

Choreographic/Political Performances: Bodies, Spaces, Actions (Steven Cohen, Femen, Nuit debout)
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Abstract:Choreographic activism could be exemplified by three case studies: performances by Steven Cohen, esp. *Coq/Cock*, 2013; “sextremist” actions by the *Femen*, since 2012; *Nuit debout* (“Up all night!”), a democratic forum at the *Place de la République*, 2016. Some issues are crucial here: “dancing” social and political conflict and ethical/aesthetical interactions; deconstructing/constructing heterotopic spaces and utopian bodies; carnivalesque interplays of irony, critical thinking, spectacular celebration and denunciation; dialectics of discursive and synesthetic pragmatic and negotiation. These performances may also compare to anti-AIDS actions.

This paper intends to study choreographic activism or artivism (i.e. art activism) in three context-specific case studies, considered through three main pragmatic perspectives:

- Occupying and building up (heterotopic) spaces and times: where? when?
- Standing up against and for (esthetic, ethic, and political) values : what?
- Queering bodies, discourses, identities, and communities: who? how?

But I first would like to state some epistemological and methodological *prolegomena* about the relation between dance and politics, relying both on ancient, esp. Greek, and recent scholarship on aestheticizing politics and politicizing aesthetics.

Politics and dance: humanity and space, *dissensus*, carnival

1. The Aristotelian definition of human being as *phúsei zoon politikón* (“a political animal by nature”), in *Politics* 1253a1-11, implies that a person defines her/himself both as an animal (with a sensitive and practical body as well as embodied psychology, cognition, and thought) and as a part of an organized group (a *pólis*, not “town”, like *ástu*, but “city”, that is a “public body” ideally based on *eleuthería* - freedom, *autonomía* – self-governance, and *koinonía* - mutuality). By definition, political life relies upon the interactions, altogether participatory and conflicting, of those two kind of bodies, individual and collective (both “animal”, that is “living, animated”, *zoon*), through sensorial, especially visual, oral-aural, gestural, kinetic expressions and performances, and in specific spaces, e.g. on the *agora* (the

central public space of the city, where people meet and exchange material goods as well as discourses) and in some other central or peripheral spaces, temples, sanctuaries, *gymnasia*, theatres, assemblies, councils. A decisive space is also the *khóra*, the territory forming, with the “town” (*ástu*), the whole “city” (*pólis*). In Plato’s *Timaeus*, 48e4, *khóra* is a concept referring to a site, receptacle, matrix, substratum or interval, interpreted by Heidegger as a “clearing” where “being” appears. Kristeva (1984) uses this concept in to study poetic/artistic negativity against social and linguistic codes, and Derrida (1994-1995) analyzes “cette chose qui n’est rien de ce à quoi pourtant elle paraît donner lieu – sans jamais rien donner pourtant”, (“this thing which is nothing else than what it/she seems to give rise to — though without ever giving anything”). In reviews, Derrida’s work was presented of special interest to readers in philosophy and literature, but also in “space studies” (architecture, urbanism, design”). Dance studies were often forgotten, before their recent philosophical reevaluation.

Khóra, “territory”,ⁱ “place” (of an activity), “position” (also for a soldier), is, at least for ancient Greeks, though not for modern linguists, etymologically related to *chorós*, first “dance area” (in Homer’s *Iliad* XVIII, in Crete, and an *agora*, in Sparta, for the historian Pausanias), and in classical Greek “choral dance and song”: DSA conference in Malta was a *polis*, with a *khóra*, as well as various *khoroí*. This corporeal and spatial aspect has been underestimated in political science and history, but not any more in practical philosophy, where dance and politics are well connected, either to govern and control kinetics (like dances and individual/collective emotions and passions in the utopian *Republic* of Plato) or to handle, adjust, and mediate it, for instance with the help of notions like *pathos*, *phantasia*, *praxis*, *mimesis* or *catharsis* in Aristotle’s *Poetics*, *Rhetoric*, and *Politics*. Thought divergent, Plato and Aristotle’s agree that politics is not only a question of rational regulation, negotiation, and decision-making, whenever that exists anywhere. Identities and communities are dynamic and

precarious, moving social and cultural constructions based on physical, emotional, and practical, exemplarily artistic, devices, forms and forces.

2. In democratic politics, contrary to a widespread opinion, *dissensus* (“dissent, discord, conflict”) is as decisive as *consensus* (“concord”). And, from Greek *harmonía*, etymologically related to *árma*, “chariot”, as a “good assembly”, and meaning “adjustment, adaptation, assemblage”, then “proper proportion” (of a building or a body), finally “acoustic accord, chords, musical harmony”, “harmony” denotes tenseness and intensity. Likewise *tónos* (*teínō* “to stretch, extend”) means “rope, chords”, “tension”, “energy”, and “musical mode”. The architectural and biological, then esthetical, concept of “tensegrity” (“tensional integrity”), in relation with system and rhythm, is quite useful in this perspective: flowing movement without tension nor even organization, is meaningless chaos; structuration and tension, without any floating or looseness, is dead order. And it is quite tempting here to replace “tension” by “dance”, at least metaphorically: various scientific as well as popular etymologies of the word “dance” relate it to lexemes denoting “tension” (indo-european *ten- “to tense, strain, reach, extend, spread”), in Latin or in Old High German.

About *dissensus* as providing an agonistic model for democracy, I refer here to Mouffe (2005) and Mouffe - Erreión (2016), who promote a radicalization of democracy as the construction of an active “people” (*dêmos*). *Dissensus* itself has been problematized by Rancière (2010), about the articulation of sensitivity and politics, as in Rancière (2000) and (2011). These studies were first published in French, and fully read by the *Femen* or a part of the public in *Nuit Debout*, who are interested in experimenting the relation of politics and aesthetics. Conversely, Rancière (2017) was first published in English, and then translated in French, some years after the activist performances studied here, all by artists who know about politics, and activists who know about art, especially performing arts.ⁱⁱ I here also refer to Andre Lepecki’s “kinesthetic politics” and to politicized choreographies and choreographed

politics, as in Siegmund - Hölscher (2013),ⁱⁱⁱ and Kowal – Siegmund – Martin (2017).^{iv} A crucial point is that these issues are transcultural both in space and time, that is transhistorical, from classical to contemporary times (see Briand (2010) and (2016)).

3. There is not enough space here to develop the role of carnival, as a post-Bakhtinian concept and an efficient conjunction of (political) ritual and (choreographic) spectacle, as well as (choreographic) ritual and (political) spectacle. A decisive concept here is choreographed anti-authoritarian and carnivalesque performativity against oppression, illusion, ideologies, insulting discourses, spread out in space and time, and various kinds of institutionalized violence (in authoritative states, neo-liberal globalized capitalism, or multidimensional cultures of hate, like racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.). A crucial issue is also the way carnivalesque blurs and articulates boundaries, codes of identities, communities, times, spaces, discourses, and practices, and above all binary oppositions such as male/female, academic/popular, tragic/comic/camp, esthetic/political ...

As a provisory conclusion, I would mention Butler's reflections about *performativity vs. expression* in *gender (especially queer) studies*, now influent in performance studies (Butler 1990), and about the activist bodies, discourses, and movements (Butler 1993 and Butler – Athanassiou 2013). This performativity has some relation with the Deweyan idea of "art as experience" (1934), and that may help to justify the following structure of this paper in three parts, about: 1. Occupying and building up, 2. Standing up, and 3. Queering.

The three related case-studies are: Steven Cohen's performances, especially *Coq/Cock*; the *Femen*'s sextremist actions against *Front National*, *Manif pour Tous*, *Civitas*; *Nuit Debout* (several months of political debate on the *Place de la République*, Paris)

Occupying and building up (heterotopic) spaces and times: where? when?

Three main relations between performance and spaces as political territories and matrices for energized bodies can be noticed in these three examples.

1. Occupation. *Nuit Debout* uses to be compared with long lasting events like *Occupy Wall Street* and integrated in the so-called “movements of places”. It is related with specific sites, first with *Place de la République*, where a monumental statue of Marianne stands, a popular allegory of French Republic, inaugurated in 1883. The place was given its name in 1879, at the beginning of the 3rd Republic. Its previous name was less political (*Place du Château d’Eau / Water Tower Square*). Just before, during the Second Empire and the Hausmannian urban revolution, its reorganization had also military reasons, although it was an important site for the *Carnaval de Paris*. During the twentieth century, it was a characteristic site, together with *Place de la Bastille* and *Place de la Nation*, for the beginning or ending of cheerful or violent political and social demonstrations, thanks to its symbolic name, central location, and accessibility (five metro lines). The whole place was reorganized in 2010-13 (traffic limitations, pedestrian area, large and flat esplanades). It became more practical for celebrations, and was the start of the republican march, January 11, 2015, after terror attacks, especially against the satiric newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*. It was dedicated to grief and resistance performances and installations, after the terror attacks of November 13, 2015, which killed more than 300 persons in the neighborhood: the pedestal of the statue was surrounded, during months, by thousands of flowers, posters, etc., as in republican altars. The participants of *Nuit Debout* chose this place as their location, but also as a contemporary monumental site where the history of French people and their present meet and project common values of idealized and concrete democracy and activism. And when the choreographer Anne Teresa De Keersmaker was invited by the *Festival d’Automne*, she organized a *Slow Walk*, September 23, 2018, with five groups of amateurs converging, during four hours, from five sites in the neighborhood, to the *Place de la République*, where she led a one-hour workshop for about one thousand dancers, under Marianne’s statue. Nearby, on another side of the square, there were exhibition panels about French Revolution.

Nuit Debout connected with other places, for walking or standing demonstrations and actions: *Théâtre de l'Odéon*, *Bourse du Travail*, and most symbolically the *Assemblée Nationale*, near the *Pont de la Concorde*. Some analogous events occurred in 140 French cities, as well as in social medias, websites, and in documentary films, for instance Mariana Otero's *L'Assemblée*, with the subtitle "Comment parler ensemble sans parler d'une seule voix?" ("How could we speak together, not with only one voice?"). On the film poster in comic book style, we read the slogan "Démocratie t'es où?" ("Democracy, where are you?"). The allegorical statue is not brandishing a torch, but bearing an olive branch and attentively listening to the assembly, which seems to interest her more than the official Assembly (*Assemblée nationale*). I also would mention *Journal Debout* ("Standing Newspaper") and since then, in traditional medias, diverse publications like Lordon (2015), mostly about political emotions and bodies, in a neo-Spinozist perspective, or the special issue of *Les Temps modernes*, the journal of Sartre and de Beauvoir, with the title "*Nuit Debout et notre monde*", nov.-déc. 2016, n°691 ("Standing Night and Our World").

Actually, *Nuit Debout* did not permanently occupy *Place de la République*: the assembly and commissions took place from 6 p.m. to midnight (and a few weeks after the beginning, to 10 p.m.). Every day, the whole occupation had to be resettled and difficulties, up to some violent confrontations, often occurred with police and military forces, destroying various devices, filtering the audience, etc. And the participants were mostly seating, not standing, at least on the site of this heterotopic assembly.

2. Disruption. The displacement choreographed by the *Femen* is more disruptive than *Nuit Debout*: their action is directly agonistic, a staged fight against sexism, racism, and fascism, see Femen (2015). Events do not last long and are not supposed to be repeated, because of the strong opposition they provoke; the performance does not aim to construct a polyphonic community on a site, but to disturb a monophonic one, to de-territorialize one.

Among places where the *Femen* operate in Paris, in opposition to political rituals they try to distort, a most significant one is *Place de l'Opéra*, built in 1862-64, in front of the *Théâtre national de l'Opéra* (or *Palais Garnier*, after its architect's name), esthetically, economically, and politically typical of French Second Empire as well as of classical ballet, with respect to hierarchical relations, idealized and disciplined bodies (especially female), and monumental kitsch ("art pompier"). On May Day, between 1988 and 2015, this place was the end of a march organized by the extreme right movement Front National. Not far away lies *Place des Pyramides*, named after the Battle of the Pyramids, a Napoleonian victory in Egypt. At the square center stands a gilded bronze equestrian statue of Joan of Arc, by Emmanuel Frémiet, in 1874. Joan of Arc has been traditionally treated as a religious figure (a Catholic saint), and a national heroine from the fifteenth century, for her prominent role at the end of the Hundred Years War between France and England. By honoring her before their meeting at the *Place de l'Opéra* the *Front National*, since 2018 euphemistically called *Rassemblement National*, follows a long tradition of extreme right leagues, although Joan of Arc can also be iconic for French republicanism, or even, in other terms, for feminists and lesbians.

In relation with this memorial and ideological space, I would mention one of the most numerous recent demonstrations in Paris, which the *Femen* tried to disrupt: *Manif pour Tous* ("March for everyone", against "Mariage pour tous" / "Marriage for everyone", that is same-sex marriages): January 13, 2013, between 350.000 and one million participants reached the *Champ de Mars*, another monumental site with military connotations, between the *Eiffel Tower*, built for the *Exposition Universelle* in 1889, and the *École Militaire*. This area hosts musical and sportive arrangements or festivals for fraternity, concord, as well as the fireworks for the national day, July 14. But the most important site for the *Femen's* actions are the mass medias and social networks, which appreciate their spectacular performances, conversely benefiting from this de-territorialized attention: what counts is not only the

Femen's in situ choreographies, but also their preliminary and subsequent media coverage and dissemination. May 1, 2015, the disruption was so efficient, that the *Front National* do not meet any more around Joan of Arc and on the *Place de l'Opéra*. In 2018 Marine Le Pen was confined in a Convention Center in Nice, with European allies from the extreme right. Only Jean-Marie Le Pen, paradoxically excluded from the party he created and presided, was leading a rather discreet wreath-lying ceremony for Joan of Arc.

3. Deconstruction. A third kind of relation between politics and choreography is the process of camp deconstruction and unveiling Steven Cohen performed, in his *Coq/Cock*, September 10 2013. The artist, or activist, that is not first an activist, as the *Femen*, chose the *Parvis des Droits de l'Homme* (named so in 1985), on the *Esplanade du Trocadéro*. This square welcomes various political and/or artistic, often international, arrangements, like the piece *Dance or Die* by the Syrian refugee Ahmad Joudeh, July 20 2017. The comparison with Steven Cohen is thought provoking for what concerns the type of body, register, relation to space, and France as the “country of human rights” the two performances are staging. This square was created in 1869 as *Place du Roi de Rome*, in honor of the son of Napoléon I, and renamed in 1877 as *Place du Trocadéro* (a battle in Spain, 1823), then *Place du Trocadéro et du Onze Novembre* (the 1918 armistice concluding World War I). It is now located between the two wings of *Palais de Chaillot*, built for the universal exhibition of 1937, in so-called neo-Roman style, now hosting the *Musée de l'Homme*, *Musée de la Marine*, *Théâtre national de Chaillot*, in Art déco style, and *Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine*. December 10, 1948, the general assembly of the United Nations adopted here the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A floor tile is inserted in its pavement, reading “les hommes naissent et demeurent libres et égaux en droits” (“men are born and remain free and equal in rights”), and the square offers a breath-taking view over *Tour Eiffel* and *Champ de Mars* mentioned above for the *Femen*. Steven Cohen always chooses his performance locations for both cultural and

political reasons, reconfiguring it by the complex and ambivalent symbolism of gestures, costumes, and moves. The same kind of spatial distortion and unveiling of past or present paradoxes characterizes other performances: *Chandelier* (2001), a slum, Johannesburg ; *Cleaning Time* (2007), Heldenplatz, Vienna, ; and *Golgotha* (2009), Wall Street, New York.

Standing up against and for: what?

The next two criteria applied to these performances need a shorter contextualization. During their actions and in interviews and publications, performers and participants explain their purpose, combining three main social practices: critical thought and action / self-affirmation / choreographic representation and negotiation of conflicts. I chose the verb « to stand up » for its both physical and metaphorical meaning, associating revolt, advocacy, resistance, lamentation, or provocation. The *Femen* and Steven Cohen are standing up (and walking) both physically and politically for and against something. *Nuit Debout* refers to this way of moving in its name itself, but it is rather an image, relating to the slogan “Debout!” (“Wake up!” or “Arise!”). This image is also common, as a Warburgian *Pathos-Formel*, in conjunctions of dance and politics, as the following examples, where “standing” implies a diversity of modalities, forms and energies, see Warburg (2000), Didi-Huberman (2002), and Michaud (2004). Though it is not possible here to present pictures of these artistic, political, and scientific performances and publications, I refer first to these visual aspects, which it will be interesting to compare with Cohen’s and the Femen’s actions or *Nuit Debout*:

- Erdem Gündüz, *The Standing Man / Duranadam*, at *Taksim Square*, Istanbul, June 17, 2013, silently standing during hours, staring at a photo of Kemal Ataturk, creator of secular Turkey. The performer confronts Erdogan’s economically neo-liberal and politically authoritative government and the planned destruction of *Gezi Park*, the last one in the city center. By this expressive and obstinate “standing”, he participated in this political protest

through one simple action, and provoked its viral diffusion, in Istanbul, with other silent demonstrators performing it, and, indirectly, in the international medias.

- the exhibition catalogue edited by Didi-Hubermann (2016), *Soulèvements* (“uprising”, “insurrection”), with articles by N. Brenez, J. Butler, M.-J. Mondzain, A. Negri, J. Rancière, and a cover photo from a demonstration in North Ireland, in the sixties: a demonstrator, seen from behind and raising his/her right hand, throws out a projectile against soldiers appearing on the background of the photo. The soil is covered with rubble.

- a collection of papers about amateurs in contemporary dance, in Briand (2017), *Corps (in)croyables* (“(un)believable bodies”). The cover shows a drawing by Paulet Thevenaz (from *Gymnastique rythmique*, 1913)^v: a slender dancer in black leotard jumps gracefully and energetically in the air, tilting his/her head back and flexing his/her wrists.

1. *Nuit Debout* performs moves: converging, expanding, coordinating, and staging multidimensional (or intersectional) interplays of struggles and resistances; generating and composing direct democracy; promoting anti-capitalism; opposing a new law on labor, “Loi Travail”, hence their standing/sitting demonstrations before the *Assemblée nationale*, with the motto *La loi travail on en veut pas. On vaut mieux que ça*, “The Labor Law, we don’t want it, we deserve better than it”. First, this “convergence des luttes” (“converging struggles”) was crucial, in commissions and in the assembly. But direct and intersectional democracy became difficult. The horizontal negotiation of powers cannot be authoritatively choreographed, unless it risks losing legitimacy. The movement became utopian, replacing *Grève générale* (“general strike”) by *Rêve general* (“general dream”), after two letters fell down from the light installation at the *République*. This radicalism was despised as unrealistic by institutions and most medias, but as a chain of performances many critics still consider *Nuit Debout* meaningful, the effects of which have not yet disappeared and offer an imaginary horizon to present and future activists. This precarious horizontality contributes to its intense

development, during a few months, like a purposefully choreographed ritual/festival. Two examples support this reading: 1. movements and displacements of demonstrators and onlookers, sitting in the assembly, circulating between commissions, preparing other actions in other places, and confronting, sometimes violently, the police forces, e.g. at the beginning and end of the daily occupation; 2. gestures and signs, facial expressions during debates, often inspired by deaf culture, like waving hands in the air to express one's agreement.

2. The *Femen*'s objectives are confrontational and concentrated, in space, time, and sensorial impact. Their intense performances have the following agenda: respond to and choreograph conflicts and contradictions; fight sexism, patriarchal ideologies, religions, racism, homophobia, and sex industry; promote women rights, democracy, and freedom of conscience and speech, including so-called "blasphemy", like the satirical journal *Charlie Hebdo*. Their actions are mostly counter-actions, often demonstratively satirical, like for Dominique Strauss-Kahn's trial for imputations of sexual abuse, in Lille, February 2015.

To understand their action against *Front National*, it might help to analyze similar political movements. A good example is the Catholic fundamentalist *Civitas* (Latin for Greek *polis* and *politeia*, "community, city, citizenship"), an avant-garde of the *Manif pour Tous*. The *Femen* tried to demonstrate that struggling against same-sex marriages is fighting the Republic itself, and their visual identity refers to female allegories of French Republic and Revolutions, like again Marianne on *Place de la République, Liberty Leading the People* by Eugène Delacroix (1830), or even usual stamps. In 2016, postal services were accused by religious members of Parliament for publishing a figure of Marianne inspired by the *Femen* prominent personality, Inna Shevchenko. The artistic creator of the stamps denied it, but the "fachosphere" (extreme right networks) still considers this analogy proves a complot of the decadent Republic, infiltrated by LGBTQ+ and atheist lobbies, against Christian values and what they think is natural anthropology, for instance "normal" family. Their France is a

Christian kingdom. Their demonstrations are choreographed with other symbols than *Nuit Debout*: Joan of Arc again was used as a nationalist figure, in the *Manif pour Tous*, in homage ceremonies loaded with Ancien Régime references, or in protests against artists like Romeo Castellucci. Manifestations were quite rough against *Sul concetto di volto nel figlio di Dio* (*On the concept of God's son face*), in 2011. The artist is famous for questioning *mimesis*, the relation between images, texts and bodies, the function of theatre, especially contemporary tragedy, the notion of *catharsis*, the relation between aesthetics and politics, and the mysteries of human and divine incarnation and desperate suffering, not typically anti-Christian issues. Castellucci's post-dramatic play shows a decaying old man whom his son is desperately taking care of. The stage background is shows a portrait of Jesus by Donatello da Messina, fifteenth century, which at the end gradually blackens, sweating some organic matter through which appear messages like "you are my shepherd" and "you are not my shepherd".

Castellucci speaks of a development from scatology to eschatology. A very shocking scene for the fundamentalists is the bombing of the portrait of Jesus by a group of children with hand grenades. It is sometimes still suppressed, even recently in 2018, for the (supposed) protection of children mental health. For *Civitas* this is blasphemy: in 2012, they organized their own "choreographed" actions, like collective prayers in front of the *Théâtre de la Ville* and verbal and sometimes physical attacks against the spectators. A security portal protected the theatre. Activists sometimes succeeded in coming on the stage, shouting "non à la cathophobie", and interrupted the performance. When observing the *Femen* against *La Manif pour Tous* and *Civitas* against Romeo Castellucci (and later against Rodrigo Garcia's *Golgotha Picnic*), it would be erroneous to consider them equivalent, in aesthetic and political terms: one activist disruption is creative, producing (performing) art, among other undisciplined activities and values; the other, fully reactionary, attacks and destroys arts.

3. Steven Cohen, in *Cock/Coq*, performs one of his typical activist solos, focusing on and unveiling French political inconsistencies: on one side, French authorities assert that they represent the (self-proclaimed) “pays des droits de l’homme” (“land of human rights”); on the other side, among others, state policies occur to have a very negative impact on diverse minorities, migrants, poor people in general. Through this monumental and heavily historical site of *Place du Trocadéro*, Cohen’s fragile and unsecure walking choreographically performs the complex negotiation between precarious lives and a context which is getting harder and harder for the most vulnerable ones. This *a priori* paradoxical expression of *dissensus* is all the more spectacular and possibly efficient, since it relies on both alluring and extravagant signs, like high-heel shoes, luxurious and sexy costumes, hybrid physicality and adornments (for instance feathers), and a general atmosphere of glamour and camp referring to the *Folies Bergères* or transvestites shows, also typical of (*Gai*) *Paris*.

Queering bodies, discourses, identities, communities: who? how?

This study could have followed another order, but after space/time and political issues, it is much easier now to observe briefly the connection of dance and micro-politics in these three case studies, which have in common, to a different extent, an ambivalent and precarious identity expression and performance, using discourses, images, actions, and gestures, at the same time enhanced and blurred by various shades of carnivalesque and queerness. I use the word “queer”, both adjective and verb, in its original meaning “strange” or “eccentric” (from indo-european *kwer- “to twist, distort, contort”, physically, morally or socially) and in its modern meaning, first pejorative, now reclaimed, referring to minority gender and sexual identities, in relation to post-structural critical theory and un-normative fields of art, culture, and politics. As bodily performances and kinesthesia is consubstantial to contemporary choreographed politics, this notion of “queering”, in its sexual and gendered uses, but also in

a more metaphorical meaning (“distorting, blurring, troubling” binarisms, power relations, structural norms, etc.), is a convenient analysis tool.

The *Femen*’s performance against *Front National*, in 2015, demonstrates their self-called “sextremism”, through carnivalesque parodies, half-nudity, and radical slogans, proposing a diverted extremist imagery: Nazi salutes from a balcony over the *Place de l’Opéra*; red banners with white circles where swastikas were replaced by the tricolor flame of the Front National, a neo-fascist symbol; phrases written in black on the women’s naked breast, e.g. “Heil Le Pen!”; each of the three *Femen* wearing a blonde wig similar to Le Pen’s hairstyle. The crowd gathered to listen to Le Pen’s speech was shocked: their leader had to stop talking, the audience jeered and shouted insults like “Salopes! Putains!” (“Bitches! Whores!”) and their typical slogan “On est chez nous!” (“We are at home!”), showing how crucial are for them the occupation of public space, at the level of a meeting, horizontally and vertically, and over the whole country and nation, and political issues of identity, community, as well as gender and sexuality. The *Femen*’s action ended with the violent intervention of the security service, grabbing and hitting them, to bring them back inside the *Hôtel Continental*. The last henchman on the balcony, after destroying their material, triumphantly waved his fists to the cheering crowd. The most meaningful was the pragmatic efficiency of parody and its contrast with the fierceness of the gathered viewers, who felt humiliated by their lower position, and of their paramilitary agents: what in the present instant seemed to finish successfully for the security staff and the audience *in situ*, after a brief disruption of the activists, was later interpreted as an absolute defeat for the Front National in the medias, particularly on the internet. The *Femen* had succeeded in unveiling the real brutality of this political organization, which was managing to “dedemonize” itself (“dédiaboliser”): the *Femen* were legally allowed to perform their action, as a kind of free speech, while the security service were illegally substituting themselves for public police. The contrast was

striking between the female bodies, dangerously exposing their bare chest, and the dark military outfits and strong figures of the nationalist security agents assaulting them. And the Front National never more organized May 1 meetings at the *Place de l'Opéra*.

For Steven Cohen, we may focus more on carnivalesque interferences, inversions, and hybridations, e.g. between humanity and animality. The performance related a rooster named Franck, Cohen's pet, and a human being, altogether South African, Jewish, gay, and drag: the human performer, on high heels, was following the non-human one, attached to his penis by a long ribbon. Other important points were: the public ritualization of two singular bodies; the queer and camp performance of identity; the sexualization of French political symbols (the *coq*) and power relations. The complex, ambivalent, and fluid critical device constructed here reminds of decadent figures from the nineteenth century like Des Esseintes, an immoderately refined and immoral aesthete and dandy, the protagonist of the novel by Joris-Karl Huysmans, *À Rebours* (*Against the Grain* or *Against Nature* or *Wrong Way*, 1884): at the end of chap. VIII, an allegory of Syphilis appears to the hero in a dream, ruling the city of Paris. In visual terms, Cohen's performance is similar to the painting *La dame au cochon : Pornokratès* (*The Lady with the pig: Pornokrates*, "the ruler of fornication"), by Félicien Rops, 1878: an almost naked woman, holding a swine on a leash and wearing long black gloves, a blindfold, a plumed hat, high black shoes and stockings, and a band of gold and blue silk, probably a prostitute, follows three flying putti. Under this scene lies a marble frieze representing male allegories of sculpture, music, literature, and painting, with desperate expressions. This low relief compares to the sculptural ornaments of the *Palais de Chaillot*. The whole is related to the Odyssean figure of Circe and the metamorphosis of man into swine by uncontrolled and blind sexuality, as well as an ambivalent nostalgia for classical values, now trampled underfoot in a fancy attitude. Cohen performs the multi-secular tension of satirical, especially sexual, parody and sophisticated culture, through an equivocal performance, at once fragile,

particularly in his walk, and deeply political. Cohen was arrested for sexual exhibition, but he was found innocent at the trial. Cohen had the right to mock the authorities in this perfectly queer way, in the site celebrating human rights, among which freedom of speech.

Finally, *Nuit Debout* might be defined as queer, in the first meaning of strange, unusual, or weird, which might be either creative, utopian, progressive, experimental, alternative, or insignificant, inconsistent, superficial, immature, or finally (and ironically) constantly elusive and therefore (too) perfectly adapted to post-Fordist and neo-liberal contexts *Nuit Debout* intends to fight. Among its participants and between them and the authorities like police, state, large companies, *Nuit Debout* did not aim to stable reconciliation, nor definitive order, in any matter (economy, international politics, education, health, ecology, gender and sexuality, etc.).

Dance can perform politics, politics can dance

In the summary of this paper, I connected these three examples of activism with now classical anti-Aids actions, for instance: by *Sœurs de la perpétuelle indulgence* (founded in 1990 in Paris, cf. *Sisters of perpetual indulgence*, 1979, San Francisco), which Steven Cohen could compare to; by *Act-Up Paris*, founded in 1989, anticipating the *Femen*; or by associations of persons living with AIDS and supporters (not “patients” and its passive meaning), whose empowered actions remind of *Nuit Debout*. I here refer among others to the French association *Aides*, founded in 1984 by Michel Foucault’s companion, Daniel Defert, who declared that people with diseases are social reformers. There is not enough space here to develop these connections, but it is clear that the three examples studied here, from 2013 to 2016, could benefit from being integrated in a longer history of activism and artivism. These politicized choreographies and choreographed politics are best performed not only by corporeal/visual expressions of messages, but rather through a both concrete and critical

embodying of displacements, advances, and resistances inextricably (syn)aesthetic, discursive, ethical, social, philosophical, and physical, especially spatial and temporal.

Notes

ⁱ Ancient Greek also uses the word *khôros*, also meaning “space”, “territory”, “country”.

ⁱⁱ See Julie Perrin, « Lire Rancière depuis le champ de la danse contemporaine », *Recherches en danse* [En ligne], Actualités de la recherche, mis en ligne le 19 janvier 2015, consulté le 19 octobre 2018. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/danse/983>

ⁱⁱⁱ See e.g. Ramsay Burt, « The Biopolitics of Modernist Dance and Suffragette Protest », pp. 247-258, to me seminal. See Briand, Michel. 2015. « Danse et politique contemporaines. Radicalités esthétiques, philosophiques et sociales en danse », *Recherches en danse*. Accessed October 21, 2018. <http://danse.revues.org/1034>.

^{iv} Especially, among others, see section II. The Politics of Choreography: Gabriele Klein, Andre Lepecki, Mark Franko, Gerald Siegmund, Bojana Cvejić).

^v - For the conference presentation I also showed two photos: *Black Panthers, Chicago, 1969*, by Hiroji Kubota, and the expressionist dancer *Jo Mihaly*, by Germaine Krull (1925).

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When German Dance Migrated: A Legacy in Archives.

Josephine Fenger

Abstract: Letters by Mary Wigman to her Silesian born disciple Karin Waehner bear a connection from post-war refugees and international migrant cultures disseminating German Expressionist dance, to the letters' role as a medium of access to GDR modern dance culture for French citizen Waehner. Her biographic experiences of escape, migration, and the German division are reflected in her choreographies as well as in the documents of her French and German legacies.

Regarding current tendencies of artistic migration caused by present refugee movements, Waehner's work as a migrant artist was recently the subject of both historical research and re-creation choreography projects.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Organizers of this incredible conference. I thank you most sincerely for the invitation and am very excited to be here. My presentation is mainly based on a commented edition of letters by Mary Wigman to her student and friend Karin Waehner that I published in 2017. Their decades-long correspondence as well as the history of the letters itself after Wigman's death offer extensive information about two crucial points in the development of Modern Dance in the mid twentieth century – from post-war Germany until shortly before the fall of the Berlin Wall, when the Wigman letters were donated in 1986 by Paris based artist and teacher Karin Waehner to the Akademie der Künste Berlin.

I. From marginalization to migration – Expressionist dance in post-war Germany

In post-war Germany, Expressionist dance as developed in German speaking countries at the beginning of 20th century lost its importance as an artform almost completely because of its entangled association with the Nazi era. During the 1950s, worldwide Expressionist dance assemblies were developed by numerous migrated artists and teachers, and a future generation of dance pioneers emerged. It took until the turn of the millennium to restore an interest in this post-war dance history that spread *Ausdruckstanz* worldwide and created the foundation for many contemporary dance schools, styles, and philosophies. The latter ones, verbally and literarily expressing the aim to preserve the idea of Expressionist dance as the “most human form of communication”, were also important factors in the

development of dance research as we perceive it today. When in 2014 both the style as well as the traditions of transmission of *Ausdruckstanz* were declared Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO, a renewed interest emerged for an era that had formerly been virtually ignored. This could be explained by several tendencies in dancing that explored the historical sources, the reconstructions, re-enactments, and recreations of the almost lost works by post-war dance transmitters. These were discovered anew via bodily and document-based archives as a missing link between the great dance avantgardes before the Second World War and the international modern dance culture with its multicultural aspects at the turn of the millennium.

