrich our understanding of the works to which they were attached? Does the Italian practice of labeling the repertory mirror French and English practices? In Italy, was the usage of these genre labels random, or, studied together—with the help of the database—may they indicate meaningful patterns? Either way, can we identify trends over the decades of the nineteenth century? Perhaps most importantly, how do these labels match—or challenge—our modern understanding of the repertory of this era?

Figure 1. *Il diavolo a quattro* (1855), Giovanni Casati


IL DIAVOLO A QUATTRO

AZIONE COREOGRAFICA IN 4 PARTI

DI

GIOVANNI CASATI

DA RIPRODURSI

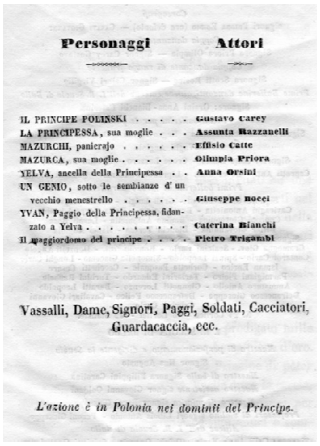
NELL'I. R. TEATRO ALLA SCALA

LA QUADRAGESIMA 1855.

MILANO

Tip. di Paolo Ripamonti Carpano

1855.


Personaggi Attori

IL PRINCIPE POLINSKI . . . . . Gustavo Carey

LA PRINCIPESSA, sua moglie . . . Assunta Razzanelli

MAZURCHI, panicrajo . . . . . Efisio Catte

MAZURCA, sua moglie . . . . . Olimpia Priora

YELVA, ancella della Principessa . . Anna Orsini

UN GENIO, sotto le sembianze d'un vecchio menestrello . . . . . Giuseppe Bocci

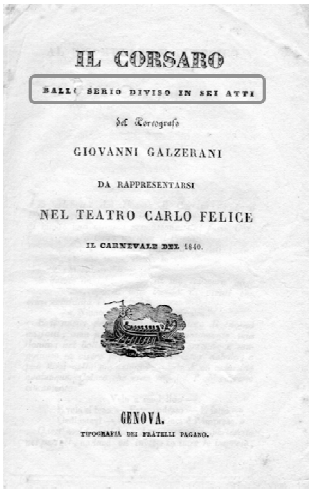
IVAN, Paggio della Principessa, fidanzato a Yelva . . . . . Caterina Bianchi

Il maggiordomo del principe . . . . Pietro Trigambi

Vassalli, Dame, Signori, Paggi, Soldati, Cacciatori, Guardacaccia, ecc.

*L'azione è in Polonia nei dominii del Principe.*

Figure 2. Sample title pages with genre labels outlined.


IL CORSARO

BALLO SERIO DIVISO IN SEI ATTI

Di Coreografo

GIOVANNI GALZERANI

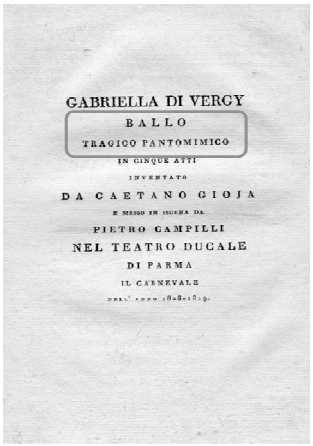
DA RAPPRESENTARSI

NEL TEATRO CARLO FELICE

IL CARNEVALE DEL 1840.

GENOVA.

TIPOGRAFIA DEI FRATELLI PAGANO.


GABRIELLA DI VERGY

BALLO

TRAGICO PANTOMIMICO

IN CINQUE ATTI

INVENTATO

DA CAETANO GIOJA

E MESSO IN SCENA DA

PIETRO CAMPILLI

NEL TEATRO DUCALE

DI PARMA

IL CARNEVALE

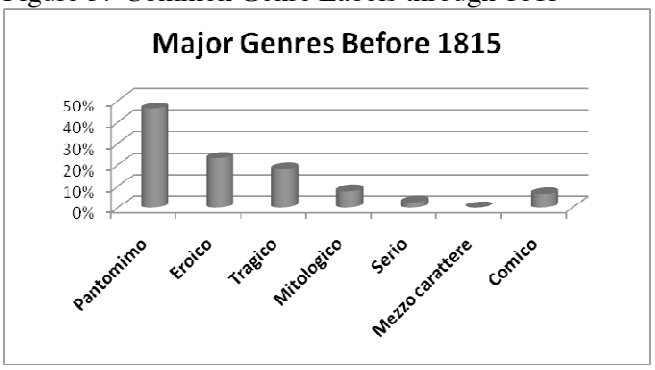
**Eighteenth-Century Genre Labels**

Broadly speaking the theatrical dance of the eighteenth century was divided (in theory and practice) into three distinct genres, to which we usually refer by their French names: *noble*, *demi-caractère*, and *comique*. *La danse noble* was the style of movement used to depict kings, heroes, and other protagonists of an elevated stature. Their movements were largely *terre-à-terre*, languid or slow and deliberate, with held poses; the themes they portrayed were "lofty, noble, dignified, and sublime."[2] Livelier in tone and elevation than the noble style was the *demi-caractère* style, *semi-serio* or half-serious, which included high leaps and nimble capers; according to Edmund Fairfax, it sufficed for minor deities such as Cupid and Mercury, along with "gallant youths in love, or even characters from high comedy, and . . . such anacreontic figures as satyrs, fauns, nymphs, sylphs, and *bergers*."[3] Distinct body types also characterized the varying genres: the ideal serious or noble dancer was tall, with long lines and an elegant, rather than muscular, physique, while the *demi-caractère* dancer was of middle height, with excellent proportions, an agreeable visage, and well-developed leg muscles for jumps. The third category was the comic style, appropriate for shorter dancers, and its movements were less refined than those of the first two styles. As Regine Astier points out, "the comic and its extreme, the grotesque, made use of acrobatic stunts and pantomime," and was performed by dancers representing the common people (rather than the nobility or the bourgeoisie).[4]

What were the parallels between French and Italian practice in regard to labeling the repertory of this period? In Italian terminology, the *ballo serio*, *ballo tragico*, and *ballo eroico* were probably the equivalent of the French *noble* genre. The Italian equivalents of the *demi-caractère* style were the *ballo semi-serio* or *mezzo-carattere,* while *comico* and *buffo* clearly indicate the *comique* style or its extreme version, the *grotesque*. These labels figure prominently in the database and allow us to track the rising and falling popularity of the genres they indicate.

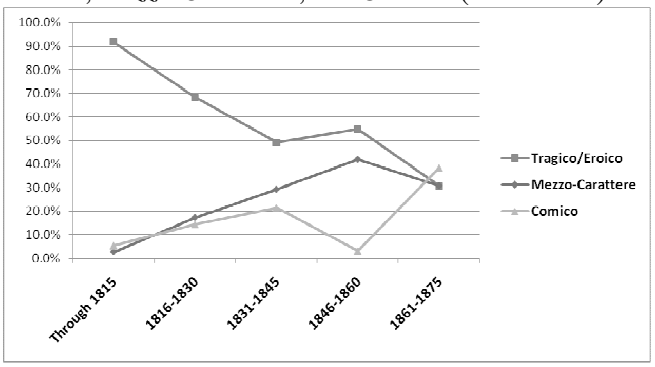
The Sowell Collection contains a limited number of libretti before 1800, but if we use the year 1815 as a cut-off point (which is convenient because it represents the end of Napoleon's influence in Northern Italy), there are 75 libretti from 1777 through 1815. Approximately 46% of these use some Italian variation of the French term "ballet-pantomime," following the French pattern of a label indicating the "hybrid nature" of the spectacle as explained by Cordova [Figure 3; note the first column.]. Of those 75, 45% also use one of the traditional eighteenth-century genre labels, either alone or in conjunction with *ballo pantomimico*.

Figure 3. Common Genre Labels through 1815




Following 1815, however, the percentage of database titles that include the Italian equivalent of the traditional French labels drops off significantly (to approx. 29%). Even within that smaller population, however, the database allows us to see clear trends [Figure 4.] If we break down the nineteenth century into fifteen-year increments, we can see a clear trend away from the serious tradition, first toward the *semi-serio*, and finally to the *comico*, suggesting that by the end of the 1800s ballet had lost its serious side and degenerated into the portrayal of frivolous themes.

Figure 4. Nineteenth-Century trends of *Tragico/ Eroico*, *Mezzo-Carattere*, and *Comico* (1816-1880)




This finding, however, requires some contextualization. As Kathleen Hansell confirms in her authoritative study "Theatrical Ballet and Italian Opera," in the Italian tradition ballets were inserted between the acts rather than being woven into the fabric of an opera's plot.[5] Conventionally, an opera's first act was followed by a serious or tragic ballet,

while the second act was followed by a comedic or light-hearted ballet.[6] This balanced approach to programming might lead scholars to expect similar parity in the number of existing libretti, but such is clearly not the case. How, then, may we reconcile libretto data with known performance traditions? As Gunhild Oberzaucher-Schüller observes, fewer libretti were printed for comedies because their plots required less explaining to audiences; moreover, it might have been considered undesirable to give away a comic ending.[7] Still, while this possibility explains the apparent disparity in extant libretti, it does not explain the large shift toward the more lighthearted genres later in the century.

The traditional eighteenth-century stylistic distinctions broke down near the end of the 1700s as the *demi-caractère* style absorbed steps and elements from both the serious and comic genres. Astier links this stylistic shift to the social upheaval surrounding the French Revolution (as noted in Endnote 4). Edmund Fairfax points out that this stylistic "meltdown" (as he terms it) was due in part to the prodigious talent of Auguste Vestris, who mastered and intermingled the technical demands of all three styles. According to the Paris and St. Petersburg editions of Noverre's *Lettres*,

> Vestris, full of ease and facility, vigour and dexterity, suppleness and strength, whim and fantasy, and unthinkingly enterprising, composed, so to speak, a new kind of architecture where all the orders, all proportions, were confounded and exaggerated; he made the three known and distinct genres disappear; he blended them together and made them one with his amalgam.[8]

If Noverre is correct, by the late decades of the eighteenth century, and certainly by the early decades of the nineteenth, the traditional distinctions had largely lost their meaning.

If this is true, did anything take their place? One source to which we may turn for an Italian response is Carlo Blasis' *The Code of Terpsichore*.

**Carlo Blasis and Italian Ballet Scenarios**

As Flavia Pappacena so clearly demonstrates in her new, bilingual volume *Il Trattato di Danza di Carlo Blasis 1820-1830*, Blasis came of age in this period of transition, and his published comments regarding genre are mixed. While he regretted the loss of the nobility and majesty of the serious genre (to paraphrase Pappacena), he also appreciated gaiety as "a fundamental prerogative of the dance."[9] Blasis paid lip service to the traditional classifications—the *serieux ou heroïque*, the *demi-caractère*, and the *comique*—but his text and illustrations recognize additional influences, such as the highly popular Spanish dance, and allow for peasants or villagers whose technique equals that of the traditional *danseur noble*.[10] His list of ballet programmes in the 1828 English *Code of Terpsichore* provides a meaningful context for the remainder of this paper, as each of his model scenarios includes a specific genre label pertinent to its thematic content (not just to the "hybrid nature" of the spectacle). Blasis states that he "has endeavored to enlarge the sphere" of ballet compositions, and his titles—listed in Table 1, with their supporting genre descriptors—do suggest a broad scope of thematic or narrative possibilities.[11]

Table 1. Ballet Programmes by Carlo Blasis, with genre labels in bold.

*The Wrath of Achilles, or the Death of Patroclus,* ***A Heroi-Tragical Ballet.***
*Herman and Lisbeth,* ***Village Ballet.***
*Hippoltyus,* ***A Grand Pantomimical Ballet.***
*The Festival of Bacchus, or the loves of Cyllenius,* ***An Anacreontic Ballet.***
*Marcus Licinius,* ***An Historical Ballet.***
*Sidonius and Dorisbe,* ***Chivalresque Ballet.***
*Aphrodita,* ***A Mythological Ballet.***
*Dibutade, or the Origin of Design,* ***A Histori-Fabulous Ballet.***
*The False Lord,* ***A Comic Ballet.***
*Achilles at Scyros,* ***A Heroic Ballet.***
*Mokanna,* ***An Oriental Ballet.***
*The Dutch Painter,* ***A Semi-Serious (Demi-Caractere) Ballet.***
*Thrasimedes and Theophania, or The Feast of Eleusis,* ***A Serious Ballet.***
*Vivaldi,* ***A Grand Ballet.***
*Nocturnal Adventures,* ***A Comic Ballet.***
*Zara,* ***A Romantic Ballet.***
*Cyrus,* ***An Encyclical or Historical Ballet.***
*The Sorceress and the Troubadour,* ***A Fairy Ballet.***
*Dudley,* ***A Grand Historic Ballet.***
*Alcides, or The Trial of Youth,* ***An Allegorical Ballet.***

Obviously, Blasis's does employ the traditional eighteenth-century labels—heroi-tragical, semi-serious, and comic—but he also uses adjectives such as mythological, historical, Oriental, and romantic.

**National Differences: The Italian Tradition**

Does the Italian practice of labeling the repertory exemplified by Blasis mirror French and English practices of his era?

To explore this issue, I selected works between the years 1815 and 1846 whose titles are well known to dance scholars, although in most cases the choreographic tradition has been lost. To supplement the holdings of the Sowell Collection, I searched bibliographic listings of the New York Public Library, the Harvard Hollis Catalogue, and the Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico (OPAC ICCU on-line) for entries of known, dated libretti. The following is a selected survey of my findings, listed chronologically by date of premiere; note how often the Italian genre label includes a thematic descriptor not listed in the French or English titles. (The Italian genre labels are in bold for easy identification.)

Table 2. Comparison of selected French, English, and Italian ballet titles

***Les pages du duc de Vendôme***

- Paris, 1815: *Les pages du duc de Vendôme: ballet en 1 acte*, Jean Aumer[12]
- London, 1840: *Les pages du duc de Vendôme: Ballet in One Act*
- Napoli, 1825: *I paggi del duca di Vendome:* ***ballo di mezzo carattere*** (Aumer/S. Taglioni)

***La Sylphide***

- Paris, 1832: *La sylphide: ballet en deux actes*, F. Taglioni (also 1834, 1836)
- Genova, 1837-38: *La silfide:* ***ballo mitologico***, A. Cortesi[13]
- Milano, 1841: *La silfide:* ***ballo di mezzo-carattere fantastico***, A. Cortesi
- Parma, 1843: *La silfide:* ***ballo fantastico di mezzo-carattere***, F. Taglioni/L. Bretin
- Bologna, 1844: *La silfide:* ***azione fantastico-danzante***, A. Cortesi
- Venezia, 1845: *La silfide:* ***ballo fantastico***, F. Taglioni
- Cagliari, 1845: *La silfide:* ***ballo fantastico***, G. Lasina
- Roma, 1846: *La silfide:* ***ballo*****,** F. Taglioni/G. Galzerani
- Palermo, 1859: *La silfide:* ***ballo mitologico***, G. Ferranti

***Le Diable Boiteux***

- Paris, 1836: *Le Diable Boiteux: ballet pantomime*, Coralli
- London, 1836: "…the grand new ballet entitled The devil on two sticks…" [Coralli]
- Parma, 1853: *Il diavolo zoppo:* ***ballo fantastico***, A. Coppini

***Le diable amoureux***

- Paris, 1840: *Le diable amoureux: ballet pantomime*, Mazilier
- London, 1843: *The devil in love: a ballet*, Mazillier [sic]
- Trieste, 1852-53: *Il diavolo innamorato:* ***ballo fantastico***, D. Ronzani
- Milano, 1853-54: *Uriella, ossia Gli amori di un genio:* ***ballo fantastico***, D. Ronzani
- Firenze, 1870: *Il diavolo innamorato:* ***ballo fantastico***, G. Golinelli
- Genova, 1870: *Uriella:* ***ballo fantastico***, Masilier [sic]

***Giselle, ou Les wilis***

- Paris, 1841: *Giselle, ou Les wilis: ballet fantastique*, Coralli
- London, 1845: "The new grand ballet, in two acts, entitled Giselle"[14]
- Milano, 1843: *Gisella, ossia Le willi*: ***ballo fantastico***, A. Cortesi
- Genova, 1844: *Gisella, ossia Il ballo notturno*, Monticini
- Milano, 1844: *Gisella:* ***ballo fantastico di mezzo-carattere***, Coraly [sic]
- Napoli, 1849: *Gisella:* ***ballo fantastico***, Coralli
- Torino, 1866: *Gisella, o Le wili:* ***ballo fantastico***, Coralli

***Ondine ou La naiade***

- London, 1843: *Ondine, ou La naiade: a ballet*, Perrot
- Napoli, 1852: *Ondina, ossia, La fata delle acque:* ***ballo romantico-fantastico****,* A. Cortesi
- Torino, 1853: *Ondina, ossia, La fata delle acque:* ***ballo romantico-fantastico***, A. Cortesi
- Milano, 1869: *Ondina:* ***ballo grande fantastico***, A. Pallerini
- Firenze, 1870: *Ondina:* ***ballo grande fantastico***, A. Pallerini

***La Péri***

- Paris, 1843: *La péri: ballet fantastique*, Coralli
- Milano, 1843: *La peri:* ***ballo fantastico di mezzo carattere***, F. Taglioni
- Genova, 1849: *La peri:* ***ballo fantastico***, A. Belloni

***Esmeralda***

- London, 1844: *La Esmeralda: a ballet*, Perrot
- Milano, 1854: *Esmeralda:* ***azione romantica***, Perrot/D. Ronzani

Although this survey is far from comprehensive, it suggests that the Italians had a much stronger penchant for categorizing and attaching labels to their repertory than did either the French or the English. (An extreme case in point is Gaetano Gioja's 1816 La Scala production of *Niobe, o sia la vendetta di Latona*, which was labeled a "Ballo spettacoloso pantomimico appartenente al gran genere tragico-mitologico.") While the point at issue here is the *practice* of labeling rather than the labels themselves, this limited survey also confirms that in Italy the label *fantastico* was used to describe ballet with a supernatural element more frequently than in Paris, where the label *fantastique* was more sparingly applied (in this list, only in reference to *Giselle* and *La Péri*).

**Methodology and Preliminary Findings: The Sowell Libretto Database**

Having acknowledged the Italian penchant for labeling the repertory in this manner, what nineteenth-century trends may be tracked using database technology? Recognizing that any collection is an incomplete assemblage of extant documents, in order to strengthen the reliability of the sample I identified seven of the most prolific Italian choreographers of the nineteenth century: Antonio Cortesi, Gaetano Gioia, Giovanni Galzerani, Luigi Henry, Antonio Monticini, Giuseppe Rota, and Salvatore Taglioni.[15] Then, using title records of their ballet libretti in the catalogue of the New York Public Library, I identified approximately 200 titles not included in the Sowell Collection, which I added to the database to create a total of over 1000 libretto records. The resulting extended database, which contains the work of 110 choreographers, is not meant to be understood as an accurate representation of dance productions on the Italian peninsula, nor do I claim statistical significance for the findings. However, the data are sufficiently numerous to indicate some patterns of choreographic activity, to the extent it is represented by surviving libretti of the most active choreographers.

Using database technology, one may easily track, over time, the introduction of **new** genre labels, which replaced the eighteenth-century categories with adjectives that put a finer point on a ballet's characters or theme. By separating these labels into the genre category (*ballo*, *azione mimica*, etc.) and the accompanying thematic descriptor (*tragico*, *storico*, *romantico*, *fantastico*), one may track the introduction of new thematic descriptors in this sample of 1000 libretti: in 1810, *mitologico*; in 1812, *favoloso*; in 1817, *magico*, *anacreontico*, and *storico*; in 1832, *romantico*; in 1838, *fantastico*; and in 1871, *romantico-fantastico* [Figure 5]. Figure 6 demonstrates that as the use of the eighteenth-century genre labels (*serio*, *semi-serio*, and *comico*) declined sharply over time, the use of these new thematic descriptors rose significantly. (This does not mean that Italian choreographers were not creating, say, anacreontic ballets before 1817, but rather that the label began to applied to that repertory starting in 1817.)

Figure 5. Introduction of New Thematic Descriptors

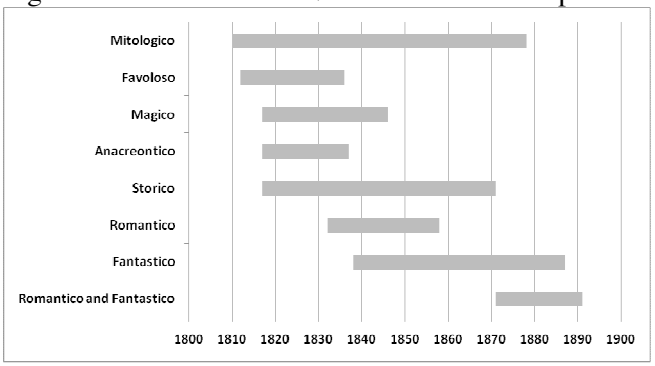
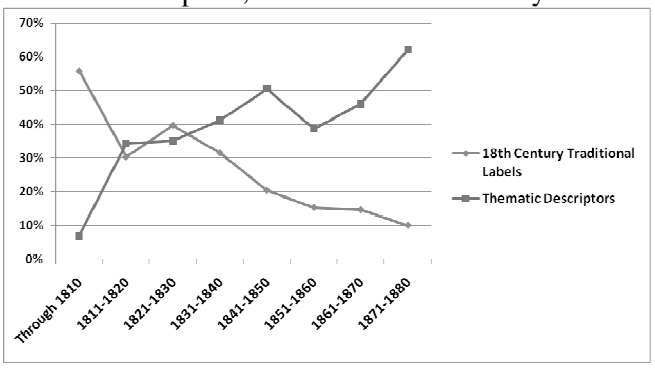



Figure 6. Use of eighteenth-century labels vs. new thematic descriptors, in the nineteenth century



The most interesting statistics surface when tracking the frequency of individual descriptors. By dividing the century into decades, one can trace the popularity of the *ballo mitologico*, which rises slightly and then dips; the *ballo favoloso* or *magico*, which follows a similar pattern, ending down; and the *ballo anacreontico*, which dies out completely [Figure 7]. In contrast, the *ballo storico* peaks sharply during the 1820s and 1830s and declines later in the century, whereas the *ballo* called *romantico*, which is introduced in the 1830s, reaches the height of its popularity in the decades of the 1840s, 50s, and 60s [Figure 8]. The *ballo fantastico*, which is introduced with a few examples in the late 1830s, shoots up wildly during the 1840s, 50s, and 60s, and continues to be popular in the 1870s, long after the cut-off date of 1850 adopted by many dance scholars as the end of the Romantic ballet. A minor category is the combined *ballo romantico-fantastico*, which is seen mostly in the last period.[16]

Figure 7. *Anacreontico*, *Mitologico*, and *Favoloso* descriptors, by decade

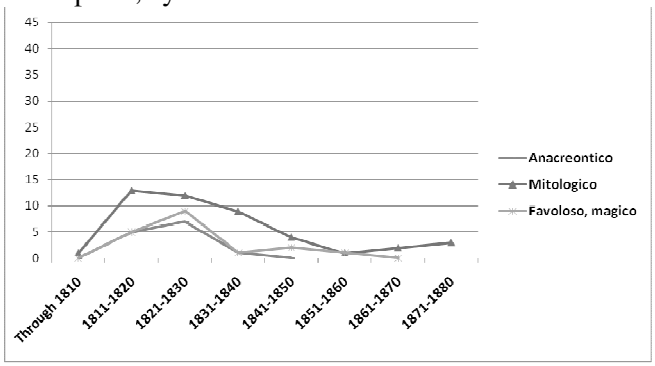
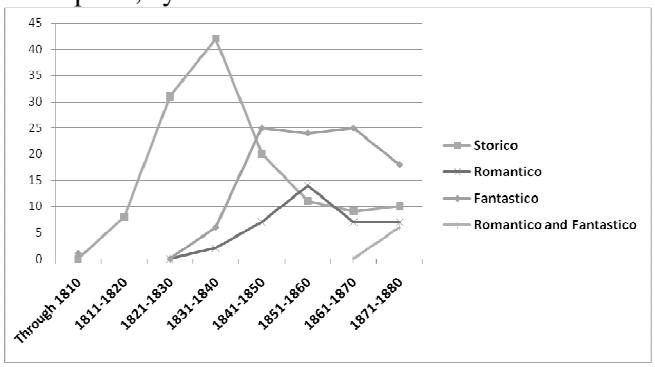
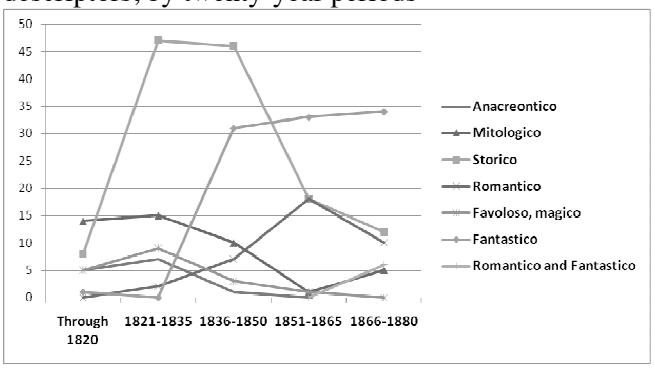



Figure 8. *Storico*, *Romantico*, and *Fantastico* descriptors, by decade




Combining these two figures, and dividing the century into twenty-year periods, further clarifies the contrasts in usage [Figure 9].

Figure 9. Nineteenth-century trends in use of thematic descriptors, by twenty-year periods




**Implications**

What are the implications of this information for dance scholars today?

First, it would seem responsible practice for us as historians to base our terminology for the repertory on that of its creators, rather than lumping into the term "romantic" several strains of ballet that they saw as diverse phenomena. Returning to the issue of when new labels were introduced, we see that in the database, the label *storico* or historical was added not long after the fall of Napoleon in 1815, a turning point year because the Austrians reasserted control over Northern Italy and supported, in 1816, the first journal of Italian Romanticism. It would seem logical to assert that the first phase of the Romantic repertory in Italy was based on or influenced by literary trends, specifically novels that were Romantic in the sense of historical romances.

The introduction of the label *romantico* in 1832 is not long after the Paris premiere of *Hernani* and indicates a link to Romantic drama rather than the *ballet blanc*, as noted above. During the period viewed as the high point of balletic romanticism in Paris and London (the 1830s and 1840s), the genre label *ballo romantico* is used relatively sparingly in Italy. To make sense of this, we must return to Blasis's list of titles and the supporting narratives he supplies, acknowledging his neo-classical mindset. His introduction to this section of the *Code* states emphatically, "Let nothing of the marvellous and supernatural be admitted, unless it is well founded on the nature of the piece, and executed with a good taste."[17] Writing on the cusp of recognized Romanticism in dance, just a few years before the premiere of *La Sylphide*, Blasis's sample "Romantic ballet," *Zara*, has no suggestion of the *ballet blanc*. Instead, its plot centers on a Spanish king, Alphonso,

who has abandoned his queen in favor of Zara, a beautiful Moorish woman (an example of woman as the "exotic other"). Alphonso suffers from a passionate inner conflict, unable to give up his lust for Zara despite his knowledge that he has betrayed both his wife and his country, and now his citizens are in open revolt. When he returns to his wife, Zara takes her own life in an act of desperation. The story bears little resemblance to the strain of post-*Sylphide* Romantic ballets in which supernatural creatures flit about the stage in white tulle. Rather, Blasis's scenario shares characteristics of the plots of Romantic dramas in which the protagonist is torn between duty and desire, or between two strong desires, often in a setting considered exotic.

Regarding the introduction of the label *fantastico* in 1838, this is just one year after Cortesi's introduction of *La Silfide* into the Italian peninsula, which premiered in Genova in 1837. The routine application of the term *fantastico* to works such as *La Silfide, Giselle*, and *La Peri* confirms that this genre label, not *romantico*, indicates the *ballet blanc*, or works with a white act. But if we work from the known to the unknown this way, what do we make of the fact that Bernardo Vestris's *La Rivolta delle donne nel seraglio* (based on F. Taglioni's *The Revolt of the Women*) was also labeled a *ballo fantastico*? The plot summary in the Vestris' libretto gives no indication of anything resembling a white act, but it does include magical tricks involving the heroine's bouquet, suggesting that the term *fantastico* also extended to ballets with magical elements.

In conclusion, if we continue to use the term "Romantic ballet" in reference to this era, it should be with an enriched awareness that its repertory included historical, romantic, and fantastic genres. Teasing out these varied strands of the Romantic repertory helps us to arrive at a more precise understanding of that era's richness and variety, and provides the necessary foundation for a more sophisticated study of individual works.

**Acknowledgements**

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## Notes

[1] Cordova, p. 122.
[2] Fairfax, p. 87. I owe my summary of the four traditional genres largely to Fairfax's detailed analysis, pp. 81-188.
[3] Fairfax, p. 103.
[4] Astier, p. 419. Astier's discussion of these genre labels includes insightful commentary on their relation to the three classes of French society: the aristocracy, bourgeoisie, and lower common people. The late eighteenth-century breakdown in rigid divisions among these genres reflected the social upheaval surrounding the 1789 French Revolution (p. 420).
[5] Hansell, pp. 242 ff.
[6] Hansell, pp. 258-260.
[7] Personal communication, Rome, Italy, October 15, 2006.
[8] Noverre, quoted in Pappacena, p. 261.
[9] Pappacena, p. 270.
[10] Pappacena, pp. 271-72.
[11] Blasis, p. 259. Blasis's ambitious collection of suggested "programmes" constitutes a large portion of the volume, pp. 262-484.
[12] No libretto was available for this Paris production, so I have used the title of the work as it appeared on two contemporary published sources. Beaumont's *Complete Book of Ballets* also uses this genre label; Beaumont, p. 60.
[13] This ballet bears no resemblance to Blasis's sample *ballo mitologico*, which features the birth of Venus and all the Olympian deities. The use of the term *mitologico* may simply demonstrate that the label *fantastico* had not yet caught on in Italy.
[14] *Giselle* was actually seen in London as early as 1842, but this was the earliest libretto listing I am able to use as documentary evidence. Beaumont, p. 166.
[15] In selecting these names, I was guided by Hansell's study as well as by the frequency with which names appeared in the Sowell database.
[16] The label *romantico-fantastico* seems to indicate a plot with both romantic and fantastic elements, i.e., a historical drama with a conflict between passion and duty (or conflicting passions) and a narrative featuring supernatural creatures. For example, Cortesi's *Ondina*, which bore a close resemblance to the tale of de la Motte Fouquet, is labeled a *ballo romantico-fantastico*.
[17] Blasis, p. 261.