The art of dance [...] is still endangered. [...] Once upon a time, dance revealed life and creation of an entire people, now it's mutated to decorative arts. A serious dance performance is hardly respected anymore.[...]. Dance as an art, once mattered to an entire culture. Nowadays, it belongs only to insular individuals. Those certain 12 years have shaped a style of dance that merges into the degenerating occidental culture. (Orban 1948)ⁱ

The institutional and artistic roots of numerous international dance institutions lead back to the situation of post-war conflict within the German dance scene, when dancers in lack of professional futures followed the war refugees into their forced exile. The art formerly also known as *German Dance* was first marginalized, then practically displaced as a style of the past in Germany. Coincidentally, due to this forced emigration, dance first created in Germany became a globally cultivated art.

The life and career of Silesian-born French dance pioneer Waehner encompasses two central adversarial situations in German and European (dance) history that are reflected in the correspondence: the post-war migrational wandering and beating of one's head against the Berlin Wall, representing also an artistic obstacle for Waehner to get in touch with dance culture in either part of her native country. Renowned though never "famous" in France during her more than forty years of residency, she was hardly known in Germany.

“1946 – All Germany was fleeing” (Bonis 1982, 38ⁱⁱ) resumed Karin Waehner who in 1986 choreographed *L’Exode*, (*The Escape*) in remembrance of those years. Waehner’s first escape from a war-destroyed environment led her to Wigman’s school in Leipzig, where an exclusive concentration on dance signified more an ideology of a survival strategy than a professional training. Dance as essential, as an exclusive expression, reflection and coping mechanism for the existential, needy situation meant an imperishable experience. Wigman modelled this refuge in such a way that many of her post-war students later described the resulting utopia romantically as a sort of paradise island. Not just reality outside the school was shattered, but also the dance culture that was mediated there. Karin Waehner’s later emigration seeking an equivalent of this culture while merging and developing dance performing and training tools and techniques represents an example for the significant generational change in dance transmission.

II. The letters

For twenty-three years, Wigman closely followed Waehner’s career and life. Most particularly in the letters within a network of other correspondences, notes and diaries of both correspondents, traces of the contemporary development of dance become apparent: its cosmopolitan distribution, international entanglements, and innovations. This points out the significance of archive matter within the collections concerned, where this complex dance history between personalities and discourse is stored in Paris and Berlin. ⁱⁱⁱ

The letters, which re-migrated as historic documents of value because of their famous writer, were eventually re-appreciated because of their reflection upon the dance pioneers of the “Sowing Years” (Robinson 1997, 173-95) from the 1950-1980s. When their disciples in an opened up international dance culture became famous, like Waehner’s student Angelin Preljocaj, attention lead back to the wandering and foundational 1950s and the academic institutionalization of modern dance in France in the 1960s.

The letters to Karin Waehner from Mary Wigman as correspondence include the time of migration and the founding of the Paris enclaves of modern dance as well as the period of a divided Germany. As documents they span an entire epoch of post-war clashes and its impact on the following generation of modern dance disseminated worldwide.^{iv}

The donation of these letters to the Akademie der Künste as the central part of a collection of chosen documents on Waehner and her companies' work might actually have enabled her companies' performances for the same occasion, Wigman's centenary celebration in East-Germany, East *and* West-Berlin (Frede 1986). This donation split Waehner's legacy into the German and the French collection, and in a way, re-contextualized it first, in the network of classical modernist dancers, and second, in the framework of several French post-war dance pioneers whose legacy documents, like Waehner's, are archived at the Bibliothèque nationale de France since 2013.

There are more than two thousand private letters by Mary Wigman preserved. By contrast, most of the correspondent letters have not survived. Possibly there were simply too many to be kept – Wigman complains in her diary, after her sixty-fifth birthday, that “much more than five hundred letters from all over the world still lie on my desk.”^v Unable to find any of Waehner's letters in response nor sketches in her notebooks, I consulted both writers' correspondences with third parties for commentaries.

The exchanges I found most informative on Waehner's movements, their advantages and obstacles, were those regarding her continued relationship with dance in divided Germany: To Ballet Director Lilo Gruber, Archivist Aune Renk, and, notably, Wigman-disciple and the GDR's Dancing Queen Palucca whose school represented the country's most important institution of modern dance. Waehner's attempts to introduce her work to her native country was also continuously a subject in her correspondence with Wigman.

III. The migrant

Karin Waehner's emigration to Argentina, where she joined her brother in early 1950, appears to be a convenient possibility to sneak out of a frustrating ballet life at a provincial German theater. Why she was soon desperate to follow friends' suggestions to migrate further to France never became quite understandable to me, given that she was rather successfully teaching and performing in Buenos Aires.

In interviews she admitted that, isolated from creative influences, she'd had the impression that Modern Dance was dead. Actually, dance activity was thriving in the early 1950s in Metropolitan Buenos Aires: Tatjana Gsovsky worked at Teatro Colón; Margarethe Wallmann, Renate Schottelius, and Otto Werberg had been creating a modern dance culture, already established by a sensitization for European art through the former migrant's influences after the World War I and the Russian Pogrom.^{vi} Dore Hoyer's huge success at the Colón would start her notable career in South America half a year after Waehner had left without much of a trace in the national dance chronicle. Although connected to many of its promoters by school and/or collaboration, she didn't manifest in Argentina.

In the fall of 1952 Wigman addresses Waehner, a New Parisian since Spring, as "My beloved Migrant" (Wigman 08.11.1952, 1). Disappointed by the sparse contemporary dance culture she found in Paris, Waehner sought inspiration once again from Mary Wigman whose courses at the Summer Schools of the Swiss Professional Association for Dance and Gymnastics attracted dancers from all over the world (Gisinger 1998, 63-84).^{vii} Those Summer Schools would constitute an exceptional nucleus for exiled modern dance.

Jerome Andrews came to Switzerland in 1951. Wigman mediated the contact between Waehner and him in Paris, again documented in the correspondence. After Waehner had also met Jacqueline Robinson at the Swiss course in 1953, the core formation of *Les Compagnons de la Danse*, one of the first contemporary dance ensembles in France, was completed. They

started a community of dance creation during the 1950s which for Waehner culminated in the founding of her own company in 1959. Laurence Louppe acknowledged those dancers as:

[...] those to whom we owe the existence of a singular and innovative current of contemporary dance [...] They have also given local root to contemporary dance which was born under other cultural skies. Their names are those of a cosmopolitan family [...] who came together through the contingency of migrations and chance alliances: Françoise and Dominique Dupuy, Jacqueline Robinson, Karin Waehner and the late Jerome Andrews. (Louppe, 1997/2010, xxiv)

The example of the Swiss summer courses clarifies, besides the discourse of their dancers' careers, the discourse of modern dance development itself: In 1950, an American is the only foreigner among 20 participants. In the summer of 1952, for the first time after the war, German dancers attend again. In 1953, the number of international students booms: "Of about 160 participants from 18 different nations at least 120 daily passed through my hands" notes Wigman in her diary (July 22-August 12 1953). Alongside her, Rosalia Chladek, Kurt Jooss, Harald Kreutzberg, and Sigurd Leeder, all among the most important representatives of Modern Dance of their time taught these courses.

One might consider the Swiss summer courses with their international dancing community and mediation as a sort of ground control of Modern Dance's internationalization. Denominated "the UN of dance procreation" (Gisinger 1989, 74), this was enhanced by the association of high-level dance performances. Among the dancers were Dore Hoyer in 1956, in 1958 Wigman/Palucca disciple Rolf Gelewski – the future pioneer of Modern Dance education in Brazil – and a "dancer of the Jooss School" called Pina Bausch.

In the early 1950s, Wigman linked her Berlin summer courses successfully to the Swiss ones. Whereas these classes were "too big," as she complains, in the middle of the decade because of the numerous foreign students, around 1959 the school's existence was threatened by the augmenting isolation of Berlin. Teachers as well as students had started for some time to leave the Wigman Studio – often heading for the US., as an embittered Wigman mentioned in her diary. Karin Waehner announced her marriage to a French photographer,

which finally enabled also her to achieve a longed-for visa for studies in America. While foreign students stayed away, the fortification of the sector borders complicated how dancers from East Berlin were able to reach Wigman's school. The conflictual situation is documented in Wigman's letters to Waehner and Robinson:

I would like to make a heartfelt and also urgent appeal to you: to promote for my school, and most particularly for the summer course. I know that because of the Berlin Crisis many people recoil from visiting the city. [...] The absence of foreign students would have a disastrous effect on my school (and thus also onto my personal existence).^{viii}

Expressionist dance's brief revival and its suffocation in the Cold War entangles as a subject of correspondence the two major movement themes of Waehner's work and motivation: Migration, and the insistently pursued professional re-integration into her native country. With her biographical and artistic Leitmotif of refuge and rootlessness, she continued to pursue reflecting on the situation of German division.^{ix}

IV. The years of the Berlin Wall

Karin Waehner's transcultural activities during the time of the German division can be perceived in a significant dialectic: Whereas facts and reviews document the moderate success of her tour to West Berlin and East Germany in 1986, Waehner's private letters reflect frustration and disillusion: It had taken her twelve years of pathetically insisting correspondence with Palucca^x to teach for two weeks in Dresden – without Palucca's presence. But neither the course nor the tour and conference she was invited to at the Wigman-Jubilee was ever followed by another important invitation or any notable feedback at all. Ultimately, Waehner concentrated elsewhere on her by now mainly educational work, and wrote her manual on choreographic tools commissioned by an Italian academy. Her declared wish of its translation into German has only recently been fulfilled in 2018.

The Wigman letters illustrate Mary's constant support of Waehner's aim to work abroad. She had also established the contact to Palucca, the most powerful dance mediator in and between the two Germanies. It's yet to be determined whether personal or political

conflicts hampered Waehner's German career. For an understanding of the correspondence between Waehner and Palucca, I consulted the Federal Agency for the files of the GDR State Security – after all, two of Waehner's three faithful correspondents were evidently unofficial informants of the State Security. However, there's only a file card with her name. A state security file on Karin Waehner, if there had ever been one, was destroyed in 1989.

Impulse and resistance during Waehner's career characterize the historical discourse of these years: Her Silesian birth, recently declared "communist territory" denied her a visa for the US in the early 1950s, whereas the Germanophile immigration politics of President Perón lead her to Argentina. In France, supported by the enhanced promotion of the arts by the de Gaulle government since 1959, she contributed to the development of dance as debate and the institutionalization of contemporary dance as an academic discipline. The declaration of martial law in Poland in 1981 prevented a tour of her Compagnie in Eastern European Countries. The tenacious and subdued development of her career in the divided two Germanies is subject to decades of her professional and private correspondence: Applications and inquiries to institutions of both German republics in the French Waehner collection give evidence of a long lasting stubborn insistence, and fighting inconvenient conditions for contemporary dance culture also in West Germany, as Wigman warned her still in 1971 (January 22, 1971).

Ironically, it was the Wigman letters that eventually facilitated Waehner's only prominent appearance in Germany in 1986. The documents symbolized her relevance as a connecting person to the historic dance era and its key figure.

After the turn of the millennium, in the "rapid march of dance history," that, to quote Karin Waehner (Waehner 1986, n.p.^{xi}) had already pushed Wigman aside during her lifetime, also Waehner's work for the contemporary dance discourse had been almost forgotten. It's at this point the document history of the letters receives attention: Their journey to East Berlin

acknowledges them as a link of the writer's remembrance while their reappraisal during the last years eventually approves the achievement of their addressee's generation. Waehner's donation had separated both collections whose dance historical content is definitely complementary and links two generations of Expressionist dance. It focuses on the process where the classical modernity of *Ausdruckstanz* and the post-war era meet its successive generation of exiled dance associations during the years of the German division.

When Wigman died in 1973, *Ausdruckstanz* as a historic style had become insignificant to contemporary dance. Yet, at the same time, with Pina Bausch as the new director of Wuppertaler Tanztheater, Expressionist dance became a central element of current dance aesthetics once again in new styles like *Tanztheater* and *Tanzdrama*. Likewise in Wuppertal, the characteristic early twentieth-century dance subject of refuge and migration, developed decades ago for coping with and reflecting on reality, took the form of an intercultural mediation philosophy on the base of rootlessness, raised to an aesthetic principle of artistic nomadism (see Paternostro 2011, 29-30).

V. "Messages from person to person"^{xiii}: Traces of two conflicts in European post-war dance history whispering in the archives

The international post- and Cold War assemblies and the re-unification of dance discourse in present art and academia have opened a discussion on the isolated influences after the war that are nowadays a subject in archive exploration, re-construction, and re-creation of dances of the past as a contemporary reflection. Via the relationships of the post-war generation of migrated dance pioneers and their lifetime work until the turn of the twenty-first century, an approach to study the Classical Modernity of German Expressionist dance represents a focus on the art's development leading towards the future. And thus, the collaboration between the two archives at Bibliothèque nationale der France and Akademie der Künste Berlin, the mutually inspiring exploration of this legacy has only just begun.

Dance development becomes visual between physical techniques of transfer in bodily archives, documents such as Waehner's choreographic tools, and the meaningful framework of primary-source historical subject material like the letters.^{xiii} The reformed reflection of those "Sowing Years" and, consequently, archive matter surveyed to reflect their circumstances has recently boomed, also concerning Karin Waehner's work. Her late solo for Bruno Genty inspired by the tour in the GDR was originally titled *Behind the Wall*. For the colloquium "Exposing/Performing the Archive" in Paris in 2017^{xiv}, Genty staged material from his 2013 reconstruction of this choreography as a duo. In Berlin in March 2018, four dancers of four generations, including Genty and Waehner's artistic inheritor Jean Masse, performed using both Waehner's choreographic vocabulary and her lifelong leitmotiv: to go *and* to go away in the recreation *WEGEHEN* [= to go (away)/to go a way] (see Lazarus 2018). Karin Waehner's work is by now acknowledged as a notable link between the Classical Modernity, American Modern Dance, and contemporary expressionist factors. It draws a storyline of dance from the conflict-ridden time when *German Dance* migrated.

Notes

ⁱIn *Der Sonntag*, 25.01.1948, n.p., my translation.

ⁱⁱ Interview with Waehner in French, my translation.

ⁱⁱⁱ Karin Waehner's divided succession is curated at Akademie der Künste Berlin (AdK), Bereich Darstellende Kunst as part of the so-called „Dance Legacies” – as Karin-Waehner-Sammlung –, and along with several successions of dance artists of her generation at Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Arts du spectacle, Fonds Karin Waehner.

^{iv} In a nutshell the letters in terms of content can be characterized as insinuated testimonies between masterworks and ailments: The persistence of a philosophy that defines dance as an exclusive medium of expression as well as of coping characterizes the Wigman letters as a sort of a survival strategy along with Care packages and constant economizing. Although Wigman herself considered *Ausdruckstanz* as a concluded artistic era of pre-war time, her constant credo of inseparability of dance and life penetrates the correspondence. Indiscriminately she considers *Carmina Burana* and potatoe soup (to save money), *Sacre du Printemps* and an aching backside from “shots into the bottom” (Wigman to Waehner, December 24, 1953, my translation).

^v Wigman diary entry, November 12, 1950. AdK, Mary-Wigman-Archiv. Tagebuch 1950, Wigman 465.

^{vi} According to Robinson: “[...] during the 1950s, there were probably more things going on (and with more significant results) in Buenos Aires than in Paris. Moreover, modern dance seemed to receive greater encouragement from various official institutions there.” Robinson acknowledges that the same opinion was shared by Argentine-based dancers Renate Schottelius and Paulina Ossona during their Paris visit. (Robinson 1987, 385).

^{vii} Those courses started in 1946; Wigman participated first in 1949 in Zürich and returned regularly until 1957.

^{viii} Wigman to Waehner, January 7, 1959, my translation. AdK Berlin, Karin-Waehner-Sammlung, Waehner 22.

^{ix} The construction of the Berlin Wall or the success of Karin Waehner in Paris from 1958 on, supported by the culturally oriented politics by Charles de Gaulle are not mentioned in the Wigman letters to Waehner because the contact was completely cut from 1960 to 1967. As a dancer and a choreographer of her own company as well as a teacher at academic level – a significant innovation in France in 1960 – Waehner kept a distance as well as from her Master as from the dance style she’d taught her.

^x The correspondence lasted from 1969-1980: see AdK Berlin, Gret-Palucca-Archiv: 25 letters and a postcard by Karin Waehner, 19 letters by Palucca and the office of her school are conserved. AdK Berlin, Gret-Palucca-Archiv, Palucca 3385.

^{xi} Karin Waehner, typescript for the program of *Les Ballets Contemporains Karin Waehner* for Wigman’s centenary in La Rochelle, May 1986, my translation. AdK Berlin, Karin-Waehner-Sammlung, Waehner 35.

^{xii} This refers to the German title of my publication on the correspondence quoting Waehner’s statement about Wigman’s dances and pedagogics (Fenger 2017, 471).

^{xiii} This equals what Franko names the “trouble”some “translation” of archive matter between times, techniques, bodies, individualism and circumstances. (Franko 2017, 497).

^{xiv} Colloque “Exposer/Performer l’Archive”. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, 16 December 2017. http://www.labex-arts-h2h.fr/IMG/pdf/programme-waehner-programme_3_.pdf.

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Body Contended: Practicing Somatics in Cold War Europe

Elisa Frasson

Abstract: This paper offers an insight into the impact of somatic practices on European choreography during the Cold War era. What kind of commentary does somatics offer into the body politics fostered in the West between the 1950s and 1970s? How do somatics practitioners and choreographers applying somatic investigation to their work interrogate the political climate that heavily affected conditions of productions as well as the public opinion? Through my inquiry, informed both by my scholarly research, and my experience as a Somatic Movement educator, I hypothesize that somatic educational pedagogies have affected choreographic mechanisms directly or indirectly, increasing both individual and collective awareness.

Introduction

The subject of my presentation is a first analysis of the interrelation of somatic practices and dance around the Cold War period in Europe, in particular Germany, UK and Italy. The starting point is my personal experience as somatic practitioner. I first encountered somatics in dance contexts, taking classes in experiential anatomy, release technique, Feldenkrais, Klein Technique, and later on I have trained myself with Body Mind Centering. In the light of my understanding of somatics, today I propose to look at the ways in which somatic educational practices support choreographic mechanisms directly or indirectly, increasing both individual and collective awareness.

I am positioning this research in the time-frame 50s - 80s; before to proceed with my case studies, I would like to briefly introduce to you the perspective from where I look at somatics. At that time (1950s-80s) the definition of somatics wasn't still coined, as the term Somatics was conceived only during the 1980s (1986). So we are dealing with a time period where the practices were already in use, but without a specific definition. Somatics determined a change of paradigm, shifting the structure focus and tracing an inversion in the approach between structure and personal perception and awareness, as we can see for instance in the work of Susan Leigh Foster on Margaret H. Doubler and Feuillet ballet legacy. Where Feuillet and the western dance pedagogical tradition were more focused on fixing pre-formed movement form and standard of execution, H. Doubler's pedagogy approach was based on tracing the connections, quoting Foster (2010): 'between individual impulse and its kinesiological realization', to reach a 'natural performance'.

Context: on Somatics

Somatics is a field in perpetual development; we can note these changes now more than ever, particularly for the ways somatics is being circulated and ‘used’.

Even though each somatic practice has its specific way to conceptualise the body, I consider it as a large category (similarly to what is considered a large set in mathematics), where the inner ‘borders’, or subsets, are not well-defined.

In the 2015 program of Movement Research, an event with the title “what we talk about when we talk about somatics: a sharing of practices leading into conversation” was focused on the very current and lively question “what is somatics?”:

What does the term “somatics” even mean? Can we arrive at consensus around this as an idea, a value, a practice? This event will bring together artists/practitioners of various backgrounds and areas of study to lead the group in experiential practices which will evolve into a collective discussion on the term “somatics” and the impact and resonance of this way of learning and being in the world. (Movement Research 2015[on line])

This brief presentation of the program points out at least three significant issues: first, still at the end of 2015, there was no universally accepted definition of somatics (“What does the term “somatics” even mean?”). Secondly, somatics cannot be reduced to one concept or activity (“...an idea, a value, a practice?”). Thirdly, somatics does not belong only to one field of knowledge but can impact many (“this event will bring together artists/practitioners of various background and areas of study...”). Moreover, this text employs some key-words specifically utilized in the somatics field, such as “resonance, learning and being in the world”.

Lastly, reading and observing the title, ‘what we talk about when we talk about somatics: a sharing of practices leading into conversation’, there is a sense of flow in the construction of the sentence (there is no punctuation in the first part of it). The underlying of the concept (what) and time (when), both using two question starters (what and when), seems to delineate the fact that there is a developing process (question marks as a possibility of openness), and a direct reference to modalities and concepts belonging to the territory of somatics practices. Some of these modalities can be understood as ‘sharing, practices and conversation’, meaning that, by sharing practices (in

this case somatic practices), a conversation could start and develop. This brief text is just one significant example of the challenges with finding a working definition for somatics; it highlights the fact that this field can appear undefinable or something with more than one explanation.

‘Somatic’ derives from the Greek *soma*: ‘living body’; however, the term somatics highlights a particular field constituted by specific body-mind techniques that emerged since the beginning of the 20th Century. According to the practitioner Thomas Hanna (1986), somatics is “the field which studies the soma: the body as perceived from within by first-person perception” (Hanna 1986, p.4). Somatic knowledge, somatic practices, somatic-informed technique/choreography/training, demonstrate only a few possible uses of this adjective, that changes according to the various contexts in which somatics operates. Somatic movement therapist Martha Eddy offers a significant definition of what somatic disciplines can be:

those systems of study that view physical reality and specific bodily or even cellular awareness as a source of knowledge, usually to be gained through touch, movement, and imagery as processes of embodiment. (Eddy 2000, 1)

Therefore, Eddy expands Hanna’s definition of somatics, and delineates three main key concepts in order to assess what somatics is, namely touch, movement and imagery, stressing the concept of embodiment. While Hanna explains the concept of somatics starting from the body as seen from the ‘inside’ and through ‘first-person perception’, Eddy allows these key concepts to expand by giving them the possibility of becoming significant elements in knowledge production. Thereby the focus became the relationship between the embodied subject and his/her surroundings through modalities of touch, movement recognized through proprioception, imagery practices and kinesthetic sensations.

Already at the end of 1800 (Eighteen Hundreds) a renewed interest for the body has allowed new practices to emerge. Therefore, we are dealing with a time period of about 150 years.

It is possible to briefly summarize somatics as:

- somatics perspective as a multiplicity of layers, as a structure with different levels, a structure where is possible to access to its inside;
- necessity for a perspective including the first plural person perception (we) beyond the singular person perception (I)
- 'the capacity of leading the consciousness in listening for the perception'

The Case Studies

The 3 cases studies examples that I am proposing are the works of the German somatic practitioner Ilse Middendorf, the British choreographer Gaby Agis and the Italian choreographer Enzo Cosimi.

Middendorf developed her practice on perceptible breath right after the *Lebensreform* movement, and situated later on in the context of the developing of the Tanztheater, after the Second World War.

At the beginning of the 19th the *Lebensreform* ("life reform") approach was searching for a new political way to look at the body from the health care perspective, in a context of naturalism, physical gymnastics and dance, and research for a functional movement. As professor and choreographer Carol Brown (2015) suggested, these people could be defined as 'proto-somatic' practitioners.

In Germany the during the Cold War, straight after the end of the Second World War, developed Tanztheater as a national 'divided' genre, of a broken nation. Tanztheater was politically propelled both by the DDR and the BRD governments, gaining different forms but affirming a 'regime of practices' devoted to construct socially new communities. To my understanding is significant to highlight how, meanwhile Tanztheater was affirming itself as an independent art form (as you can see in the work of Franz Aton Cramer), somatic practices were continuing their path alongside, even tough many practitioners emigrated during the war (specially in the United States),

The case o Ilse Middendorf represents one of those. She studied gymnastics and later on dance, thanks to which she started to became interested in breath. In her opinion gymnastic movements were against the natural flow of breathing, so she started to became interested in

Tibetan movement systems, integrating in her classes stretching, pressure points and vowel-space breathing. Her main concept is that the listening and the awareness of the personal breath could offer a sensorial awareness of the body-mind entity in order to augment the personal/individual experience. I am showing now a fragment of video, where Middendorf is illustrating her method in a TV program (Middendorf 2010).

Breath is connected to movement; she is using different spatial levels. She is improvising but at the same time it looks like she is following some 'structure patterns'. The bounces movement are similar to 'modern dance', and her full body live the breath and make it 'visible' or perceptible. She is working within a fully body-connection.

The second case studies is the one of British choreographer Gaby Agis. She started choreography very young in the context of releasing technique to become later on a Skinner Releasing practitioner.

During the second half of the 20th Century the dance world and Europe encountered strongly the experience of somatics. For example the experience of Dartington Hall (established in 1925), explains how the works of Mary Fulkerson, and Steve Paxton were experienced in England during the 1970s and consequently in Europe, influencing dance artists such as Rosemary Butcher, Sue MacLennan and Richard Alston, and introducing Contact Improvisation in UK. In the light of neo-liberalism politics, with the predominant Conservatory Party, and the increasing inflation and unemployment, New Dance practitioners were inspired by release and contact improvisation, gaining an understanding of the body from the inside, from sensing rather than conforming to an external look. Somatics practices challenged in a radical way the dominant hierarchy of the dance world, introducing strongly the idea for a dance community and the role of women in dance (feminism). I am showing now a short extract of a video, of the workshop and rehearsals that Gaby gave at Roehampton University in 2014, on the occasion of the reconstruction of her work 'Shouting Out Loud' of 1984. This is not the piece, but some practices during the choreographic process (Agis 2014).

Here, the first attention seems again to the breath and how the breath influenced the spatial position and placement of the dancer body; breath helps to position the bodies in the space. Gaby is conducting her dancers from the inside their body structure to the choreographic structure, uncovering her creative process. She is proposing specific somatic movement practices/exercises to reach specific 'status'.

The third and last video experience is the one of the Italian choreographer Enzo Cosimi; he studied with Merce Cunningham company among others and practiced ballet but also Klein technique, yoga, and release. The political context he faced was the one at the end of - anni di piombo' - ('the years of lead' - era of terrorist outrages) - years of terrorism who mined the political stability of the Italian moderate politics. In his works physical and emotional sensations are interconnected and developed in a theatrical body and actions.

I am showing to you two very short selections from 'Calore' ('heat') a piece of 1982, in the reconstructed version of 2012 (Cosimi 2012). In Italian 'Calore' means 'heat/hot' - and in its pronunciation and sound it gives already the temperature of the piece. Furthermore we can also intend 'Calore' - heat as in contrast to cold. This a piece on youth and transformation - as we can read in the original program, quoting Cosimi's words:

When the reality is devastated by cold atmospheres, we think we want to 'smell', to 'sense' a new air, a new wind in which the energy could have as primary qualities sensations of profound serenity, warmth and calm, before going back to nothing and, remaining without any illusion. (Cosimi 1982-2018, [online])

Here am not discussing on the rhythmical sequences, or choreographic structure, but I am interested on the performer reactions. The performers are assuming a focus which is always from inside out, constantly reaching to empower the energy, and looking to establish a strong contact with the audience. In its theatricality you can still notice on one side the high awareness the choreography mechanism is stimulating in the dancers/, and on the other how the performers are always responding to the choreography through the gestures and impulses in a feedback system.

Conclusion

Starting from an inner focus, the somatic approach means also giving an attention and a focus to the environment where we as bodies are living, placed, and positioned.

The request to disclose the gaze from the outward comes from the vital necessity to enter in the relations and act with or against the surroundings, the other and consequently the political organization of the society. In this perspective the body displace itself moving from the position of subject, referring to Erin Manning, the one of the verb, enabling itself to the continuous possibilities to act, re-act and re-enact.

We have briefly seen three different time/space contexts, with a similar aim for a transition from a bureaucratic body to an event body; event in the Badiou's meaning of what makes possible the emancipation of what does not exist (Badiou 2007). The 'event.body' could 'represent and re-configure' the landscape of the making, seeing and being.

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The bulwark in the history of dance in Brazil: the character of political resistance in the choreographies of Ballet Stagium - 1971-1979

Rafael Guarato

Abstract: This research analyzes the modern choreographic aesthetics of the dance company Ballet Stagium of the city of São Paulo/Brazil, as well as its interactions and tensions with the Brazilian cultural and political context in the decade of 1970, when the nation was governed by a civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985). The study has a historical character and seeks to confront the sources found with the existing historiographical narratives, in order to understand to which political perspectives, the creations of the Company tended and which perspectives were, on the other hand, historically attributed to the Stagium Ballet.

Keywords: Civil-military dictatorship, dance, politics.

The history of dance as an art in Brazil is recent and its digression does not exceed the early years of the 20th century. Taxation of the aesthetics of the ballet as support, our history was initially written according to a suitability here, what is legitimized as artistic dance in the international context. The propagation of this aesthetic validity as art has branched out through different Brazilian cities, creating a predominance of artistic dance tied to the ballet aesthetics in its formation called "classic". In this sense the first dance companies in Brazil are found, which managed to form cast and professionals who devote themselves exclusively to the dance, called "stable" companies.

Ballet Stagium was the first dance company that has managed to maintain its activities over time without exclusive dependence of public power, starting its activities in 1971 in the city of São Paulo to the command of Décio Otero and Márika Gidali. Today, with 47 years of trajectory, the company enjoys a prominent place in the history of dance in Brazil, and this place is justified by speeches dedicated to justify the importance of Ballet Stagium for dance in Brazil.

The justifications for introduction of Ballet Stagium as one of the icons that underpin the national memory of dance is seated in three aspects: the itinerant

character backed on the extensive movement by the national territory; the creation of a modern aesthetic of Brazilian dance; and especially, the profile of political resistance attributed to its works produced during the military dictatorship (1964-1985).

However, the Stagium Ballet added these settings to its making over time, with the help of the books of history of dance, dedicated to represent the achievements arts of Ballet Stagium, with a view to building a memory of Brazilian dance in artistic situation. The first book that inserts categorically the Stagium as "political protest" was "History of dance" from then the dance criticism Maribel Portinari (1989, 167-168). While the previous authors spoke of "injustice", "fights", "oppression",ⁱ Portinari's book exposes hitherto nonexistent information - the dance scene as a resource for the strictly political questioning.

At the beginning of the decade of 1990 the book "Modern Dance" (1992) was published, in which the theater and dance critic Linneu Dias emphasizes the work "Quebradas do mundaréu" (1975), described as adaptation on the theatrical text of the playwright Plínio Marcos "Navalha na carne" (1967), which had been censored. But not linking objectively the work of Stagium the "political protest", as Portinari does. Dias specifies the oppressive condition of censorship about a singular work. Such aspect was crucial for the following historical texts that dealt with this relationship between Paulista company and the military government in the decade of 1970.

In 1994 the most important book was published to history of Stagium, "O Brasil descobre a dança, a dança descobre o Brasil", by also the dance critics Helena Katz. This work differs from the previous ones due to devoting large space to the approach of the historic importance of Stagium for the dance performed in Brazil. It

also stands by the effort to draw an analysis about the paths travelled by the company, these paths that would justify its historic consecration.

Unlike the narrative strategy adopted by the work of previous history of dance, Katz does not propose to draw up a general history of Dance in which the Stagium fits. Redirecting the glance to the other extreme, the proposal of the author sets in praising the creations of national artists, in an attempt to establish a memory of the national dance without being bound by the foreign models. In order to make his proposition, Katz elects Ballet Stagium as a bulwark of dance in the country, since the company appears in the text as "splitter of eras, separated the story into before and after" (Katz 1994, 33).

If until 1994 the books described Stagium as differentiated aesthetic proposal, with Katz the company takes on another level, responsible for modifying the dance history in Brazil. In order to justify his sentence, the author makes a narrative that secures senses and manufactures definitions about the Stagium that no history book of the dance had dared. The first argument used by the author is what interests me, because it deals with this protest character of the company. Presenting the company, Katz contextualizes hence the decade of 1970:

The point of departure, the basic idea of the work, focuses on a typical Brazilian phenomenon known as Ballet Stagium. The Stagium was born during the most authoritarian years of military coup which persecuted and tortured students, workers, the Church and the politicians in Brazil. It was Medici's government, with AI-5, censorship and economic growth accompanied by a perverse distribution of income. (Katz 1994, 14)

Briefly, Katz associates not only some choreographies, but the very appearance of Stagium to the period, contextualizing the historic moment of the military dictatorship and specifying which were "the most authoritarian years", under the command the President, General Emílio Garrastazu Médici (1969-1974). She highlights the censorship and AI-5ⁱⁱ, important and famous repressive elements

adopted by the government. However, a direct association between Ballet Stagium and resistance to the military regime is in another passage of the text, in which the author affirms that: "In a country silenced by censorship and by fear, the Stagium presented itself, in the years 70-80, as a spokesman for the lucidity. She made the dance a space for the consciousness that resisted" (Katz 1994, 19).