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# A Vision of the Future:

# Bodily Experiences at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893

*Adrienne Stroik*

For six months of 1893 the Midwestern city of Chicago hosted the World's Columbian Exposition. From May first through October thirtieth more than twenty-seven million people attended this fair that planners staged to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus' arrival in America. Scholars have long acknowledged that planners of this exposition aimed to mold thinking about urban design. Scholars have also attended to the fact that planners tapped into issues related to international politics, nationalism, consumerism, and Social Darwinism. However, I maintain that this event was also important in terms of bodily experience. I take the position that planners devised this event for fairgoers to move through in quite specific manners. Therefore, in this paper, I focus on some of the many bodily experiences that planners expected fairgoers to have and what those experiences disclosed about the ideology of the exposition. I argue the urban environment created at the fair rectified numerous spatial ills found in contemporary cities, but this environment did not rectify another ill, the social problem of discrimination.

**Inclusionary Practices on the Wooded Island**

Planners like Frederick Law Olmsted expected fairgoers to wander the fairgrounds absorbing the ideology and sensing concepts related to or inherent in their urban vision. Multiple locations, such as the Wooded Island, democratized the right to experience and numerous cues in these sites signaled that planners expected fairgoers to experience the benefits in the same manner. Olmsted and other landscape architects crafted the sixteen acre island to provide fairgoers with a location to temporarily escape the commotion of the fair, a purpose that paralleled Olmsted's beliefs about urban parks. Quite literally, exposition planners built the Wooded Island from marshland to give fairgoers the opportunity to physically encounter and enjoy the beneficial results of urban planning according to their views. This responded to Olmsted's perception of cities as dirty, crowded locations where the latest developments in areas such as technology, transportation, and communication took place. So at issue was figuring out ways to counteract the negative impacts that cities had on residents, which the Wooded Island demonstrated. Olmsted believed people would be happier and healthier as a result of spending time in such physically safe outdoor locations. He was referring to people of all classes and ages, both genders, and those in poor health. From an early twenty-first century perspective, one can grasp that the Island was a family friendly location that brought together people of all backgrounds including ethnicity, race, and nationality. Still further, according to Olmsted's plan, locations like the Island exerted a refining force on people as they experienced his products in each others presence.

Lena Hammergren has argued that artificial bodily memories can reveal the enacted ideological.[1] This offers a possibility for analyzing the participatory consumption that planners aimed to stimulate. Such memories function as tools for discerning bodily experiences of this fair, experiences that planners sought to mold. In general, the Island permitted the senses to recover from the onslaught they received in Chicago on a daily basis and at the fair. The Island enveloped fairgoers into a tucked away landscape. The isolation of the Island in the Main Lagoon distanced and muffled not only the noise of the city but also that of the fair itself. Chirping birds and lapping waves replaced street noises. Towering, leafy trees partially filtered the blazing sunlight and buffered the breezes blowing off Lake Michigan while also cleansing the polluted Chicago air. The sweet smell of roses and other blossoming flowers substituted for the odors of burning coal, trains, and slaughterhouses in Chicago and the aromas emanating from exposition restaurants. Furthermore, the filmy layers of settling particulates and the waste left in the streets by people and horses were noticeably missing. The hustle and bustle of both the city and the fair were left behind. The lack of buildings and exhibits indicated that fairgoers were to break from learning about products and innovations. The placards that greeted fairgoers at many exhibits were missing, as were exhibit

representatives. The Island did not revolve around educating people by compelling them to read and listen about new products and technologies, but it was about education. The wide, gently curving walkways communicated that fairgoers should relaxingly stroll. Furthermore, while walkway width also dispersed people to alleviate crowding, the shin-high chains tracing the walkways regulated crowd dispersal. Common competitions between people, horses, and carriages for walkways in the city failed to materialize on the Island. However, readily available spots in which to sit were severely lacking, which gave people more incentive to walk slowly so they could engage in conversation with those with whom they came to the Island. The shortage of seating, the lined pathways, and the manicured grass alongside them indicated that fairgoers should continue on the trajectory laid out for them by planners. So did curiosity peaked by the inability to see far down the pathway. But the unknown was not to be feared, danger did not wait in the unseen distance. The Columbian Guard, the police force of the fair, promised that. Still further, fairgoers did not have to negotiate differing ideas of pleasurable recreational practices. Chain borders deterred people from climbing trees, picking flowers, or even etching their initials in tree trunks to commemorate their presence. Young children did not irritate elders with game playing, running, and screaming. People of different ethnic backgrounds did not disrupt each other with various types of music. Nobody relaxed with an alcoholic beverage, an action offensive to temperance supporters. Everybody simply strolled forward on the pathways. The spatial arrangement of everything on the Island controlled and curtailed fairgoer behavior in somewhat subtle ways.

I apply Elizabeth Grosz's theorization of corporeal inscriptions to argue that fairgoers were being taught to behave and move in the same ways. The body is a living organism that is experienced and molded by the subject and society, and thus the body can be inscribed through behavior, which exposition planners relied upon.[2] Fairgoers allowed their movement to be outlined and chose to participate in the inscription processes, though I suspect only the most perceptive fairgoers consciously recognized their engagement in these processes. Nevertheless, the strolling bodies on the Island learned how to locomote differently than in the city. The Island absented reasons to rush to one's destination or to be apprehensive about the congestion of the streets. In many ways the prescription of the fair erased certain movement practices while establishing others and impressing them upon fairgoers. It championed behavior conformity while also eliminating causes for running or walking briskly or opportunities to passively rest. Spatial cues of the Island functioned to shape fairgoers behavior to comply with the ideals of planners.

Regardless of differences in identity, everyone leisurely traversed the Island. Simultaneous recuperation of people similar to and different from one another took place in public. This seems to have been a step away from the spatial separation of races in public locations that Jim Crow laws of the time demanded. In this context, all fairgoers walked the pathways as equals. Nothing about the Island indicated that anyone should be treated as superior to another. Of course, nothing about this location encouraged people of different backgrounds to mingle and socially interact. Spots in which to pause one's forward stroll to converse and meet new people were scarce. Benches were few and far between, there were no picnic tables, and the chains lining the pathways indicated that fairgoers should not step over them to sit on the grass. Spatial cues implied that planners intended for fairgoers to constantly locomote rather than sit and socialize. This highlights that the design of the Island revolved around exemplifying remedies for spatial problems experienced in contemporary urban environments rather than exemplifying remedies for interpersonal issues circulating in America. So while this location may not have enforced spatial segregation, it did not necessarily promote social mixing.

**Exclusionary Practices in State Buildings**

Not all locations welcomed fairgoers indiscriminately or expected fairgoers to act alike. Many places did not attempt to eliminate the use of various identity characteristics as bases for discrimination. Consider the U.S. State Buildings. Most states in the United States constructed a building to educate fairgoers about their industries and history, and to provide a resting place for state residents. These buildings categorized Americans based on state residence and many fairgoers indulged by treating their State Building as their home on the fairgrounds, an opportunity not afforded all fairgoers. General fairgoers slowly walked through exhibition rooms, briefly pausing to examine statues of popular icons or to visually inspect exhibits of agricultural products before walking to the next object readied to educate them. Rather than partake in these activities, state

residents napped on couches, wrote letters to friends, and engaged in friendly conversations in locations set apart from the educational portions of State Buildings. In contrast to the fairgoers who alternated between walking and standing still to ingest information, state residents could sit or lay down to give their bodies a break. The sights, sounds, and smells could overwhelm the senses; the near constant bombardment of information could be tiring; and fairgoers paid a physical price for traversing the six-hundred-acre-plus fair. These State Buildings gave blistered, swollen feet; tired, achy legs; sore lower backs; hot, sweaty, exhausted bodies a chance to rest while residents reflected upon what they had seen and experienced and, perhaps, planned where they would go when refreshed. Residential status granted the right to take a break from ingesting information at the fair so as to rest, recuperate, and socialize with people who had been classified as similar to one another. However, residency did not outweigh all other possible bases of classification.

Miss Mary Britton of Lexington, Kentucky attempted to enter the Kentucky State Building like so many other Kentucky state residents. The reputation of this colonial mansion revolved around its grand fireplaces and hospitality, which reportedly led to many reunions and receptions being held there. It served as a location for certain people to slide out of the role of student being taught and into that of guest at a social gathering. While fairgoers observed tobacco and distilling displays inside three exhibit rooms and watched a miniature train follow a track circling the skylight of the rotunda, state residents relaxed and engaged in conversation. However, not all state residents were welcomed into this friendly environment, and building officials used racial status as a determining factor on at least one occasion. Miss Britton was turned away from the Kentucky State Building. The prevention of this African-American woman from entering her state building revealed that racism against African-Americans operated at the fair. Her attempt to enter showed that the planners' utopian vision allowed for racism against some groups of people, which trumped residential status and even nationality. Quite frankly, identity characteristics gave cause to bar spatial access to some people and therefore the physical experiences partaken therein.

So the question arises: if Miss Britton was not welcome to indulge in the activities offered inside her State Building, where was she expected to rest, recuperate, and socialize? Most likely Kentucky State Building officials thought she belonged in the Haitian Building. Numerous nations did something similar to states in America. They erected buildings to educate fairgoers about the past and present of their nation while also providing a home base for their citizens. However, a prior association between the Haitian government and an African American paved the way for a somewhat unique bonding between a Nation Building and a specific demographic of citizens from another nation. Frederick Douglass had functioned as the United States minister to Haiti from 1889-1891, a nation whose population was largely of African descent and that won it's independence from France in 1804. The Haitian government built upon this prior relationship as well as the shared African heritage of Douglas and so many Haitians by selecting Douglass and Haitian native Charles A. Preston as co-commissioners of Haiti at the fair. This opened the door for the Haitian Building to act as a surrogate home for African Americans. Many reportedly enjoyed the food in the Haitian Building restaurant and used it as a location in which to nourish and restore their bodies. In this situation, race outweighed both state residence and nationality.

I aim to create new options for understanding and re-conceptualizing the fair by teasing apart physical experiences of fairgoers. Planners embedded messages into the fairgrounds about how cities and people should function, which fairgoers absorbed through bodily experiences. Furthermore, although planners treated fairgoers as a homogenous cohort in some locations, in others they parceled out fairgoers based on various identity characteristics. Planners used those differences to legitimize the granting or denial of access to spaces and experiences. This inclusion and exclusion of certain individuals demonstrated that the ideal urban environment of the fair rectified many spatial problems while also permitting discrimination and even implementing social inequality.



**Notes**

[1] Lena Hammergren, "The Re-turn of the Flâneuse," in *Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture and Power*, ed. Susan Leigh Foster (New York: Routledge, 1996), 53-69.

[2] Elizabeth Grosz, "Inscriptions and Body-Maps: Representations and the Corporeal," in *Feminine, Masculine and Representation*, ed. Terry Threadgold and Anne Cranny-Francis (Boston: Allen & Unwin), 1990, 62-74.

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# The political memory and its impact on the contemporary dance aesthetics on an example of works of Eszter Salamon, Saša Asentić and Polish young choreographers

*Joanna Szymajda*

One of the currents political appellations often present in West-European choreographies is the colonial history heritage. Number of examples of post-colonial memory re-worked by contemporary choreographers from France could be mentioned, as well as some from Great Britain (also inner-colonialism of Northern Ireland), Portugal (Vera Mantero[1]), or based in Europe but originally from non-European countries like Steven Cohen and Robin Orlyn from South Africa.

This tendency seems to be parallel to a larger movement, this of postcolonial studies, appeared firstly in literature studies and constantly becoming more influential within last 20 years. Postcolonial studies consist of the large spectrum of problematic; they use different theories like poststructuralism, deconstruction, psychoanalysis or Marxism, and are related to other disciplines like gender studies and regional studies. The main issues of this paradigm, such as the research into the figure of the "Other" or oriental studies were recently completed by a larger perspective including all possible forms of colonialism and the persistence of the colonial system both, in culture and national identities.[2] There are at least three possible ways of writing the word "postcolonial", each of them giving different interpretation to this phenomenon (*postcolonial* versus *post-colonial* versus *(post)colonial*).

Kenyan writer - Ngugi wa Thiongo – describes the main aim of the postcolonial studies as a "decolonization of minds"[3]. This decolonization is related to a criticism of the eurocentrism and the project of "provincialisation" of Europe, a common outline in the postcolonial studies, nevertheless carried out and understood in different ways. Postcolonial perspective offers also a number of new research categories like *ambivalence, ethnicity, diasporas, hybrid, other / difference, creolization, migration, mimicry etc.*[4]

Referring to Polish or Eastern Europe history, it is not trouble-free to apply the post-colonial discourse (no matter which way of writing the prefix ***post***- will be chosen). This optic is as far largely ignored in arts or literature studies of this region of Europe.

Assuming that fact, present paper will try to apply the "mimicry" concept originates from the field of recent post-colonial studies to the East-European choreographers' works. The concept of *mimicry* was introduced first by H. Bhabha in his research on the Indian postcolonial identity. The term of ***mimicry*** signifies "a **superficial resemblance** of one organism to another or to natural objects among which it lives that secures it a selective advantage (as protection from predation)". In other words: being the same as the oppressor, but "not really". Bhabha uses that mechanism to describe a state of oppressed cultures where the desire of being more English then English or more French then French came together with the oppressor's culture and was a sign of an artificial emancipation of the victim.

Referring to the East-European dance studies, postcolonial perspective requires recognizing of a double meaning of the term of "colonization". In dance, this mechanism is binary represented by the "colonization" of the world of the dance during communistic period, firstly by national ideology of traditional "folk" dances and secondly - by the soviet ballet school. After the end of communism in Eastern Europe the contemporary dance could finally arise as an independent artistic discipline (even if so far this discipline is has no recognition within many of the cultural policies systems in those countries). At the same time, another problematic of the ***neo-colonization*** appeared and this is what could be called the ***neo-colonization by western-contemporary dance aesthetic***.