Without half words the author sets a manichean relationship between the productions of Stagium during the decades of 1970-80 and the state structure under the military command. The dance ceases to be the place of beautiful and gracious to become the "lucidity", which, in this context, means "resistance", as a way of combating the abuse of "censorship" and facing the "fear". This type of dichotomous association made hatch a historicist practice that did not measure efforts to bind with amazing ease, the productions of Ballet Stagium to its social and political context, resounding as echoes of resistance compared to movements that occurred in the theater and in music of the period. This connection of dancing with a broader social context has equipped the subsequent narratives with a cohesive horizon, able to "provide a framework of references and points of reference" (Pollak 1989, 9). From political and social events widely discussed, studied and constructed in the imaginary history of Brazil recently, the dance took a ride with the importance of these facts, inserting it in the list of matters that involve the delicate period.

Thus, the construction of the pillars on which built the history of Stagium originated in Katz, has basis on generalists and rectifier definitions, anchored in notions such as "Brazil" and "military dictatorship". Locating artists and works in a succession, the appearance of a story as the truth about Stagium forged a harmonious relations among groups, institutions and legitimizing instances. It is like this that Helena Katz describes Stagium's work in its first decade, stating that "the theme of

the 70's almost declared itself: dancing was a way of positioning the man in his environment" (Katz 1994, 76).

This narrative format produces what the Italian historian Carlo Ginzburg defines as "effect of truth" (2007, 18)ⁱⁱⁱ. In posterior studies, resounding in all works on the history of dance in Brazil and in those who, at some point in the text, speak of the activities arts of Ballet Stagium. Political-social aspects are mentioned to validate the importance of Stagium invoked through the citation of words such as "dictatorship" and "censorship" to obtain an unambiguous reading of the company as aversion to them. What makes this closure of reflections about the Stagium was worrying is its abusive use and lacking of reflection by academic researchers dedicated to the study of dance in Brazil and its recurrence in final papers, articles in journals and doctoral theses. We will follow some examples to note the power of seduction exercised by this true story capable of building bulwarks.

Luanne Vila Nova, upon speaking of the importance of dancing in the formative process in post-modern relations, in her final paper of undergraduate course stressed that "since the military dictatorship Stagium refused the censure and moved on with its dance [...]" (Vila Nova 2010, 10). Similarly, Flávia Oliveira, in her master's degree in Communication and Semiotics mentioned Stagium as a company which, since 1971, has produced resistance and themes in its aesthetic (Oliveira 2007, 67). The researcher Denise Siqueira, upon supporting in Katz as a reference, emphasizes that "Stagium sought to maintain consistency between artistic and political action through art" (Siqueira 2006, 111).

Following this perspective, including the researcher Cássia Navas, who in 1987 in "Imagens da dança em São Paulo" presented the Stagium as the one who will dance the "overwhelmed" and denounces "injustice", not fixing it necessarily as a

specific resistance to the dictatorship, began in the decade of 1990 a construction of brazilianess of Stagium associated with the idea of nationalism in dance. To do so, she built this nationalism, from the reflections of the sociologist Renato Ortiz, stating as one of her characteristics the popular as a means of rejection to foreign aspects and opposition to dictatorship.

When referring to the intention to treat Brazil in dance, Navas says, in an article published in 1999, that "a special moment of this experience makes part of the trajectory of Ballet Stagium, that, at the end of years 70, under the censure of the military government, dedicated to working with issues of popular national " (Navas 1999, 16). Such subversive memory won outlines increasingly well-delineated with the passing of time. Thus, upon identifying the Stagium as opposition to dictatorship, the historiography has enabled discursive maneuvers. In some cases, the validity and importance of Stagium is carried out by critical forcefulness to the regime, producing a hero to dance.

The exposure of these studies is not done in order to invalidate them, because none of them has as their central object of research the Ballet Stagium. They treat other goals and in a few moments the company appears as an issue. Therefore, it is not prudent to require from such works on a revision of the used bibliography about a theme that does not occupy a central place in their investigations. But the exposure allows us to realize the degree of historical accuracy attributed by them to the historiography of the dance, based on a correlation with the national memory when they refer to Stagium.

There are also two academic papers that deal specifically with the Ballet Stagium. The first one is Karla Regina Dunder Silva's dissertation, developed in the Graduate Program in Communication Sciences from the University of São Paulo and

completed in 2008. In this work, the author proposes to analyze the Stagium Ballet and Corpo de Ballet Municipal de São Paulo as cornerstones in the foundation of the modern ballet in Brazil. Even performing a more specific clipping the author uses the texts of Katz (1994) and Linneu Dias (1992) and uses them as a bibliography that assumes the character of a source of research, not as documents to interpret, but rather as a reference for information. In this procedure, the history books of dance are understood as verdict of the occurred fact.

The author reinforces the idea that the company was founded with the aim to develop themes in dance, matters relating to everyday life. Upon contextualizing the period, she presents the following statement:

During the military dictatorship, the decade of 70, during the duration of AI-5, in Brazil, the lead years the modern dance becomes a spokesman for the situation of Brazil. [...] The decade of 1970 begins with the repression of the military regime led by President Emílio Garrastazu Médici who presides over the country from 1969 to 1974 under heavy censorship (Dunder Silva 2008, 26).

In his effort to approach the production period, situating Ballet Stagium as opposition to the military regime, AI-5 and to the censorship, the author exposes these three components of Brazilian history as facts. Also proceeds in the same way the Doctoral thesis of Elizabeth Pessôa Gomes da Silva in history of culture by Mackenzie University. In this work, Elizabeth Silva is based mainly in Katz (1994) and Dias (1992) in order to approach the Stagium from experiences of theatrical production and the playwright Plínio Marcos, who became the representative of the theater dedicated to everyday themes. Upon exposing this scenario, the author conducts his narrative to insert the Stagium in the continuity of a broader artistic process that would justify, including the success achieved by the company in the decade of 1970.

The effervescence of these years converged to the formation of an audience for the performing arts, which, since the end of the previous decade, has sought to enhance

parts with themes that explored the national shaft, whose trend was to portray our everyday, in a social or political way (Silva 2013, 127).

In various passages of the work of Elizabeth Silva detailed analyzes are performed in order to prove and strengthen the values inherited from the historiography. Therefore, we have in the history of dance in Brazil a bulwark able to anchor posterior experiences. Through the maintenance of the opinions issued by previous studies (Katz 1994 and Dias 1992) who enjoy the status of irrefutable truth even in academic environment, the dance historiography in Brazil has been demonstrated in some extent hostage to the past. The analytical griffins presented so far were performed with the aim of providing the questioning of their pretensions to general systematizations. One facet of this process, which legitimized certain readings found in works of history of dance, lies in how the narratives were organized, with a view to reifications, which allows readers better ease of apprehension and reproduction, because they contain few reflections and a greater amount of information and affirmative sentences.

What makes worrying this panorama of the historiographical production about Ballet Stagium after the decade of 1990, is the lack of verification of sentences elaborated by the authors of the works of history of dance in Brazil. They are fragile works from the point of view of theoretical and methodological framework, because they do not have sources and the authority depends on the authority of someone who wrote the dance critique. Therefore, the bulwark that today represents the Ballet Stagium in the history of dance in Brazil is heir not only of perceptions, but also the interests of dance criticism within the field of dance during the decade of 1990. Reasons that have contributed to the formulation of what today spreads on what the Stagium was in the past.

Notes

ⁱ Until the end of the decade of 1980 timid quotes can be found about Ballet Stagium in six works interested in talking about the dance history as an art in Brazil, but even without defining it in relation to the political context in the country. Namely: “Pequena história da dança”(1986) and “A dança no Brasil e seus construtores”(1989) by Antonio José Faro, “A dança teatral no Brasil" (1989) of Eduardo Sucena, “Imagens da dança em São Paulo”(1987) by Cássia Navas, "Nos passos da dança"(1985) and "História da dança"(1989) by Maribel Portinari.

ⁱⁱ The Institutional Act Number 5 (IA-5) is considered the most repressive legislative intervention throughout the period of dictatorial government in Brazil.

ⁱⁱⁱ The application of this expression by Carlo Ginzburg t differs from the meaning given by Roland Barthes due to not restricting the purely textual, devices capable of producing the text an illusion of the real. Ginzburg highlights the importance of elements present in the texts, but not necessarily textual (method, epistemology, documents) and extratextual aspects that also contribute to this "effect of truth". On the reflections of Barthes, see the text: BARTHES, Roland. O efeito do real. In: BARTHES, Roland et al. *Literature and semiology*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1972. p. 35-44.

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Dai Ailian's Anti-Japanese Dance: Focusing on Her Programs during the Second World War

Yukiyo Hoshino

Abstract: Dai Ailian, a Trinidad-born Chinese and the first headmistress of the National Ballet of China, is widely praised for her contributions toward educating people about Chinese folk dances and Revolutionary Ballet. However, her efforts during the Sino-Japanese War seem to be undervalued by the Chinese since they had held under the support of Kuomintang of China. This paper firstly highlights the dance training that Dai Ailian received in London. Next, we analyze the anti-Japanese demonstrations Ailian had staged in London in the late 1930s. Finally, we will explore her anti-Japanese choreographies performed at charity concerts in Chongqing.

Introduction

During the Sino-Japanese War, mainland China was divided into three areas: the liberated region, the Japanese-occupied area, and the area ruled by the National Party. In all three, propaganda was heavily used by each side. In the area ruled by the National Party, small dance companies were organized and barnstormed, advertising the crimes of the Japanese Army and the courageous resistance of the Chinese people.

Dai Ailian, a Trinidad-born Overseas Chinese, was the first headmistress of the National Ballet of China and the first principal of the Beijing Ballet School. Today she is even called the Mother of Modern Chinese Dance. In histories of dance published in China, she is singled out for praise for her contribution to education in Chinese folk dance (Wang, and Long eds. 1998, 72-80). However, such sources treat her anti-Japanese activities as a side matter, if at all, because at that time, she was dancing to support the Republic of China, hence this is not a politically preferred topic under today's Chinese Communist Party. In this paper, I introduce previously unknown historical materials housed in Chongqing.

Dai's dance training and studies in her youth

Dai was born in Trinidad and Tobago to a third-generation Chinese family whose origins were in Guangdong Province. She began studying ballet from the age of 7 under Sylvia Chen, a

distant relative (Chen, 2000, 404-405. Dai, 2003, 14). Chen's father, Eugene Chen, was foreign minister under Sun Yat-sen. While Sylvia studied ballet at the Lunacharsky Theatre Technicum in Moscow, her family immigrated to London. Dai followed them to England and studied under Sir Anton Dolin (Dai, 2003, 27-29), who had worked in Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Dai was lucky in that, following the death of Diaghilev, Dolin had recently left the Ballet Russes and was forced to teach ballet to make a living.

Later, Dai studied under Marie Rambert, who had also taught for Ballets Russes. Under Rambert's instruction, Dai studied eurhythmics and the Cecchetti method. Rambert commented that Dai was not much of a dancer, nevertheless she did encourage her to teach (Rambert, 1972, 196).

Dai came to feel that classical ballet had expressive limitations, therefore she began to study modern dance at Jooss-Leeder Dance School in Dartington, a village in Devon, England, where she studied the theory and techniques of Rudolf von Laban. The anti-war ballet of Kurt Jooss may have influenced Dai here, leading her to begin dancing at charity events to raise money for and awareness of warring China, which were held by the China Campaign Committee in London (Clegg, 2003, 61). For these, she danced in a Chinese style.

Performance at an anti-Japanese charity concert in Chongqing

In the late 1930s, as Nazi Germany expanded, many overseas Chinese in Europe returned to China, and Dai returned to Hong Kong. She began to hold charity concerts to raise money for the Chinese army, with the support of Soong Qingling (Madame Sun Yet-sen) in Hong Kong. After the Japanese army occupied Hong Kong, Dai escaped with her bare life to Chongqing and became a dance teacher at Yucai School, a free school for war orphans that was established by Tao Xingzhi. Tao had studied under John Dewey at Columbia University in the 1920s and was

the best-known educator in China at the time. Tao invited Dai to teach the dance class at the Yucai School in 1943. Tao also collaborated with Dai on many ballet performances in Chongqing to raise money for war orphans.

The program for an evening of performances at Chongqing can be found in the Chongqing City archives in Chinese and English (document no.205-209, Chongqing City Archives.). This document indicates that the event was a joint performance of the dance class and the music class, and it was given from November 3 to 6, 1944. The venue was the Kang-jian Tang, whose name means the resistance theater, and which is still used as a theater. The Japanese Army was sieging Chongqing and bombing it, but in autumn and winter, Chongqing is often covered with fog too thick to allow air raids, allowing anti-Japanese drama and other work to go forward from November to February.

The program consisted of 20 performances. Half featured piano, violin, and cello performances by music students, and the remainder were dance performances by Dai's students. These performances included *Les Sylphides*, one of the principal productions of the Ballet Russes, choreographed by Michel Fokine. This performance indicates that Dai followed Dolin and Rambert, both of whom had been members of Diaghilev's Ballet Russes troupe before turning to teaching. However, the performance was poorly received, as it was regarded too abstract for contemporary Chinese sensibilities. Most Chinese people had never seen classical ballet.

The next piece, *Air Raid*, choreographed by Dai Ailian, tells the following story. In the suburbs of Chongqing, a mother and her two sons evacuate to a shelter during an air raid. Uppermost in the mother's mind is the loss of her daughter, who was killed by a Japanese bomb.

After the raid ceases, she refuses to return home because she has seen the ghost of her daughter. Her sons together succeed in calming her down and lead her home.

Alarm was choreographed by Dai, probably about 1935, when she was studying at Jooss-Leeder School of Dance. This piece expresses the fear of a young guerilla soldier who is standing guard for the first time. Dai later recalled that for this piece, she incorporated movements and rhythms of Javanese dance, which she had been taught in London by an Indonesian student. The dancer holds a drum under her arm and expresses her resistance against Japanese aggression by drumming.

The music for *Longing for Home* was composed by the Chinese composer Ma Sicong, Dai's good friend, who was later persecuted during the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s and fled to the United States for safety. In this piece, a refugee woman from Japanese-occupied Sui-yuan, Outer Mongolia, thinks of her home while on the way to another province.

The plot of *Guerrilla Coup* had an anti-Japanese theme; however, no photographs survive, hence the costumes are unknown. Its outline is as follows. In a Japanese-occupied area, two girls are playing and are interrupted by guerillas who warn them that two Japanese soldiers are approaching. The four of them decide on a plan of action. When the Japanese appear, they threaten the girls, and the guerillas ambush and kill them with their own guns.

Thus, it is clear that Dai was searching for a kind of dance that would adequately respond to Japanese imperialism for the occupied Chinese.

Why does the program have two versions?

The question arises: Why was an English and Chinese program necessary? Other historical documents I found in Chongqing help address this. Among these materials are invitations to the concert addressed to importance persons in the Chongqing government, which

bear Tao's signature, and Tao's letters to the government to ask for a tax relief for the performance, as its proceeds would go to the education for war orphans. I infer from these materials that Tao needed to explain the event's details to the government, so he asked Dai for a detailed program with commentary. Therefore, Dai wrote an English version, as she could not write Chinese, and Tao translated it.

Conclusion

Previously, the existence of this concert was only supported by Dai's and her husband's memories, nevertheless now it can be confirmed by the aforementioned materials.

Although the exact details of the choreographies are unclear, Dai's dance vocabulary was certainly rooted in the basics of ballet technique, enriched by her training in German modern dance, and informed by her escape from Hong Kong to Chongqing during war and under the threat of air raids.

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Dancing behind the wire: choreographed bodies in protest.

Anny Mokotow

Abstract: At first sight, the image of children behind wire holding placards and begging to be heard, caused a feeling of helpless nausea at the injustice of their very incarceration, but also at the knowledge that the protest would fall into the abyss of indifference common to the plight of ‘asylum seekers/illegal refugees’ in Australia. Having their faces smudged out in the news photo added a further violation. A more informed reading, however, suggests that this self-choreographed action, in which the children wrote on their shirts, then sat, arms raised, and wrists crossed, posed a performative and choreographed dance between wire and freedom. The choreographed protests of the voiceless and faceless children on Nauru and the more recent, similar pacifist protests of the men in refugee-detention on Manus Island present dance and choreography as political event, and perhaps more significantly, as empowering action for the children and men. It has also translated to choreographed action for the sympathizer/activists, who use the actions of sitting, arms high and wrists crossed as empathetic resistance. This paper explores the choreographed body in situations in which the body is otherwise silenced. It examines the potential power that can be obtained with this kind of intra-action (Barad), what strategies are in play and how the dance seeds the political outcome. While the response from those in power is poor, for the children and adults, the act of choreographed protest becomes a move towards freedom.

This paper considers demonstrations carried out by two groups of asylum seekers from within their respective detention centers. It will examine how their actions have transferred to the wider public protest movement in Australia. In this paper, I will draw attention to the way the refugee demonstrations exposed the frustration of their incarceration through a very specific choreographic act. I will show how this act fashioned a gestural action which provided a political momentum that could move as an iconic message from detention centers, to protest actions, to public awareness. Consequently, I suggest that the body as a site of protest has, through choreographic articulation, been able to transcend the liminal space of incarceration to actively create intra-active possibilities and developments from those inside the wire to those who are outside the wire.

History and statistics

Mandatory incarceration for refugees that arrive by boat has been in place in Australia since 1992, with a brief period when it was disbanded by the Labour government in 2008; only to be reintroduced by the same government under the moniker of ‘off-shore processing’

in 2010. This means that refugees who come without ‘the right papers’ or through ‘the proper channels’ (with visas, by air), will never enter Australia and will be incarcerated in a country other than Australia while they have their claims assessed, refugee status granted, and another safe country found. This can take many, many years. There are a number of incarceration points for off-shore detention. The two on which these demonstrations were held are Manus Island, one of the Admiralty Islands of Papua New Guinea, where families, single men and unaccompanied youths were originally held together. In 2014, the families, women and children were transferred to other offshore detention centers leaving 600 single men (i.e. men not travelling with their families) on Manus Island. Most of the families were moved to Nauru, an island in Melanesia north east of Papua New Guinea and four and a half thousand kilometres from Australia. I will be looking at demonstrations by the children on Nauru and the men left behind on Manus Island.

Lost agency

The detainees are allowed very little access to the outside world, no visitors or media, no journalists, no lawyers or access to appropriate medical care. It has been near impossible for legal teams or NGOs to get a visa to the island even to investigate conditions. Although Save the Children were on Nauru, they were expelled in 2014. Some detainees now have phones, but previously they were not easy to maintain. On Nauru, the men are allowed to make weekly calls to family on the one available land line.ⁱ

As refugees, they are disappeared from view, voiceless, stateless and thus devoid of political status and political agency. Notwithstanding, Hannah Arendt’s famous aporia stands: no matter if they are stateless and therefore have no rights, as people/humans they still have the right to have rights. Jacques Ranciere’s credo is even more to the point: their humanity defines them as political agents precisely because they are stateless.

The detainees, asylum seekers and refugees, have an inherent understanding of this concept. They are aware of their status as political identities and that their claims are not based on individual merit but on national political interests. As such, they seek to utilize their political agency through action, even while they are, in effect, allowed no political ‘voice.’

Action as agency

Action often transpires in demonstrations and acts of disobedience. Iranian detainee, Sayed, explains that acts of disobedience are often behind administrative changes. When he asked for headache tablets or anything at all, he was required to fill out forms and make applications, after which, nothing ever eventuated. He says, “if you ask for the request, you don’t get it, but if you shout and do something, break something up, you get all these things done” (in Fiske, 2016, 65). Physical and/or property abuse are of course denounced by the government as being manipulative and highlighting the ‘threat’ potential of the detained. The voices of action committees who are busy providing counter arguments to government claims have little effect. Ultimately, detainees are aware that while temporarily affective, abusing or brutalizing the property of the government can stain their reputation. Inflicting abuse on one’s body, however, not. The body, rather than the furniture, becomes a site for protest.

The body as site for protest:

Fifteen-year-old Shamin who had been in detention for two years before self-harming describes her cutting, “I wanted to feel the pain in my heart on my body, but I couldn’t really” (Shamin, 2015).ⁱⁱ Self-harm has been a major aspect of life in detention for adults and children. At times done publicly: rioting, self-immolation, hunger-strikes, lip-sewing, suicide; at times unseen, carried out silently and hidden beneath clothes. There is a case to be made that these acts are an emotional release and a political exponent. Blood has effect, and power. Such acts of self-harm are perhaps a dissensus, performed as a means by which to regain power and agency.

Testimonies in writing from human rights groups reach very few people, the sewing together of lips, graffiti in blood and writing with knives on the skin, what Professor Gillian Whitlock calls ‘wound culture,’ often has a strong impact (2015, 186). Publicized acts of mutilation stir the anxieties of our social structures: the image of sewn lips stays in peoples’ minds, (hunger strikes have been less affective). This knowledge can be deadly. Consequently, actions undertaken on the body in Australian detention centers range from considered to impromptu, from desperate to hopeful, from unrehearsed to choreographed.ⁱⁱⁱ As Lucy Fiske in her article on human rights explains, “Detainees bodies were a site for the exercise of state sovereignty, but also for detainees to reclaim sovereignty of self” (2016, 22). It is only a temporary relief, but one with some effect.

In her study on Cambodian refugees, Toni Shapiro-Phim (2008) recognizes how refugees in detention are separated from past identities and given no direct access to any future. She observes that consequently, creating community in detention is necessary for mental and physical health. Shapiro-Phim was looking at Cambodian refugees, who are primarily from one ethnic group. The Australian context is more complex: refugees and asylum seekers are often from very different ethnic and racial backgrounds and detainees have described how the camps are often defined along racial and ethnic lines – not always easy to cross – making detention for some incredibly isolating and raising tensions within the camps. In the situation that I’ll describe, while self-harm continues, a communal responsive action, in the form of choreographed protest was creating a unity between detainees. Unity was a long time in coming, and when it did, it gave a sense of hope and purpose.

Choreographing bodies in protest: the children on Nauru

The Forgotten Children Report^{iv} of 2014 showed how protest actions were being carried out by children even while still on Manus Island. In these, the children stood behind the wire, holding placards or with arms raised hands, their mouths plastered over with tape.

Together with the adults, they had been demonstrating for years, but mostly unseen to the wider public.

In 2015-16 the children on Nauru held a New Year's protest in which they posted videos of themselves with sloganized t-shirts. They stood in front of a large board with their backs to the camera. They put their hands behind their heads, then raised their arms with hands crossed as if cuffed. They turned to face the camera with faces down and eventually sat on the ground. At another point, a few children stood in the center of a circle, their backs to the camera, holding signs. The other children formed a circle around them by squatting on the ground with their heads between their knees. Their actions seemed at times subservient and humiliating; they were anything but: this was an incredibly powerful act of constructed defiance.

The children would take up these actions any time they could, and anytime there was a camera available. Their protest continued for a number of days.

The action of raised arms and crossed wrists is a recognizable action that has been taken throughout the world in protest actions.^v While it can be read as an image of the shackled and the powerless, Shamin, (who was fourteen at the time) explained what using this action meant for the children: "When we put our hands up, it means we not armed everyone they just innocent people. It means peaceful for us. We have no weapon we do not want to have weapon to fight back only peaceful. So, we show our arms are empty." The children reclaim the power of the action by owning its docility. And this is precisely what generated its power. In the confined Australian context of isolation, this action started a small tsunami of embodied identification. It became an iconic act recreated by other detainee demonstrators and protestors.

Choreographing bodies in protest: the men on Manus Island

In October last year (2017), the New Guinea government deemed the camps on Manus Island illegal and they were closed. The Australian government refused to take the 400 remaining men off the island and has since forcibly repatriated them to three makeshift unfinished settlement blocks near the central hub of the island. The men refused to move from the original center, which at least had some facilities and medical staff to provide them with their medication. They were angry but decided to stage only peaceful protests. With raised arms and crossed wrists they demonstrated daily for three weeks before being forcibly rehoused. They have continued to demonstrate in this way in their new accommodation every day since. As a choreographic action, the men might, walk, sit, stand or do all three, raising their hands in simultaneous compliance and defiance. Whether they are in their hundreds or just a few, the acts are organised and choreographed. The softness of the action; no fist pumping, often sitting with head lowered, signifies that they are not about to use force, punch holes in the furniture or provoke violence. It presents an emotional openness, non-confrontational but non-compliant and one in which their hurt and misery are exposed. The use of raised head or lowered head is choreographically carefully constructed, depending on the moment and place of the action.

While images are not released to the outside but smuggled out like the ones in the power-point that I am showing here, the detainees perform their choreography on a daily basis. Usually in large groups, sometimes in smaller groups, depending on who has the impetus that day to rise from their bed. But seen or not seen, the performance of the choreography allows detainees to take possession of the space in which they are confined on their own terms. The choreographed protests speak across spaces of difference to keep them dancing together. As Yaseed Muhammad, a twenty-four-year-old Afghani refugee says of these actions, “you need to dance or else you lose yourself” (2011, n.p.).^{vi}

We know from studies by Naomi Jackson and Shapiro-Phim (2008), of the benefits of dance for refugees and those with trauma, however, there is no possibility of providing any kind of classes in dance to the children or detainees at the detention centers. The closest they come is the choreographic manoeuvre of their bodies in the act of protest. This dance, albeit not one designed as a creative therapy, might well become one for different reasons.

As the choreographic act has been effective in unifying individuals, it also presents a transferable and somatically infused gesture to the outside. In this case, the actions of the children transposed and acted upon by the men, was further acted upon with and by protestors in the wider community. All over Australia, in small to larger groups, protestors have taken the action of arms raised wrists crossed, standing walking and more often sitting to demonstrate solidarity and empathy; and as evidence of their own political position: citizens with their 'hands tied.' They are not attempting a representation of the detainees' bodies but, bound by the inability to 'do' something to alleviate the horror of the incarcerations, they demonstrate their own feeling of empathy and powerlessness. The iconic use of the gesture becomes a symbolic political act.

Intra-action

I find intra-action a useful term to use here. The power of what Karen Barad (2003) calls intra-action is crystalized in these examples, as the action/choreography moves from the domain of the detainees, where it has a particular sensibility and purpose, out into the space of the public and the protestors, where it becomes generated and performed on its own terms, as a new phenomenon. The boundaries of wire and distance means that neither the protestors nor the detainees can interact, but they have created an intra-active event in which they carve out the public space with their bodies. In doing so, they reclaim and redefine the limits of the potential in the public sphere. As an intra-action it remains a flexible choreography, one that extends from its origins, but is imbued with new meaning and potential.

Dramaturgically these actions are not rehearsed, but neither are they improvised. The action of the detainees has a purpose and clarity with a daily design: to act as a means of giving anger and aggression a peaceful form. The protestors are more often reactive to the situation. Gabriella Klein reads protest actions as *real-time-composition*, created performatively as a form of choreographic order in the moment of performance (2001, 196). As she suggests, “the situational decisions made by the participants and their ability to act creatively under pressure in a politically charged situation, while simultaneously taking into account the movements of the others and interacting with them, all become especially significant” (198). To provide an anecdotal situation: my experience in a demonstration during the protest actions for the men on Nauru saw myself in a group of about one hundred in a town square surround by just as many helmeted police guards. A number of demonstrators were becoming frustrated with the antagonistic behaviour of the police and the situation seemed likely to escalate. Other demonstrators countered the aggression by sitting, wrists crossed high, until all the demonstrators had taken this position. The situation diffused, and the clarity of the action, its pacifism, and non-compliance with the order to move became more pronounced. At the time we were seated, many more of the public came to talk, interact, and some to participate with those demonstrating.

Just as in the actions of the standing man, Erdun Gunduz on Taksin Square in Istanbul in 2013, it was the physicality and the gestural act that was taken up by the protesters who joined the demonstration, and it was the gestural act that sparked the inquiry of the public. “The silence and the stillness” of these actions, what Gunduz (in Mee, 2014, 73) calls “the actionless of the action,” could temporarily undercut the government propaganda line that all protestors were violent. In this choreography, as Randy Martin (2011), Andre Lepecki (2001) and others have suggested, the stillness is imbued with movement, a movement to act and to affect. What remains of these protests in the detention centers and out in the community are

traces of what Martin calls, the ‘sensible’ residue left behind; the residue that has enticed a social body towards a political body.

As a political act, the bodies organized in time and space create, to borrow again from Martin, a ‘dance’ which “makes its own politics” as it “materializes bodies assembled on their own behalf, a social ensemble by its own means towards its immediate ends” (2011, 29)

In an Australian context, detention is a theatrical presentation of politics. The government exhibits the prisoners as a performance of their power, as a way to demonstrate how they are handling the ‘protection of our borders.’ We know this, however, as a simulated theatre, which dehumanizes the detainees. Here, the obedient bodies, forced to submit in detention, subtly instigate and perform their own subversive action. Dance and politics both understand the body as a reservoir of dissensual political-somatic capacities.

While there is an attempt to make the body absent from the discourse – as the Australian government has – by stopping any media coverage and removing the identity of those detained, the detainees have found that choreography has become a means to recreate identity, to present a suspended image of bodies caught in an act of defiance and hope.

Conclusion

Can this choreography seed a political outcome? The answer is yes, the bodies torn from their homes and in pain, innovate a dance that demands attention. Dissensus grows, as the action grows the message grows and takes shape in protest and hopefully change in policy. But this is not yet a happy story. There are still 43 children in detention on Nauru and another 70 on the island with no recourse to getting off. We hear and see little of their plight.^{vii} While there was constant communication between the men on Manus Island and activists, the group was eventually moved to continue their protest alone and silenced with no press and no public recognition outside of tweeting with their friends and supporters. They continue their action and they make the press when there is a death.

I would like to pay my respects to the deaths that have taken place since I started writing this article: Salim Kyawning (Manus Island) and Fariborz Karami (Nauru).

Notes

ⁱ Australian Human Rights Commission <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/last-resort-national-inquiry-children-immigration-detention/6-australias-immigration>

See Nick Reimer <https://www.smh.com.au/opinion/let-them-stay-campaign-has-had-some-success-but-the-public-needs-to-keep-fighting-for-refugees-20160405-gnygi6.html>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/oct/21/why-i-spoke-to-four-corners-about-the-children-i-taught-on-nauru>

ⁱⁱⁱ In 2010 the refugees in Woomerah detention center and others around Australia, sewed their lips together in protest actions that included hunger strikes and occupying buildings.

^{iv} See. <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/asylum-seekers-and-refugees/publications/forgotten-children-national-inquiry-children>

^v The Oromo people of Ethiopia have used this action (also used as a symbol of non-violent protest), to express their determination for freedom. More recently this gestured protest action has also been used by African migrants who are also resisting deportation from Israel.

^{vi} <https://www.crikey.com.au/2011/10/04/asylum-seekers-personal-story-yaseed-muhammad/>

^{vii} The Nauruan President tried to have the Facebook page created by the children on Nauru, but it is still active.

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Text, Music, Dance: Conflicting Allegiances in Angelin Preljocaj's *Roméo et Juliette*
Nona Monahin and Christian Rogowski

Abstract: Choreographers working with a preexisting literary text and musical score are sometimes faced with conflicting allegiances, since there are at least two “original sources” to consider, sources that may occasionally contradict one another. Angelin Preljocaj’s version of *Romeo and Juliet* re-imagines Shakespeare’s tragedy as a clash between social classes, set in a surreal, totalitarian dystopia. Sergei Prokofiev’s musical score of the same name is itself at times at odds with the tragic gist of Shakespeare’s play. This paper explores how Preljocaj’s choreography comes into productive conflict with both Shakespeare’s play and Prokofiev’s music.

Choreographed when communist dictatorships in Eastern Europe were collapsing, and influenced by the dystopian visions of George Orwell’s novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Terry Gilliam’s film, *Brazil*, French-Albanian choreographer Angelin Preljocaj’s version of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* is rife with provocation and conflict.ⁱ Set in an abstract, dystopian, post-industrial wasteland reminiscent of a high-security prison, it reimagines Shakespeare’s tragedy as a play about conflicting allegiances, presented in the mode of a conflict of allegiances. In what follows, we wish to discuss the various ways in which Preljocaj’s choreography comes into productive conflict both with Shakespeare’s play and with Sergei Prokofiev’s famous ballet score, which itself had to a certain extent already reimagined Shakespeare’s tragedy.ⁱⁱ

Angelin Preljocaj’s full-length ballet, *Roméo et Juliette*, created for the Opéra Lyon Ballet, premiered on December 27, 1990 in Lyon. It was recreated for the Ballet Preljocaj in 1996 at the company’s own venue, the “Pavillion Noir” in Aix-en-Provence, and has since been part of the company’s repertoire, with changing casts. In working with different casts, Preljocaj modified his original choreography to accommodate the different personalities of the respective dancers and has made minor changes to the costumes and sets. Various revisions (for instance,

2008 and 2015), have been performed throughout France and internationally.ⁱⁱⁱ Our analysis is based on the video of the ballet recorded in 1992 and released on DVD by Image Entertainment in 2002, featuring the Ballet and Orchestra of Opéra Lyon, under the musical direction of Kent Nagano, with Pascale Doye as Juliette, and Nicolas Dufloux as Roméo. We take this version, with the original cast, costumes and sets, to be the authoritative version of Preljocaj's initial vision.