That phenomenon was in fact diagnosed by a Serbian theoretician, Ana Vujanovic[5], as a form of western colonization of post-communist European countries, which intercept the art model together with others – both, political and social -

democratic institutions. Serbian contemporary dance appeared in fact between 90ies and early 2000, but at this time it wasn't recognized as an independent artistic discipline. The situation was similar to this in Poland, but here the pantomime (especially the group of Henryk Tomaszewski) and theater tradition of masters (Grotowski, Kantor) was stronger then in other parts of Eastern Europe[6]. As result, the development of the contemporary dance in Eastern Europe, interrupted by I and II world wars and then the communistic period, could not begin before 1989. In Serbia and in Hungary the model of this development seems to focus on creating one " dance community". In Poland this system is rather decentralized. Here few strong dance companies (and dance centers at once) were established in early 90ies and they are actually working till today having so far a 20years heritage. In this situation, so-called new generation of young choreographers that have been started their careers in last few years is in a very different position. Those people are frequently graduated from the best schools in Europe, and they often work abroad for different reasons, one of them being for sure the lack of good dance infrastructure in Poland.

The question they have to face at the beginning of their artistic career is how to be East-European choreographer and be purely "contemporary". Assuming that the dance history is directly connected to the political history, the political memory of the body is also introduced in each creation. This fact is felt and expressed in very different ways, more or less direct, more or less symbolic, more or less conscious. Following a Slovenian theorist Bojana Kunst: "The representation of the body of the West/East reunion reveals a variety of embodiments; but in this variety a hierarchical shift is already inscribed. On one side there is the western dancing body, completely equipped for the present, and on the other side, a body almost without contemporariness, that of the other unarticulated body with a dark, closed and incomprehensible attraction to the past. If articulated, the latter cannot communicate with the western gaze without having a strong political, or local meaning. The development of western modern and contemporary dance has turned the autonomy of the body into a specific and exclusive privilege."[7]

The following analysis will focus on some East-European and later on polish young choreographers assuming their specific situation of being "East" in the Western-contemporary dance world. Their political involvement has not only strong historical and social but also – and perhaps first of all - artistic sources and can be analyzed in this ***post-*** or perhaps should we say ***neo-colonialist*** standpoint.

Based in Belgrade Saša Asentić's ***MY PRIVATE BIO-POLITICS: A Performance on the Paper Floor*** lecture – performance touches directly the question of the Eastern contemporary choreographer identity. While speaking out his text, being in fact a transcription of his doubts connected to his Serbian artist identity and European contemporary dance market, Asentić puts in the light all the tensions between western and eastern contemporary choreography. As he speaks, what the western opinion is attending from him is to be "eastern". The question appears, how to be eastern in contemporary dance, if almost all the history of the modern dance and especially all the techniques are in fact western or at least were elaborated in so called and even not possible to define "West" (which for dance means actually USA, Germany and recently France). Furthermore, performance-lecture is of course one of the western born stage (or out-stage) forms of re – presentation.
In this solo a number of explicit and implicit meta-quotations can be find:

*After the jubilee, this performance changes*
*from a work-in-progress*
***into a WORK-IN-REGRESS!***

*And gradually, the performance materials will be evacuated one by one from the performance, becoming accessible only as video documentation.*
*For the period of next year I got the invitations to present this work in Performance Research, Barcelona, Frankfurt, Poznan, Paris, Helsinki and Belgrade.*
*Slowly the performance will regress until the point of vanishing before the audience's eyes.*
*Maybe I will get more invitations.*
*We will see...*
*The more invitations – the less performance!*

Later on

*After watching several Serbian contemporary dance productions I have asked myself: Is there any other possible way to produce contemporary dance in Serbia but to copy techniques and concepts that are popular, almost even trendy, and that are usually or only coming from the West? This was the first situation.*

Later on
*NOTA BENE:*

*Just to clarify something about this thesis.*
*Conceptual dance that is the most influential in our dance contexts is not a big mainstream paradigm of European dance scene but its marginal practice.*
*And that is just what the problem is about!*
*We "bet" on the conceptual dance, as it is the only hope, the only chance, the only crack through which we – as being outside of European dance scene – can pierce through and appear on it!*

*Does it mean that Jerome Bel has the right to autobiographic story about how he became a dancer? And in his case it is new contemporary dance production? And that I don't have that right to contemporaneity?*
*Who has the right to contemporaneity?*

Quotations, comments, deconstruction and the application to the local (also in its meaning of folk) Serbian context build the whole choreographic structure. Asentić's perfectly "conceptual" lecture-performance is at once a realization of the mimicry mechanism in European dance field and a commentary on it.

***Eszter Salamon*** is a Hungarian dancer and choreographer but working abroad, mostly in France/Belgium. In her piece ***Hungarian dance (Magyar táncok)*** she faces her own dance history. She proposes also a new re-interpretation of the dance history in general. For example, at the beginning of her performance she says that the very first dance appeared in Europe was a group dance where people do not touch each other. And then she illustrates this by … contemporary disco dance.

She chooses also a form of performance – lecture and she invites her family and Hungarian musicians to take part in it. So in fact, the audience is following her story by both – watching traditional dances executions by her and her family members – and hearing what are her thoughts on this and how she thinks this beginning has influenced her current dancing-body. What we can observe in this performance is actually a kind of political dance-autobiography. It's a synecdoche representing a way of many of her colleagues from Eastern Europe that in 80 didn't get other choice then ballet or traditional dance. As we know, those were the unique forms accepted and tolerated by the communistic system. For Salomon this presentation was as an artistic statement of her status as a contemporary choreographer. Nevertheless, she created only one piece related directly to her past and currently she is working with only 'contemporary' techniques (body mind centering among others).

What is interesting about her piece in the post-colonial context is to notice that she's in fact trying to escape from colonization of the traditional Hungarian dances; she keeps their way of execution almost untouched in technique, but she exchange the gender traditional attribution of dancing movements. However, the very form of lecture performance makes them as a moving museum's figures. Salamon seems to lead the audience trough the different stages of her dance career that in our chosen perspective present the state of unconscious mimicry (folk dance period) to the conscious state of having been a part of this mimicry mechanism (the practice of the "contemporary western dance") into the way of individualization. Nevertheless, "*Hungarian dance*" persists in the trap of neo-colonization, by the choice itself of the frame of the *performance – lecture* that is a purely conceptual western form.

Other point of view is presented in a work of young polish artist – ***Cezary Tomaszewski.*** Being a part of Polish artistic emigration, he leaves and works in Austria. Poland is the country with a very high level of emigration. USA and some richest countries in Europe are the most popular destinations for *Polaks* looking for better chance. Unfortunately for Polish national image, typical *Polak* abroad is usually described as a worker, often without higher education and culture. Tomaszewski somehow tries to rehabilitate that image by inviting on the stage four women - authentic polish housekeepers working in Vienna.

They will work with him on a very special version of ***Merry widow*** – an operetta, the artistic gender Tomaszewski likes to work with by redescribing its status in contemporary art world. The problem with the social status of those women was somehow denied by giving them a new role of "the artistes". Some of them are young and, some of them are already in their 50ies, one is actually a professional opera singer, educated in Vienna, but she has never had a stage recital before (because of choosing a role of "housewife" rather then that of "Merry widow"). All of them have an opportunity to make their dream comes true on the stage, thanks to a contemporary dance project. The social question of polish charwoman is invoked in Tomaszewski's production without any martyrdom; there is perhaps even a glorification of

the status of charwoman being an artist who is actually a worker on the stage.
Tomaszewski's work does not deal with the concept of mimicry, rather with the post-colonial perspective in general. His choice of the operetta and his direct social involvement places him in the line of new independent way of being "eastern" in West. On the other hand, this way is not free of the stereotypical image of the "Other", here incorporated by the charwomen bodies onstage.

Another Polish dancer living in Vienna - ***Magdalena Chowaniec*** – in solo performance ***Hold your horses*** plays wit her own representation as a polish dancer. Similarly to Tomaszewski, she introduces the stereotype image of the "Other" – a female dancer from Eastern Europe, in common opinion being often understood as a go-go dancer or prostitute and rarely as an artist.

The third young Polish choreographer from Vienna's circle that work would be introduced in this paper is ***Agata Maszkiewicz***. Her solo ***Poland*** is based on two phenomena: sympathy and empathy. The performance, using different means of expression such as dance, performance, music and a video, slightly facetiously provokes the viewer to the physical reaction to what he sees. Some suffer embarrassment, while others will struggle with their own projections and imaginations, think of the performance and performativity, the achievements and successes, but also of injuries and failures. Dancer is dressed in sports attire, and her body definitely cannot escape the cultural kind[8].

In this solo - being in fact her diploma work - she discusses the topics of what is actually "polish" within the stereotypes concerning both – dance and the culture. By using the topic of a joke she plays with representation of *polishness* in popular stereotypes, also those reminding in dance (folk music and dance demonstrated in pure, not-spectacular form). In the light of this paper this procedure is in fact recognition of a double "Otherness"– this of "being East" and this of the performer vis-à-vis her national identity, both being incorporated in one body.

"Contemporary dance from the East entered the western production market as such a spectacular commodity, and was expected to produce Otherness, it has to stay exotic and different, with no right to the universality and exclusivity of western contemporariness. Paradoxically, this "other" could not gain its visibility or even political recognition if not displayed as spectacular commodity. So how might contemporary performance and dance – unable to avoid the fact that itself, too, is a spectacular commodity – develop parallel, digressive ways of performing? How can it develop resistance models? How can it be disclosed as a radical disconnection tactic?"[9] Looking at the examples of Asentic, Salomon, Tomaszewski, Chowaniec and Maszkiewicz works it seems that treating its own "Otherness" as a choreographic material became for some East-European choreographers a way of emancipation.

In the major currents of the postcolonial studies their aim is described as a need of "decolonization of minds". Following Bojana Kunst's questioning one could extend this discussion field by asking: "Do we need a decolonization of minds in dance field?" One shouldn't forget that this process concerns in first line the invader but also the colonized "victim".

What should be done in first step seems to be a change in what Jacques Rancière describes as a *political imagination*. Following the philosopher - instead the real freedom we have to do in fact more with its image. Freedom and domination are imaginary states. "Their status is ontologically uncertain" and depends on the collective participation of creative work, which makes this status unequivocal by moving the balance towards freedom or domination[10].

The East-European choreographers have to move this balance to freedom to not to stay in the mimicry mechanism.

Notes

1 More about Mantero's works in postcolonial perspective in A. Lepecki, *Historical dust and the ground of violence* [in:] "Performance research" nr 2/2003, p. 46 – 60.
2 E. Said, *Orientalizm*, [in:] "Teorie literatury XX wieku", red. A. Burzyńska, M.P. Markowski, Kraków 2007, p. 625 – 649.
3 E. Domańska, *Obrazy PRL-u w perspektywie postkolonialnej*, [in:] "Obrazy PRL-u", red. Krzysztofa Brzechczyna. Poznań: IPN, 2008
4 Idem
5 A. Vujanović, *Not quite not right eastern western dance*, http://www.tkh-generator.net/sr/openedsource/not-quite-not-right-eastern-western-dance.
6 Nevertheless, Grotowski's and Tomaszewski's influence was also strong in ex-ZSRR countries, as witness the Russian choreographer based in Vienna – Oleg Sumanienko (interview in Moscow, July 31st 2009).
7 B.Kunst, *Subversion and the dancing body : autonomy on display* [in:] „Performance research" nr 2/2003
8 Description on www.starybrowar.nowytaniec.pl
9 B. Kunst, idem.
10 A. Zmijewski, *Introduction* to J. Rancière "Estetyka jako polityka", trad. J. Kutyła, P. Mościcki, Warszawa 2007, p.7.

# Motion Capture: Making New Criteria as a Bridgehead

*Reishi Watanuma, Toshihiro Irie & Mieko Marumo*

## 1 . Introduction

Motion capture and recent computer vision technologies make it possible to translate human body movements into digital data. The digital data so obtained are generally time-series location data of body parts' movement. The data is new type of translated representation and there is a gap between the data and sensations which dance movement itself gives us. Because of this gap, it is difficult to reconstruct body movements or characters of movement from the digital data alone. It is necessary to bridge the gap if we want to analyze or interpret dance movements from the digital data.

We propose making new criteria as a bridgehead which bridges the gap between the digital data and our sensations. The goal of our research is to make the criteria objective and useful for dance movement study.

## 2 . Related works

Many dance analysis have used motion capture. Most of them have made their own methods which could meet their requirements. Therefore their methods are not general-purpose and their purposes are limited.

There are several researchers trying to make a general-purpose method. Hachimura, Takashina, and Yoshimura translated motion capture data into sensation-based criteria. They tried to translate the data into codes for Laban Movement Analysis (LMA).[1] LMA is a methodology to classify human motional features by observation and is a general-purpose method to analyze dance motion.

As Hangendoorn indicates, sensations are the effect of very complicated information processing in the brain, however simple the sensations are[2]. It is so difficult to simulate the information processing in the brain that we can hardly translate the motion capture data into our sensations. As LMA is based upon our sensations, it is difficult to translate motion capture data into LMA codes.

## 3 . Our method

As it was very difficult to translate the data into our sensations, we tried to make new general-purpose criteria in another way. First, we estimated several physical quantities, which could be easily calculated from the digital data. Second, we analyzed mutual relationships between the physical quantities to define criteria. Then we investigated relationships between the new criteria and sensations to bridge the gap, although this method is heuristic and will be improved in the course of study.

Merits of this method are following. (1) Indexes are objective. (2) The algorithm which we apply to calculate indexes is so simple that one can recognize what kind of physical quantities affect the value of indexes and what kind of motions affect values of physical quantities or indexes.

## 4 . Experimental data

The experimental data are two sets of movement. One includes four movements from Nihon Buyo plays[3], the radio gymnastics (Japanese famous gymnastics) and walking movements of a dancer. The other includes movements of six dancers from Nihon Buyo plays. Lengths of their performances are from four seconds to four minutes and four seconds (see Table 1). As their motions except walking had various motions and features in each movement, we separated each movement into segments by observation (see Table 1). After separating these two sets of movements into 320 and 264 motional segments respectively, we applied four indexes mentioned in the next chapter to the segments.

TABLE 1: Title, length and number of segments of performance

| Title | Length | Number of segments |
|---|---|---|
| Walking | 0:04 | 1 |
| Kabuki Odori (Nihon Buyo) | 2:08 | 44 |
| Furitudumi (Nihon Buyo) | 2:44 | 51 |
| Radio Gymnastic | 3:12 | 15 |
| Koinotenarai (Nihon Buyo) | 3:56 | 45 |
| Hokushu (Nihon Buyo) | 4:04 | 48 |

## 5 . Definition of four indexes

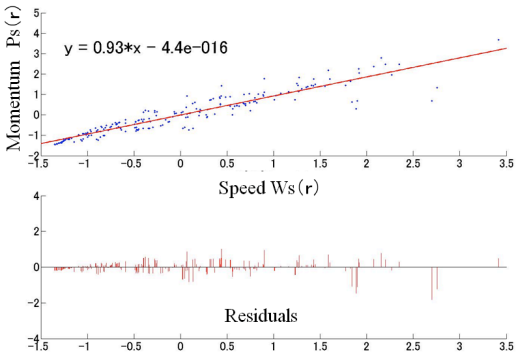
We decided four indexes; speed, degree of truncal, degree of complexities, and degree of inflection. These four indexes are not equal to the speed, motions of truncal, complexity of motions, nor inflection of motions in physical context. We need four physical quantities below to get these

indexes. Following quantities are averages per frame and one frame is 1/60 second.
(1) Sum of speeds of body parts
(2) Sum of momentums of body parts
(3) Sum of speeds of angles of joints
(4) Sum of absolute value of acceleration of body parts

Index “speed” is sum of speeds of body parts. The other indexes are calculated in the following way. We will take degree of truncal as an example here.
(1) Calculate sum of momentum of body parts.
(2) Calculate the regression line using speed and momentum (see Figure 1).
(3) Take residuals as degree of truncal.