1. Preljocaj's conflicts with Shakespeare.

As a choreographer, Preljocaj largely rejects narrative in ballet, since the effort to tell a story through gesture may lead to pantomime.^{iv} His *Roméo et Juliette* seems to assume that the audience already knows Shakespeare's story of the star-crossed lovers, which allows him to reduce the play to a series of abstract, archetypal episodes. No effort is made to explain the connection between these episodes in terms of traditional causal or psychological motivation, the audience is offered no help in decoding what is happening on stage and why.

There are no "realistic" sets or costumes that evoke medieval or Renaissance Verona. Instead, the setting is a bleak courtyard in what appears to be a kind of prison, complete with high turrets and search lights, and the costumes are for the most part vaguely contemporary. The audience has to figure out gradually who is who on stage. Preljocaj actually eliminates most of the characters from Shakespeare's play. Instead of warring families engaged in psychologically plausible feuds, we get a sharp contrast between anonymous, machine-like guards and a group of disheveled men in shabby clothes, evoking a conflict between two classes, that of the oppressors and the oppressed. Preljocaj's ballet starts *in medias res*, with a fight between the guards and the proletarians. For the longest time we have no idea who the leader of the guards, distinguished by a red vest, is nor which of the three proletarians involved in the fighting may be Romeo. In fact,

the person we may assume to be the leader of the proletarians, also distinguished by a red vest, will turn out to be the Mercutio character. The leader of the guards, who later exerts control over Juliet, is Tybalt—although he is not killed as in Shakespeare’s play. Psychological realism is further undermined by the “Nurse” being played by two dancers, wearing complementing black-and-white costumes that render their bodies split in half, as it were. In the dim lighting, their black halves are often obscured, giving their mechanical movements a disembodied, otherworldly quality. We have to infer that the young woman whom these two characters seem to supervise is Juliet, since she is the only major female character. Likewise, Romeo’s identity is only revealed when Juliet singles him out during what is presented as a strange ritual in which female dancers emerge to select male partners for themselves. The guards wear black, Juliet wears white, the proletarians wear grey—with Tybalt’s and Mercutio’s red vests the only splashes of color. Class differences are highlighted by choice of footwear: leather boots for the guards, jazz boots for Juliet, jazz shoes for the nurses, and, in one brief scene, pointe shoes for the upper-class women. The proletarian men wear jazz shoes, while the womenfolk are barefoot.^v

There are numerous other changes Preljocaj makes to the storyline: Romeo, on his way to visit Juliet at night, slits the throat of one of the guards. He will later stab himself, rather than taking poison as in Shakespeare’s play. The potion that renders Juliet’s body lifeless is represented by a red shroud that the Friar Laurence character instructs Juliet to wrap around herself. Here, it is not the prospect of an unwanted marriage to Paris arranged by her parents that prompts Juliet to fake her own death. Instead, there is a suggestion that Tybalt’s henchmen rough up Juliet to prepare her for being raped by Tybalt.

Such changes in the motivating logic of the plot, the elimination of most characters, as well as the refusal to illustrate Shakespeare’s play by way of gestures and movements, indicate

that Preljocaj takes great liberty with the text, stripping it of its specificity and turning it into abstract political commentary.

2. Prokofiev's conflicts with Shakespeare.

Prokofiev's music is usually praised for the masterful way in which it brings out the emotional content of Shakespeare's passionate story. Yet Prokofiev originally composed his ballet score with a "happy ending," giving it a flavor that at times is strangely at odds with the tragic gist of Shakespeare's play (Monahin 2017). It was not until later that the score was subjected to a rather perfunctory ending change. It can thus be said that Prokofiev too takes liberties with his textual source, radically reinterpreting Shakespeare in the process.

3. Preljocaj's conflicts with Prokofiev.

Much as he did with regard to Shakespeare's text, Preljocaj uses Sergei Prokofiev's musical score as a kind of quarry from which to mine material that suits his purpose. The ballet cuts substantial portions of Prokofiev's score, incorporates indeterminate concrete sounds, reassigns musical passages to new contexts, and introduces stretches of silence to derail the music's emotional power. In so doing, Preljocaj creates surprising juxtapositions that bestow upon familiar pieces of music a radically different significance and effect.

We wish to discuss two examples that illustrate the productive use Preljocaj makes of reassigned music, sounds, and silence in his choreography.

First Example: Juliet's Introduction.

Shakespeare presents Juliet as a girl of thirteen, perhaps slightly mischievous, as hinted at in the nurse's frustration: "God forbid—where is this girl? What, Juliet!" (1.3.4), but shy and modest, and certainly not thinking about marriage, as her replies to her mother's questions

indicate: “But no more deep will I endart mine eye / Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.” (1.3.100-101); “It is an honour that I dream not of” (1.3.68).^{vi}

Prokofiev gives Juliet several musical themes, each with a different character (playful, graceful, wistful, sensuous), which accompany her different moods as well as her emotional growth from child to young woman during the course of the work. All four are heard in the scene under discussion (No.10, “The Young Juliet”).^{vii} The music for her first entrance (rehearsal no. 50), suggests youth and playfulness: the simple scalar melodies, interspersed with crisp chords played *pizzicato* on plucked strings, run and bounce. Most choreographers have Juliet dashing about (teasing her nurse, or playing hide and seek with friends) during the first statement of this “girly” music, which returns several times during this scene, punctuating the more “mature” themes.

The first of these “mature” themes is more graceful but still cheerful (rehearsal no. 53), whereas the second (rehearsal no. 55) is wistful and slightly sad; perhaps Juliet is reluctant to part with her childhood; one of Prokofiev’s notes in the 1935 libretto for this scene reads: “Juliet stands before a mirror and sees a young woman. She briefly muses, and then dashes out” (Morrison 2009a, 396). A few measures later this wistful theme morphs into a more sensuous one (rehearsal no. 56). Traditional choreographies tend to use these themes to accompany Juliet’s somewhat less than enthusiastic interactions with the adults in this scene (her mother, her father, Paris), as they expound on the joys of Juliet’s approaching womanhood and marriage.

Preljocaj reverses this pattern. His Juliet is not a naive young girl playing childish games. She is already a sensuous, if lonely, young woman. As will be seen later in the ballet, when she meets Romeo it is she who makes the first move. (She literally chooses him out of a line-up of

men.) Actually, that is the only way it could be in the given social setting—he is the pauper and she is, as it were, the boss’s daughter.

For such a Juliet the music assigned for her entrance is totally unsuitable. Prejljocaj’s solution is to have Juliet slowly walk on and dance a considerable portion of her solo in total silence. During this she performs a series of sustained movements—such as stretching and bending forward, extending one leg slowly into an *arabesque* and continuing the extension by rising on the toes of the standing leg, or slowly circling her shoulder with an accompanying sinuous rotation of the body—all of which seem to evoke feelings of yearning. Done in silence they can also suggest loneliness. This, then, is our first impression of Juliet.

As a result, when the “girly” music finally does begin, we hear it in this newly established, different context. Prejljocaj exploits the rather banal nature of the simple scale passages and bouncy chords to create a very stylized movement sequence for Juliet that smacks of precision and rote-learning as she repeats it verbatim whenever the same music returns. With the nurses observing, it does look like they are watching their pupil practicing a lesson, which she performs somewhat reluctantly, as her facial expression (at least on the video used for this study, at 11:18–11:19) suggests. But when the music changes—first to the wistful tune, then morphing into the sensuous theme—Juliet repeats the sustained and sinuous movements from her original silent entrance, making the impression of wistful longing and yearning even more poignant.

Prejljocaj’s approach (both in this scene and in others) is first of all to overturn the potential emotional impact of Prokofiev’s music by beginning the dance number in silence, during which the desired mood is established. This enables him to break long-established associations (in this case, the fast “girly” music with Juliet’s youthful persona, the wistful and

sensuous music with her parents' plans for her future) and to replace them with new ones (the "girly" music for her tiresome "lessons," the sensuous music for her true persona). Thus, instead of the more usual situation (in many traditional ballets) of the dance "following" the music, here the music is, in a sense, made to follow the dance.^{viii}

Second Example: The Wedding Night.

In Shakespeare's Act 3, Scene 5 Romeo and Juliet are shown on the morning after their wedding night, with the famous "nightingale and lark" dialogue (3.5.1-35). Prokofiev's music for this scene can rival his "balcony scene" music in its sumptuous beauty and romanticism, in fact reprising some of the music of the earlier scene, though the overall mood is now more serene and less fervent since they have consummated their relationship. Despite being sad to have to part, and Juliet's fleeting premonition of trouble notwithstanding, they are looking forward to their future together. Prokofiev's music here is overall optimistic.^{ix}

In Preljocaj's world of perpetual night there can be no potentially forward-looking "morning" scene. Instead, we get a direct glimpse into the "night after" the two lovers have consummated their relationship. The future for Preljocaj's Romeo and Juliet is uncertain at best. Their passionate union has violated the strict class division that marks their society, a bold and transgressive act that exposes them to danger. It stands to reason that their sleep, and their dreams, on their first night together, will be anything but restful.

Preljocaj's choice of music here is perhaps the boldest move to repurpose passages from Prokofiev's score, radically reinterpreting their significance in a new context. The scene uses the music that Prokofiev composed to accompany Juliet's visit to Friar Laurence (No. 44, "At Friar Laurence's Cell"), during which she explains her dilemma regarding her upcoming forced marriage to Paris, and the friar recommends the sleeping potion. This music is comprised of

several contrasting and rapidly changing themes: a tranquil one associated with the friar and the wedding ceremony (rehearsal no. 312), a brief but exuberant one from the “balcony scene” (six measures after rehearsal no. 312), and a longer one based on a short but repeated melodic motif (rehearsal no. 314) with ominous-sounding undertones (four measures after rehearsal no. 314), associated here, and in later scenes, with the sleeping potion and Juliet’s apprehension concerning its outcome. This musical collage—intended to evoke the dialogue between Juliet and the friar (Wilson 2003, 183)—effectively captures Juliet’s emotional turmoil during this scene. With Preljocaj, this music accompanies a restless night of the two newly-weds who toss and turn on their bed, while snippets of sweet dreams alternate with anxious nightmares as they try to comfort each other during brief semi-awakenings.

The passage that shows Romeo and Juliet on their “bed” (in fact, a plain rectangular slab of concrete) is preceded by a brief episode in which we see the night guard, clad in a black leather coat and accompanied by a German shepherd dog, walking the rounds on one of the turrets, with a flashlight in his hand, to the ominous, drum-like noises of a disembodied machine. We see the two lovers in what initially might be interpreted as post-coital relaxation. They lie next to one other but, oddly, with their feet by the other person’s head. Slowly they begin to stretch as if waking up. A sense of their uneasiness is conveyed when the two strike a pose with outstretched arms that momentarily freezes and looks like a strange double crucifix of sorts—a suggestion of their impending martyrdom. With arms outstretched, they raise their knees and begin to shift their legs to the side and back again, as if unsure about whether they should get up or stay asleep. They begin to toss and turn, mostly one after the other, in canon, in poses reminiscent of studies of sleep disturbances—with raised knees, on their stomach with arms at an angle, or curled up sideways in a fetal position. They attempt to raise themselves, only to

collapse again. Romeo embraces Juliet, their bodies writhing in a futile effort to seek reassurance. They cling to each other, only to separate abruptly into different corners of their confined space. Romeo sits on the right edge of the bed, with his feet on the floor, Juliet rests her back against his back, and her body is lifted as he gets up. She turns and collapses into his arms, as he embraces her, now standing next to the bed.

At this point, a soothing, uplifting passage of music commences (rehearsal no. 316). In Prokofiev's libretto, this was intended to signify Juliet's acceptance, and trust in the efficacy, of the friar's sleeping potion.^x With Preljocaj, this music introduces several other couples, dressed in flesh-colored body-suits suggesting nudity, who appear in the background and proceed to mimic Romeo and Juliet's now somewhat less haphazard movements, as if humanity and universal love has triumphed over local despair and hopelessness (or perhaps simply sleep has overcome exhaustion). The scene ends in silence as Romeo lovingly carries Juliet back onto the bed and they finally do fall asleep.

This music, written for a different scene of the ballet, seems so perfect for Preljocaj's vision of the wedding night that it appears to validate Preljocaj's statement, made during an interview, that ideally, after creating a choreography to pre-existing music, the impression would be that the music was created on the choreography.^{xi}

Shakespeare's play famously ends with the Prince's concluding comment that "never was a story of more woe / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo" (5.3.308-309). The Prince attributes the sad fate of the two lovers to the folly of their warring families—"See what a scourge is laid upon your hate" (5.3.291). Prokofiev deviates from Shakespeare by ending his score with music assigned for Juliet's death (No. 52), which does not allow time for a fully-fledged reconciliation scene.^{xii} Nevertheless, a tentatively reconciliatory ending may be implied in a note in the score

(rehearsal no. 363) that reads “Juliet slowly dies, embracing Romeo. The crowd timidly approaches.” Preljocaj has just one witness to the scene: Tybalt, gazing upon the gruesome scene in bewilderment. As we hope to have shown, in violating the surface trimmings of Shakespeare’s play by way of changing the setting, eliminating and collapsing various characters, reassigning musical passages from Prokofiev’s score to different contexts, and adding silence and concrete noises to the soundscape, Preljocaj digs deeper, addressing the tragic core of Shakespeare’s play: the focus here is not so much upon a “flaw” within the characters or upon their ill-advised actions, but on the nature of the society in which they find themselves. Given the absolute division of classes in the world we are presented with here, it is the impossibility of finding emotional fulfilment that dooms the two lovers from the start, their agency curtailed by the very world they live in; a bleak assessment—there can, perhaps, indeed be no “story of more woe.”

Notes

ⁱ Angelin Preljocaj acknowledged the influence of George Orwell’s novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Terry Gilliam’s film *Brazil* in an interview with Jean-Michel Plouchard (1991, 6).

ⁱⁱ For a discussion of the original “happy ending” to Prokofiev’s ballet score see Monahin 2017; Morrison 2009a; Morrison 2009b; Wilson 2003. The original score was restored by musicologist and Prokofiev specialist Simon Morrison, and a “happy ending” version was choreographed by Mark Morris and performed by his company in 2008.

ⁱⁱⁱ See the list of “créations” and “tournées” on the company’s website: <http://www.preljocaj.org>.

^{iv} Preljocaj discussed his approach to choreography in an interview with television journalist Alain Fauritte (Preljocaj and Fauritte 2017, 9:20–10:58).

^v In our view, the casting of the two leads, as well as their costuming, significantly contributes to the reframing of Shakespeare’s tragic love story in terms of a clash of social classes: the original Juliette, Pascale Doye, has an athletic, regal presence, and she seems to be almost as tall as her male partner, making her a formidable force in the ballet’s battle-of-the-sexes. Her proletarian Roméo, Nicolas Dufloux, displays both strength and vulnerability, combined with a feisty nimbleness that highlights his streetwise, scruffy, underdog persona. The Preljocaj company website aptly describes the focus of the original ballet upon “a confrontation between the militia responsible for keeping social order and the ‘family’ of the homeless, on the fringe of society.”

The costume of the original Juliette featured a cone-shaped bra reminiscent of that worn by American pop star Madonna in the early 1990s, as well as suspenders and leggings. The gleaming white lingerie outfit, paired with white jazz boots, has an armor-like quality, perhaps highlighting both the character's self-assured sexual agency and her unattainability. Subsequent Juliettes wear a softer outfit, and forgo the leggings and boots in favor of bare legs and feet. Although the elimination of the now dated topical cone-bra reference is understandable, the reduction of the martial qualities of the original costume diminishes, in our opinion, the impression of class difference between the two leads.

^{vi} All quotations from Shakespeare's play are from Shakespeare 2005.

^{vii} Numbers identifying musical sections refer to the piano score of the ballet, Prokofiev 1979.

^{viii} In an interview discussing one of his later works, Preljocaj suggested that choreography can influence the perception of the music just as music can influence the perception of choreography (Preljocaj, Dautrey, and Assayas 2007, 98).

^{ix} One reason for keeping the mood upbeat is suggested in a note in the 1935 libretto for the ballet, which reads "Romeo and Juliet behind the bed curtain. . . [In order to avoid a misleading impression, the composer attempted to make the music clean and bright.]" (Morrison 2009a, 400).

^x A note in the ballet libretto at this point reads: "Juliet prepares and calms down, she is even delighted" (Wilson 2003, 183).

^{xi} Preljocaj and Fauritte 2017, 10:34–10:44.

^{xii} This may be one outcome of Prokofiev's change from the original "happy" ending (1935) to the more familiar "tragic" one (likely completed by early 1938 [Wilson, 148]). Quite striking is the relative brevity of the new tragic ending, as well as its subtitle, "Epilogue," both of which suggest a tacked-on quality (Monahin 2017). Moreover, as Simon Morrison has shown, Prokofiev reworked some of the music from his original "happy end" version rather than composing entirely new music for the new ending (see Morrison 2009a, Morrison 2009b. See also Wilson 2003). All of this seems to suggest that Prokofiev may not have been entirely enthusiastic about the change, and perhaps the reconciliation scene suffered as a result.

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Echoes of a remote conflict in an encounter between contemporary dance and *bharata natyam*

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Abstract: In January 2017, the Italian Ministry for Arts and Culture promoted an initiative (“MigrArti–spettacolo”) for projects promoting an “intercultural dialogue”, especially with “second generation” young migrants. Simona Bertozzi, an Italian contemporary dance choreographer, proposed a project involving the Tamil *bharata natyam* teacher Sharmini Kavithasan and sixteen children of the “Associazione Unione dei Tamil d’Italia”. The project won the 2017 MigrArti-performance award.

The 40-minute choreography, a combination of the two teachers’ dance styles, was staged in Bologna and Pistoia in public spaces and in a theatre. After each performance, there was a debate to illustrate the process of creating the performance.

Since the migrants involved in the project were Tamils from Sri Lanka, the final performance also included revisited choreographic fragments of their repertoire (both of *kuttu* and *bharata natyam* dances) illustrating the civil conflict between the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) and the Sri Lankan government (1983-2009). As a consequence of this choice, the Italian audience encountered a dance technique in which a faraway war was represented and at the same time, the debate following the performance gave Tamils the opportunity to talk about the conflict and its consequences.

In January 2017, I was involved as a consultant in the creation and elaboration of a project, promoted by an Italian contemporary dance choreographer, as part of the initiative “MigrArti–performance”. For this initiative, the Italian Ministry for Arts and Culture selected projects which mixed artistic forms, including a “preparatory series of workshops with the participation and involvement of immigrants, especially of second generation young immigrants, in order to promote intercultural dialogue” (<http://www.migrarti.it/>, accessed December 10, 2017).

Our project won and between June and July 2017, the workshops took place. The participants were sixteen children and young girls from Sri Lankan Tamil families living in different Italian towns. The workshops were carried out in Genoa and in Bologna, for a total of ten days.

The contemporary dance teacher, Simona Bertozzi, in collaboration with the Tamil *bharata natyam* teacher Sharmini Kavithasan, created a 40-minute choreography, *Lotus*, which blended the two teachers' dance styles.

Lotus was performed in Bologna, in courtyards and museums, and later in Pistoia, the Italian capital of culture that year.

After every performance, a meeting with the dance teachers, a member of the Union of the Italian Tamil Association, a representative of Simona Bertozzi's association and myself was held in order to inform the audience about many subjects.

The first topic was the reasons behind the presence of Sri Lankan Tamils in Italy, specifically the civil conflict which raged from 1983 to 2009 when the Tamil Tigers, a separatist movement controlling the north and the east of the island, were definitively defeated.

Secondly, the characteristics of the Indian dance tradition and of *bharata natyam* were described, in particular the use of hand gestures (*mudras*), anklets and red to paint feet and hands. Moreover, the song dedicated to the god Shiva which the dancers sang during the performance was explained.

The third topic was the working methods and dynamics of collaboration between the dance teachers.

Finally, the audience were invited to ask questions.

In order to document the project, I kept a fieldwork diary, collected drawings which I had asked the girls to make, carried out audio and video interviews, and collected written comments from the audience.

The whole project was also filmed by the video maker Luca Del Pia who produced a 20-minute film and a 4-minute promo, which can be seen at <https://vimeo.com/233474264> (accessed June 5, 2018). I have to mention that the audience were copious in all the locations,

except on the occasion filmed at the end of the video because the performance was in the afternoon instead of in the evening.

In order to structure the performance, the Italian choreographer asked the *bharata natyam* teacher to show their repertoire, which includes two kinds of dance: *kuttu*, a folk dance, and *bharata natyam*, a classical dance style – or better, as Vatsyayan (1997) suggests, a contemporary-classical dance style – that springs from an ancient religious matrix.

For Tamil supporters of the LTTE, *bharata natyam* is not only a means to express religious devotion (symbolized for example by the dance for the song dedicated to Shiva) but is also an artistic form enabling them to narrate the events of the civil war and, as Janet O’Shea shows by discussing the work of the Toronto-based choreographer Vasu, “a means of demonstrating the need for a separate nation-state based on linguistic and ethnic commonality” (2007, 102). In order to stage events such as bombings, the suffering of mothers who have lost their children, and the fighting between the Sri Lankan Army and the LTTE, new gestures (*mudras*), developed from the classical ones, have been invented. This repertoire of new gestures was integrated into the final performance, which was in this way literally “talking of” or “remembering” a faraway conflict.

In terms of applied anthropology, or in this case of anthropology of dance, *Lotus* has had many relevant consequences.

First, the *Lotus* project led to an appreciation of a dance style, *bharata natyam*, which, together with the Tamil language, Tamil migrants consider representative of their culture (as a matter of fact, Tamil children attend language and dance courses for the same number of hours weekly). The dancers’ relatives underline their satisfaction at the opportunity to show a substantially invisible legacy:

Our culture, our dance *bharata natyam* is a wonderful thing. It is becoming famous in Italy too and we are very happy. I like it very much. This is a very ancient dance and concerns our culture. In other countries, America, Australia, London... their dances are

famous, there is always some performance, some program... On the contrary, our dance is not so famous in Italy (interview with Keerthana's mother, July 2, 2017).

I am happy I have seen the children dancing to Italian songs. Although I do not know the language, thanks to their gestures and expressions I have understood what they wanted to express. I'm very happy. Besides there was the Tamil dance [*bharatanatyam*] too, and Italians have admired it, I'm happy about this. I hope the children continue to increase their artistic sense (interview with Laxsika's grandmother, July 7, 2017).

This project is a beautiful opportunity, since two different worlds join up, therefore our language, our culture, become known to people who perhaps have never experienced them (interview with Vaishnaavy's mother, July 4, 2017).

The project also revealed the richness of a dance technique, which, although different from any Euro-American tradition, is no less complex from the point of view of its execution and interpretation. *Lotus* actually proposed a concept of the encounter between dance practices as a mutual enrichment on the same level: watching the performance stimulated reflections about the value of the migrants' artistic legacy and about its permeability in the encounter with other artistic forms, so fighting the stereotype of the fixed nature of dance forms of "others", as well as showing their dynamism. A young spectator observed: «The topic of integration is not suggested in a forced and/or pressing way, but comes out in a natural way and leads to understanding how such different cultures may be enriched by each other (Matilde, eighteen years old, personal communication, July 15, 2017).

Alessandra Pizza, an Italian *bharata natyam* teacher, noted:

The spectator travels in a very peculiar temporal dimension, in which the traditional Indian sounds (*sollukuttu*, anklets, *shloka* for the god Shiva and the stamped rhythm) mix perfectly with an Italian song that today's young people love. The experiment is wonderful: symbolically and artistically, it opens many windows of dialogue among different cultures that live together in this complicated and cynical historical moment (personal communication, July 20, 2017).

Lotus was also conceived to promote a widening of the horizons of artistic research, thanks to stimuli coming from non-European traditions, in the knowledge that the

understanding of different concepts of body and space may lead to a change of perception of one's own categories. Simona Bertozzi explained:

When we are facing the audience, we are really two-dimensional, which is not very interesting [...], but their ability is to be facing the audience while at the same time have such a strong perception of height and depth [...]. I find this so fascinating [...]. It's as if through their movement, they continually embrace the space behind and in front of them. I really like this. I rarely work on a frontal approach, even when creating more static situations. It has already occurred to me in this period [of the project] to have moments of interiorization of their perception of the space surrounding static situations, which makes them strongly three-dimensional (interview with Simona Bertozzi, October 26, 2017).

Finally, in the project *Lotus* there was the intention to produce information about a remote, forgotten civil war: thanks to the conference following the performance, the audience became aware of the Sri-Lankan conflict and of the conditions of Tamils in their mother country and in the Diaspora. One of the young girls explained: «It was a great opportunity for us to learn contemporary dance and to show the existence of *bharata natyam* to people who did not know it, and to talk about genocide, because many Italians do not know about it at all» (interview with Keerthana, July 2, 2017). Giovanni Azzaroni, a professor of Oriental Theatre at the University of Bologna, underlined:

Youthful and talented, the young Tamils were teachers for the audience, who appreciated the performance aspect of the event in a dialectic way, since by wondering what dancing the *bharata natyam* nowadays in Bologna means, they certainly also asked themselves what it means to save a culture from destruction and the dust of oblivion. I am very appreciative and grateful for this life lesson, which managed to combine aesthetic pleasure with a profound justification of social value, that of awareness that the future can only be built on an awareness of the past (personal communication, July 10, 2017).

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Somatic Activism: A Sword Not [Only] A Shield

Nita Little Nelson

Abstract: This presentation considers somatic practice beyond the personal, inward sensorium to its actions as a cultural determinant; an outward attentional communication, its actions are world-defining. Populated by dancer/researchers, together with experts in the sciences and humanities, the Institute for the Study of Somatic Communication is actively developing the field of somatic communication as a science of intra-action and response-ability (Barad, Haraway) through embodied tactile attention (Little and Dumit). Its activism moves through dynamics of the ecological self, both human and non-human, to question the cultural training of attention—the binding of perceptual values and the biases that form them (Lurhmann).

When I reach to touch someone’s face, through an interval of space, they are moved on the level of attention. With the reach, their face changes in its tactile potentials which may mean that it softens receptively, extends to meet the touch, repels it, concentrates itself, stretches, opens, or configures uniquely as an ecological event. The possibilities are innumerable. And, while there are myriad factors that compose how the touch is received, what is clear, the receiver’s face doesn’t remain the same. It is changed by the reach. We know, because we notice the change. We notice how touch touches touch – and within that, we notice the presence of attention.

Noticing the experiential moment is fundamental to somatic practices. My colleague Malaika Sarco-Thomas, in a conversation about our panel, said that “somatic practice is noticing: me, you, the environment, breath, in/out, the permeability of these things, and the malleability of our perception. It’s a meditation that you take beyond the studio...” Beyond the studio.... Key words that speak to why it holds tremendous potential as an activist practice based in embodied engagement. Noticing becomes a political act both in the studio where it gets honed as a skill, and outside it, where it instigates new sources of information, new ways of being human: “being” in and of itself and being “with” or “of” the human and non-human in one instance, being relational, and hopefully, being relationally intelligent.

It takes a bodymind to experience living and although our terms may be contested, we can say that embodiment (the vitally detailed somatic sensibility of physical/mental experiencing) is critical to not

only knowing experience, but to thinking and the ability to reason (Varela, Thompson, and Rosch; Sheets-Johnstone; Lakoff and Johnson). J.J. Gibson famously said: “Perceiving is an act, not a response, an act of attention, not a triggered impression, an achievement, not a reflex.” We can say that perceiving is the physical/mental basis for experience and from it comes reason. Attention is how it organizes. Noticing is how we re-cognize the action of attention.

Noticing is a soft activity. A fielding action of awareness, it is “entrained” to habitually recognize affordances (Manning and Massumi 2014, 7-9) from which attention may then engage or not. Noticing invites perception without impacting that which is doing the perceiving. It is not the activity of a hand reaching for a face and discovering possibilities in that action, or a paintbrush reaching for a canvas to apply paint so much as the activity of the face as a canvas being touched, being changed while not intentionally changing the brush that reaches for it. It is an offering, the vulnerability of being changed and by being so, gathering information.

Vulnerability is potently powerful.

An early CI exercise that Steve Paxton taught us in the summer of 1972 from his Aikido training comes to mind. We did this outside. One person stands in a circle of participants, eyes closed. Vulnerable. That person spins so as not to know direction. Then, someone from the circle takes aim with their hand and two fingers, piercing space at and through the stander. They sustain aim while walking directly toward the sightless stander. The stander’s job is to move by taking only one step before the aiming person reaches their flesh: ensuring that they miss. It doesn’t work if you strain, stress, or try to achieve anything. It only works if you relax but present a wide field of awareness. And, if you are touchable. I know, because I had one practitioner who could not get the practice until she imagined that it was her daughter taking aim. Then, she could not *not* get it.

In this manner, vulnerability begets information, and information is like a shield: it is how we know to act. Because it rests in this fielding practice of noticing, somatic practice at its core is vulnerable.

Those of us who practice it have a shield with which to know ourselves and the world. This shield tells us when it is time to act.

I am going to draw a distinction now, between awareness and attention. To quote Kent de Spain,

“Attention is an intentional focus on a specific “thing,” or closely observing the relationship and interaction of more than one “thing.” Awareness is a state of being open to stimuli, of being receptive to what comes your way. Attention is yang to the yin (2014, 168).”

Although de Spain’s description mentions only one of multiple aspect of attention in this description, he nevertheless captures in his last statement a significant dynamic difference between the two – attention intends by organizing consciousness, focusing is one possibility but there are more attentional modes, whereas awareness is how we register change. Awareness is a position from which to listen to oneself, listen to the world in which one is already becoming.

I heard somatics described earlier today as a way of seeking a holistic self, a way for the body to be in-tune with itself. This describes an inward seeking concern. I adamantly wish to counter this idea ... somatics is not limited to the body, rather, it is the basis for acting ecologically with the world. But, whereas awareness is critical to embodiment, the foundation of consciousness, attention makes it active – it organizes consciousness giving it agency and turning it into a creative, commanding dance. It takes embodiment and turns it inward/outward in the determinative act of choice – it articulates. It becomes a blade that cuts into and through the perceivable world, defining both you, your perception and the perceived world. Awareness and attention are critically different somatic actions, not to be confused with one another.

So while noticing appears to be a more passive action when it is functioning on the level of awareness, when one notices noticing itself (attention to noticing), we can discover an armory of potentials within its varieties of organization. This armory contains new technological tools for change, the instruments of choice. Anthropologist Tanya Lurhmann says, “The way we pay attention to our minds

changes our mental experience ... you are making choices in the ways you use your imagination and your inner senses. And, the choices you make will change you (2015).” Lurhmann is highlighting the fact that there is no neutral position from which we can know the world. Every organization of attention changes us and how we know the world. It is done with conscious recognition of choice or more often through acculturated habit. Either way, the choice is definitive. Meanwhile, the kinds of attentional choices available to be made are mostly unexplored.

Here we find the swords I refer to in my title. These armaments are attentional practices that are productive of a myriad of creative actions from web building to those that underlie somatic communication, the intra and interactive micro-actions of the bodymind. They produce the objects of attentional action that somatic dancers can wield to cut away notions of the self as solely autopoietic - self forming systems (Maturana and Varela 1980, xvii), which unfortunately configures in hand with neo-liberal notions of an autonomous self-responsible individual. Rather through our attentional practices we can invite the recomposition of an ecological self, and think of the human as sympoietic (Haraway 2016, 58 - 98) – being with – a being emergent with one another and the environments of which we are intimately “entangled” (Barad).

To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. Existence is not an individual affair. Individuals do not preexist their interactions; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating (Barad 2007, ix).

From this perspective, embodiment needs new ways of knowing, new attentional forms and formulas. For example, an attentional web is a kind of intentional attentional practice formed by multiple bodyminds. To build it requires attentional extension, an array of spatial haptics, envisioning, inquiry, and a full complex of other attentional skills. As an attentional sword it cuts through notions of independence. Webs are fascia-like spatial structures. They knit dancers to dancers in a volatile but shared space of knowing.

Embodiment cannot start and stop at the flesh. Rather it exceeds material boundaries making experience spatially insistent. In my dancing, I often locate my “self” within my sensing, which means that “self” is now this larger form, consistent with my spatial inquiry (Little 2014). My Contact Improvisation colleague Ann Cooper Albright says, “CI radically ‘reorders our traditional Western conceptions of the body and identity’ greatly affecting our sense of self. (Albright 2003, 208)” As “selves” become more spatially fluid, by choice, we in CI no longer experience clearly delineated and independent bodyminds.

And because a great deal of my work is about the ecology of the self in motion, I require another term as well. “Enminding” is the action of an environment moving with, on, within, against, about (name your preposition) the embodied mind and thus on embodiment (Little 2016). In a sense, enminding is how entangled objects and beings communicate with one another... through the actions of their presence. Touch is enminding. A person enminds us when they pass closely behind us, particularly when they intend us to know their presence. Conversely, we have been enminded by them. This happens within the sensing of a self when there is physical touch, not only spatial touch.