Replacing sum of momentum with sum of speeds of angles and sum of acceleration, respectively, we can calculate degree of complexity and degree of inflection.

FIGURE 1: The regression line using Speed and Momentum (top).The residuals (bottom).




The more percentage of moving heavy parts increases, the more degree of truncal increases. The word “truncal” is a symbol of heavy parts. The greater angles of joints are in motion, the more degree of complexity increases. The more frequently speed of motions change, the more degree of inflection increases.

## 6 . Comparing indexes with man-separated types

We applied the K-means clustering to the segments of the first set of movement with these four indexes. K-means clustering is one of the statistical methods which classify observations into clusters by mathematical methods. In this case, we use index values of each segment as objects of the clustering. When we compared the clusters derived from the above clustering process with the types of segments which we classified by observation, we found that quite a few clusters corresponded to the man-separated types (see Table 2). This result indicates that the four indexes can be adopted as a method to evaluate movement in some measure.

TABLE 2: The result of correspondence between the clusters by indexes and types classified by observation.

| No. | Percent of representative type | Representatives type |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 100% | Gymnastic movement |
| 2 | 100% | Dance-like movement |
| 3 | 100% | Noh-like movement |
| 4 | 100% | Dance-like movement |
| 5 | 100% | Gymnastic movement |
| 6 | 100% | Gymnastic movement |
| 7 | 100% | Gymnastic movement |
| 8 | 93% | Gesture |
| 9 | 89% | Gymnastic movement |
| 10 | 88% | Still |
| 11 | 81% | Dance-like movement |
| 12 | 71% | Noh-like movement |
| 13 | 69% | Dance-like movement |
| 14 | 67% | Gesture |
| 15 | 63% | Gesture |
| 16 | 62% | Gymnastic movement |
| 17 | 57% | Gymnastic movement |
| 18 | 50% | Noh-like movement |
| 19 | 50% | Gymnastic movement |
| 20 | 48% | Gesture |
| 21 | 46% | Gesture |
| 22 | 38% | Noh-like movement |

## 7 . Application of indexes

After confirming that indexes which we proposed can evaluate movement, the next step is to use these indexes to evaluate dance motion. We used the second set of movements as an example. In this second set, six dancers danced “Kabuki Odori”.

In order to compare indexes of same parts of “Kabuki Odori”, we use radar chart. The radar chart [Figures 2 and 3] indicates how much degree each index reads for motions. The upper axis indicates degree of speed, right axis indicates degree of truncal, lower axis indicates degree of complexity, and left axis indicates degree of inflection. Lines from “a” to “f” indicates motions of dancers. Line “f” indicates motions of a master of Nihon Buyo and the other lines indicate those of students.

Figure 2 indicates that line “d” is most distinctive as its degree of truncal reads markedly high. In fact, we can find through the video of its actual movement that only dancer d’s truncal moves vertically. In this example, indexes represent features

of motions which we can easily see in the actual movements.

FIGURE 2: The radar chart of the motion with hands close together.

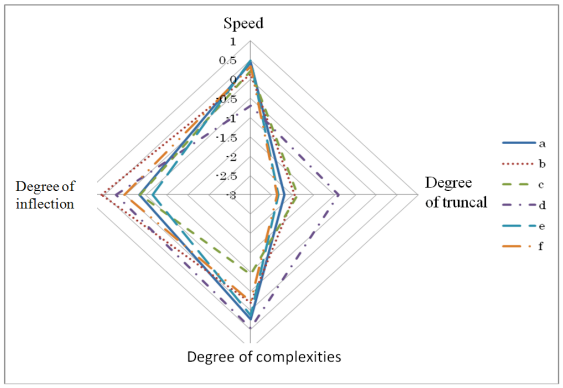
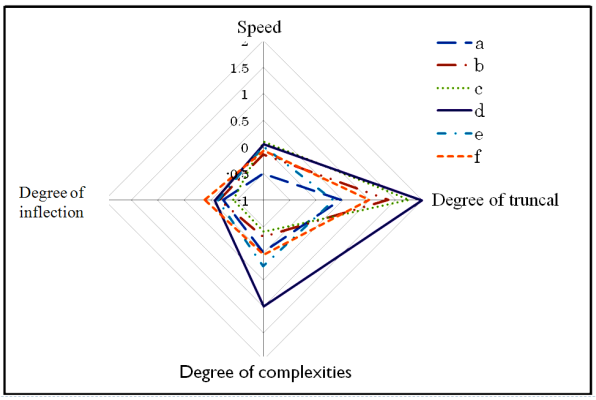


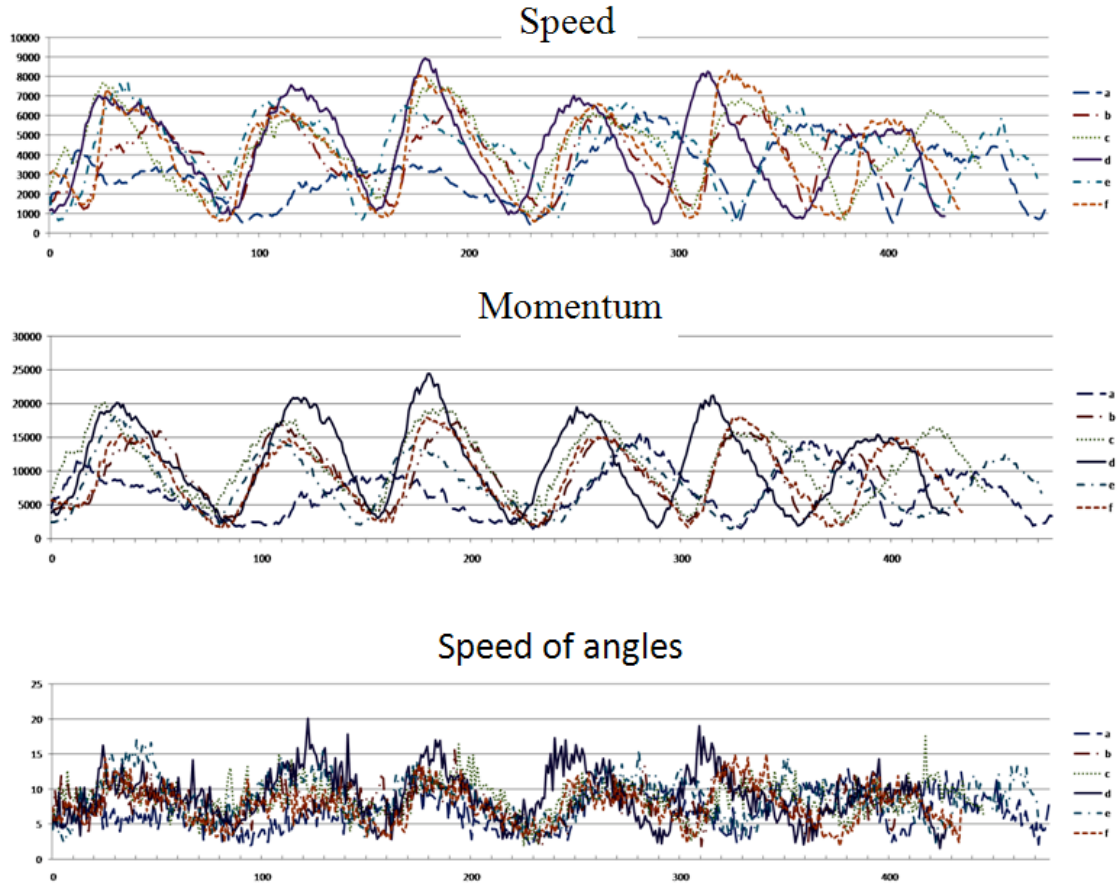

Figure 3 indicates that line “d” reads high degree in degree of truncal and degree of complexities. In this case, we cannot find features of motions through the video. As indexes are comprehensive values, we can derive more detailed data which constitute indexes and could help us understand the actual movements. Figure 4 shows time-series charts of sum of speed, sum of momentum, and sum of speed of angles of joints.

FIGURE 3: The radar chart of the gesture of rowing a boat.




Comparing the line “d” with the line “f”, we can find several points at which line “d” reads notably higher in sum of momentum and sum of speed of angles, while both lines read similar degrees in sum of speed. The higher points can be found around 120, 180,

FIGURE 4: Time-series charts of sum of speed (top), sum of momentum (middle), and sum of speed of angles of joints (bottom).



250 and 310 frames. They are also points at which d's motion is characteristic. Indeed, a twist is added at these points in "d" while no twist is added in "f".

## 8 . Conclusion

Comparing the clusters derived from the K-means clustering with types into which we classified the segments by observation, we found that quite a few clusters corresponded to the man-separated types. This result indicates that the four indexes can be adopted as methods to evaluate movements in some measure.

As we saw in several examples, indexes indicate features of actual motions using indexes with or without physical quantities from which indexes are composed.

Though there still are gaps between sensations and indexes, indexes have objectivity and are useful to analyze dance motions with motion capture. Indexes can be a bridgehead between our sensations and digital data of human motion.



Notes

[1] Kozaburo Hachimura, Katsumi Takashina, and Mitsu Yoshimura,'Analysis and Evaluation of Dancing Movement Based on LMA,' Robot and Human Interactive Communication, 2005. ROMAN 2005. IEEE International Workshop on 13-15 Aug. 2005 pp.294 - 299

[2] Hangendoorn, I. (2004), 'Some Speculative Hypotheses about the Nature and Perception of Dance and Choreography'. Journal of Consciousness Studies, 11:3/4, 79-110

[3] Nihon Buyo is a Japanese traditional dance. It has developed as performing arts.

# THE PANEL

## *Andrea Haenggi, choreographer/artist, AMDaT*
## *Beth Weinstein, architect, University of Arizona*

*Small Seminar Room. Theater-style. Pitched floor. Projection screen Up-stage center. Stage left is a rectangular table. On top is a movable wooden podium. A computer is on the podium. Two chairs are behind the table. Room Lighting.*
*Andrea (*A*)*
*Beth (*B*)*
*Prerecorded Voice (*V*)*
*A* walks to stage left door. Leaning into the wall. *B* walks to podium to trigger-pre-recorded voice. *B* joins *A* at the left door. Both hold white paper. Both wear black sandals, black skirts, black suit jackets. Under the jacket, both wear black T-shirts with white lettering: "informe" and "formless."

**BODY/EXPERIENCE**

**V** [*Prerecorded voice of Andrea Haenggi*] "I'm in my studio writing, so you will be able to listen to these words in another space. I have my legs crossed, right over left. My spine is slightly inclined forward. My fingers are dancing on the key-board in time and space. My buttocks sink into a soft leather chair. I'm sitting, writing, thinking and scanning the picture of the conference room, the one you're experiencing right now. I'm multi-tasking, so I must be coordinated. I'm leaving my studio to join you in the stillness of the conference room to give you the opportunity to answer my questions."
[A *moves in a slow direct manner to the podium. Hands grip the sides of the podium.*]

**A** At the entrance, did you adjust your clothes? Once you entered the space, did you pause to examine the people and the furniture in the room? Did you take a seat in relation to the speakers in this room? How did you negotiate through the space? Did you choose to sit next to someone else? Or prefer to have nobody around you? I chose not to be alone today. The woman to my left is Beth Weinstein and my name is Andrea Haenggi. Good evening.
[A *and* B *change places.* B *turns on Projection Lighting*.]

**ARCHITECTURE/FACTS**

**B** (fig. 1a) Look again at this room. There is an inequality in this room, differentiating those around this table, this panel so to speak, from those not at the table (fig. 1b). Panelist is on one side and the audience sits opposite. This inequality is formalized spatially, as we can see in the room we presently occupy. A line divides the space HERE. One convention for reading a space is Urbanist Kevin Lynch's five elements. This looks at form in terms of its performance as landmark, edge, path, node or zone.
[A *turns on Room Lighting. B uses hand gestures to describe the room.*]
I'll use this room as an example. The screen is a landmark—a focal point of attention and something that stands out as a figure against the background and is readily recognizable. The pair of wood doors and exits signs do the same thing. This space acts as a virtual wall or edge between two zones—the zone of the audience and the zone of the presenters. The walls of the room are also an edge. You came in along a path, here too between the doors is a path; the table may be a node in that paths, edges, and all the action seem to come together at and around this tabletop.
[A *joins* B *to walk in medium tempo four times around the table counterclockwise. A + B left hand traces along the edge of the table surface.* B *steps to the door stage left. Stands still.* A *behind podium. Again grips podium.*]


fig 1a

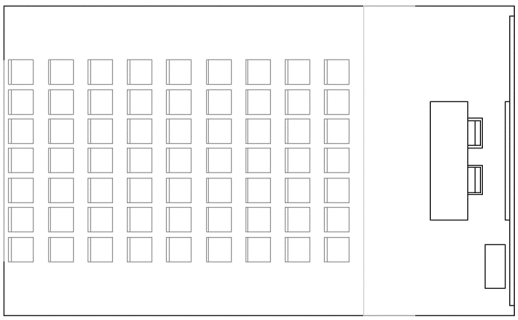


fig 1b

**A** Just as Beth was reading this room through Urbanist Kevin Lynch's five elements, I will read the body movements in space by using Rudolph Laban's four categories of movement analysis: Body, Effort, Shape and Space, or BESS. Body refers to "what is moving." For instance, when Beth pointed with her arm and finger to the screen [*She points with left arm and finger to the screen.*] Effort reveals a person's inner attitudes toward the movement; determine its quality and dynamics [*She repeats finger-pointing movement sequence with a quick slash.*] And Space—which for Laban was one of the deepest concerns describes a person pathways through space; and includes the analysis of form and design, "where it moves". Right now if I lean forward into space, I will be closer to you. [*She leans forward towards the audience.*] Shape is "Why it is Moving"—creating Relationship, as when you go to shake someone's hand.
[*She goes to an audience member in the front row to shake hands. Shakes adjacent person's hand.*]
[B *joins* A *to take podium down. Both take a seat at the table. Side by side. Behind the table. Facing front.* B *triggers recorded voice.*]

**V** "So now I'm going to ask the recently joined panelists to just briefly introduce themselves (…because I wouldn't know how) and then I'm going to …. Talk about this sessions' theme… and I'm hoping tha I'll have a lot of input from the audience as well. This is a round table.. a sort of weird roundtable but it's meant for you to interact with us and ask questions as well and explain your ideas about this subject. So I strongly ask that (you know)… that you participate. It's very important for us to hear your opinion."[1]

**DIALOGUE**

**A** I am a choreographer, visual artist, and in training to become a certified Laban Bartenieff Movement Analyst. One day, I decided to hold the regular meeting with my dancers at the conference table I have in my studio; instead of sitting in a circle on the floor as we normally did [*advances her body to the right to draw a circle with her right arm and hand*] and I noticed that our conversation was more structured and formal. Was it because a rectangular table created a distance between us? Thinking about tables, Kurt Jooss' dance *The Green Table* came to mind with all that tables represent and DO in regards to political negotiations. This led to my making several performances exploring the dialogue that happens around conference tables, through physical movement and gesture. These projects have me thinking about dialogue, architecture and the body, or body, dialogue and architecture.

**B** As an architect I had been researching different scales at which architectural and choreographic practices overlap, but had not yet looked into the scale of furnishings and interior space arrangements. I was struck when Andrea brought to my attention the six-month period spent negotiating the shape of the table for the 1973 Paris Peace Accord. One essay stated that [*makes a quote gesture with her hands*]

> …the US wanted to have two sides [*she holds two fingers up*]… The Communists wanted to have four sides... [*she holds strong punctuated four fingers up*]. Many people have criticized this as a remarkable piece of stupidity, a case of diplomats wasting time on trivialities. They are mistaken; the debate over the shape of the negotiating table was perfectly rational.[2]

I then found analyses of Richard Holbrook's negotiation strategy for resolving the Bosnian Conflict, referring to it as "modular" negotiation, because the strategy involved breaking up the problem into smaller pieces to be re-assembled bit by bit in the same way that one pieces together modular furniture or builds a wall from brick modules.[3] [A + B *get up, re-arrange their chairs to face table corner. B turns on Projection Lighting.* A+B *sit. Arrange paper and computer to diagonal facing. Palms of hands on table.* A *leans forward to press her upper body into the table corner edge.*] (fig. 2 and 3a)

fig 2 + 3a

**A** In this presentation--a panel on panels, so to speak--we want to critically question the conventions, the hierarchical relationship between panelists and audience by looking at the *performative* aspect of presentations and the negotations that occur in these spaces. We are asking what is the connection between the structural organization of this room, this container and the bodies that occupy it? Can the body and voice collaborate with the architecture in a way that would create no hierarchy?

[A *makes a quarter turn with her chair to sit. She now has her back to the audience. She is now one of the listeners.*]

**B** This is codified; institutionalized: a paper or panel discussion, within a conference, to convene members of a group, in this case academics. A gathering like this could just as easily be within a commercial context, within a museum or other cultural venue, at community board or in the context of a political or civic debate. These too, like an academic panel, are highly formalized events, both spatially and corporally. The use of space, body and speech will most likely obey implied or overt rules.

## FORMAL CONVENTIONS

Going back to the topic of conventions, I want to ask how institutions are dictating the form, content, and methodologies of round table or panel discussions.

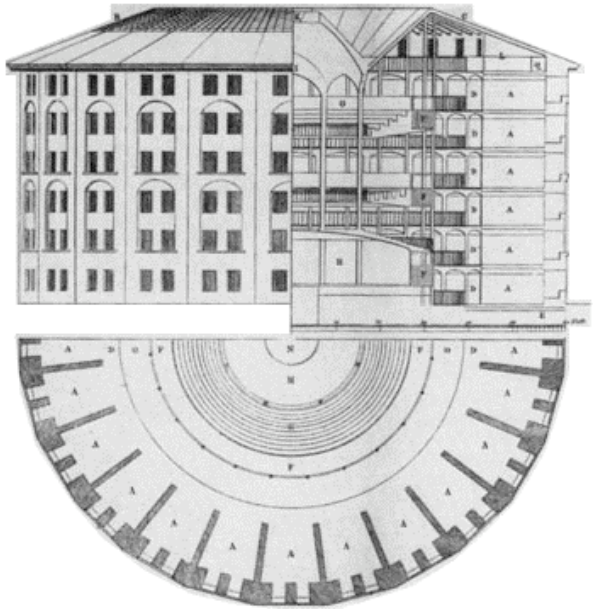


fig 4

(fig. 4) Taking cues from Foucault's reflection on Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon (this architecture of incarceration) as the paradigm of disciplinary technology, Foucault calls attention to the organization of space and the bodies in it as both the representation and the mechanism of power being deployed.[4] [*Project image of other spaces; not included here.*]

The spatial and temporal forms at play here—a room physically organized for a presentation as monologue and panel discussion as dialogue—are mechanisms derivative of rituals from Western religious, legal, or political institutions. The formal mechanism of the panel discussion is itself rooted in the history of western philosophy through the use of dialogue. So the organization of space, bodies and speech perform as both function and representation of the hierarchy of that particular institution. (fig. 5)

[*In unison,* A + B *move chairs. Take off suit jackets and put around backs of chairs. Each sits down on one end of table.* B *is like Jerome Bel. Slumped over in chair. A sits like Pichet Klunchun. Upright with feet firmly planted on floor.* B *turns on Room Lighting.*]

fig. 5

**A** Speaking of the formal mechanism of the panel discussion reminds me of a performance I saw two years ago—conceptual choreographer Jerome Bel's *Pichet Klunchun and Myself*. It was a one-hour live-performance theatrical documentary of an intellectual encounter between Bel and one of Thailand's great classical dancers.

In the piece, they were speaking much as we are speaking today. I thought: is this a Panel talk? No, it isn't. But it is: they talked, they demonstrated, they asked questions, they answered. In fact, I felt like I was part of the conversation. But, why? They were on a stage. They sat on chairs. They faced each other. They looked at each other. They never broke the fourth wall. Is it because they had no table between them? Is it because they did not face us? Did this not facing us allow me to be more a witness of a conversation than feel like I got lectured? Pichet Klunchun was elegant—inclined forwards towards Bel. He didn't speak much, but I could understand him through his movement. And Bel was loose, slumped over, continually pushing his hair out of his eyes. His body embodied what he was saying—and that made his words more powerful. I ping-ponged back and forth between them like I was part of the conversation. [A *stands up. Takes her chair. Puts chair on her right side. Chair faces front.* A *places herself between the chair and the table. She faces front. In her vertical stance, her body starts slightly swaying*.]

**V** "Inanimate objects are always correct and cannot, unfortunately, be reproached with anything. I have never observed a chair shift from one foot to another, or a bed rear on its hind legs. And tables, even when they are tired, will not dare to bend their knees. I suspect that objects do this from pedagogical considerations, to reprove us constantly for our instability." [5]

**SPACE**

**B** What you are seeing right now is inspired by Steve Paxton's *Small Dance* to show human mobility by minimizing muscular tension resulting in subtle shifts of weight.[6]

What seems to be at odds here is the dynamic of the human action rubbing up against the geometric ordering and hierarchies of the setting. Let's look at this issue of the organization of space, bodies and speech in regards to panels in particular.

[B *switches lights off. Darkness.* (fig. 3a + b again) A *moves along right aisle to end of aisle. Stands still*.]

fig. 3a + b

Various figures repeat—lines, arcs and circles. Of these, round tables facilitate discussion and debate amongst an intimate group; they share a writing surface, face each other, have eye contact. At the peace treaty the round table was so large for the number of participants in the conversation that in fact two distinct sides were formed. A clever way to enact and represent unity and division simultaneously. (fig. 6) In other circles or rings, like at the UN Security Council, different types of

witnesses occupy the inside, the near exterior and the far background. Eye contact and whispering distance dictate local relationships and hierarchies along this continuous ring.

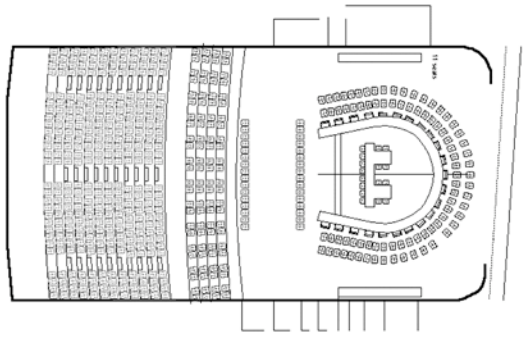


fig 6

**A** (fig. 7.) Let's look at a close-up of that room with people in it, and their kinesphere. What happens? The total movement range that you can trace around you without stepping is your kinesphere. [*Pause.* A *opens her arms, reaching around herself. Listeners turn their body and head to the left to look at* A] So look at the people in the photo. What do you see? Where is the energy?


fig 7

What kind of groupings? The woman in the back writing is very internal, inside herself, very much in her own dynamic of energy. Let's look at the people in the dark suits. Same clothes, same kind of body dynamic, different postures, but pretty much the same energy. They make one energy group. In the left corner, there's a man almost falling out of the picture, facing a computer screen, a virtual space; he's in his own kinesphere as well. [A *walks forward from back of aisle. Holds paper tightly*] And then we have a single person in action, who is ready to speak. [A *takes her chair close to screen. Sits down. Facing front. Lifts right arm up. Ready to Speak. Freeze in pose.*]

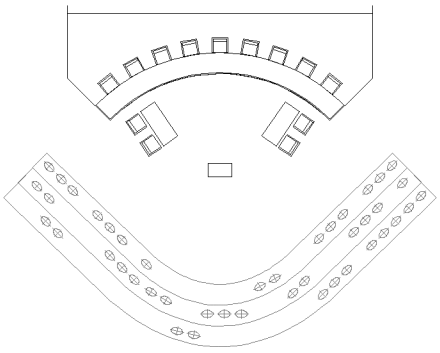
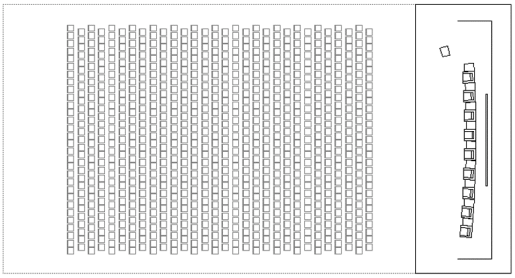


fig 8

**B** (fig. 8) The arcing configuration of this community boardroom makes an attempt to include the audience in the conversation but the physical boundaries of low-walls and level changes keep officials and the public apart. (fig. 9) Straight-line configurations breakdown communication between participants into serial monologues and reinforce the hierarchy between those, as right here, "on stage" and the audience. To establish further hierarchy at Davos the presenters move to an opaque podium to formally



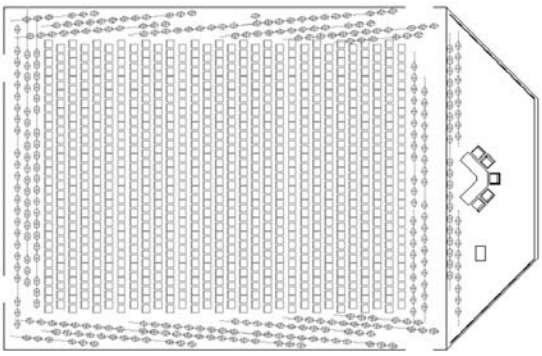



fig 9 + 10

present their monologues, and otherwise remain in their places to debate the issues.

Consistently, changes in floor level, ceiling conditions, and concentrations of lighting contribute towards differentiating zones for speaker from listener, reinforcing the spatial hierarchy.

**A** [A *gets up from chair. Travels in a circular pathway from floor over table to floor to land seated on the side of* B*'s chair.*] The word choreography is derived from the Greek word for circles—choros—as Rudolph Laban noted. The human being is in space; gravity pulls us down and we try to rise up—the fundamental human opposition. All the time we have to negotiate with the space around us—our kinesphere. And, true expressiveness occurs when our bodies control and integrate in the space around us—rather than the objects around us creating barriers and controlling us. The objects give us opportunities for new approaches, new ways that we can take ownership of the space around us, but we have to investigate these possibilities.

**B** (fig. 10) So here, in the round table on Art and Politics with Joseph Beuys, we see the hierarchy dissolving as audience members sit on the edge of the stage just a few feet from the presenter, or (Fig. 11) in this circus shaped assembly at the Serpentine Gallery the architecture puts both the audience and performers on stage; or nobody on stage. Bodies and mobile furniture established where the action happens.

[A *moves to center of left aisle. Pause. Prerecorded voice of Merce Cunningham*]

**V** "I remember thinking I don't… see any reason why the space can't be all over, that is that you can't be anyplace in the space without necessarily referring to some other part. [A *six steps walking through listener row. Pause.*] And then I read that thing of Einstein's by pure coincidence where he said 'there are no fixed points in space,' and I thought well that's perfect. [A *moves out of row to walk through another row. 8 steps. Pause.* B *switches to Room Lighting. Moves to second seating row and sits on arm rest.*] That, as far as I was concerned about stage space, there aren't any fixed points. Where ever you are could be a center… [A *moves through row to a new row and sits on armrest of listener. Pause.*] Wherever you are is the center as well as where everybody else is. *(chuckles…)*"[7]

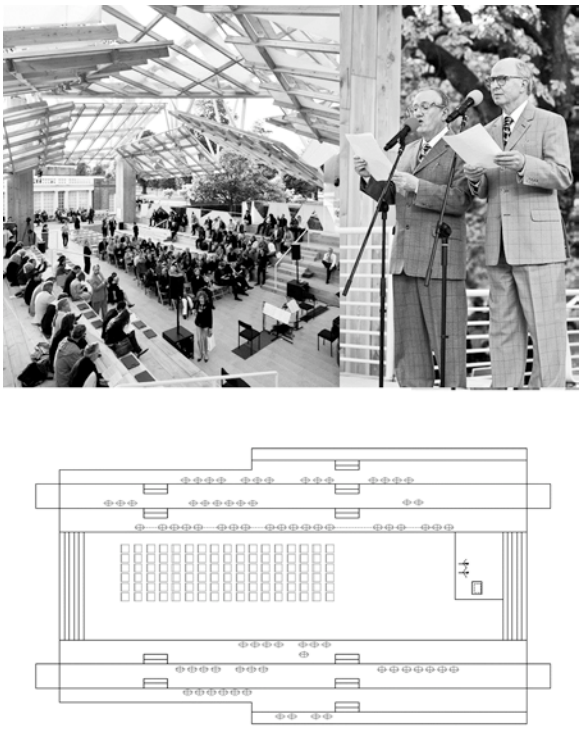


fig. 11

**BODY/GESTURE**

**A** Movement and stillness. You move, we are still. We move you are still. Speaking and silence. You speak, we are silent. We speak, you are silent. A continuous fluctuation and duality. Voice is motion. Voice is effort. Voice is space. Voice has shape.

**B** Perhaps in Bentham's Panopticon "docile bodies" are the norm, but are we confined to a static and stationary condition here? Watching footage of these panels, my interest was peaked when speakers used body gestures to extend their ideas beyond voice into the space, or they broke out of their "assigned" space, strayed beyond boundaries, dissolving the distinction between speakers and listeners as will you see momentarily in the photos of Andrea's new work-in-process "Dialogue."
[B *moves back to table. Switches on Projection Lighting. Advance slides*]. (fig. 12 a-f) *B turns light on. A moves as well back to table. A + B seat relaxed on the table-facing each other diagonal—allow gestures to come in play. Play with energy level –whole body integration)*

**A** Does the voice have a connection to body movements that occur in conference settings? The most prominent gestures in conferences are hand gestures. How much are they controlled by protocols, and how much are they unconscious. Let's look at a fact:

**B** Blind people gesture as often, and in virtually the same way, as people who can see. This suggests that gestures are a natural accompaniment to speech. Perhaps people gesture to provide visual information that adds to what they are saying.