The actions of enminding become heightened when there is peripheral intelligence – when the extended self in-forms the local self. Dancing, we are entangled and enminding both on the level of the flesh and as a spatial dynamic. It is a critical aspect of physical communication. When we extend the self into an ecological multiplicity (Manning and Massumi 2014, 28), locating the self as a larger than flesh form, we can allow ourselves to be enminded and notice that we enmind. Indeed, minds become less fixed as attention becomes more easily read.

Now I need to change the tone of this talk to locate the significance of somatic activism in this historical moment.

Given the current ecological moment, Donna Haraway asks if there is “an inflection point of consequences [beyond just] climate change” steering us toward systems collapse? Its “extraordinary

burdens of toxic chemistry, mining, depletion of lakes and rivers under and above ground, ecosystem simplification, vast genocides of people and other critters, etc, etc, in systemically linked patterns that threaten major system collapse after major system collapse after major system collapse” (2015, 159) ... humanity may not survive itself. She prefers to call this the Capituloscene, rather than the Anthropocene, placing responsibility on the perpetrators of capitalism and their engine of destruction, rather than on humanity itself.

And what of people? They have physically and mentally retreated into virtual worlds, graphically produced and otherwise, numbing and dumbing themselves beyond any hope of direct and purposeful action – essentially saying, “If the world is going to fall apart, I don’t want to be there!” And for those of us who live beside and within this phenomenon, those of us for whom experiencing life is our purpose, our whole physical mental apparatus is in alarm. There is no shield that can protect us from these facts. The time to act is now. And, like Haraway, whose Chthuluscene calls for resurgence and partial healing, I am a “composist” (2016). From within this mess there is a rising up, not of voices alone, but of the bodymind roiling into action. A call to attention!

The subtitle of this talk should be “a sword, not [only] a shield” because somatic practice functions in both ways and both have value. Looking at the troubled edge where our somatic practices meet our socio political lives I conclude in this paper that a shield is not enough, and, together with other somatic practitioners, I am acting with a somatic sword. The time is now to refigure not just concepts of the bodymind, but their socio-political practices on every strata of this, the Capituloscene. This is not a simple task. Perhaps like blue jeans were to the demise of the segregated Soviet Union, our work will be an emergent phenomenon, striking and penetrating to produce profound change without meeting direct resistance. That is the dream.

The Institute for the Study of Somatic Communication (ISSC) which I initiated in 2016 with anthropologist Amanda Conche- Holmes is a practice of somatic activism. By investigating practices of physical attention that lead to relational intelligence, we hope to develop a far larger armory of tools for

communicating between humans and between humans and the non-human. We are not doing this work alone, my colleagues in the fray include mostly dancers but also people from a broad population of experts in the humanities and the sciences. And while much of what is taught in universities as somatic is awareness training, that too is changing. Informed by neuroscience, dancers now train practices developed for attention as well as awareness (Batson, 2014). Contact Improvisation (CI), of which I am a founding developer, started in 1972 with three of us in a studio developing what is now a global practice to which people devote their lives. It was born via Steve Paxton's physical curiosity and somatic sensitivity, but these forces were inseparable from his activist political purpose – he sought to rethink hierarchical forms through artistic practice.ⁱ That somatic “genie” is now way out of the box.

A 2017 issue of *The Journal of Dance and Somatic Practice*, edited by Kirsty Alexander and Thomas Kampe, was linked to a Symposium at Bath Spa University on *Bodily Undoing: Somatic Activism and performance as practices of Critique* at which I was a keynote speaker. The Journal dealt directly with issues of activism, and noted the wide variety of somatic projects underway including building schools to train practitioners. Examples were schools for somatic based practices such as *Body Mind Centering* and *Moving on Center* which have given rise to activist projects such as a fledgling *Institute for Somatics and Social Justice*, in Philadelphia.ⁱⁱ Other examples are the pan European *Nanopolitics Group*, who according to Alexander and Kampe “asks questions concerned with the lived, moving, slowed down, de-individualized, relational and caring body as ‘a question of self-care, of resistant autopoeisis’ (2013: 27)” and *SAB* in Berlin, also concerned with *Social Somatics*. These are just a few of our emerging forces.

Into this pool, I add the *ISSC* which has a global research purpose to study non-verbal communication. We are a collective of dancers acting also as researchers into our shared practice of ensemble dancing. Every member has *Contact Improvisation* skills, so our ensemble dancing is co-emergent with *CI*. We are organized into *CoLaboratories* forming a network of cells distributed across the globe, currently in Bristol, Hamburg, and Berlin, although we may also see them in Brazil and New

Zealand in the coming year – we seek cultural diversity. And, we are furthering our work by partnering with researchers in other disciplines as well – such as cognitive science, anthropology, psychology, and even mathematics. We are working to develop research modalities for dancers.

The ISSC work starts by asking dancers to notice their attentional acculturation. Thanks to Judith Butler, we speak of cultural performance as repetitious actions of a “stylized body” – the creation of performative stability on the level of identity ([1990] 2006). Controlling our identity is politically powerful. So is disrupting it. In our work, the ISSC looks at how the performance of embodied attention determines our capacities as humans performing within moving ensembles. Recognizing the impact of the capitalocene on human relational capacities our purpose is to encourage ecologically more significant abilities than what is currently practiced. We disrupt the normalcy of our culturally attentional modes in order to exceed their determined expectations. When we consider attention as fundamentally creative, meaning that our perceptual detailing is as varied as is a whole color wheel that can be organized uniquely in each moment, then one of the striking things we notice is that what we think is possible in ensemble communication is culturally delimited through repetition. Our work is to disrupt these limits by becoming exceedingly skillful in somatic communication. This requires that we upset the boundaries of identity. Somatic action is political by default as well as by design.

Our work begins with where we think we begin and end, the limits of identity. Alva Noë asks this question and adds, “where does the rest of the world begin (Noë 2012, 64-70)?” From his perspective, everything touches everything. His perspective is substantiated by Karen Barad’s writing about the subatomic scale of things in which nothing is actually independent (Barad 2012b, 6-7). And, that is why response-ability is so important to relational intelligence.

I think of the following quote from Karen Barad as a kind of ISSC motto:

In an important sense, in a breathtakingly intimate sense, touching, sensing, is what matter does, or rather, what matter is: matter is condensations of response-ability. Touching is a matter of response. Each of ‘us’ is constituted in response-ability. Each of ‘us’ is constituted as responsible for the other, as the other (Barad 2012a, 215).

Peering at relationality in its very finest resolution, Barad points us to the underlying agreement we all recognize is present at every scale of existence. We are compositions of relations, ecologies of being constituted through our ability to respond through sensing touch. We are response-abilities. My work with attention identifies tactile properties within its spatial reach, available to those that choose to train it as an embodied practice of relations (Little and Dumit forthcoming).

ISSC dancers are actively organizing their attention around ideas of identity that take these complex boundaries of the enminding flesh into account. They seek to experience the touch of attention. And, the phenomenon that emerges is something between individuated choice making and the actions of a network. We see a kind of attentional tensegrity that I am writing about with fascia theorist and ISSC researcher, Kevin O'Connor, and, we study the events of emergence – noticing how the shape and actions of dancers' attention is critical to the events produced by the network. We do this work by watching video of what we have done looking for moments when we can identify somatic communication. The categories we seek are meant to be processes, unstable and in motion, they are open to reconsideration and to be made anew by other dancers elsewhere in other moments.

It is early in our research, and yet we find that when we see spontaneous somatic communication, we often have experienced communion. Communion is what happens when communication is concurrent, no longer bound by call and response durations. We see that individuated identity shifts, dancers co-extend with their spatial environments, inhabiting the same spaces uniquely. There appears to be a larger physical practice of attention that is inclusive of one another's bodily spatial presence. The dancers think of selfhood in this larger sense of being, and that allows for new group phenomenon to appear. They commune. This is response-ability in practice, but it requires new attentional tools to achieve.

It is in this moment that we may realize the impact somatic activism could have on a world desperate for new ways to be in relations in a world that has lost its ability to be in touch and commune with its environments. Dancers as researchers can build an armory of tools, swords that don't make war

and domination, but rather offer us ways to meet across difference, ways to commune, and, ways to be human and non human within one moment, response-ably.

In her 2017 opening remarks for *Bodily Undoing: Somatic Activism*, Glenna Batson spoke to the conditions of bodily knowing under neo-liberal economic states that reject the very notion of “society” (i.e. people working and moving to mutual advantage), in preference of free markets driven by individualized entrepreneurs – a hierarchical form creating winners and losers. Against this background from which comes the “commodified” body, she identifies the practice of bodily undoing and other forms of Somatic Activism. Quoting Steve Paxton, she concurs that, “Somatics is the softest revolution in human consciousness that can be imagined.” And, we must not confuse softness with passivity. Softness can be a sword, wielded with accuracy and might, cutting right to the core of the issue, and so doing, illuminating the brilliance of human being as world being – relationally vital in ecologies of co-motion never moving as one, but always as more than one (Manning 2014, 4, 28). We have a sword and a shield, this is the time to wield them.

Notes

ⁱ At the time, the US was engaged in the Vietnam War.

ⁱ The Institute for Somatics and Social Justice has subsequently been closed

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Choreographer, teacher, and scholar of improvisational dance and Contact Improvisation (CI), Nita Little, PhD, is one of CI's foremost developers since its inception – working with dancers and institutions worldwide. An activist for relational intelligence, she initiated the global *Institute for the Study of Somatic Communication* in 2016.

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A Field of Conflict: The Higher Private Professional Dance Schools in Greece and the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports.

Panourgia Marianna

Abstract: This paper sets out to provide an insight into the conflicts that are present within dance studies in Greece. It is based on the research “An Ethnographic Investigation into the Curriculum and the Dance Training System within Higher Private Professional Dance Schools in Greece” (Panourgia, 2017) which was undertaken to ethnochoreologically investigate the formation of the current contemporary dance curriculum and its implementation, through training. The study and this paper are theoretically based on prominent scholars and important dance ethnographers. The current dance studies in Greece present two major drawbacks. Firstly, the curriculum of the contemporary dance training system in the Higher Dance Institutes focuses on physical-bodily training marginalizing a critical theoretical-academic engagement with dance studies. Secondly, the curriculum dictated from the Ministry of Culture and Sports presents serious lack of engaging with present contemporary dance techniques and pedagogies of the twenty first century. This paper provides an overview of this field and presents recommendations which need to be made in order to enhance and enrich the contemporary dance curriculum and the dance studies in Greece. These recommendations can be summarised as follows a) the revision of the current modules, b) the update of the Ministry’s texts and c) the reformation of the dance studies structure. This paper can be seen as a starting point which propels further research in the field of contemporary dance curriculum and training in Greece and could be used as a source both for cultural / anthropological / ethnochoreological researchers and dance artists.

Introduction

Contemporary dance and contemporary dance training are living organisms, fields in constant change and evolution. Through this ongoing change, dance can be seen as “an act of culture- making” (Potter in Kringelbach 2012,212) and defined as a “co - constructed process” (Potter in Kringelbach 2012,212) that expresses, affects and interacts with and within society and culture. Therefore, crucial questions arise. How do we teach contemporary dance? And what do we teach through it? This paper follows the ethnographic investigation and description of contemporary dance curriculum and teaching within Higher Private Professional Dance Schools in Greece¹ that conducted in 2017 in Greece. The paper argues that although contemporary

dance is a vivid and vibrant ‘work in progress’, the current training curriculum in these institutes seems fossilised and does not correspond to the needs of the current times.

Overview

Although Greece is situated in the geographical crossroads of the Western and Eastern world and was influenced accordinglyⁱⁱ, it seems that the training within the Higher Private Professional Dance Schools has adopted a curriculum that tends toward a Cartesianⁱⁱⁱ division of body and mind, practice and theory. Even though the first Higher Professional Dance Schools used to follow a holistic^{iv} model of training, currently the curriculum’s trajectory leans towards the technical and practical aspect of dance, marginalizing the mind and relevant theory. The current curriculum seems to support the concept of the well-coordinated dance ‘machines’ in Foucauldian sense that are able to imitate and reproduce gracefully their teachers’ movements with ease and virtuosity. The students seem to be empty vessels where a technique is deposited through the ‘banking’ notion of education (Freire 1970) without regarding dance as an “articulated movement language” (Claid 2006,141). The professional dance training in Greece is interwoven with the Higher Professional Dance Schools. These schools, which are eighteen, have been the responsible institutions for the training of dancers, choreographers and dance educators in Greece since 1937^v. The Higher Professional Private Dance Schools in Greece are under the supervisor of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports - Department of Theatre and Dance Education. The curriculum of the contemporary dance is established by the law number 1158 of 1981 and the Presidential Decree of 1983. There has not been any update since then. The directors of these schools are licensed teachers who have at least ten years of teaching experience in amateur or professional dance school in Greece or abroad. While the

teachers of professional dance schools need a proof of seven years of teaching. The majority of these schools are located in Attica the central county of Greece, around the city centre of Athens (the capital) and the second major city of Greece Thessaloniki which is located in Macedonia County.

Curriculum of contemporary dance: Program

The main courses of the Higher Private Professional Dance Schools in Greece are divided into everyday and weekly classes. *Contemporary Dance* module is an everyday main course occupying one and a half hour of practice daily. While the *Theory and Analysis of Contemporary Dance* is one of the main courses but lasts forty-five minutes per week and the *Dance History* module is classified as secondary occupying one hour per week.

Module: *Theory & Analysis of Contemporary Dance* - Context

The module of theory and contemporary dance analysis does not actually correspond to the title. It is not a module that involves theoretical – critical or academic engagement. This module is the theoretical analysis of the basic elements of the taught contemporary dance technique (Release based Jose Limon technique).

Module: *Dance History* - Context

On the other hand, the module of *Dance History* focuses on the Greek dance history and the limited territory of Europe, Balkan Peninsula, Minor Asia and rarely Mediterranean. The program could be described as an ethnocentric approach of dance history marginalizing the wider context of world dance. Additionally, the module gives emphasis on the pre-historic and historic era which covers the first two year's program. Furthermore, during the third year, the program focuses on the last two

centuries and especially on Ballet History. Most of the times, based also on my experience as a dance student, ballet is treated as a higher art form of dance and not as a form of “ethnic dance” as the anthropologist Keali’inohomoku argued in 1970^{vi}. In addition, six out of nine chapters of the third year’s program refer to the Ballet history and only three chapters refer to the history of contemporary dance.

Ministry’s Texts, Dance Techniques and Pedagogy

It is important to point out the lack of an official text, a guideline from the Ministry of Culture and Sports. This is in accordance with Hassioti’s statement that “the theoretical instruction [of the curriculum] is even of poorer quality” (Hassioti 2001,1). Important sections of the text of the curriculum are not clearly articulated^{vii}. The proposed techniques written in 1981 do not correspond to the current frame of contemporary dance neither in Greece nor on a global scale. The techniques of the expressionist dance are dance waves that dominated the generation of 1930-1950. Even later contemporary dance techniques and methods (Graham, Limon, Cunningham, Horton and others) that were established after Wigman seem to be old – fashioned since new and revolutionary techniques are establishing during the twenty first century (“*Fly Low*” D. Zambrano or “*Gaga*” O. Naharin). These techniques are gradually adopted by the new contemporary dance teachers worldwide and in Greece. Presently, the majority of the Professional Dance Schools in Greece utilize the Release based Limon technique and an amalgam of later techniques depending on the teacher. Consequently, we observe that the contemporary dance techniques that are used within the frame of the Higher Private Dance Schools in Greece are closer to the somatics techniques and the techniques of twenty first century rather than the expressionist dance methods of twentieth century. For example, the text proposes the techniques of Wigman and Graham. However, the text does not give an analysis of

the Graham technique and the illustration of Wigman technique is not clear^{viii}. These facts may lead to misunderstandings and wrong interpretations. I hold the view, that even if the curriculum is not balanced and the technique is not updated, it should be at least described in depth or accompanied by a teachers' handbook. In this way, the teachers would have a basis on which they would have the possibility to anchor and develop the technique and the module. Currently, the teachers have to invent a teaching methodology based on their pre-existing experience and not on the official curriculum. This procedure may be creative for the teachers. However, it is evident that the curriculum seems to neglect the analysis and the theory of the contemporary dance class as the theory is not an important element of the contemporary dance. This lack of detailed documentation and analysis of the contemporary dance technique from the Ministry of Culture and Sports escalates the gap between practice and theory.

Recommendations

There are a number of important changes which need to be made in order to enhance and enrich the contemporary dance curriculum. Firstly, the contemporary dance modules apart from providing a technique should also provide a fertile ground for students to acknowledge understand experiment and apply contemporary dance theories in order to understand dance in its holistic aspect and in depth. Secondly, the outline of the dance history course should also be revised. This module is a course that could provide dance students with a general knowledge of dance and contemporary dance. Through this course, it is possible for students to acquire the valuable knowledge and understand the interconnection between culture, dance and society through theory and apply it. The students should have been equally informed about the world dance history. Thirdly, the module of theory and analysis of

contemporary dance should be divided in two separate modules (analysis of the contemporary technique and theory of dance). The module of the theory of dance should enclose theories related with philosophical, socio-cultural, scientific aspects of dance. Furthermore, the incorporation of interdisciplinary modules and courses that will bridge the gap between practice and theory such as Ethnochoreology are considered to be important. Lastly, a unified guideline of the teaching of the contemporary dance technique is required to clarify and enforce the teachers' teaching method and provide a frame of 'legality'. This would also illustrate a clear picture of the technique to the students. The students will be positively affected if they know that the technique they are taught is not an 'arbitrary' choice of their teacher.

Conclusion

To conclude, the reformation of the modules relating to the contemporary dance training within the Greek Higher Professional Dance Schools is urgent. The curriculum seems to be remote from a holistic model as it is proposed by Brinson, 1991; Smith – Autard, 1994 and others. Moreover, it is remote from the current environment of the contemporary dance in Greece and the rest of the world. It is crucial to acknowledge the constant shifting of the triptych of culture, dance and society since as McFee pointed out “movement needs to be contextualised” (McFee 1999,30). Consequently, a holistic model of dance studies that relies on the above triptych and on their interconnection is, as Smith – Autard argued, a dynamic circle of a theory that informs practice and practice that informs theory (Smith – Autard 1994). Dance, culture and society participate in a vivid equation which makes the balanced and reviewed curriculum of contemporary dance training in Greece urgent. After all, as Novack advocated

“To study dance, we must take into account the “art” (the choreographic structures, movement styles, and techniques of dance), the institutions (local, notional, global) in which it is practiced and performed and the people who participate in it as performers, producers, spectators and commentators. With this scope, dance studies have the potential to inform us about the history of fluctuating events and how to research and write about them. Dance studies can illuminate knowledge created through bodies, movement, artistic ideas and choreographic interactions. It can participate in dialogues about theory and practice and about the most personal articulations of political forces and social power.”
(Novack 1995,182)

Notes

ⁱ In the attempt to make a detailed description (Geertz 1973) of the subject of the research, the ethnographic method was used. The primary sources were on-site research (Jackson 1987) through interviews (directors of Higher Professional Private Dance Schools, teachers of contemporary dance of Higher Professional Private Dance Schools), questionnaires (current and former students) and recording and field note taking of the course (Grimes 1982, Spradley 1983). Secondary sources include the study of archive material from the Ministry of Education and the Hellenic Independent Statistical Authority as well as a literature on contemporary dance.

ⁱⁱ “In Greek Classicism, body is not entirely cut off from soul/spirit/mind and the triplicate unity this represents. Even though soul and body are empirically distinguished throughout the ancient world, the original togetherness of the body and soul is, nevertheless, a fact for Plato.” Fraleigh 2004,17.

ⁱⁱⁱ For Cartesian dualism see Rene Descartes (1596-1650).

^{iv} Holistic approach of teaching, theory and praxis see also works of Buckroyd (2000), Conquergood (2013).

^v The first professional dance school in Greece was founded by Koula Pratsika in 1937, with the name “Professional Dance School”. In 1970, the School was transferred to the Greek State. In 1972, the School was renamed “The Greek National School of Dance” and it is the only one that has been recognised as public since then. Pratsika’s teaching material and training methods were inspired by her studies at Hellerau and the expressionist dance of Central – Europe. Pratsika’s teaching focused on the Rhythmical education and her passion for Ancient Greece. She promoted the connection between body and mind, movement and music. The second Professional Dance School was private and founded by Rallou Manou in 1951. Rallou Manou studied eurhythmics, gymnastics and music. Manou’s teaching and training approach were similar to that of Pratsika as far as the vision for the development of Greek dance is concerned, the interconnection of culture, movement and the holistic cohesion of “body, mind and soul” (Barbousi 2014,121). Pratsika promoted this triptych through eurhythmics. However, according to Stamatopoulou – Vasilakou (2006) Manou’s teaching was influenced more by her later encounter with particularly Martha Graham who combined “the modernity with the tradition” (Stamatopoulou-Vasilakou 2006,61) since this aesthetics was closer to Manou’s thoughts about harmonizing the “spirit of her times with the spirit of her home place” (Stamatopoulou-Vasilakou 2006,61). Manou wanted to incorporate the foreign innovating elements of contemporary dance into the Greece

dance scene without neglecting the ‘indigenous’ Greek tradition, history, prehistory and mythology. Many Higher Professional Dance Schools were established after those. However, are considered to be the most influential and well esteemed until today.

^{vi} See Dils 2001.

^{vii} For example, according to the text of the Decree “The Professor of Contemporary Dance must have taught one of the internationally recognized Contemporary Dance Systems to be well acquainted with its basic principles”(Presidential Decree, 1981: Annex 3). However, the text does not mention which are those techniques.

^{viii} According to Newhall (2009) the following terms are the basic building blocks of Mary Wigman’s Ausdruckstanz: “walking, gliding, to strike to stalk, falling, collapsing, rhythm in the feet counter the rhythm, vibration, floating, swinging, skipping, jumping, walking the circle, circling while changing facing, turning, spinning, shifting weight into running then catch and collapse.” (Newhall 2009,138). However, these elements are not displayed analytically in the curriculum.

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On Subversive Space Strategies Used by Hungarian Contemporary Dance Creators in Late Socialism

Petra Péter

Abstract:

First contemporary dance performances in Hungary used neither the direct political criticism nor the habitual double speech technique of cultural resistance. By presenting three memorable examples I tend to focus on three approaches of occupying territory for independent performing arts, how they leaped through borders. Border of the country (Josef Nadj, *Canard Pékinois*, 1986), border between performers and viewers (Iván Angelus, *Mirrors*, 1982), border of the capability of the body (György Árvai-Yvette Bozsik, *Living Space*, 1986).

Hungary had been part of the so-called Eastern Bloc since the end of World War II up until the fall of the communist regime in 1989. After 1949 the culture policy of the country followed the model created in the Soviet Union, thus only ballet and folk dance were officially recognized as dance. Even these two categories had to meet the strict form and content criteria rooted in the ideals of socialist realism. The pressure of culture policy somewhat decreased following the unsuccessful revolution in 1956 and at this time the scope of action for artists was set up until 1989. Centralized control meant that artists and works of art were classified in the following three categories: supported, tolerated, and prohibited. (Fuchs 2000, 84-85)

Despite the restrictions of culture policy and the closed borders of the countries in the region the processes taking place in the Eastern Bloc were similar to those in Western Europe. Having a closer look at this period, I agree with Bojana Kunst's analysis pointing out that the arts of Western Europe and Eastern Europe should not, because they cannot, be separated aesthetically. (Kunst 2017, 567) The difference lies in the process of institutionalization and professionalization that also defines the success of entering the art market.

Before presenting the chosen performances I would like to explain the usage of two particular terms, pointing out how this institutional frame functioned in the 80s. The two notions are 'amateur' and 'art of dance' which are rather telling of the culture policy of the

time. The meanings of these two words are ideologically fuelled and their usage was introduced by the institutional system. On the poster of *Mirrors (Tükrök)* from 1982 (canonized as the very first Hungarian contemporary dance performance) the piece's genre was identified as 'movement theatre'. The reason for this was not simply the fact that the director had a background in theatre. The phrase 'art of dance' in the eighties was exclusively used by professional dance artists who had received state-funded education and were employed in state-funded dance companies. Thus the notion of "art of dance" was reserved for the supported forms of the artistic territory.

The adjective 'amateur' on the other hand was used to describe the performance in one of its critical reviews. The description 'amateur' identifies the space of the artist on the periphery of the professional institutions. Paradoxically, the phrase could also provide such performances with a certain level of protection or even with some low-level support, as amateur artistic activity was a priority of popular education due to the ideology of collectivism. As a proof of this the five large mirrors on wheels used in the performance were supported by the Popular Education Institute. Artists coined as 'amateur' before 1989 defined themselves as 'alternative' or later 'independent' artists after the fall of the regime. This shows that it is not the quality of the artistic work but its status within the institutional system that determines positioning.

Through the analysis of three dance performances from the 1980s I will show in my presentation how the pioneers of Hungarian contemporary dance creators could carve a space for their artistic work in the political atmosphere of late socialism. Relating to Agamben's essay *What Is the Contemporary?* I will argue that these dance performances can be seen as iconic pieces of contemporary dance because on the one hand they differ from the artistic and political norms of their environment, on the other hand they maintain an active and transformative attitude towards the establishment. (Agamben 2009, 41)

The subversive space strategies I emphasize can be interpreted within both aesthetic and institutional frameworks. The three examples show breaking down the traditional limits of viewer position, expanding the limitations of bodily performance, and networking through borders between countries.

1. *Mirrors (Tükrök)* directed by Iván Angelus in 1982

Even the contemporary reception of *Mirrors* emphasizes the effect of labyrinth-like space organization on viewers' experience. It is not only the dynamics of the performance that differs from the existing institutional order, but also the conditions of the premiere. In the following let me list the differing characteristics.

The piece was put on stage in the rehearsal venue of an amateur folk dance group where occasionally a tearoom holding discussions on public topics was also operated. By connecting two rooms, using curtains, and creating hallways and passages a labyrinth-like space was created where the viewers could easily lose their spatial orientation. The five parts of the performance took place one after the other in different areas of the space. The viewers were oriented by the voices of musical instruments coming from different areas as well as by dim lights in the dark. The four solo sections and the tutti exploited reflection, the shifts between dancer and their mirror image, in different ways.

Apart from the scenes with dancers and musicians there were mirror installations mounted in the space where the viewers could play with reflections. Such 'mirror games' choreographed the viewers' movements and instead of watching others they were being watched. The viewers were inspired to change their place from one scene to another and make decisions about their own position and viewpoint as well as create an even more physically active relationship with the performance. Thus the traditionally separated roles of performers and viewers and the rules for their contact were opened up by the spatial and temporal structure of the play. The reviews at the time also drew attention to the liberated

atmosphere and the feeling of community where people could take possession of the space offered.

The space strategy of the performance was organized not around the logic of appropriation but sharing. The act of sharing evokes the notion of ‘the commons’ used by Ramsay Burt referring contemporary dance practices as a common-pool resource, which has a political, and an aesthetic potential as well. The first contemporary dance performance in Hungary thus offered a space for the audience “for imagining and creating a new culture and new ways of thinking and living.” (Burt 2017, 20)

2. *Living Space (Eleven tér)* directed by György Árvai in 1986

The space strategy applied in the production *Living Space* is also very characteristic. The center of the performance is a glass showcase, which is barely bigger than an average human with a person locked in it. The show was created by the *Natural Disasters Collective* (Természetes Vészek Kollektíva) consisting of two college students, who found their artistic language combining visuality, acoustics, theatrical situations and bodily expression outside the framework of professional art education. György Árvai was a student at the College of Fine Arts, while Yvette Bozsik had been attending the State Ballet Institute when they started to work together. The act of creating and publicly presenting their own work before graduation was in itself a critical gesture, considering the nature of the institutional framework of socialism.

The story on stage can be described as the process of an animalistic creature becoming human. In its almost sixty minutes, the performance consists of ritualistic actions evoking Christian symbolism, and is segmented by both the movement patterns and the sounds of the genderless living body performed by Yvette Bozsik.

During the rehearsal process she had actually moved into the showcase for two months and had spent there several hours daily, even had eaten and slept there. This intense

physical training helped her body to get rid of the movement patterns imprinted in it by the systematic work of many years. At the same time Bozsik acknowledged that this extraordinary work was made possible by the self-discipline and concentration acquired during her training as a professional ballet dancer. The genre of the show was close to that of performance art due to its ritual nature putting strong physical and mental pressure on the performer as well as using the human body as both the subject and the object of the play.

The limited space of the performer can be easily interpreted as a political or existential code and the dancer's performance has a strong physical and visceral effect. The interplay of these two layers holds the viewers' attention and tests their ethical limits at the same time. Several times, a member of the audience wanted to free the dancer from the showcase during the performance but others in the audience resolved the situation and the performance went on.

By locking up the space radically this performance forced the viewers to step away from their usual contemplative role and face both intellectual and ethical challenges. On the contrary, at the same time this action has opened up the space for the audience to intensively react to the performative situation.

3. *Canard Pékinois (Pekingi kacsá)* choreographed by Josef Nadj in 1986

Through the examination of the performance *Canard Pékinois* by Josef Nadj I will focus on the establishment and operation of international networking. I will emphasize the significant difference the institutional environment and receptiveness make in the success of a performance or an artist. With this I will support my former statement (following Bojana Kunst) that the difference between the arts of Eastern Europe and Western Europe can primarily be understood not through their aesthetic characteristics but the features of institutionalization.

Canard Pékinois, which was Josef Nadj's first work choreographed for several dancers, was created in an international cooperation with French and Hungarian artists and supported by the French Cultural Institute in Budapest and the American Soros Foundation. The show was first presented in Hungary by Szkéné Theatre in December 1986, Szkéné being the only possible venue for alternative theatres at the time. The premiere in France was three months later in Théâtre de la Bastille in Paris, and from the autumn season it was taken over by Théâtre de la Ville, a prestigious host theatre of contemporary dance in Paris. The production had no professional reception in Hungary. Following the success of the performance in France, Josef Nadj founded Theatre Jel (Jel Színház) with French and Hungarian actors. In 1989 he was named Choreographer of the Year in France. *Canard Pékinois* was played regularly for over ten years but it was never brought back to Hungary. But how was it possible to make French-Hungarian cooperation when even crossing the Iron Curtain meant many difficulties?

Josef Nadj was of Hungarian nationality but with a Yugoslavian citizenship, which meant that he could travel more freely than Hungarian citizens. Yugoslavia had its own special way of politics and its connections to the Soviet System were looser than those of the other countries in the Eastern Bloc.

Nadj came from Vojvodina, a region of the former Yugoslavia inhabited by Hungarians and bordering Hungary. He went to Budapest to continue his university studies and he also studied pantomime for a year, then he moved on to Paris in 1980 to pursue his mime studies in Marcel Marceau's school and to acquire skills in contact dance with Mark Tompkins. In the 80s he regularly went to Hungary sharing his contact improvisation knowledge with local dance artists.

Connecting these networks he benefited from the position as an artist from the Eastern Bloc but working and living in Western Europe. Thanks to his in-between position he

received support for his co-production, then he transmitted the production into the western market. Even not only the production was successfully transmitted but his company as well. Not just the production but also even his company was transmitted and integrated successfully. Josef Nadj's stable position within the French institutional framework is indicated by the fact that he was the head of CCNO (National Choreography Centre of Orleans) between 1995 and 2016.

Conclusion

In my lecture I demonstrated that all the three performances I discussed here had the same institutional position, namely they were all put on stage outside the institutional framework of the 'official dance art' in the context of Hungary as part of the Eastern Bloc. Their creation and presentation in themselves made them critique the establishment. In my analysis I showed that these performances were of political nature by leaping through borders even if they did not thematize actual social problems and did not apply the tool of double discourse so typical and popular in dictatorships.

These artists worked outside the framework of the official state institutions, independent of the regime. They showed that it is not only imaginable but also possible to live a different life. I believe that their autonomous artistic activities contributed to dismantling the socialist dictatorship.

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Translation from Hungarian by Klára Tukarcs.

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The Uncanny: *the Fear of the Un/Known*. Affective Conflicts in the Presence/Absence of Sight and Sound

Katharina Rost

Abstract: The uncanny has been determined by Salomé Voegelin as a central dimension of sound's paradoxical status between salience and immateriality. In this sense, sound has a different kind of materiality; none like traditional notions of an object-like "substance". In fact, it is an ambivalent ghostlike non-/appearance between presence and absence. Sound is in constant motion and thus upsets any attempt to capture it in a stable state or by a stabilizing term. The choreographic works of Gisèle Vienne (and the musicians Stephen O'Malley and Peter Rehberg) as well as the performative installations of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller evoke an experience of uncanniness that is connected to affective frictions between sight and sound. I will reflect on the conflicts between the presence and absence of sounds, bodies, voices, and connect these thoughts to the discursively coined understandings of something human- or ghostlike that is determined by a specific relationship of materiality/immateriality, vitality/inanimateness, and movement/immobility.