**A** [A *gets up. As she talks, walks back to table.* A + B *get on table. Sit casually on table by leaning towards one side. Leaving the vertical axis. Facing each other across the diagonal. Talk to each other and not to the listeners. Allow gestures to come in play.*] But does gesture have an additional purpose? Perhaps gestures help to store information in the brain, or perhaps to activate parts of the brain.

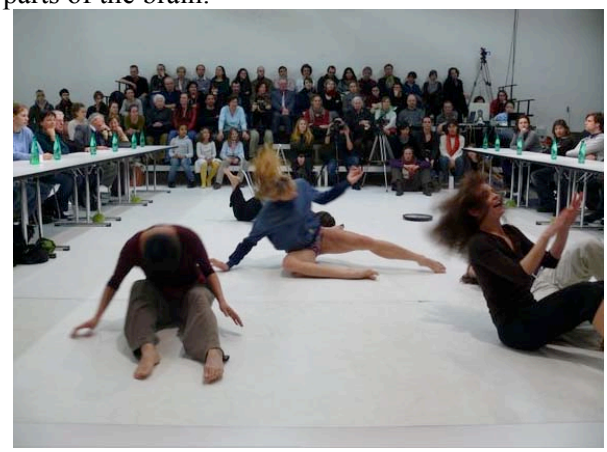


fig. 12a

**B** Researchers have found that gestures almost always precede the word they accompany, sometimes by as much as three seconds.

**A** So do they come before thought? Or are they thought itself?

**B** As Susan Goldin-Meadow of the University of Chicago said, "Gesturing certainly is talking with your hand in terms of conveying information, but I would like to think it's more than that. You could say it helps to think."[8]

**A** I might put it this way: there are unexplored formless connections between mind and body and architecture.

**SPACE: INFORME**

**B** The alternation between motion and stillness,

**A** between speech and silence,

**B** plus hierarchy and its antithesis, is a perfect way for us to introduce the *informe*,

**A** or formless.

fig. 12b-e

**B** Yve-Alain Bois describes this alternative to the formal as containing the following qualities, or vectors
**A** horizontality,
**B** base materialism,
**A** pulse,
**B** and entropy. [9]
**A** The HORIZONTAL, or experience through movement, is seen as a counterpoint to verticality and the primacy of the visual;
**B** BASE MATERIALISM, or the physicality is seen as a counterpoint to the "tyranny of form and idea" over matter;
**A** PULSE embraces the temporal, the heart;
**B** and ENTROPY as nature's tendency to dissolve order is the counterpoint to formal structure and totality.
**A** Perhaps,
**B** if we accept
**A** that this presentation
**B** is a panel
**A** in which all the
**B** conventions of panel spaces
**A** are accepted,
**B** can these dynamic,
**A** anti-formal
**B** approaches to space,
**A** body
**B** movement,
**A** gesture
**B** and time
**A** provide
**B** a spring board
**A** into a
**B** much larger
**A** realm
**B** of possibilities?
**A** [A *to B*] Thank you.
**B** [B *to A*] Thank you.
**A+B** [*Turn to face audience.*] Thank you.



*The Panel* premiered as a context-specific paper /performance June 20th, 2009, Rm30, Bldg 220, Stanford University. *The Panel* is the first iteration of an open-ended, context-specific, collaboration between choreographer Haenggi and architect Weinstein. It is our intention to continue this research into the formal/*informe* latent in the relationship between speaker (performer), listener (viewer) and the architectural context containing the dialogue. These new iterations will be situated within other spatial and institutional contexts to which the form, content and method the new paper/performance will be tuned.

## Illustrations

Figure 1a. Location of *The Panel* presentation June 20, 2009. Building 200, Rm 30, Stanford University. Photo ; b. speculative plan of furniture configuration made prior to seeing space, B. Weinstein.

Figure 2. *The Green Table*, Kurt Jooss, 1932. American Ballet Theater remake, New York Times, Oct 28, 2005. Source: www.nytimes.com/imagepages/2005/10/28/arts/28gree_CA0ready.html

Figure 3a. Paris Peace Accord Signing 1973, Source: www.mishalov.com/Vietnam_peacepact.html; b. speculative plan of furniture configuration, B. Weinstein

Figure 4. Jeremy Bentham, Panopticon, 1791.

Figure 5. *Pichet Kulnchun and Myself*, Jerome Bel, 2007 @ DTW. Photo by Julia Cervantes, www.danceviewtimes.com/2007/11/two-camps.html

Figure 6. UN Security Council space, source: www.pimun.org/?q=content/un-security-council-2009; speculative plan of adjacent UN space, B. Weinstein

Figure 7. UN Security Council, close up, with Russia's UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, June 16, 2009. http://downloads.unmultimedia.org/cms/radio/content/uploads/2009/06/full/veto-ruso-georgia.jpg

Figure 8. Video Still from Carpentersville Council; speculative plan of this space, B. Weinstein.

Figure 9. Video Still from *Davos Annual Meeting 2007*; speculative plan of this space, B. Weinstein.

Figure 10. Video Still from *Uber Kunst und Politik*; speculative plan of this space, B. Weinstein.

Figure 11. Gehry Pavillion photo by Iwan Baan , Gilbert and George, www.serpentinegallery.org/2008/02/park_nights_manifesto_marathon_1.html, Source: *Manifesto Marathon*, 2008; speculative plan of this space, B. Weinstein.

Figures 12a-f. photographs of *Dialogue*, choreographic work in progress, Andrea Haenggi / AMDaT, 2008.

## Notes

[1] Voice of Marta Menezes (moderator), the Round Table Co-habitation and Dialogue between the Arts and the Sciences.

[2] Moïse, "The Vietnam Wars"

[3] Watkins, Michael. "Strategic Simplification"

[44] Rabinow's introduction, *Foucault Reader*. p 18

[5] "Objects," Zbigniew Herbert. www.poemhunter.com/poem/objects

[6] "Small Dance" instructions were first published in *Contact Quarterly*, Volume 11, No 1, Winter 1986, accessible http://myriadicity.net/ci36/satellite-events/the-small-dance-the-stand

[7] Cage/Cunningham

[8] Stein

[9] Bois, p. 32

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## Online Video References


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Joseph Beuys, *über Kunst und Politik*. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNsoG9tLwdE

*Art is Communication*, panel discussion moderated by Gabriel Sherman, Art Director's Club, Oct 28, 2008. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5yKdlQfyOX8

Xavier LeRoy, http://www.unfriendly-takeover.de/

*Manifesto Marathon 2008, Gilbert + George, Serpentine Gallery London* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvli3w1ePfA

*Davos Annual Meeting 2007: Modern Russia*, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5PWjcR4wzI

Approaches to Collaboration: Choreographers and Visual Arts, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=THuyhgEhkdU

Carpentersville, Illinois, *The most outrageous local government board meeting ever!!* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFeA-pM0o8Y

Chavez UN Speech: 'Bush is the Devil' and US imperialism. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bOMnJyJkHY

Round Table Co-habitation and Dialogue between the Arts and the Sciences. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfH2mL9ZXCA

# Training & Construction of the Competition Body

*Alexis A. Weisbrod*

As a first year dance major at a well-known art school, I was working on the stage crew for an MFA showcase. While going through our duties with the technical director for the dance program, I asked a relatively simple question, "How many numbers are in the show?" Expecting a simple answer, I was caught off guard by his firm response, "We don't do numbers here, we do pieces." At that time I had heard people refer to dance work as "pieces" but until that moment, I knew dances literally as entry numbers. This was my first realization that the dance I had know before college did not look like the dance I would be immersed in during college.

Throughout the last eight years I have traversed two worlds of dance, one full of numbers and routines the other made up of works of art. As a student in modern-based collegiate dance programs, I have also directed dance competitions. Over time I have realized that my experience with the art school's technical director is not uncommon. And I have realized that each of these spaces, dance competitions and American concert dance, specifically modern, are two very different structures of dance, dictating differing methods of training, composition and performance. Consequently, these two spaces are similar but not identical and, therefore, can be dialogued with each other but not evaluated through the same methods.

When I began work to merge these two spaces I started, interestingly enough, at the point of congruency—two bodies each performing on a proscenium stage. I was initially drawn to Susan Foster's 1997 article "Dancing Bodies", wherein she examines the construction of bodies in different dance techniques. Directly addressing American concert dance forms, Foster also theorizes the "hired body", which she suggests is a "new multitalented body"[i] composed of various American dance techniques. Not trained in a single technique, the hired body successfully traverses several, including ballet, Duncan, Graham, Cunningham and contact improvisation for professional success. Though the competition body is an amateur body, competing in a multitude of categories ranging from ballet and jazz to lyrical and musical theater, it is very much a multitalented body able to execute multiple dance forms equally successfully.

While the ability to replicate various styles allows the hired body to participate in the capital industry of dance by acquiring financial capital through the labor of dancing, the competition body spends money to dance. Although each entry opens up more opportunities for the competition body to gain social capital in the form of trophies, titles and monetary awards[ii], she also pays for each additional opportunity. Paying to perform rather than being paid to perform is just one of many reasons methods for reading other American concert dance bodies are insufficient for the competition body.

Unlike other competitive forms, such as gymnastics or ice skating, dance never requires certain movements to be performed and the judging rubric is often more subjective. Moreover, this is not dance team competition wherein all groups are united under a single national governing body. Competition dancers train at private studios and enter competitions run by private companies. Whether it is entry fees, choreography fees or costume costs, underlying each step of the training and construction of the competition body is a specific exchange of financial capital between various parties, which rarely includes the dancer herself. While the exchanges of capital are too complex to discuss fully here, I encourage you to consider this underlying feature as I guide you through the construction of the competition body.

In what follows, the competition body will be examined in order to extract its significance to dance studies as well as its larger implications on American culture. I will focus on the body, rather than the staging and choreography, to highlight the various movement techniques central to competition training.

Rather than performing dance techniques separately like the hired body, every training form is simultaneously visible in the competition body's performance. A viewing of the competition body live on-stage or through mediated sites such as YouTube reveals that no training technique is performed discretely. With this understanding I'd

like to begin by looking at the cornerstone technique of competition training and performance: jazz.

While jazz found on the competition stage retains many elements from the great jazz masters such as Jack Cole and Bob Fosse, much of this jazz genre is infused with popular culture aesthetics, which are obvious within the music and costuming as well as movement composition. I contend that much of the movement and imagery that non-competition dancers and choreographers find uncomfortable, problematic and unnatural are inspired by popular culture dance forms, such as those evident in nightclubs and advertisements, especially those related to fashion. The hip and shoulder movements that are often read as sexual by "outsiders" are derived from contemporary social dance forms used in dance clubs both by go-go dancers and patrons, and are also used in music videos and other media spaces. Additionally, the lines and positions of the body, contoured from traditional ballet and jazz technique, resemble the lines and shapes used by models in fashion and advertising. While the model's static image strives to convey movement (to display the clothing), the competition body is the live, moving version of the model's pose. By displaying the legs, stomach, arms and face, through movement and costuming, the competition aesthetic alludes to a sexual body without crossing social boundaries of eroticism. Many competition participants perceive movements as non-sexual because of the performance space, which creates a sort of "safety". This idea of safety results from the competition stage as a private space, rather than public, which allows for a sense of control over the interpretation of images. Instead these movements are regarded as skilled, innovative and exciting, rather than sexual or mature, without regard to the dancer's age.

This use of jazz technique heavily incorporates elements of ballet technique and training to construct a particular aesthetic. In all successful competition bodies the ballet training is undeniable; starting simply with outward rotation of the legs and advancing to movements such as fouetté and á la seconde turns, the competition body always uses ballet training. Though this body must be well versed in ballet, it does not need to be fluent. It never trains in ballet with the intent to pass as a ballerina and often alters ballet technique, such as hip or hanplacement in order to accomplish the most current version of the competition aesthetic. Because the competition aesthetic incorporates many different elements from various sites of dance and popular culture it is difficult to determine whether the movement is an intentional change in ballet technique or the result of poor technique training. However the reason is irrelevant, as this stylized use of ballet technique functions successfully in the competition industry.

Another layer of training also accents the competition dance aesthetic: acrobatics and gymnastics. Many movements associated with the competition body derive from rhythmic gymnastics. For example, many turn sequences performed by the competition body include pirouette, fouetté and á la seconde turns with illusions, found in rhythmic gymnastics. "Leg wrap" or "leg hold" turns that look more like acrobatics than dance are also commonly found on the competition stage. These "feats" of physical prowess and virtuosity are highly regarded on the competition stage and are markers of successful competition bodies. Moreover, they enhance the spectacle performed by the competition body. Much like the historical evolution of ballet, including the development of the pointe shoe to lighting and other technologies, the competition body has and continues to evolve with the goal of appearing to accomplish tasks beyond natural human strength. Just as the Romantic ballets of the 19th century strove to make the ballerina seem ethereal and beyond human, the physical feats of the competition body intend to create one capable of the super-human. These super-human skills intrigue and awe the audience, which is increasingly accustomed to digital technology and CGI, and, therefore, have a strong reverence for these extreme abilities.

In addition to these and other similar forms of dance, the competition body also often trains in and incorporates hip hop and tap, during which she utilizes many of these elements I have already discussed. She is a jack-of-all-trades but a master at none. She even trains in a form of modern, more recently widely referred to as contemporary dance, which often ideologically opposes forms of modern and contemporary dance found on traditional American concert stages.

Drawing on many of the characteristics of the other primary training techniques, modern dance on the competition stage expresses an almost direct shift from the formative ideologies of modern and post-modern. At their origin both dance forms worked beyond outside codified training and dance making.

While modern dance choreographers such as Martha Graham presented ideas more relevant to the current human experience, post-modern choreographers sought to make dance more relevant by engaging the pedestrian movement experiences of the body. However, in a stark contrast, competition dance is bringing back the aesthetic ideals found in ballet and intensifying them. Competition primarily disregards the "natural" or given body and attempts to construct a wholly new body. A bricolage of images from various dance forms and American popular culture construct this body and are visible, in a fractured pattern, through competition performance and training.

Less concerned with the internal feeling of the movement, the competition body functions almost entirely on the images presented. Specifically, the competition body utilizes the images from the reflection in the mirror during class and rehearsal to shape her performance. As one can imagine, and many instructors have experienced, asking the competition dancer to choreograph, beginning not with music, but, with an abstract theme or exercise can be very frustrating. I will never forget my first composition course during which I secretly used music in my dorm room to choreograph—these were never very successful as class assignments nor as competition dances. For competition dancers, dance is the turns, leaps and leg extensions that so many modern and post-modern choreographers see as uninformative movement. Competition is not simply about conditioning these dancers to achieve these skills but it also instills a kinesthetic reaction that assists in reading this aesthetic.

A large and ever expanding audience connects to these bodies. Competition audiences are typically limited to those affiliated with the competition or the dancers on stage. However, these bodies are increasingly viewed through music videos and television shows, including So You Think You Can Dance, where many of the show's most popular dancers were trained in the competition circuit. Music videos and commercial spots combined with Ultimate Fighting Championships and Survivor-like reality shows have created a viewing audience ready to read and understand short, fragmented ideas portrayed through physical experiences that push the body beyond its natural limitations. In many ways the competition body is poised to be the next model American body.

At this juncture I'd like to posit that not only does the structure of competition serve to construct a particular dancing body, but as a product of competition, the competition body also trains other bodies. Certainly, while competition bodies often become dance instructors, at an ever increasing rate American audiences are learning how to read dance through the competition body. So You Think You Can Dance and other widely accessible mediated sites of dance foreground the professional manifestation of the amateur competition body. Because of these vehicles of dance, the competition body is not only re-fracturing and reflecting popular culture, but also creating it. By nature competition doesn't make space for transgressive bodies, only constructing and making visible bodies that maintain hegemonic structures. In this regard, the highly visible competition body sustains dominant power structures. Even the sexualizing of the young female dancer works to ensure that the female body is trained to position itself as commodified product—commodified in the construction of her sexuality as well as the capital structures through which she performs. Familiar to American audiences the competition body instructs viewers in reading and understanding the dancing body. The lack of resistance performed by the competition body leads to a lack of resistance in the viewing bodies. Ultimately, both of these subjects become supporters of hegemony, in particular the structures designed to limit and confine bodies for the maintenance of structures of power. Therefore, the competition body is not only shaping American dance training, performance and reading, she is also affecting the production of American culture and others as she finds herself packaged and ready for export.



Notes

[i] Foster, Susan Leigh. "Dancing Bodies" in Jane Desmond, ed., Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997, 255

[ii] I do not deem the monetary awards as financial capital since the amount won rarely covers the full expenses endured.

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Weisbrod

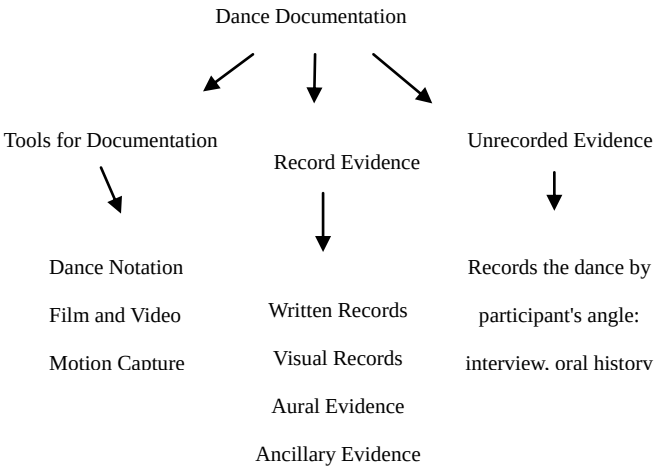
# “Preservation and Management of Taiwan’s Modern Dance Company Archives”

*Chih-Chieh Wu*

**Dance Archive Definition**

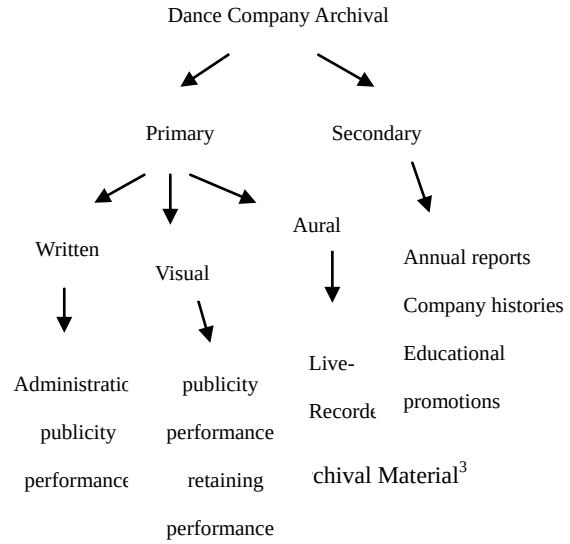
In this research, I integrate the idea of “Museology” and that of “Intangible Cultural Heritage.” I quote the concept of collection in Museology, and regard dance as ‘Intangible Cultural Heritage. ’ To conclude, I think dance archives are the compound carriers of tangible materials and intangible artistic ideas.

And then my question is “what are the types of dance archives?” I adopt the classification created by Dance Heritage Coalition. In a book published by Dance Heritage Coalition[1], dance archives are considered as dance documentation. The Coalition divided dance documentation into three types: ‘Tools for Documentation’, ‘Record Evidence’ and ‘Unrecorded Evidence’.




1-1 The types of Dance Documentation

In my opinion, I think the dance company produces dance archives. “What archives does the dance company include?” Adshead and Layson divided archival materials of dance companies into two types: Primary Sources and secondary sources. Primary Sources are the first-hand, contemporary, and raw materials generated by the dance company. Secondary Sources are the second-hand interpretation or reportage, derived from the primary material.[2] For purposes of clarity primary sources have been subdivided into visual, written and aural categories. (Please look at the detailed classification for the chart 1-2)




For Dance Company, the importance of archives preservation is derived from the following three points: Firstly, the photographs and videos can help to reproduce the work. Secondly, no matter for the choreographers, dancers or administrators, these materials have the function of inheriting experiences. Finally, through the research in the work, the new value of the work is created. As for the society, archives preservation has the function to educate and promote people’s realization of dance. Therefore, I personally think that the final goal of archives preservation is to

promote the opening and the application of those archives.

**Present situation: Taiwan Modern Dance Company Archives preservation**

According to the creation style and manifestation of the specific work, the dance company records the dance with the most suitable method and pattern. The reason to preserve Taiwan's modern dance is that it has been departing from the western modern dance in its pattern and style, connecting with the unique civilization to develop as the differentiable specific genre. I select ten modern dance companies for case study, which were all awarded with the subsidies by the Council for Cultural Affair in Taiwan.(Please look at the chart 1-3)

| Dance Company | Foundation | Art Director |
|---|---|---|
| Cloud Gate Dance Theatre | 1973 | 林懷民 |
| Neo-Classic Dance Company | 1976 | 劉鳳學 |
| Taipei Dance Circle | 1984 | 劉紹爐 |
| Dance Forum | 1989 | 平珩 |
| Ku & Dancers | 1993 | 古名伸 |
| Legend Lin Dance Company | 1995 | 林麗珍 |
| Taipei Crossover Dance Company | 1995 | 葉台竹<br>鄭淑姬<br>羅曼菲<br>吳素君 |
| Sun-Shier Dance Company | 1997 | 吳碧容 |
| Scarecrow Contemporary Dance Company | 1989 | 羅文瑾 |
| HORSE Dance Theatre | 2005 | 蘇威嘉 |

1-3 Dance companies for case study

Different archives types are exist for different dance companies. Hereafter I am going to explain the creation style and manifestation of my studying cases.

林懷民 combines tai chi of the east with modern dance of the west and develops the new dance vocabulary in 1990's. The representative works are ***Moon Water*** *(1998)* and ***Cursive*** *(2001), which* takes calligraphy as its subject. International scholars or researchers take Could Gate as the subject of studying, partly due to its world-wide reputation as an modern dance company with a distinguishing feature. The Cloud Gate Dance Archives cooperates with National Chiao Tung University to execute its plans of archiving. In the website, users may search for any materials of the works, such as the review articles, programs, pictures, videos and so forth. The on-line database allows foreign scholars to directly obtain related materials of Cloud Gate.

Neo-classic Dance Company's subject matters fused the components of eastern and western literatures, as well as the elements of Taiwan's indigenous people. Taipei Dance Circle 's 劉紹爐 combined the Chinese yin yang tai chi, Chigung and Contact extemporaneously. He has Created the so-called "modern dance on baby oil." The representative work is ***Olympics****(1994)*.

Cloud Gate: ***Moon Water*** *(1998)*[4]

Ku & Dancers is the only dance company in Taiwan whose creations and performances is produced with “improvisation” and “contact improvisation”. 林麗珍’s *Jiao(1995)* is the traditional religious rite in Taiwan, presented with the bodily esthetics of slowness, quietness, steadiness and internal attentions, shaping the atmosphere of phantom ghosts and magnificent religious rites.

Legend Lin DanceCompany: ***Jiao****(1995)*[5]

Taipei Crossover Dance Company tries to make cooperation between dance and other art domains. Usually it performs on non-professional fields, and therefore how to completely record the works through camara lens becomes the biggest obstacle for its archives preservation.

HORSE Dance Theatre is Taiwan’s first “entire male Dance Company”. In the third year of its foundation, the work ***Velocity****(2007)* wan the Best Performance in 2007 Annual Taishin Arts Awards in Taiwan.

Taiwan doesn’t have an organization specializing in preservation of the dance archives. For the modern dance companies, only the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre is equipped with Cloud Gate Dance Archives. According to the my research, I induce some points of present situation for Taiwan Modern Dance Company Archives preservation.

HORSE Dance Theatre: ***Velocity****(2007)*[6]

1. <u>For the performance, the most important dance archives are films, videos, photographs.</u>

<u>For the administration, the most important dance archives are Business planning books, reports.</u>

Since only images could record the movements of a work, for the performance, the most important media of archives are films, videos and photographs. In addition, the proposals of works may help the Dance Companies to promote and market themselves.

2. <u>Doesn’t have ability to gather the oral historical material</u>

Oral history is very important for the dance archives preservation. However, obstructing with funds and human resources, most dance companies are unable to gather the oral historical materials independently.

3. <u>Doesn’t complete the systematization to construct the archives.</u>

Except Cloud Gate, Neo-classic, Taipei Dance Circle, Legend Lin Dance Company, and other companies just keep files with hard-copies or digital archiving.

4. <u>Migration and Refreshing</u>

Evolving with the science and technology, the Dance Companies are forced to face the problems of the transforming and upgrading of digital files.

5. <u>Lack of the suitable preserved space and the equipment</u>

Lack of the specialized administrative staffs

All Dance Companies are in need of the suitable preserved space and the specialized administrative staffs. Only Cloud Gate Dance Company has the professional archives management personnel. The other companies' archives have preserved in the office and rehearsal room.

6. Influence dance preservation primary factor are ' funds '

The primary factor to influence dance preservation is 'funds.' In Taiwan, the public funding is an important source for dance companies. But because of limited resources, each dance company can be assigned limited funds.

7. Not to make archives open to public use and look up

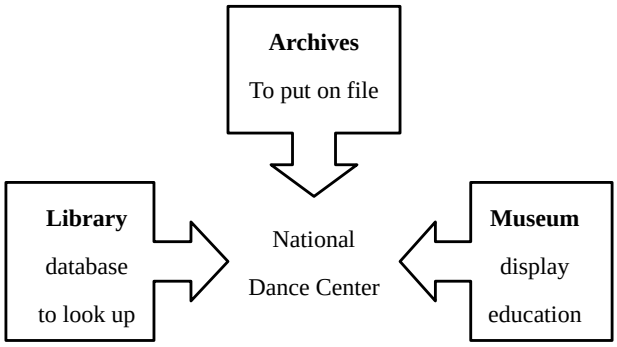
Owing that Dance Companies belong to private agencies, the existing archives are not open to the public for use. For researchers, the closed archived materials increase the difficulty to do the researches in Taiwan dances.

**Suggestion: Taiwan Modern Dance Company Archives preservation**

The cooperation between Merce Cunningham Dance Company and Rambert Dance Company could be a model for Taiwan Dance Companies. Dance Company could train its personnel with the resources and assistance of schools and libraries. For example, The Merce Cunningham Dance Company cooperates with NYPL Dance Division, keeping the archives preserved under the specialized environment. It could not only systematically build up the archives, but also be provided to the future inquiry. Now that funding is the major factor to affect a dance company's operation on archives, it becomes necessary to consider the possibility that the government and non-government organizations provide their supports.

**Prospect: Taiwan Modern Dance Company Archives preservation**

I propose a prospect for Taiwan modern dance archives preservation's development. To legislate the laws may assist the dance company to be engaged in the archives preservation. The long-range prospect is to establish a "National Dance Center". This center will combine the functions of Archives, the Library and the Museum.




1-4 Function of National Dance Center

Dance Company's administrative materials, such as budget statements, proposals, and the files of communication, should be "confidential documents". The files should be collected and preserved in an archive center, which would not be accessible without previous permission. The works, such as the clippings, books, the reviews, the films and videos, the photos and so forth, should be categorized as "books and reference materials". The enquiry service of which should be provided with the retrieval libraries system. The final step is to unify the demonstration function of museums, gradually reaching the goal of education and

promotion, making more and more people appreciate dances.

What mentioned above is my analysis and suggestions on the present situation of Taiwan's modern dance archives preservation. I hope that takes advantage of the research to let more people take seriously to dance archives preserved.



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Notes

1 Dance Heritage Coalition, *Documenting Dance: A practical Guide*, Dance Heritage Coalition Ltd.

2 Janet Adshead, June Layson (1983).*Dance History: A Methodology for Study* , London: Dance Books,pp.75.

3 Make up from Janet Adshead, June Layson (1983).*Dance History: A Methodology for Study* , London: Dance Books,pp.76.

4 Picture from: http://cloudgate.e-lib.nctu.edu.tw/home.asp

5 Picture from: http://wougow.myweb.hinet.net/

6 Picture from: http://www.mdans.org.tw/

# Addendum

The beginning paragraph in *Beyond Representation: An Aesthetic Approach to Study on 1980—a piece by Pina Bausch* should be revised as below:

German choreographer Pina Bausch's Tanztheater, by means of its distinctive form and content, provides a new way for the audience to see dance. According to dance history scholar Ya-ping Chen, "in the 1980s, the concepts and styles of Bausch's Tanztheater were brought to Taiwan and were thereafter engaged in a richer dialogue with the drastically transforming Taiwanese society." [1] Bausch's performance strategy provided Taiwanese choreographers with a different manner to explore the possibility of theater-dance aesthetics. Some examples are provided below:

1. Lin Hwai-Min and Cloud Gate Dance Theater's *The Rite of Spring* (1984) and *My Nostalgia, My Songs* (1986). The latter used popular songs to discuss the story of the young adults who came from the countryside to Taipei city to make a living. Its main theme focused on their dreams and frustration, sorrow and efforts.
2. In 1997, Pina Bausch went to Taiwan where she influenced many professional performance major students who later followed her to Germany to study under her artistic direction. They went to study in Folkwang Dance School, where Bausch graduated and later taught. Wu Kuo-chu (choreographer of Cloud Gate 2) and his work *Oculus* is one such example.

[1] Chen, Ya-Ping ( 陳雅萍 ), 〈身體．歷史．性別．權力 : 舞蹈劇場與台灣社會 , 1980s-1990s〉 , 《民俗曲藝》 , 161 期 , 2008 年 9 月 , 頁 80。