Imagine a scenery in which you are sitting in a half-lit room and are reading a book and, suddenly, you hear a cracking sound from the corner. You turn around in the direction to where that sound came from, and there, you don't see anything, so you turn back around to your comfortable reading position. And again, you hear something – a weird little shuffling noise. Turning around and staring into the darkness, you can not figure out where the noise came from, nor what had caused it and you might begin to feel uncomfortable, maybe even observed, or threatened. And you might begin to wonder if you had actually heard that noise, or if you've had auditory hallucinations. This is one of many possible uncanny situations, in which sound and a conflict between the visible and the audible spheres are essential criteria. When we sit and read a book at night and suddenly we hear a noise coming from the corner of the room, what is uncanny about that, is, that the noise seems to signal us that there must be another living creature present in that room, but we cannot detect another living being there.

There is an immediate connection between sound and movement, as noises are usually connected to movement. Movements most often will cause noises, and noises, on the other hand, consist of movements of waves in the air. Sound is nothing else than movement, actually. So we could say that we do only hear something, whenever the air is "dancing". As Alain Corbin has explicated, the ringing church bells in Medieval times came to signal the presence of a nearby

village and religious community, and noises in general were understood as an expression of the presence of people, more generally of a living being, of life.ⁱ It is in this sense that sound historians Emily Thompson argues that soundscapes have “more to do with civilization than with nature”ⁱⁱ and David Hendy speaks of the “warm humanity that often emanates from noise”ⁱⁱⁱ. Thus, the deep connection between sound and movement becomes uncanny, when one of the two aspects is somehow missing or imperceptible. Movements in silence can have an effect of uncanniness as well as sounds without a visible sound source. For these kinds of conflicts, I want to introduce the term “affective frictions” – the word “friction” refers to the conflict that takes place in perception, when there are unusual audio-visual dissonances, and by “affective” I want to accentuate that the uncanny is not a clear feeling, but an impression that slowly creeps up on the perceiving subject and manifests itself in feelings of discomfort and disorientation.

I will elaborate a bit more on the theory of the uncanny, which has been analysed mainly in the domain of psychology and psychoanalysis. While psychiatrist Ernst Jentsch has determined the uncanny as something absolutely foreign and unknown, psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud has reworked this theory in his well-known text “Das Unheimliche” from 1919 and postulated that the impression of something as uncanny derives from suppressed fears that emerge again, or from a confusion about the boundary between reality and fiction/fantasy. Following Freud, the uncanny derives from a collapse of binary dichotomies and can be described as the familiar-that-becomes-strange, the inanimate-that-appears-alive, or the real that becomes infiltrated with fantastic or supernatural powers. This often includes a shifting within spatial-temporal orientation and an undermining of those principles that mark the frame of what is considered reality at a certain moment and place. In Western philosophical thinking, a certain understanding of the body and its materiality and presence are deeply connected to the concept of reality, and more precisely, a specific correlation between reality and material presence.

Sound and movement are both cutting across such a neat divide – in their ambivalence they are not graspable with such concepts, because both possess a materiality of their own that does not

add up to substance or concreteness. Even though sounds are often considered to be strongly connected with their sources, these two things are not the same – the sound is something else than its source, and in sound theory it is often determined as immaterial, because sound as a phenomenon is not like a firm object. It is rather like a fluid or a gas, expanding in every direction and not being contained by a concrete shape. In her book “Listening to Noise and Silence” (2010), Salomé Voegelin says that “Sounds are like ghosts. They slink around the visual object, moving in on it from all directions, forming its contours and content in a formless breeze. The spectre of sound unsettles the idea of visual stability and involves us as listeners in the production of an invisible world.”^{iv} The ghostlike character of sounds is seen in their ontologically dubious status in that they are not stable objects, but moving, dynamic and ephemeral processes. Because of their specific kind of materiality that is always interspersed with immateriality and absence, sounds are particularly prone to be considered uncanny. There is extreme closeness, even intrusion, involved in listening, and always movement as well as touching – sounds cannot be perceived without touching the listener. They are always near, always already inside. The uncanny sensation is even stronger, when the sound source is unclear. Being touched by an unknown sender is strange and transgresses as well as questions the listening subject’s control.

Noises are usually connected to the presence of living creatures, or more generally speaking, to the presence of life in the widest sense. The situation of reading a book in the dark and hearing a noise is uncanny mostly because the noise seems to signal us movement and therefore, we might conclude that there must be another living creature present, but we cannot see anything in the darkness. Thus, the deep connection between sound and movement becomes an “affective friction”, when one of the two aspects is somehow missing or imperceptible. Movements in silence can have an effect of uncanniness as well as sounds without a visible sound source or logical explanation. The Uncanny comes to be noticed as an intrusion – there is a situation of comfort or at least of familiarity, that suddenly shifts. It turns into a situation of discomfort and uncertainty. The appearance of the uncanny can put our familiar notions of reason and reality into question, insofar

as we start to question our own perception process. All three of these aspects have – in the wide sense in which I want to contextualize them here – political, or, rather, ethical meanings and implications. There is a tension between comfort and discomfort, safe space and intrusion, certainty and disorientation, reason and madness, reality and fiction/fantasy, a clear understanding of what “life” is or should be and a questioning of these normative attributions. Three aspects are thematized by such a focus on uncanny sound:

- How does uncanniness sound like? (→ Materiality)
- How do these sounds move us and/or make us move? (→ Movement and Affect)
- What kind of situation is it, when something, that we cannot really specify, enters our (comfortable) situation and seems to shake our notion of security? (→ Intrusion)

To answer the questions, I am going to take a closer look at two different performance examples, in which the relation between the visible and the audible, between movement and sound, between reality and fiction, and between materiality and immateriality is thematised and, in my opinion, ghosts play a central role in all of them. The ghost is a figure which transgresses limits of space, time and materiality, as it derives from the past, but appears in the present, without actually being properly present. It also confuses notions of spatial and physical presence in its immaterial appearance. The examples manifest the uncanny in various ways, and they belong to different genres of the Performing Arts, so that diverse frames have to be considered in the reflections. These artworks are: Gisèle Vienne’s “Kindertotenlieder“ (2007) and Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller’s “Ship O’ Fools“ (2010).

1. In the work of French choreographer and puppet maker Gisèle Vienne, the uncanny is very present, visually and aurally. The choreographer herself has characterized her work as uncanny in opposition to scary, an opposition that I find very productive to explain the uncanny. Where the scary would be the absolutely unknown, the uncanny is tending more towards the strange; where the scary would just be terrifying and frightening, the uncanny is characterised by both, repulsion *and* fascination. Vienne’s “Kindertotenlieder” is uncanny in various ways, mostly

because of its dark content, in which violence and depression/apathy among youth in the Black Metal subculture is dealt with. There are four aspects that I would like to point out as uncanny:

- a) the conflict between the static visible and the powerfully moving audible spheres
- b) the appearance of revenants, ghosts, and monster-like creatures,
- c) the employment of life-sized puppets; the choreography of puppet- or robot-like movements and body postures, and
- d) the separation of voice and body.

a) The sounds in Vienne's "Kindertotenlieder" are transgressing and stressing the listeners' control in their loudness and dissonance. The musicians Stephen O'Malley and Peter Rehberg produce them live on stage. The sounds are powerful drone sounds and feedback resonance that is created with an electronic guitar, amplifiers and huge loudspeakers. It comes at us like a wall of sound – hard, robust and almost brutal, and in these qualities, the sounds reflect the stage in its darkness, coldness and uncomfortableness. It shows a winter scenery with snow, thick fog, pale light and dark silhouettes of a few people in black sweatshirts with imprints of Black Metal bands and their sinister symbols. They are sitting or standing still and spread out in space. For most of the time they remain absolutely immobile, which gives the impression of a tableau vivant. But there is movement from time to time, often in slow motion, as if it belonged to a different temporal order. In very short breaks, there are outbursts of movement, the appearance of the "Krampus"-carnival figures and several violent acts of beating up, murder, suicide – and afterwards, all is calm again. The youth depicted in Vienne's "Kindertotenlieder" do not know of or do not believe in any morals; it is a post-apocalyptic landscape of darkness, snow and wind, in which human rights do not have any place. The predominant immobility of the figures on stage contrasts with the powerfully dissonant layers of sound. While the stage remains rather introvert with only temporary outbursts of energy, the sounds are extrovert in their constant output of emotion. It is this oppositional arrangement by Vienne that is a central part of what makes this performance so uncanny. There

seems to be incredibly much pain in the figures on stage, but it is all contained; the only channel where it gets out is through the music, and the sounds heard are quite untamed and brutal.

b)/c) The second and third aspects can be reflected on together, because they both touch and question the difference between the inanimate and the animate. Freud explicitly mentions both the re-appearance of the dead and seemingly living puppets or automatons as central themes of the uncanny. At least two moments depict the re-appearance of the dead: shortly after the beginning of the performance, someone crawls out of the coffin and walks slowly across the stage. Later there is a voice-over of a young man; it represents another appearance of the dead, as it is a murdered boy who is speaking. When these voices are heard, a strange figure appears on stage, embodied by the dancer Anja Röttgerkamp. She enters the stage with her upper body bent down, her long black hair covering her face, the arms hanging loosely besides her torso, her legs moving slowly forward step by step. Her hands are of particular interest, as they are kept in a certain position throughout the whole scene, a position which I would determine as puppet-like because of the stiffness and the kind of gesture.

d) The fourth and last aspect that I want to point out is the exposed separation of voice and body, which takes place during a longer scene in which Röttgerkamp embodies a Black Metal singer during a concert. She slowly moves closer to the microphone, takes it in her hand, approaches it with her face and mouths words, while at the same time a female singing voice can be heard from the loudspeakers. After some time, she begins to slowly bend backwards, moving her face away from the microphone. The voice keeps on singing, even when the singer continues to bend over so much, that her head almost touches the floor. In this manner, Vienne plays with the spectators' impressions and produces optical and auditory illusions, which subvert a linear or straight way of perceiving the performance. Instead, the audience is brought to a shift of attention towards their own perception. The ruptures in the perception process question patterns of perceiving, and therefore question the habitualized forms. The voice, once again, appears in its ghostlike quality, and becomes separated from the body of the singer.

2. A different, but nevertheless uncanny experience can be made in the sound installation “Ship O’ Fools” by Canadian artists Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, that basically consists of a thirty foot Chinese junk boat. It is a ship without a shipmaster or any sailors; thus, it is a ghost ship with unknown passengers. There is uncanny life on board of this ship that articulates itself through strange sounds and noise. The artists used diverse sonic materials: snippets from old recordings of classical music and operatic voices, quiet white noise, layers of female voices talking and singing, water containers shaking and swirling, thereby producing swashing sounds, a violin playing vigorously by itself – or an invisible musician, various other objects that move automatically and by banging into each other, they produce hammering, clacking and clanging noises. There are three aspects that I want to point out about Cardiff and Miller’s “Ship O’ Fools”:

- a) it plays with notions of activity and passivity, as it makes the audience into explorers and intruders into an unknown space,
- b) it messes with space, as it provokes disorientation about inside/outside as well as it questions spatial proportions, and
- c) it blurs the boundary between the animate and the inanimate through the activation of objects.

a)/b) The first and the second aspects belong together, as they happen in the same movement. Cardiff and Miller play with the difference between inside/outside. In Berlin, the installation was placed on a small lawn in front of the theatre building; a ladder with a few steps invited the visitors to enter the boat. When entering, a change of perspective takes place – the audience moves from outside to inside and enters the inner space of the ship, so that the outside now becomes the *exterior*, the other, somewhere else. The visitors turn into intruders in the sense that they step into a space unknown and foreign to them. They are like explorers; they have to move through the tiny space in order to see, hear and feel the artwork. The artists play with the difference between interior and exterior. Once the visitor is inside, he/she faces more and smaller rooms with

miniature human figures in different spatial proportions. In one corner, for example, there is a small sculpture of a man in his bedroom, with a shark lying in front of him. The shark could be seen as symbolizing the intrusion of dangerous species, of danger in general, of the feeling of being threatened, into a space that is usually considered to be a private, safe space. And suddenly that species does not seem to be as dangerous anymore. It becomes clear that an interior is not completely contained and furthermore, an interior is not and will never be completely homogeneous. And it asks questions about whether it should be by creating an open space, in which the interior is transgressing the boundaries of inside/outside through sound and in which the exterior is invited to come inside.

When the visitors enter the ship, they will notice that, strangely, there is more movement than their own – there are objects that dance and make noises or music without anyone who moves them. They might get the impression that the ship or the objects in it were alive. They seem soulful, and therefore, Freud's concept of the uncanny is evoked – objects that are supposed to be inanimate suddenly seem to be full of life. The "Ship O' Fools" is inhabited by various somehow spirited objects. This connects to the allegory that dates back to Plato's "Republic" (4 BC), in which the philosopher speaks of the quarrel among different people on a crowded ship. While they argue, fight and kill each other in order to become the shipmaster and to navigate the ship, they overlook that there is someone amongst them who can be considered as a 'true ruler of the ship', which is Plato's metaphor for the philosopher's role in society. Plato uses this image to emphasize that the philosopher is not respected in society, and instead is depreciated as 'a star-gazer, an idle babbling, a useless fellow'. Plato therefore contrasts the principle of the strongest, after which the shipmaster had to be careless, rash and brutal to win over the wheel, with the wisdom and considerateness of the philosopher. The philosopher is called idle and useless, but in fact, the other people fighting for the shipmaster's position are the foolish ones in this allegory. The image has been taken up in many caricatures, depicting Western politicians as the fools embarked on that condemned ship called Government, Nation, or Party.

Whereas this understanding of the metaphor has broadened the notion “fool” to encompass politicians and even the whole society, the fool can also be understood differently. The “fool” can be based upon a specific understanding of rationality and reason and it can mark mechanisms of exclusion. Following Sebastian Brant’s 15th Century-book “Ship of Fools” and the chapter “Stultifera Navis” in Michel Foucault’s “Madness and Civilization”, the fool can also be understood as a fragile subject on the verge of – still or no longer – being counted as a full human being with all rights and sovereignty, as in the early Renaissance, designated “fools” were expelled from society. Confinement is a central term in Foucault’s theory on the construction and making of the fool. By creating a clear boundary between rationality and irrationality, it functions as legitimization of the legal confinement and disciplinary control of certain people.

The artwork of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller often thematises principles of inclusion and exclusion. Janet Cardiff states in an interview that in their work often “the room concept [...] is about containment”, and this relates to the before-mentioned statement of Miller that the small room of the ship contains so much more than is visible at first sight. The artists create spaces as containers, but they contain much more than they look like. George Bures Miller adds: “It’s just a small room, but it contains a whole world inside of it.”⁹ They compare it to “Dr. Who”, a famous British TV-series character (from the 60s to the 80s), who could travel through time in a box called “Tardis – Time and Relative Dimensions in Space”, thereby underlining that the visitors of “Ship O’ Fools” would transgress boundaries of space and time and immerse themselves into another world.

I think that for my further reflection of this topic in the future, it might be productive to compare the seemingly similar, but different terms of *confinement* and *containment* to each other and to reflect on their differences. English apparently is not my mother-tongue, so I can only hypothesize that while *confinement* puts the emphasis on the closing-in and putting-away, the term *containment* underlines the shape of container, therefore indirectly highlights the content that is contained within it. And the container is not necessarily a closed-off space with definite borders.

Because, for example, the door is invitingly open and the sounds are audible outside of the boat; the foolish sounds do not let themselves be tamed in this way and constantly transpire to the exterior. There is movement of sound and a transgression of boundaries, not only in a spatial, but also in a temporal dimension. Some of the sounds emanating from a small radio in one corner seem to come from the past – this temporal aspect is manifested in the sonic quality of the crackles that characterize old recordings. Following Mark Fisher, the crackle is the typical sound of hauntology; it “unsettles the very distinction between surface and depth, between background and foreground”^{vi}. Hauntology was primarily coined by Derrida’s deconstructive philosophy in “Spectres of Marx” (1993), took its inspiration from the figure of the ghost of Marxism, and concerns the ambivalent status of presence that is always already gone by and can not be traced back to an origin. It is symbolized in the figure of a ghost and manifests itself in temporal/historical disjunction. “In sonic hauntology, we *hear* that time is out of joint. The joints are audible in the crackles, the hiss...”^{vii}. In this way, another dimension of the uncanny, as Freud has determined it, manifests itself insofar as time becomes audible and the separation between presence, past and future an only relative distinction.

Concluding this paper, I will come back to the initial questions and to the concepts of reality, reason, material bodies, and life, and I want to dwell for a few moments on the third question that was directed at the process of intrusion. Following several media articles that use the term “Fearful Society” (“Angstgesellschaft”), our age might be determined as an era in which fear and anxiety are symptomatic and came to dominate political and social actions and concepts, and often has to do with processes of exclusion and inclusion. When Judith Butler asks “what are the norms that determine silently and powerfully our understanding of what or rather who is to be considered a human being?”^{viii}, she turns our attention to the processes that are at work when political or social decisions – ethical decisions – are being made. They are made along the axes of what is determined to be appropriate and highly valued regarding a notion of humanity, a notion of humanity that is not free from racism and discriminatory practices in act, speech and thought.

Referring to Susan Sontag's well-known text "Regarding the Pain of Others", Anna Harpin in her article, "Intolerable Acts", reflects the ethics of *looking* in the context of theatre performance and this kind of looking as a form of witnessing.^{ix} But also, or especially, *listening* can teach us a new – or re-activate an already existing, but forlorn – ethical attitude. With her concept of a "Politics of Listening", Leah Bassel proposes that listening can be evaluated as a form of communicative ethics, a concrete means to establish equality between different people as the roles of speakers/listeners are shifting. Having worked as a humanitarian assistant to asylum seekers in France for several years, she draws from her own experience in social work and develops the concept of an ethics of listening from a sociological and activist perspective. "Listening, then, can be a different way of doing politics when speaking and listening connect."^x

The sounds influence the stage action in a fundamental way, as Voegelin states: "Listening as an aesthetic practice challenges how we see and how we participate in the production of the visual world. Listening allows fantasy to reassemble the visual fixtures and fittings, and repositions us as designers of our own environment."^{xi} I think that this is remarkable, as it confers powers to sound and listening to fundamentally change the way that the world is understood. Theatre can be the practice of experiencing the Other and a location for navigating these fears. The artist Rohini Devasher has coined the term "strange-ing" for her practice of rendering familiar things strange. She explains: "In practice, strange-ing explores the interconnectedness of human beings' relationship to the planet, and it offers a perspective that may be of use to the imagination when envisaging the future of both shaping and living within it. Walking a fine line between wonder and the uncanny can change how we view the world."

Notes

ⁱ Cf. Alain Corbin (1998): *Village Bells. The Culture of the Senses in the Nineteenth-Century French Countryside*. Translated by Martin Thom, Columbia University Press.

ⁱⁱ Emily Thompson. *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900–1933*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002, p. 2.

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- ⁱⁱⁱ David Hendy (2013): *Noise. A Human History of Sound and Listening*. London: Profile Books, p. vii.
- ^{iv} Salomé Voegelin (2010): *Listening to Noise and Silence. Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art*, New York: The Continuum, p. 12.
- ^v Video „Lost in the Memory Palace: Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller - Vancouver Art Gallery“, online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LahrSiUeP2I> (accessed on November 18, 2018).
- ^{vi} Mark Fisher (2013): „The Metaphysics of Crackle: Afrofuturism and Hauntology“. In: *Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture*, 5/2, p. 42-55, here p. 48 f.
- ^{vii} Fisher (2013), p. 48.
- ^{viii} Vgl. Judith Butler (2002): „Body: recognizable/unrecognizable. Über das Stück Körper von Sasha Waltz“. In: Sylvia Sasse, Stefanie Wenner (Eds.), *Kollektivkörper: Kunst und Politik von Verbindung*, Bielefeld: Transcript, p. 167 [Translation by KR]
- ^{ix} Cf. Anna Harpin (2012): „Intolerable Acts.“ In: *Performance Research*, Vol. 16, Issue 1, „On Trauma“, p. 102-111.
- ^x Leah Bassel (2017): *The Politics of Listening. Possibilities and Challenges for Democratic Life*. Palgrave Macmillan, p. 4.
- ^{xi} Voegelin (2010), p. 12.

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The Mature Age of Contemporary Dance: Ageism and Conflict on Stage

Luísa Roubaud

Abstract: Aging is a sensitive issue for the performing arts. However, theatre dance is no longer today exclusively for young and perfect bodies. Putting the mature body on display, contemporary dance is making visible themes related to aging and pushing them into the fields of Cultural and Dance Studies. How does this mirror the inversion of the age pyramid in western societies? How is dance provoking changes in social perceptions about aging? How to avoid the perverse effects of positive discrimination? To what extent does this relate to the fact that memory and patrimony have become central themes in western societies?

Pina Bausch (1940-2009) was aged 67 when she danced *Café Muller*ⁱ for the last time. In spring 2008 we were able to see her in Lisbon making one of her final performances of what was the most emblematic of her works: exactly thirty years after her premiere (on May 20, 1978 at *Tanztheater Wuppertal*) and a year before the choreographer's death. This most beautiful of dance pieces – today converted into an icon of contemporary art -, would have been unthinkable on the stages of earlier decades. And, even while never verbalizing this, its dramatic nature is inherently bound up with the bodies that perform it. In particular, the nodose and dried figure of the German dancer-choreographer, her pale and lined face that had long since lost its youthfulness.

Seeing such a performer live on stage thus becomes a reflection of the profound changes that have taken place throughout the social fabric and the arts in recent decades. For the last four centuries, the canons of western theatre dance have proven implacable as regards the requirements of beauty and efficiency, displayed by perfect, highly trained and functional bodies. Young, talented bodies refined through the iron discipline of countless hours sweating in the dance studio striving for a mirage: creating the illusion of transcending the body's limits and shearing off all its biological connotations. Since its very earliest days, in the European courts of the seventeenth century, the founding tradition of western theatre dance has been to guarantee its audience, immersed in the darkness of the great concert halls, the

repetition of a four centuries old ritual: to project on dancers an idealized version of themselves and thereby ensuring a temporary reverie both of overcoming and of eternity.

However, the world and its demography have changed. Here and there, we may grasp how the stages are no longer the exclusive territory of young, beautiful and healthy bodies. The word “inclusion” has become the new diktat for democratic societies and, after all, dance is an emanation of social and cultural processes.

New demographic landscapes

Longevity and demographic ageing in western countries has very much become part of the daily agenda. The twenty-first century has already been labelled the “century of the elderly”.

Despite all this, whenever we take a look around us, recalling Stockley (1992, 82), we notice that the social and physical support given to children (young dependents) proves far less reluctant than that given to the elderly (elderly dependents). We recognize how there is greater goodwill when we show affection and attention to children: they do after all represent a future full of possibilities and this renders them more attractive than a long, obsolete past. The elderly thus appear as children in reverse: they are placed in limbo where they are not recognized as having desires, concerns or fears, for example as regards their sexuality, their needs for socialization or the value of their social contributions. Indeed, the very representations that the elderly tend to incorporate for themselves.

It is a fact that we all age and grow old. However, as we have never experienced just what being old involves, we probably never truly grasp what this means. Ageing is something we disassociate from our future self.

In the meanwhile, the academic world and social and artistic actors are also a product of the social fabric; in other words, ourselves. Nevertheless, even if involuntarily, our initiatives tend to perpetuate the homogenizing collective attributions about age.

However, we have begun rebuilding the narratives around ageing in contemporary times: we now hear frequently the terms “fourth age”, “positive ageing” or the more polished designation of the “silver age”; the social and human sciences are valuing individual heterogeneity and spreading the notion that development is a process of continuous adaptation made up of losses and gains. Nevertheless, should we leaf through the geriatric manuals, the words are unequivocal: atrophy and degeneration; withering and wrinkling... the terminology on ageing is implacable. They may be summarized in a single word: loss. Multiple losses: of health, of physical and mental performance, and of autonomy; of sensorial acuity and of social value. Losses reverberating in a progressively shrunk and isolated social (and vital) space, expectations of an anonymous life ending, deprived of any scope for sharing.

Ever since the Modern Age, our societies have been built based upon the principles of productivity and efficiency, the “having” and the “appearing”. The cult of a youthful and dynamic appearance, the capacity not to vacillate before the vortex of progress are clear expressions of this state of affairs. Particularly in the West – despite the level of sophistication attained in our lives - there are obvious difficulties in integrating the basic realities interrelated with decline and death.

In the “century of the body” – the twentieth century – the prerequisites for success immerse contemporary individuals in constant tension and confrontation with their own bodies (Breton 1990).

In a demographic context in which youthfulness becomes scarcer, the depreciation and prejudice towards an increasingly aged population constitutes one more symptom of the neoliberal ideology and consumerism. In predominantly young contexts (such as India, or certain regions of Africa), precisely the opposite occurs: where there is an excess of children

and young persons and this proves problematic, maturity, with its share of experience and wisdom, is raised as a very scarce qualitative resource.

Such a conjuncture would lead the gerontologist-psychiatrist Robert Butler (1927-2010) to coin an important concept in the realm of this debate: “ageism”. In keeping with notions such as “racism” or “sexism”, this concept refers to the stereotyped visions, whether of individuals or groups, held towards the factor of age, along with a set of beliefs, values, attitudes and norms that serve to justify prejudice and discrimination, casual or systematic, related with age. Mechanisms that, as regards ageing, correspond to attitudes and behaviors, segregation propensities, political and institutional practices perpetuating stereotypes around the idea of ageing and the elderly.

Dance of this day and age took a stance against such processes. Still, its aptitude for absorbing and reflecting social changes often does not render it immune from involuntarily reproducing such mechanisms.

New demographics in theatre dance

It is therefore within our own territory that these debates occur. Are we all – the community, artists and researchers in cognitive dissonance between what is our real practice and the principles that we defend? It is justified, then, to look at how contemporary dance has pointed out this web of questions.

The images of Pina Baush in the mythical *Café Muller* we referred to at the beginning of this essay, contain something subversive, even in the context of contemporary dance. The modern and contemporary developments in dance, we would note, were born of the systematic questioning – sometimes radical – of the idealized bodies of the academic-classical tradition and its further derivations, which still remain in the current conceptions of performance. It is equally well known, however, that even with the modern and post-modern dance revolutions, when legendary key figures such as Martha Graham (1894-1991) or Merce

Cunningham (1919-2009) exposed their ageing bodies on stage, they were not able to avoid the commentary, commonly uttered through the grapevine: that they had not known how to reconvert themselves as performers and retire from the scene in good time.

In the arts of the body, the question of age is of particular sharpness. As happens, by the way, whenever approaching issues which the social fabric finds difficulties to deal with: disease, gender orientations, difference, disabilities, decline and death.

Recently, however, we have been noticing major changes on stage (Roubaud 2016): for example, high profile performers, such as Dominique Mercy (b.1950) or Nazareth Panadero (b. 1955) – both dancers at the Pina Bausch’s Wuppertal Tanztheater –, Steve Paxton (b.1939), the doyen of contact-improvisation, Kazuo Ohno (1906-2010), the old master of *butoh* dance, or Anna Halprin (b.1920), one of the most relevant pioneers in post-modern American dance, all attained their artistic pinnacles when their bodies were already becoming mature. And it was precisely this artistic identity that has been crucial to their success. Kazuo Ohno danced until the end of life. He was the performer-author of the perhaps most existentialist of all dances: the essence of his *butoh* (a term meaning something like “dance of darkness”), merged with the great cycles of life and nature, and their reconfigurations in the context of an urban life in which the tumultuous experiences of post-World War Two Japan also still echoed.

The performances of these mature bodies bring us to an awareness of the more inner and profound sensations of the body, in other words, they re-connect us to our somatic self.

However, also in the European-American theatre dance tradition, conventional dance companies no longer seem unaware of such signals: the famous choreographer Jiry Kylian (b.1947), for example, developed a specific creative work for older or senior performers in his *Netherlands Dans Theatre* between 1991 and 2006 ; in Ireland, the *Bealtaine Festival* is an event promoting the work of mature artists since 1995; the British *Sadlers Wells* has run

the *Company of Elders* since 1989, the jewel in the crown for performers aged over sixty five. We may mention, among others, the excellent piece *Natural* (2005) that the Portuguese choreographer Clara Andermatt created with this company, exposing the beauty of mature and imperfect bodies usually subtracted from the scrutiny of audiences. Portugal also saw the founding of the *Companhia Maior* in 2010, with which different theatre and dance authors are regularly working.

The emergence of these initiatives is undoubtedly significant and important. However, they also raise some questions: as they circumscribe themselves to mature performers, are they involuntarily proposing once again segregation instead of inclusion? To what extent is ageism being perpetuated? This issue would require in-depth examination.

Let us consider the trajectory of the dancer and choreographer Anna Halprin. Despite holding a lower profile among the leading names in post-modern dance, she was a crucial figure in the contestatory dance of the 1950s-1970s period. Ninety eight years old today, her contesting emphasis has reconvered into a deepening vision of dance that progressively became a philosophy of life.

Positive Motion (1988) for example, was a dance piece, created with AIDS infected performers. The critical episodes in the disease served as a creative resource, a way of facing the emotional charge and bring about individual change; *Planetary Dance* is a choreographic human chain evoking, in the name of non-violence, the murder of six women in Talmapais (San Francisco, California) between 1979 and 1981. Since the early 1980s, it has become an annual collective ritual, a community dance accessible to all, taking place simultaneously in thirty-six countries around the world.

To Halprin, dance thus emerges above all as a civic positioning. Her most recent pieces have been focusing on dignifying the failure of the body and ageing. Movement is, according to her, first and foremost an echo of our interface with the world, a right,

independent of age or physical condition. *Seniors Rocking* (2005), in turn, was a choreographic event conceived with an elderly population, and developed from a socially congregating perspective. A celebration of life across all its phases and aligned with the universal dimension of the cycles of nature. In *Intensive Care* (2000), Halprin confronts the issue of oncological disease and unashamedly speaks straight to the point about the pain, the love, the cure, and the sheer perplexity of facing death.

The mature age of contemporary dance

It would be difficult to imagine the impact of this dance were it not for the bodies that performed it. They present to us images that appeal and challenge a scope reaching that which exists beyond the conventions of beauty; they expose, openly and without any evasive measures, the profound experience of decline and disease. Spilling over from the individual to the collective, they elicit, as Halprin tells us (Gerder 2009), a cathartic effect in which the cruelty of the emotive drive, through being ritualized and elaborated, becomes shareable.

The French philosopher Michel Bernard affirmed that “the body is the symbol through which societies tell us of their ghosts” (1972, 134) ⁱⁱ. In keeping with this line of thinking, through exhibition or denial, the bodies of theatre dance are reflections of the fundamental dynamics of the psychosocial body: the desire to confront one’s ghosts, rendering them the material of creation or, inversely, the flight towards an idealization that banishes the horizon of any disease, decline and death.

With the dances of Anna Halprin or Kazuo Ohno, we understand how it is simply not possible to dominate the degeneration of the body and the resulting pain, suffering, acuity of emotions or control the vicissitudes of life. However, it is feasible to creatively reconvert these experiences and therefore establish connections to the matter of our emotions; and to achieve this from a perspective of sharing.

Contrasting the vertigo of our current times, we may all also recognize an act of subversion in the slowed down movements of these performers. Their slow pace triggers our kinesthetic awareness, thereby appealing to reflection and thought. A meditative and philosophical dance perhaps putting into practice the idea of Plato that all philosophy ends up as meditation around death.

It is in this capacity to appeal to the present that originates the contemporaneity of this dance or, better expressed, its timelessness.

These bodies certainly echo the increase in longevity, the inversion of the age pyramid of our societies and the new mental representations that are coming from there. However, they are also drivers of the change in collective perceptions on ageing and the way in which such a process is both socially and culturally constructed.

Whoever works in such territories also knows that this is a complex and booby-trapped path, full of risks and perverse effects: for example, the temptation to reap dividends from positive discrimination or the social condescendence resulting from a guilty collective conscience.

It is also difficult to evaluate to what extent the psycho-physical degeneration stems from advanced age itself or from the life styles deriving from the incorporation of roles by the elderly, as a self-fulfilled prophecy sustained on the self-induction of the stereotype. We have, on the other hand, the most recent psychological perspectives on human development defending that individuals go through compensatory adaptive processes over the course of all their evolutionary stages and that there are unnecessary losses arising from internalizing negativity. Finally, how frequently do “personal problematics” result from misalignments with the collective homogenizing attributions of the social group?

Contemporary dance is bringing into itself the social debate about exclusion and segregation. The issue of interculturality has shaped the agenda of Cultural Studies over the

course of recent decades. In appealing to the temporalities that structure human existence, dance is inserting the silenced dimensions of ageing within the scope of Dance Studies and Cultural Studies. Furthermore, as the poetics of dance are of an allusive and subliminal nature, this debate is above all taking place in the intimate sphere of each viewer.

In our day and age, invisibility has become part of the mechanisms of subalternity. Hence, placing these subjects under the spotlight involves “de-pathologizing” ageing and stripping it of its symbolic weight; this thus brings forth profound cultural representations associated with the advancing of age, otherwise tending to get overlooked and left in obscurity and silence. There is a need to shed light on the value of experience and better understand about just what this might tell us about the largest and most difficult enigma of existence: its inexorably transitory status. Re-connecting the silenced individual experiences to the collective also ensures contributing towards dignifying them. In other words, to share these problematic issues is to shift the emphasis from *loss* and re-place it on *gain*.

In dealing badly with time and memory, contemporary societies are building up their own future isolation. This dance, which plunges into the somatic memory and the embodied self, thus spans a trajectory that converges with the emergence of memory as a central theme in our current societies.

It was perhaps necessary for population ageing to impact on the leading figures in contemporary dance and convene with other socially positive reactions, for such themes to rise to the surface and discretely invade the stages. And, in this way, they became transported from the darkness of theatre halls and the most intimate reaches of each one of us into the spaces of daily life.

Notes

ⁱ The piece, choreographed by Pina Bausch, with music by Henry Purcell (*The Fairy-Queen* and *Dido and Aeneas*), has remained regularly in production ever since its premiere. The

work is inspired on the childhood memories of the choreographer as regards the ambience lived in the cafe where her father worked during World War Two, in Germany.

ⁱⁱ Translated from the original in French: *le corps est le symbole dont use une société pour parler de ses fantasmes*

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The Materiality of Conflict in Contact: Improvisational Explorations in '*Pitch*'

Malaika Sarco-Thomas

Abstract: This presentation investigates the 2017 site-based dance film project *Pitch*, featuring choreography by Charlie Morrissey, as an investigation into the materiality of conflict within contact improvisation practices. New materialist philosophies invite reconsideration of matter as animate in ways which dance improvisers might be said to already perceive the body. Deborah Hay's knowledgeable cells, and Steve Paxton's animal body can arguably be read in light of Karen Barad's notion of posthumanist 'iterative intra-activity' in which the consideration of the differentiated mass of the body as nonhuman becomes another kind of choreographic agent within the performance.

Working processes within the project, which included focusing on the tactility of conflict as friction and the consideration of resistance itself as a material, placed emphasis on the dancers' material experience of the body as a key performative strategy. In this sense, matter became figured, in the words of Barad, not 'as a mere effect or product of discursive practices, but rather as an agentive factor in its iterative materialization' (2012: 32) in which the identity of the dancers became 'radically reworked'. From an analysis of the choreographic process and film product, this presentation will investigate how contact improvisation practices which focus on the tactile experience of matter can be said to be examples of iterative intra-activity on multiple perceptual levels. Tactile confrontation of 'the other' and his/her struggle toward aliveness in movement, and confrontation of the porous materiality of the human body become hallmarks of the film.

Keywords: contact improvisation, film, new materialism

This paper reflects on the film *Pitch* which can be viewed here:

<https://filmfreeway.com/project/1361791>

Password: materiality

Good afternoon. My presentation deals with somatics as a form of confrontation through an analysis of the creative dance film project *Pitch* (2017).

Pitch is a 9-minute dance film, in which eight movers negotiate each other's bodies on a dusty playing field. Haunted by a gritty soundscape of breath, dust, falling bodies, and football players, the video documents a research process that began in July 2017 by gathering a group of contact improvisation (CI) practitioners together to investigate **conflict** in and through CI practice.

You can catch the full film in the screenings taking place as part of the 'Positioning Screen Dance' event from 3.30pm Sunday at Palazzo Pereira, which is also when the contact improvisation jam is taking place.

Prompted by the call for proposals for this conference, but also by very real events in our lives—the crisis in Syria and repercussions across Europe, Brexit, personal experiences of clashes in professional life, we gathered under the direction of choreographer Charlie Morrissey to see what we might discover about conflict from a seven-day process of investigation.

As the project coordinator, I invited movers who were experienced in the practice of contact improvisation, to collaborate under Charlie’s direction in order to discover something about resistance, and touch, which could be shared in a film. We invited videographer and visual artist Rafael Mielczarek to work with us in the creation of this video, but ultimately we improvised our way, as we realised that our process was not necessarily storyboard-able, and that ultimately we needed to find a route toward framing our work that was suitable for film. Through the process Richard Sarco-Thomas became director of cinematography, and editing; he guided Rafael in framing the shots, and considering the proximity of the lens during filming.

In this presentation, I will show parts of the film, discussing how it offers an insight into ways that contemporary contact improvisers are thinking through performance, in order to argue that the CI practices that inform such art-making also align with radical proposals for reconfiguring human identity. Karen Barad’s assertion that matter is animate, and configured through a mutual attention on the intra-activity between humans and/as material, informs this argument.

Originally, the brief for this project, called ‘the Conflict in Contact’ was quite open. Our resources included the theme of conflict, videography, a group of movers, a week of rehearsals, our CI skills, and a chosen site of a football stadium in Msida, Malta, in July.

When we sat to gather our ideas to get a sense of the territory we were working in, questions we brought to the process included:

What are common conflicts in the practice of contact improvisation? Beyond the clashes observable in CI culture between the hippies (go with the flow, touch & play, body love) and the CI purists (research-focused exploration) we were interested in conflicts inherent in the principles, e.g.:

- how we perceive and what we perceive
- up and down
- tension and relaxation

We asked, how can conflict be explored **in and through** the practice of CI?

Charlie guided our conversation toward materiality, articulating his interests, and asking:

‘What is the material, the actual **stuff** of conflict?’

Asking ‘how can we experience this, and then compose with it?’, we arrived together eventually at a film which captures scenes from our explorations. It starts with a wider view of individual bodies manipulating other individual bodies in a geometric landscape, and moves in to record our explorations in close up shots of bodily detail and blurry movers. The footage was edited with an eye toward giving a close, involved, experience of bodies in motion, in contact, and in tension and conflict.

[see first two clips of *Pitch*, 2.21-2.32 and 6.37-7.10]

The film created offers a documented exploration of materiality, which also considers the camera as first a voyeur, and then a participant in the activity, leading the viewer toward a more intimate involvement with the dancers’ bodies, following their **experience** through close proximity.

As a dancer, Morrissey’s teaching has inspired me tremendously in my study of movement and performance. His rigorous and joyful enquiry into **experiencing mass** through moving has prompted me, as curator and co-organiser, to make his teaching a mainstay in

nearly a dozen events (festivals, workshops, performance projects, and conferences) produced by Contact Festival Dartington since 2010. Choosing him for this project was also an effort to enquire further into a way of operating with a direct lineage to Steve Paxton, with whom Charlie has a working relationship.

Rather than presenting, showing, or performing, Morrissey emphasises the research element of enquiry through touch, asking:

How to stay in that place of inquiry—not to demonstrate or portray something, but instead to be in the activity of being and doing ... and the more we can stay inside of something rather than being outside of it... It was a way of looking at something and saying: that's what's happening and how is it happening? (Morrissey 2017)

We started with a simple premise of exploring 'what is happening' through resistance. In partners, we engaged with 'sensing as a muscular activity', asking 'what is the stuff of encounter?' through touch duets. These were a focused exploration on the mass and minutiae of anatomy as experience through mutual resistance: two opposing forces finding friction in skin, fascia, muscle, bone, structure, centre and periphery. From duets this became a group exploration, where one person in the middle of a web of resistance explores the potential of exceeding himself, and the group, through *feeling through the sensational effects of frictive opposition*. Here is a clip of this score.

[see third clip of *Pitch*, 4.14-4.32]

While the bodies resist one another, there is also an intensely focused sensing activity going on—active listening while doing. Through the score, and through the film, we (both movers and viewers) are constantly asking: 'What is the stuff of encounter?'

The exercise reminded us of the explorations shown in early CI work, such as those in the film *Soft Pallet*. As dancer Dorte Bjerre Jensen pointed out, ‘There’s no fancy stuff there, just people bumping into one another over and over’ (2017). Each time this encounter is different, yet this material is made from the repeated seeking, launching, crashing, rebounding, recovering. These repeated rough bumpy encounters are the substance, the *stuff*, of the dance. The unaffected mass and momentum of the moving bodies is foregrounded in the film, not smoothed or sanitized, yet, the dancers continually seek engagement with one another—they are magnetized as they seek out meeting—and confrontation.

[play *Soft Pallet* clip 1:26-2:00]

These ungoverned encounters of touch and conflict are fundamental to the premise of CI as a research activity—an active enquiry and experiment in engaging with another body, rather than a reproduction or representation of patterns.

So, how is such work confrontational? It can be argued that CI is not.

The values behind both practicing modern and postmodern dance are often linked to themes of the emancipation of the body, flow, continuity and, in Andre Lepecki’s words, ‘being-towards-movement’, or a state in which the body becomes available for both self-expression and autonomy (Cvejic 2015: 35). Such values have been critiqued in light of the ideological flexibility they imply, with correlations being made from the pleasure-seeking ‘liberation’ of Gaga dance and the ‘go with the flow’ mantras of some folk practices of contact improvisation to the expansionist and neoliberal policies of the US and Israel. See for example Edo Feder and Shir Hacham’s development of this argument in ‘A Dancing Body Offers Legitimacy to the State’ (2015).

However, CI founder Steve Paxton emphasises the ‘non-wimpy way’ that dancers need to engage in struggle in order to practice. Drawing on principles from the Japanese

martial art aikido, which influenced Paxton significantly in his development of CI, Paxton explains that not presenting oneself as a victim is a primary principle in injury prevention (Paxton in Cvejic 2014: 43)—a principle of working somatically and sensitively, as an intelligent mover. As Cvejic points out, Paxton’s subsequent definition of CI as a study of the a de-socialised ‘animal body’, in its engagement with Newtonian physics, necessitates a kind of negation of social and historical identities in order to tune in to the body itself:

Paxton’s words:

I stress that the dancers are people not in the social sense but in the animal sense in this kind of dancing, that they should not smile, should not make eye contact, should not talk, that they should just be there as animals, as bundles of nerves, as masses and bones... touching the other bundle and letting that be the work (Paxton 2004 in Cvejic 2015).

In her article ‘War Dance’, Cvejic however questions the political immunity and isolationism implied by such practice, as well as the living-on-a-farm-away-from-it-all lifestyle adopted by Paxton and other key CI founders, arguing that although CI focuses on the elongation and responsiveness of the physical spine in practice it also seeks to negate intellect, political ideas, passions in the name of the work, resulting in:

‘the private spineless life of a subject who is immune, indifferent, or powerless in the face of politics outside of her/his own immunised community—in a non-wimpy way, perhaps, but still a wimp’ (Cvejic 2014: 45).

There is a contention that the de-identification of the body from its socio-political context through the work with mass is itself a non-standpoint, and thus by default ‘wimpy’.

I would like to counter this, however, with the suggestion that the project of seeking to feel into the body of another with both force and curiosity is in fact a bold and politicised move, moving away from identification with ‘the human’ components of the self. Such work coaxes attention away from social identity and toward an experience of materiality which encompasses ‘stuff’ as a common factor, and inquires into the possibility of movement within and between masses, as a rigorous meditation on encounter. Friction is an essential part of this encounter; the practice proposed by Charlie is to feel through the ‘stuff’ of this resistance, to enquire ‘what is there’. In doing so, the activity of contact in conflict maintains a curious, questioning stance toward a changing reality, and tracks this together in a changing environment. Attention and physical curiosity is the confrontational practice.

As Charlie Morrissey said: **It’s a massive thing, to feel this other body.**

At its core, CI practice is about **feeling another body**-- and as Morrissey infers, that’s massive. It’s massive in its intimacy—to feel through the layers of warmth, hair, skin, fascia, muscle, bone, marrow, centre, and floor—but also in its tuning to mass as a focus, its attention to physicality as a force beyond identity. It is also a radical practice, to notice what is here, to bring attention to what is happening in another body as connected to one’s own body, noting the tension and strain, and asking whether that is what we want to be creating.

Noticing might be recognised as the primary step of somatic practice. *How* we notice can be said to constitute a primary fact of identity.

Can a practice of noticing be radical activism?

Karen Barad’s new materialist writing looks at how philosophical and scientific practices have upheld representationalism through their assumptions, and proposes that a **performative understanding of matter**, as material, can shake up of how we understand our world, ourselves, and our relationships. Building on Donna Haraway’s work on cyborgs and

companion species, Barad questions how notions of ourselves and our boundaries as ‘human’ or ‘nonhuman’ are stabilised—and questioned—through performativity.

She notes that:

If performativity is linked not only to the formation of the subject but also to the production of the matter of bodies, as Butler’s account of “materialization” and Haraway’s notion of “materialized refiguration” suggest, then it is all the more important that we understand the nature of this production. (Barad 2003: 808)

Barad champions the fight against ‘thingification’ through definitions, proposing that the tyranny of ‘the the’ (Brown 2010) can be resisted through agential realism, a practice that notices the ways that we enquire into matter, language, and relationships, while recognising the influence of the apparatuses we use to measure such entities.

She proposes that:

On an agential realist account, it is once again possible to acknowledge nature, the body, and materiality in the fullness of their becoming without resorting to the optics of transparency or opacity, the geometries of absolute exteriority or interiority, and the theoretization of the human as either pure cause or pure effect while at the same time remaining resolutely accountable for the role “we” play in the intertwined practices of knowing and becoming. (Barad 2003: 812)

There are several ways in which *Pitch* and the somatic work it documents, can be seen as a testament to notions of conflict, by seeking to enquire into the intertwined practices of **knowing and becoming**. I will summarise these points, which have been hinted at.

- 1) Conflict / resistance as material, explored through:
 - a. Partnering struggle at the start
 - b. Exploration of resistance in group as affecting / supporting

- c. Jumping and catching: asking how we deal with the full weight of another
- 2) Intimacy of touch as reading / noticing / seeing / enquiring, explored through:
 - a. Filmic closeups, fascination with detail
 - b. Documenting sensing: breath, skin, impact of gravel
- 3) Impact with the other: dealing with mass, explored through:
 - a. Falling to the ground
 - b. Launching and catching
- 4) Site and references to society, explored through:
 - a. The soundscape: football inferences
 - b. Disaster imagery: desert / the middle east / dust / bombing / Syria

To conclude, and to further link this process to conflict:

The founder of aikido, Morihei Ueshiba said, ‘Warriorship is none other than the vitality that sustains all life’. The film *Pitch* documents contact improvisers as readied warriors dealing with one another’s moving, changing, masses with a vital and ongoing sense of curiosity. The becoming is not defined, but the struggle is present. As a practice in exchanging identification for a gritty, sweaty, dusty experience of materiality, the film shows us blurred bodies of resistance as contingent – codependent, but wholly involved.

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Soft Pallet (excerpt) 1973, Rome, Italy. Videoda Archive. <https://vimeo.com/98280862>

Pitch (2017) Choreography by Charlie Morrissey, filming by Richard Sarco-Thomas and Rafal Mielczarek, produced by Malaika Sarco-Thomas.

<https://filmfreeway.com/project/1361791>

Password: materiality

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Malaika Sarco-Thomas is a dance artist and scholar researching the potential of improvisation technologies to facilitate developments in environmental perception. She has worked with dancers and community groups in China, Poland, Swaziland and Malta to develop site-specific choreography and film projects. An account of her work in China is detailed in the Journal of Arts and Communities issue 1.1 titled 'Improvising in Ruyang, Community Art as Ecological Practice (2011)'. In 2017 she produced the site-specific dance film *_Pitch_* which can be viewed at <https://filmfreeway.com/project/1361791> Password: materiality. *Pitch* was presented at the event *Screendance Landscapes* in Venice in 2018.

Recently Malaika co-organised the Dance Studies Association's 2018 conference in Valletta, Malta on the topic of 'Contra: Dance & Conflict' and co-edited the book *Interdisciplinarity in the Performing Arts: Contemporary Perspectives* with Stefan Aquilina, available through the Malta University Press. She is currently editing a forthcoming volume on *Thinking Touch in Partnering and Contact Improvisation: Artistic, Scientific, and Philosophical Perspectives*.

Malaika lectures in Dance at the University of Chester's Department of Performing Arts. Previously she was Senior Lecturer and Head of Department of Dance Studies at the University of Malta, and Course Coordinator for BA Dance & Choreography at Falmouth University incorporating Dartington College of Arts in the UK. Since 2011 she has co-organized Contact Festival Dartington and Conference, an annual platform for exchange in practices of contact and improvisation, with Richard Sarco-Thomas.

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Bodies and Sounds in Digital Music and Dance Cultures

Stephanie Schroedter

Abstract: Since the groundbreaking *Variations V* (1965) by and with John Cage, David Tudor, Gordon Mumma and Merce Cunningham, a variety of artistic experiments have emerged, using digital interfaces to create new and always different relations between dance and electroacoustic music. In principle, they are characterized by the intention of producing complex multilayered networks between the arts and their medializations, in contrast to visualizations or illustrations of music through dance (and vice versa).

By taking the example of the installation-performance *Eadweard's Ear – Muybridge extended*, which was premiered in 2017 under the artistic direction of Penelope Wehrli in collaboration with the sound artist Gerriet K. Sharma and the musician/computer scientist Joa Glasstetter, I will explain principally to what extent conflicts between the visual and aural components – constraints, resistance and latency – have advanced to driving forces within the development of the performance. Movements of Jutta Hell and Dieter Baumann from the Berlin based dance company *Rubato* were translated via sensors into a graphic notation, which forwarded only fragments of the processed information to the musicians. Furthermore, they were transmitted with minimal delay and modulated via an interface. In addition, they left for the musicians (a bassoon player, an electric guitarist and a drummer), who couldn't watch the dancers, interpretative freedom. Remarkable is the cognitive capacity with which our brain surprises us in such experiments: inevitably, we try to combine the audible and visible movements, which are separated by arbitrary breakages, and perceive them as a unit – a permanently changing, dynamic motion-sound-space.

Although still in a stage of development, I would like to present facets of my research project “Bodies and Sounds in Motion” (supported by the German Academic Research Foundation, DFG), by instancing two performances, which are characterized by techniques and technologies of sound production and linked with very divergent sound experiences in theatre and performance.

Apart from the current and without a doubt very advantageous performance analyses in the field of theatre studies and opera/music theatre research, which have been increasingly presented recently, my project aims at developing analytical models, which, above all, focus on the interaction and interplay between bodies and sounds in very different scenic formats. In this context, I do not restrict myself to dance theatre in a narrow sense, although it is a central starting point of my reflections.

Despite the fact that I am especially responding to latest developments in the contemporary music-/theatre and dance scene, with its growing interest in interrelations between sound and (body) movement (that is, audio-visual-kinaesthetic sensations beyond conventional narrative intentions), this project aims at a specifically choreomusical or sound-performance analysis.ⁱ This research is vital because in current staging and performance analyses of theatre studies (which undoubtedly offer valuable starting points for this) the interplay of music/sound and (body) movements/dance have largely been neglected.ⁱⁱ My main research questions focus on interrelations between audible and visual movements: How are music/sound and (body) movements/dance related in artistic processes? What models can be determined in this regard, and with which aesthetics of effect do they correspond? And: What are the consequences for their perception, the hearing and seeing of movements, as well as for their description and analysis?

The staging of audible and visual movements and their relationship within selected scenes will be described on the basis of music- and movement-analytical, that is, structural parameters. The aesthetic dimension – that is how body and sound in movements are perceived – will be investigated by consulting models of performance analyses from theatre studies. Additionally the research will also engage music theory and music psychology oriented towards cognitive sciences. It will also include aspects of film and media studies that comprise musicological aspects and/or a musicology that observe aspects of film and media studies.

The range of investigated performances, drawn from a wide variety of areas, genres and styles, comprises compositional techniques and music practices that have been for the most part left out of choreomusical analyses, such as New Music of the second half of the 20th century, including (live) electronic music and electro-acoustic as well as music improvisations. Furthermore, the project also takes into account genres that dissolve the

boundaries of the stage, such as installations or video productions. Three models for aesthetics of effect will serve as a starting point: a) interruptions or alienations, b) breakthroughs or estrangements and c) interdependency and the special case of interferences. It will be argued that these models lead to experiences of emergence, immersion or difference on the level of perception. An essential prerequisite for this approach is a physically located hearing of music/sounds/noises in/with/as movements, which will be defined as kinaesthetic listening.

Important prerequisites for these analyses are on the one hand a current appraisal of theories on the relationship between music and physicality (the repeatedly overused term “embodiment”), and the examination of music’s implicit movement potential on the other, including the resulting possibilities of choreographic/performative movement explications. Its wide spectrum was fanned out in a notable way only during the last century – but it still does not seem to be exhausted at all.

I would now like to turn to my two examples: The first is a series of four editions that oscillate between installation and performance, entitled *Eadweard’s Ear. Muybridge extended* under the artistic direction of Penelope Wehrli, which were staged in four different locations between February 2017 and October 2018 (from the Uferstudios in Berlin to a sports hall in the context of the Neue Musik Festival Rümelingen, the Künstlerhaus Mousonturm in Frankfurt and finally the closing show in the Berliner Akademie der Künste. I listened to/watched all editions live and was rather baffled in view of my changing perception during the continuous monitoring of this project for almost one and a half years). The second example is meant as a contrast to the first – the performance *Multiverse* by the Belgian dancer and choreographer Louis Vanhaverbeke, which had its world premiere in 2016 and since then has been performed in France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany and Great Britain. (I

came across this production during the Festival “Radikal” at the Radialsystem in Berlin in 2017.)

I will start with *Eadweard’s Ear. Muybridge extended*: As the subheading already suggests, this experimental series was inspired by chronophotography, which was based on Eadweard Muybridge’s work, in which the act of seeing was fragmented into single photos.ⁱⁱⁱ Jo Glasstetter and Penelope Wehrli took this basic principle and transferred it by means of a digital notation system or rather an “interface” onto the acoustic level to evoke a fragmentation of the listening process. The set-up of the experiment was as follows: In one corner of the big hall the musicians were positioned on a big rectangular field marked in dark blue. In the opposite corner stood a blue box with a “seismonaut” (see below) and two dancers – Jutta Hell and Dieter Baumann from the Berlin duo *Rubato*. These two corners were separated by a big divider so that musicians and dancers were not able to see each other. On this enormous screen snapshot-like movement sequences of the dancers were projected subsequently with bigger intervals. (The term “seismonaut” refers to a camera positioned above the blue box of the dancers. It recorded data for the projection of the movement sequences on the screen which, unlike Muybridge’s chronophotographic process, were digitally fragmented.)

Since the Swiss edition (for the Neue Musik Festival in Rümelingen) was an exception^{iv} among the series of four due to an entirely new composition concept and instrumental ensemble, the following description focuses on the other three editions (two in Berlin, one in Frankfurt), which were staged with the same ensemble of artists. Under the musical direction of the composer Gerriet K. Sharma, who is specialized in electro-acoustic music, the following musicians participated in the performance: Alejandra Cardenas with her electric guitar, which she used for an interactive and improvised “live coding”; bassoonist Stephanie Hupperich, who is trained in classical music and has focused recently on unusual

playing techniques in the context of New Music; and the percussionist Alexander Nickmann, who was initially trained as a dancer. Along the walls stands with loudspeakers mounted on top were positioned at regular distances, which served as an acoustic amplification as well as an optical boundary of the sound space.

What was remarkable for the sound production of this ensemble, was that they did not use the instruments as one might have expected: Percussions were hardly used as rhythmical instrument but instead mainly produced noise-like soundscapes by means of clappers and sticks, but also by violin bows, sponges, tin foil and other pieces of equipment made of plastic, iron or wood. The sounds produced by the bassoon were mainly respiratory sounds and the moving of the valves, whereas the electric guitar was primarily lying on the musician's thighs without being connected with the amplifier and instead operated with the amplifier's cable, various sponges and knives. Gerriet Sharma called his function at the display that is similar to a conductor's stand as "thermostat", i.e. he seemed to subtly mix the sounds, which means he also directed and controlled – or to put it in exaggerated terms: he manipulated the sound events.

The audience was able to move freely between the blue areas of the musicians and dancers, which were illuminated. They could sit down on the three-legged stools/camp chairs or position themselves with stools elsewhere. I noticed that I initially chose points of view or rather points within hearing range from which I was able to observe dancers and musicians simultaneously, despite the partition wall. It enabled me to reconcile the sounds, which initially were rather disconcerting but gradually became strangely familiar, with my observations of the dancers' movements: During this process I kept asking myself, what was the relationship between the movements and the sounds. Were the sound creations initiated by the movements or vice versa? Could one actually speak of interactions between musicians and dancers, if both parties could not see each other but 'just' listen to one another? Or was

this rather a process of permanently fathoming the relationships between the audible and the visible? Finally I caught myself enjoying those moments with great delight whenever I had the amazing impression that sounds and movements were precisely coordinated – which was actually quite impossible, since the movement data of the dancers were recorded by sensors and their transmission delayed (latency) and fragmented via a notation display (seismonaut display) for the musicians. The latter interpreted the thus generated graphics on the basis of pre-set playing instructions (constraints), although they were allowed to take certain liberties in the arrangement. Therefore, they were constantly required to decide between various options.

In no other production which I have attended did I notice a similar intensive oscillation between emergence effects and experiences of difference. This state required getting used to and finally needed a more intensive attention and was thus leading to a certain strain because of inner resistance. Each evening was subdivided into 7 or up to 9 sections, each of which was 15 to 20 minutes long. The audience had the opportunity to leave the hall in between and it was possible to join in again later. Therefore, it is not astonishing that during the performance installations the audience thinned out noticeably, thus only the “hard-boiled” insiders stayed until the very end.

I will now turn to Louis Vanhaverbeke’s *Multiverse*, which lacked complex technologies, instead it relied on the modest use of apparently nostalgic record player. Furthermore, it created a small sound universe by means of refined movement techniques, which also set inanimate objects into motion (thus animating them). In this little movement and sound universe everything deliberately revolved around itself, maybe paying homage to the almost leitmotif-like use of the record players. The performance was dominated by circular movements or rather circular formations. Nonetheless, it opened up a wide spectrum of associations in terms of sound space and sound chronology, which reached far beyond the

circularly draped, audible and visible stage event. Precisely structured right down to the last detail, nothing seemed to have been left to chance, particularly as it was obviously aiming at an optimal coordination of all elements that were involved in the sound- and movement activities (unlike *Eadweard's Ear*). Furthermore, it only seemed to be a solo performance, as was powerfully emphasized by the final waltz scene, in which a record player hangs down from the ceiling, swinging in three-four time to dance together with Louis Vanhaverbeke.

Each and every object of the colourful hotchpotch on stage became part of the performance. The aim seemed to be to exhaust the respective movement potential of every object according to their different materials in order to develop a complex general choreography, in which all those materials were combined.

Being confronted with this cabinet of sound curiosities, one is unable to avoid a smile. Nonetheless, these audio-visually-moving sensations beyond (conventional) narrative intentions appeals to all senses: not only to the senses of hearing and seeing, but also to those of movement, haptics and tactility. Whereas the punch line of *Eadweard's Ear* was above all that eye and ear alone could never decipher how the sounds and (body) movements were connected with each other and thus were exposed to permanent irritations, the viewer/listener of Vanhaverbeke's *Multiverse* was able to comprehend step by step the creation of this little sound universe. Unlike the permanently priming break between the audible and the visible in *Eadweard's Ear* (due to the pre-programmed latency and the fragmentation of the sensor signals), Vanhaverbeke's *Multiverse* emphatically involved the viewer/listener in the events on stage due to the gradual increase of the surprise effects. Only the performance's absurdity created some distance.

Notes

ⁱ For groundbreaking work in this direction cf. Jordan 200 and 2007.

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- ii Exception make Kendrick/Roesner 2011, Rebstock/Roesner 2012, Roesner 2014, Schrödl 2012, Ernst/Niethammer/Szymanski-Düll/Mungen 2015 and Rost 2017 among others.
- iii For this starting point cf. Frizot 2008.
- iv The accordionists Olivia Steimel and Sergej Tchirkov played under the direction of the composers So Jeong Ahn and Thomas Kesser.

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Feminine Nightclub dances revival and the global market: Commodifying Western Cultural Imaginaries and Stereotypes

M^a Dolores Tena Medialdea

Abstract: This paper examines the widespread popularization of two nightclub dances, belly dancing and burlesque (namely, striptease), as an urban phenomenon of globalized societies that has moved from adult entertainment circuits to the mass consumer culture. In their succeeding promotion, both practices has been reinterpreted as means of subjective empowerment within the hobby and wellness markets, matching with late capitalist trend of commodifying both sexuality and nostalgia. Traversed by American cultural imaginary of the so-called War on Terror, this replacement recalls to the one occurred during the first decades of the Cold War, when orientalist erotic imaginary prevailing since Parisian cabarets heyday was substituted for the American standard embodied by the pin-up.

In terms of methodology, both dance styles are conceived valuable semiotic systems that, being expression of the sexed body, not just reveal, but also produce gender constructions and patterns of bodily representation. On this account, this study draws on the critical perspectives of Gender, Cultural and Postcolonial Studies to develop a comparative analysis, which focuses on their current significance to experience identity processes, both individual and collective. Hence, cultural transfers and permanencies are discussed attending to US cultural hegemony in the context of globalization, as well as the performative power of mass media, so as to interpret the apparent conflict between the nostalgic aesthetics evoked in the mainstream versions of these dances and their updated review of gender constructs.

“The glossy, overheated thumping of sexuality in our culture is less about connection than consumption. Hotness has become our cultural currency”

Ariel Levy (2005:25)

I open with this quotation from writer Ariel Levy because it touches upon a central issue that has inspired the discussion in this paper: the outstanding social and marketable value bestowed to sexuality in postcapitalist societies. In view of this appraisal, the core of this study is the recent commercial reification of two different kind of dance performances, belly dance and burlesque. Given the various meanings of these terms, I would like to begin by explaining the specific sense they have been used: On the one hand, the expression belly dance has been employed to refer only to its stage form, namely, the individual, sexualized and exclusively feminine cabaret style that flourished in the last colonial period –so as to distinguish it from preexisting forms of dance, both popular and professional, in areas of Islamic influence. However, in recent times the term Oriental dance (from the Arab *raqs sharki*, coined to denominate merely vernacular cabaret style) has spread among worldwide

practitioners. Accordingly, these two expressions have been utilized interchangeably in the last two sections of this article, related to the current period. On the other hand, burlesque has been used by meaning striptease –and not its broader sense of satirical vaudeville subgenre–, inasmuch both terms became synonyms by the thirties when striptease numbers started shining among other type performances (Fuentes, 2006). This choice relies on the wish to differentiate these classical striptease forms from the latest ones, commercialized in the pornography industry, since as Kay Siebler describes: “Historically, burlesque artists from the early 1900s through to the 1970s prided themselves on not stripping total nudity, performing artful dance, and keeping the performance ‘fun’” (2014:4).

My interest on developing this research started at the last stages of writing my PhD thesis (Tena Medialdea, 2015), when I could observe that the international spreading of the neoburlesque subculture was somehow entailing a renewed scene, shared by both dance styles, together with the restoration of the debate about relating their practice. Despite current bias against it among most belly dance practitioners, from the late nineteenth century until the advent of the 1960’s and 1970’s sexual revolutions, professional striptease and belly dancing intersected in Western stages associated to nightclub circuits. Therefore, among striptease researchers’ circles it is common to trace its origins in vaudevillian versions of belly dancing such as the dance of the seven veils or the *hoochy-coochy* (Fuentes, 2006)

Researching belly dancing and burlesque

The parallelism established between the contemporary versions of belly dancing and burlesque, resignified as potential sites to explore subjective experience and bodily representation processes, can be explained attending to their development from adult entertainment circuits (mainly, directed to male audiences) to mass culture, surpassing the long-lasting association to erotic shows and unformal kind of venues. Some analogies resulting from this evolution are: firstly, the discourses employed to promote them

emphasizing their subversive potential to transcend restrictive Western canons of female corporeality (extreme slimness and eternal youth), as well as their feminising quality; secondly, their innovative and now branched out *mise-en-scène* (from internet channels, contests, festivals, etc. to established theatres) that is contributing to surpass their long-lasting association to erotic shows or informal kind of venues; thirdly, the prominence of amateur performances, usually attracting already engaged audiences, together with professionals' demands for attaining recognition as an art form, facing labour intrusiveness; and, lastly, the fact that the monolithic notion of femininity, usually upheld on them, is being challenged nowadays. Besides, it can be observed that neoburlesque circuits are becoming a new showcase for minority and unorthodox sorts of belly dance performances.

Accordingly, the premise sustained is that recent reinterpretations of these two dances are, in fact, displaying one same cultural product, which is subjected to market politics and its continuous fashion renewals. On this basis, the main goal of this research consists in exploring contemporary subcultures generated around these two dances focussing on their cultural significances, so as to offer a panoramic perspective of their reification processes. To this end, the archetypical figures of both the belly dancer and the pin-up, being expression of the sexed body, are analysed in the light of their suitability to embody gender and erotic discourses.

Despite traditional void of these uncanonical styles in dance scholarship, nowadays it is possible to recognize pioneering research communities in both fields, which have been furthered by the advance of the new epistemic approaches in social sciences. This theoretical turn has contributed to dehierarchize the different fields of study (Horton Fraleigh & Hanstein, 1999); as a result, popular dances as the ones discussed in this paper start to be recognized as epistemological categories, likewise traversed by different symbolic systems such as social class, ethnicity, and, particularly, sexuality and gender. Following these

tendencies, I have addressed this comparative study from a historicist approach that has allowed mapping recent reinterpretations and stylistic diversification of both dances so as to offer a panoramic perspective of this progress. From professional stage forms (mainly related to the adult entertainment sphere) to amateur productions and practices (often linked to the wellness culture, currently in force), all of them have been regarded as potentially critical sites for examining transnational circulation of cultural products, gender standards and patterns of symbolic embodiment –reinterpreted under USA cultural hegemony since World War II. In addition, their current internationalization has been viewed by means of an interdisciplinary approach informed by the analytical perspectives of the Gender, Cultural and Postcolonial Studies, which has contributed: on the one hand, to elucidate to which extent their present interweaving with identity processes has been mediated by the performative power of mass media; and, on the other hand, to enquire about their attributed femininity, their assumed subversive potential and their recent role as vehicles to assert sexual dissidence.

Dancing Western taboo on sexuality

The rise of professional erotised feminine performances in the frame of the *fin-de-siècle* culture –even though subjected to the male gaze and beyond the deep-rooted prejudice of associating those to commercialized sex– represented a challenge to bourgeois Puritan sexual mores and its polarized patterns of symbolic embodiment, sustained since Romanticism. Under the canons of hegemonic social conservatism female bodies would have been reduced either to the virginal/maternal role of legitimate women or to that of the “fallen woman” (courtesan, vamp or *femme fatale*, who often belong to lower classes or ethnic minorities). Within this context stage forms of both belly dance and burlesque, even if presenting evident stylistic dissimilarities and different trails along their historical and sociocultural evolution, would have much contributed to generate Western erotic imaginaries.

Besides, since professionalization of these dance styles was linked to the development of cultural industries and the commodification of eroticism in capitalist societies, their potent erotic iconography would have reach to traverse class and national boundaries. Hence, according to Stephen Gundle (2008), their performers would have eventually become allegorical representations of women sexual manumission, drawing to the appeal of the archetype of the courtesan over the bourgeois womanly ideal (the virtuous housewife). As this author remarks, this erotic icon has prevailed by adapting to the successive trends and lifestyle changes that consumer culture imposes. Actually, from the Ottoman odalisque to the Romantic courtesan, from the *cocottes* of *Belle Epoque* cabarets to Hollywood star-system divas, up to contemporary popstars, all of them would incarnate this archetype.

The harem fantasy reinterpreted: Cold War period

The nationalist arousal that followed the end of the World War II contributed to generate a new erotic imaginary in the United States of America in which sexuality happened to be embodied by an ideal closed to the middle-class American white woman. Its origins can be found in the figure of the pin-up, a femininity icon that evolved within the adult entertainment industry (then establishing as a lucrative economic sector) and lowbrow art productions. As discussed by Gundle (2008), the refusal of orientalist erotic imaginary –in vogue from the *Belle Epoque* up to the interwar period– that impersonates the heterodox, unruly and ambiguous vamp/*femme fatal*, matched the outbreak of Middle East geopolitical conflict in the early decades of the Cold War.

From the end of the fifties to mid-sixties, this hypersexualized standard of feminine bodily reification moved from being an object of essentially male consumption to be embraced by advertising, fashion and media industries. As a result, responding to socioeconomic interests, this tamed figure (as depicted in cultural industries) would become an allegory of the American dream. As Kirsten Anderson (2004) argues, in the optimistic

fifties *zeitgeist* lowbrow art and countercultural productions operated as a nationalist reaction opposed to the homogenizer ethos of American middle class by exhibiting, uninhibitedly and without pretending to display authenticity, not just US erotic fantasies, but the anachronisms and multiethnicity of American culture. Within this milieu, the allure of exotic and primitive cultures increased the visibility of diverse diasporic communities (Latino, Middle East, Polynesian, and Afro-American), mostly in urban spheres where, preceding upcoming racial riots, would participate of new sociocultural patterns and leisure activities. Ethnic nightclubs and bars, addressed to mixed audiences that included cosmopolitan white-American citizens, outstand among them. Indeed, Oriental fantasy was reinterpreted in Middle Eastern nightclubs that, according to Anne Rasmussen (2005), provide Turkish, Armenian, Arab (mainly, Syrian-Lebanese), and Greek minorities with a means of negotiating their own ethnicity and nationalism in front of the hegemonic American society. A new and hybrid musical style was shaped, assembling their musical legacies with Western contemporary instrumental trends, so that «a kind of musical caricature of the Orient was created» (Rasmussen, 2005:180). Belly dancing became the most appealing element of this eclectic and exotic subculture, even if it used to be performed by white American dancers (less subjected to social pressure than women from these communities). The representational frame of American belly dance then drew from cabaret styles developed in Middle Eastern capitals (Egyptian and Lebanese styles but, above all, the much more sexualized Turkish style) to end up producing their particular versions. Altogether, this resignification of Western harem fantasy may be interpreted considering Slavok Žižek approach, since:

fantasy mediates between the formal symbolic structure and the positivity of the objects we encounter in reality - that is to say, it provides a 'schema' according to which certain positive objects in reality can function as objects of desire, filling in the empty places opened up by the formal symbolic structure (Žižek, 2011:7).

Moreover, the universal scope reached by US mass media entertainment industries signify the diffusion of this pop culture imaginary overseas, where it would be reinterpreted under each particular belief and cultural system. This tendency can be illustrated with the rise of Egyptian film industry and the so-called “Golden Era of the Oriental dance”, from the forties to the late seventies, when hegemonic depiction of this style occurred. The support of Egyptian national discographic and movie industries signified the consolidation of vernacular *raqs sharki* like stage genre, as Viola Shafik discusses: “due to the dance’s partial elevation to an almost highbrow art form” (2007:208). At the same time, it would start to be adopted in social celebrations, such as weddings, replacing traditional dance practises; as well as, to be performed as ‘local’ culture for tourists.

The concept of *colonial mimicry* developed by Homi K. Bhabha (1994) has been helpful to understand social resignification of feminine professional dance among both Middle East communities and its diaspora at this period. Since, in order to attain and sustain their Modern claims, these would have normalized and rearticulated their own realities by showing what was considered desirable from the otherness, that is, by adopting hegemonic Imperial standards. As Sunaima Maira points out, auto-exoticism is enduring in current postcolonial context in which orientalism has been redefined in terms of interculturalism:

Belly dancing has become an element of Arab identity and cultural contestations among younger generations who struggle with how to produce and perform Arab-ness, given the emphasis on multicultural origins, the hyper-Orientalization of Middle East, and the limits of the cultural imaginings of ‘Arab’ identity in United States” (Maira, 2008: 340).

Nightclub dances and sexual revolutions

The impact of sexual revolutions of the sixties and seventies contributed to enhance sexuality as a social and marketable value effective to undergo identity issues, at the same time that women’s liberation movements claimed feminine reappropriation of the erotized body and sexuality. In this milieu, belly dancing was reified as a cultural product in the

United States turning to be a popular healing and fitness practice among middle-class white American women, a mainstream hobby. Exemplifying Marta Savigliano's ideas (1995) on consumption of exoticism, since then diverse substyles have been developed, conforming anyway a unified vision for its practitioners. At the same time, the figure of the belly dancer would be once more reinterpreted as an icon of feminine sexual liberation. This evolution would have especially contributed to dissociate belly dancing from striptease, which would remain circumscribed to the male's gaze within the then rising pornography industry; whereas, as Jacqueline Millner y Catriona Moore refer: «By the 1960's burlesque had become passé, and the theatricality of tease had lost its subversive punch outside of the drag queen circuit» (2015:21).

In any case, the uprising of the sexed body would have entailed that, as pointed out by Jean Baudrillard (1989), the representational frame of sexuality would have progressively moved from being subjected to the pressure of puritan censorship to rely on: the cult of the body, the tyranny of healthiness and the requirement of adjusting to changing market trends.

Erotic expressions and gender identities in postcapitalist societies

By the nineties, while the belly dancing craze was reaching unprecedented levels of popularity worldwide, burlesque theatrical tradition was reemerging in the USA and Canada. Formerly, the spreading of belly dance practice happened to start by the end of the 1980's, when its practise started surpassing national and ethnic frames; although, as Sunaina Maira (2008) argues, it was after the 9/11 terrorist attacks that it would receive a great deal of media attention, and attracted also pop music and fashion industries. To this author, most of its appeal then rested on liberal multiculturalism and contemporary gender politics, given that the progress of Islamist terrorism would have hampered to sustain a romantized vision of Arabs and Muslims ever since. As a result, from the beginning of the twenty first century it is possible to detect new performative directions, which is revealing a turn towards the past or

the fantasy to recreate imaginary sites where incarnating Western womanly sensuality: On the one hand, substyles that maintain fewer connections with the varieties developed in the Middle East (ATS, Tribal Fusion, Steam punk, retro-vaudevillian, etc.) are proliferating among belly dance circles of those; on the other, Oriental glamour are depicted resorting to other dances such as, for example, Bollywood choreographies; and, most recently, neoburlesque subculture and its reinterpretation of classic striptease numbers, from an explicit feminist agenda (closed to third-wave and pro-sex feminisms), is spreading in most European cities, as well as in Australia and Japan –even though, without reaching the massive popularity formerly acquired by Oriental dance, since particular social taboos around public exhibition of the nude/semi-nude body overlap globalized cultural trends.

This progress (namely, the successive international promotion of belly dance and burlesque as means of feminine empowerment through performing the sexed body) recalls the one occurred along the first decades of the Cold War, when orientalist glamour of Parisian cabarets was replaced by American burlesque models (Fuentes, 2006; Gundle, 2008), revealing not just trends' cyclic character, but also diversification as a market strategy of cultural industries. Nonetheless, the subversive capability of mainstream versions of these dances is being questioned nowadays, inasmuch their hypersexualized models of bodily representation cannot be detached from those promoted in commercialized culture since the nineties (Ferreday, 2008; Maira, 2008; Siebler, 2014). From then on it has been established a renewed masquerade of femininity in which erotic fetishes (such as excessive high heel shoes, fleshy lips, push up bras or, even, cosmetic surgery of breast implants, among other procedures) are reinterpreted as a visual means of symbolizing feminine empowerment. Broadly contemplated from feminist critique this womanly ideal, which gathers the diligence and respectability of the mother with the aesthetics and economical independence of the courtesan, is now reproducing normative symbolic structures. As Ariel Levy (2005)

discusses, its prevalence may be regarded in terms of raunch culture, since exposing not just the hyperbolic character reached by sexuality in postcapitalist societies, but also the way pornography has been introduced in pop culture –even endowed, as Gundle (2008) underlines, with a glamorous aura.

Global popularization of belly dance and burlesque cannot be detached from media promotion of this feminine corporal image; accordingly, their contemporary practices may well be viewed drawing on Teresa de Lauretis's notion of technologies of gender (1987), that is to say, as technosocial apparatus that submit individuals to a required gender pattern. Her ideas have contributed to interpret these popular culture expressions that may, at once, echo women's sexual manumission and perpetuate the association between feminine body and sex. The aim of favouring the feminization of women bodies –allegedly, masculinized in accessing to the male labour market– that is being used to promote these dance styles, could be recognized as one of these apparatus of leisure time regulation and control. In addition, De Lauretis queried the need to underline women diversity and autonomy, since the emphasis on sexual difference has turned out to be a disadvantage to feminist theorists. Likewise, the accepted “exclusively feminine” character of both disciplines, so linked to processes of bodily representation and autorepresentation, is hampering their yearned professional recognition.

The enduring subversive potential of the erotized body

Conversely, the recent rise of queer-orientated performances within these presumed womanly practices is contributing to relocate the fetishism conferred to the female body, as well as to uphold sexual dissidence. On the one hand, the number of male Oriental dancers has significantly increased of late, allowing the redefinition of the feminized cabaret style not just in Western countries, but also in Middle Eastern ones. Thanks to the performing freedom of this style, male Oriental dancers are claiming those professional forms of Middle Eastern

dance that, traditionally performed by men, would have almost disappeared during the last colonial period as a result of the introduction of European cultural apparatus (Karayianni, 2005; Shay, 2005). At the same time, as Stavros S. Karayianni (2005) remarks, nowadays male Oriental dance is symbolically responding to the generalized repression of non-heteronormative masculinities in Islamic culture.

On the other hand, regarding neoburlesque subculture, recent studies (Millner & Moore, 2015; Siebler, 2014) tend to distinguish two unlike tendencies that Kay Siebler (2014) denominates retro/sexy burlesque and underground burlesque. Even though sharing one same agency (this is, the performative employment of erotica as means of subjective transformation and self-determination), they differ in terms of their aesthetic strategies and performative use of the body. In relation to the latter, underground proposals tend to explore Western sexual taboos from diverse approaches, close to the queer theory and the imaginary of the *riot grrrls* subculture. In the search to subvert ongoing hegemonic social conventions on gender identities and beauty canons, the use of comedy and the grotesque body acts as political satire to destabilize audience's symbolic systems. However, this tendency has attained greater acceptance in Anglo-Saxon countries, as keeping up British music hall and American vaudeville mocking traditions – in contrast with the more aestheticist tradition of French cabaret.

At the end, this evolution exposes how sexualized expressions remain being employed to reply the crystalized Romantic imaginary. In this respect, Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity (1990) has enabled to interpret this idea, since emphasizing the highly codified and ritual character of gender acts, as well as the contribution of parodic identities to expose the artifice of gender constructions. Nevertheless, as Butler already raised, the assumed relation between subversion and the hyperbolic representations of sexuality could also be

objected. Actually, transnational assumption of Western gender constructions rather displays the uniformity that globalization imposes.

Coda

“When the real is no longer what it was, nostalgia assumes its full meaning”

Jean Baudrillard (1994[1978]:6)

To conclude, in the light of this quote from Jean Baudrillard, I would like to launch the following reflexion: Even though preceding sexual revolutions of the sixties and seventies both belly dance and burlesque challenged hegemonic bourgeois puritanism, current mainstream versions may well be located in the order of simulacra, given their hybrid and referential character, pastiche aesthetics, as well as the attempts of legitimating them turning to historicist nostalgia. Whereas, at the age of massive commercialization of pornography and political correctness, at least heterodox interpretations of these “feminine” dances seem to move on their satirical component and enjoyment of diversity.

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Conflicts in Maltese Identity and Lineage: the future and legacy

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Abstract: A brief overview outlining the legacy of yet unwritten history of contemporary dance in Malta (1975–present) from an autobiographical perspective, unavoidably intertwined within the framework of my research investigating current practices in style, conflicts of identity, neage. Perceived from a Maltese social, cultural, political ethos as a Maltese dance pioneer, practitioner, choreographer, spectator. The opportunity to question embodied history through a ‘lived’ form of resource and the challenges faced within the phenomena of ‘dance importation’ with an existing suggestion of possible suppressed cultural identity.

Slide 1

The legacy of Contemporary Dance in Malta between 1975 to the present.

This paper aims to outline the legacy of contemporary dance in Malta between 1975 to the present. At this stage it is important that I make clear that my personal reflections, observations and thoughts are unavoidably intertwined within the framework of this research. As such I ask that you view this presentation as a personal perspective set with an objective overview within the context of this paper. I had to be selective in my mentions due to constraints of time.

The yet unwritten history of Contemporary dance will also reflect of my work and its role in relation to the growth of Contemporary dance practice in Malta researched in a chronological study of events that impacted and influenced changes towards Contemporary dance on the island.

Personal experiences during this time provided me the opportunity to question my practice by addressing my embodied history, thus providing a ‘lived’ form of resource to the study. Drawing from difficult challenges, perceptions and sensibilities, the research investigated the working practices of the time whilst considering the impact of teachers, collaborators and colleagues that knowingly and unknowingly become pivotal to the development of my own practice and research influencing a chain of events. Data is from my personal collection of

newspaper cuttings, brochures, magazines, reviews and interviews with some referenced artists and dance critics.

Slide 2

- How / When / Where / Why did Contemporary dance arrive on the island?
- How was Contemporary dance received in early years?
- How did Contemporary dance expand?
- What was my role in Contemporary dance practice in Malta?
- The Future and a Legacy Beyond
- Have we moved away from colonial attitudes?
- Has an identity emerged?

Slide 3

CONTEMPORARY DANCE ARRIVES IN MALTA

In 1975 I attended the Tanya Bayona Dance School. Bayona introduced me to modern dance, postmodern in style with strong influences of Jazz and the tastes of musical theatre. During that time the influences of the likes of the Rocky Horror Show (1975) followed by the act of Grease (1978) were the rage releasing a different form of energy in the style of dance which also reached our shores. Meanwhile in Malta the only dance schools in existence at that time were Tanya Bayona, Daphne Lungaro Mifsud and Lillian Attard ballet schools. The schools focused mainly in Cecchetti and Royal Academy of Dance Systems of classical ballet training. In 1979 Alison White founded her school offering a variety of dance disciplines with commercial strengths in tap, jazz and musical theatre.

Bayona had a vision to branch out by bringing outside influences. One must keep in mind that at the time there were limited qualified teachers. As the popularity of dance began to grow, the school began to expand in other dance disciplines. Reaching into the fields of Jazz, Spanish Dance and Contemporary.

In 1980 Vivienne Fielding (UK) was invited to teach at Tanya's school. Others who were to come and leave a mark included Diana Turcotte (Canada) in 1982 and Amanda Eyles (UK) in 1985.

Slide 4 and 5

How was contemporary dance received in the early years?

Fielding's background was a varied style of contemporary dance that included technical styles from Alvin Ailey, Martha Graham, Erik Hawkins and Viola Farber. These names meant nothing to Malta at the time. Fielding left me curious questioning what was this contemporary dance? It seems that these 'alternative' techniques being introduced by Fielding allowed for a certain versatility to be explored. As a young dancer it was a new experience not to be confined to the structured boundaries of Classical ballet. A vivid memory of Fielding's floor work exercises was completely alien to my body. The whole class was perplexed as the concept of moving across the floor was still foreign that had been conditioned to work ethereally against gravity.

Bayona's school opened a new way of considering dance not realizing perhaps the effects it would eventually have in the future. Whilst interviewing Fielding (2014) she recalls Bayona feeling a little restless perhaps within the teaching structures of classical ballet and silently embraced contemporary methods and innovations. With contemporary dance being offered within the school brought a new wave of energy, and a discovery of Maltese talented students began to surface. During this time of exploration there was a creative relationship brewing with contemporary composers such as the late Maestro Charles Camilleri.

Slide no 6

In the early 80's the Manoel theatre hosted Tandy Beal & Company (USA) her performance was one of the first contemporary encounters that offered enticing, mysterious, theatrical dance. As a choreographer Beal astonished the Maltese public and stimulated curiosity.

A workshop was offered to dancers in on the stage of the Manoel theatre, where I recall dancers having great difficulty in relating to this task based idea of movement. This was very premature times in the development of dance theatre and dance improvisations in Malta.

Slide No. 7

Nana Gleason (US) took to the stage at the San Anton Gardens, performing an unusual style of work, defining herself categorically as a modern expressionist dancer with a strong background in Bharatanatyam (south Indian classical dance). Malta was not exposed to this dance genre, so of course the reviews of her performance at the San Anton Gardens was curiously received.

It is possible to suggest that till this point, the theatres predominantly presented more conservative disciplines of performance that were either classical and neo classical forms of dance, with an occasional random visiting performance of folk dance troupes. The diverse works of contemporary dance from the abstract to the political and social had not yet been exposed. Therefore, many audiences were accustomed to the 'comfortable' sensibility of traditional classical recitals they knew what was expected. General comments when attempting to bring audiences to watch contemporary dance was indeed a struggle, such as 'I don't understand the work, and it's too abstract' or 'The dancer does not have pointed feet', or 'the music was too strange', these would be a few of the generic comments.

Yet, times were changing and there was a considerable shift in an influx of contemporary dance makers and their companies (mostly from the UK) who presented their works to Maltese audiences. These would often be through either performances, or workshops and choreographies made on Maltese student and semiprofessional dancers.

slide 8

These included a few of the training platforms and performances between the years 1998 – 2006 just to mention a few influences of styles and names during those years:

Henri Oguike /Isabel Tamen (Portugal/UK based)	Cunningham Technique
Laurie Booth (UK)	Release Work – Partnering - Conceptual
Luca Silvestrini (Italy / UK)	Physical theatre - conceptual
Ben Dunst (UK)	Release Work, Partnering
Jodie Farrugia (Australia)	Fusion
Jack Gray (New Zealand)	Traditional, Contemporary fusion
Bawren Tavaziva (Zimbabwe/UK based)	Fusion
Michael Joseph (UK)	Martial Arts, hip hop, Capoeira fusion
Garry Benjamin (UK)	Martial Arts, hip hop, Capoeira fusion
Debbie Lee Anthony (UK)	Contemporary styles
Jasmin Vardimon (Israel / UK Based)	Physical theatre, Gestural
Jem Treays (Wales)	Conceptual, Fusion of styles
Douglas Comley (Wales/ Malta)	Conceptual, Fusion of styles
Mavin Khoo (Malaysia/UK/ Malta based)	Classical/Bharatanatyam, Cunningham
Lea Anderson (UK)	Gestural, conceptual
Roberto Olivan	Circus, flying low
Athanasia Kanellopoulou	Physical theatre

Slide 9

In 1998 Laurie Booth (UK) performed a solo voyage wearing a warrior helmet, he danced using improvisation as an integral part of his performance. Audiences were startled by Booth's quality of movement and harmony rather than a message or storyline. His very 'different' technique and way of moving, seemed to weave into one expression working of every muscle. Booth gave workshops which introduced a very new and foreign concept (at the time) of 'contact work'. It was particularly illuminating to find no gender specification within the technique of partner work. The concept of males carrying females no longer seemed to exist and everyone was on an equal footing.

Lea Anderson in particular proved a challenging innovator for audiences and the dance community of the time (1999). Anderson (UK) was the director of two dance groups called the Cholmondeleys and the Featherstonehaughs. The Featherstonehaughs performed at the Manoel Theatre. Malta had not yet been exposed to this genre of work. A six strong male dance cast that twisted and contorted in a reconstruction of the 'lost dances' of Egon Schiele. Provocative and charged, this work drew angst out of the self-portraits by this tormented expressionist artist. I recall a full house at the Manoel theatre finishing with a standing ovation. However, this was followed by an invitation to be a part of a cultural TV programme called Meander where the argument and attack was pronounced that this was not dance. Questions as to "where are the pointed feet?" and "where is the music?" were addressed directly to me which forced me to defend contemporary ideas within a debate on aesthetics and ideals in relation to the Maltese perception of dance.

Between 1998 and 2004 British council Malta brought many contemporary dance companies to perform backed up by the British Council UK who was pushing forward diverse dance companies sprouting all over Britain at that time.

Slide 10

In 2000 Phoenix Dance Company performed at the Theatre, under the direction of Thea Nerissa Barnes a former American dancer with the Martha Graham Company. The all black company won the Maltese audience over. Thea Nerissa Barnes was invited to give a lecture about her work and experience as a performer with the Graham Company whilst company members gave a class/workshop open to all who wished to attend. The company was instrumental in bringing what was to become a significant feature of contemporary dance in the 21st century: diversity be it culturally, racially or stylistically.

Slide 11

In the same year Union Dance Company, a racial diverse company performed *Lifeforms*, Union Dance brought with them a fusion of hip-hop and martial arts style within a contemporary dance framework. The virtuoso adaptation of the Brazilian martial art Capoeira with its spinning kicks and powered lunges confronted renaissance music with street witty dances of that decade such as hip hop to break dancing, ballet, and modern and Asian dance bringing together stylistic diversity within a single work. Their free flow movement with strong bodies but unexpected feet (not pointed) won the audiences over receiving generous applause. Union dance tapped into creating a niche with contemporary dance separating them from mainstream dance for twenty years.

Slide 12

In 2001 **Jasmin Vardimon** a choreographer from Israel was developing a particular signature, first performing *Lure Lure Lure* in Malta with Zbang Dance Company. This was enthusiastically received where the combination of distinctive dance, theatrical skills and video projection combined with a sharp sense of observation and rich ironic humor met the audience. Returning in 2002 Vardimon company visited Malta again performing *Ticklish* to an established Maltese fan club, a new audience mix who discovered within her work an emergence of physical

theatre inspired by the likes of Pina Bausch, innovative to Malta. Hofesh Schechter was a dancer in her company at that time.

Slide 13

In 2004 **Luca Silvestrini** a former dancer with The Featherstonehaughs who developed his own company called **Protein Dance**, performed a work called “**Publife**”. Creating a pub scene at the the Valletta Campus Theatre. The audience was made interactive; it was an innovative venture at that time. Publife was a concoction of text, comedy, movement and a raw projection of pub happenings, some of which was not received well. It is possible to suggest that perhaps to appreciate the context of this particular work one must have experienced or lived at some point British pub culture. Nevertheless, it opened a door for critical discourse allowing for dance and choreography to be seen perhaps as something more than pure entertainment. Being present at this performance I witnessed a respected Maltese theatre critic, perhaps not quite ready to embrace the absurdity that this could be dance.

Slide 14

The late **Nigel Charnock** (UK) a former founding member of **DV8**, performed his solo work **Frank**. This had quite an impact on the audience. Charnock ignored the distinction between actors, dancers and singers and simply worked with people to make total theatre. His work was about being human. His performance viewed religion and abortion, it was the first time from my perspective that I truly felt a distinctive change in Maltese audiences. It seemed acceptance in the changes that were happening in the field of dance and theatre, and the appreciation of the humor in tragedy and the tragedy in humour with its seriously funny, madly sane beautiful chaos was engendering a feeling of emotional inspiration to all in the audience. Charnock’s performance had interesting critical reviews which ranged from the positive to almost unkind feedback. But one could sense the respect towards the performer’s audacity of approaching such sensitive subjects within a catholic country that was still under the strong

influence of artistic censorship. However, I remember being in the audience and observing discomfort on the faces of audience members.

Slide 15

How did contemporary dance expand within our islands?

1983 Bayona and Fielding collaborated to develop a dance company called FIEBA. At this point Malta Visas were extremely difficult to acquire. Bayona had strong dancers blended with Fielding's new choreographic abilities and with these strengths they attempted to set up a ballet and contemporary dance company. However, with Fielding being non- Maltese and being jointly involved in heading this idea '*a company*' the government at that time did not wish to support this. According to both Bayona and Fielding this was the reason that stopped them financially to invest in the company. Nonetheless they put up a performance including a collaboration with a Russian troupe that was the link through the cultural minister of that time. (There were many dance events linked with cold war countries during this period.)

The introduction of other disciplines of Dance encouraged many young dancers who felt either incompetent or in some cases, resistant to the requisite of Classical ballet to continue their Dance studies. This conflict followed a pattern of commencing one's training in Ballet and then as one developed and matured emotionally and physically there would be a shift into the modern and contemporary dance disciplines. Contemporary styles seemed to compliment the majority of Maltese physiques.

In 1983 the era of dance and fitness spaces opening all around the island offering various fitness methods, a shift in dance culture spread over the island through these fitness programmes with rising popularity towards dance.

CLICK ON 16

The Tanya Bayona Dance Theatre company was launched in 1989 its identity being a neo classical contemporary style under the direction of Tanya Bayona. During this period Felix

Busutill and Justin Barker opened the college of Jazz (1989) offering a range of dance disciplines, their strongest identity to date being the Jazz discipline which they built their school and dance company YADA upon producing large scale commercial performances.

Slide no. 17

A relationship with the late Maestro Charles Camilleri a very important figure in Maltese music and recognized internationally, developed between TBBDT which was a significant era to the evolution of Contemporary performance it brought new challenges. Sara Pardo an Argentine artist based in Paris was invited to choreograph the company in 1995 she had an abstract approach to choreography. Pardo's Laban and chance-like Cunningham methods created a curiosity to TBBDT dancers until then, the idea of participating in the collaborative process was fairly new.

Slide no. 18

In 2004 through the British Council Mavin Khoo (Malaysia) stimulated a curiosity within audiences with his solo performance in a Bharatanatyam Contemporary style. Later returning in 2007 performing with live musicians from India. His performances initiated a new East meets West curiosity. It was the beginning of a long term relationship with Malta, eventually joining the University of Malta Dance Studies since 2010 – 2014 continuing on to be the first Artistic Director of ZfinMalta Dance Ensemble from 2014 – 2016. Khoo developed a relationship with the Flamenco community and produced two performances which were pivotal in Malta at questioning how classical music could be interpreted, in his re-telling of Swan Lake performed at the Malta Arts Festival in 2011, he brought together international collaborators and four local female dancers. This gave an opportunity for Maltese dancers to work at professional level.

Slide no. 19

Since 2006 Sandra Mifsud a former dancer with Contact Dance Company was instrumental in writing the infrastructure of the National Dance Company ZfinMalta. Sandra invested deeply into the community through outreach work and today is the Artistic Director of Opening Doors Association leading projects for disability groups and continues to perform.

In 2003 and 2005 Douglas Comley (Wales) offered dancers an encounter with South African Gumboot, a dance used by miners as a form of communication using codified body percussion and stomping patterns in wellington boots. He continues to live in Malta and pursues a wider interest amongst boys and dance in Malta through community and education projects.

Slide no. 20

2007, Athanasia Kanellopoulou (Greek) a former dancer with Pina Bausch shared her theatrical dance style with strong influences from the Mediterranean. Dancers embraced her rebellious qualities, her wild anarchist strong feminine political views that transmitted through her dance movement qualities and works.

Slide No.21

In 2001 Joanne Butterworth conducted an intensive course that focused on the Laban analysis of movement. My introduction to Butterworth was destined to lead me many years later to a pivotal change towards dance and dance academia.

In 2010, the University of Malta opened its first Dance department under the Mediterranean Institute. Funds were allocated where gratitude and mention to the late Father Peter Serracino Inglot for his foresight and vision in the arts must be acknowledged. Introducing Butterworth to the University of Malta proved fruitful as she was contracted to write the first modules for a BA and MA degree programme. The department has grown considerably instrumental in the serious recognition dance so rightly needed, it has developed important links within the islands creative industry as well as with the international contemporary dance sector and exchanges. The results of this initiative had the very first cohort graduate in 2013, and has attracted dance students from across the globe.

Slide No. 22

What was my role in Contemporary dance practice in Malta?

Between 1981 to 1986 my training in London was buzzing with dance artists and tutors very relevant and influential in the transformation of contemporary dance in Europe in the 20th century. This exposed me to a wide variety of contemporary techniques. In these years the most influential techniques taught were Graham, Cunningham and Limon. However, the style of teaching varied from one teacher to another which injected a developing taste for the perpetual

wave evolving in Contemporary dance. I was thirsty to bring this home. Teaching since 1987 I would continue to draw from these varied styles within my practice eventually finding my own voice and signature taking risks and developing a Mediterranean fusion and style of work even

though in early years nobody could understand what I was doing with dance vocabulary, use of space and music choices.

Slide Nos: 23 – 29

In 1998 I founded Contact Dance Company as a vehicle to promote my own choreographic work as well as independent commissions collaborating with international choreographers and musicians. This was an important part of growth within the company as it moved away from mainstream dance and evolved towards refreshing innovation. During these years there was no other dance company in existence.

1998 to 2007 Contact Dance company travelled all over Europe and North Africa, performing at international dance festivals. The company's range created specifically by a number of international choreographers reflected the versatility of the group and the willingness to diversify through cultures. Collaborations erupted and formed into interdisciplinary performances. Dancers branched out and contemporary dance began to filter through the communities. It is important to note that during these years many new dance schools too began to sprout. With this brought new laws in permits, qualification demands, etc creating some conflicts. Many schools included contemporary dance classes within their programmes allowing their studios to be used for workshops and classes. This aided visibility and allowed the practice to become more accessible to all dance enthusiasts, new talents emerged as the 'You tube' culture and technology closed the gap bridging dance.

In 2001 discussions were held between CDC, the culture department and the theatre towards the goal of setting up a resident dance company. No funding bodies existed added with shortsighted Culture Ministers that did not understand the heart of a country is through its culture. During this period investment into the art of dance were limited. The Dance community represented by principals, students, choreographers and practitioners doing outstanding work should be applauded for their belief and continuity which went unacknowledged professionally

for many years, undermined for the important value they contributed to society, communities, and culture.

Slide Nos: 30 to 35

As a freelancer this allowed me to push, prod, provoke, annoy and ask. My interest in physical dance theatre grew becoming more brutal physically even on my ageing body. The conflict of this changing body of work seemed to bounce off frustrations. Challenges were met with the birth of the annual Dance Hybrid Malta established in 1998 which brought innovative changes and fresh ideas to the contemporary community. Hosting international contemporary dance makers from all over the world who are 'relevant' to Contemporary Dance practices of each generation. The 'Hybrid' instrumental in nurturing a creative and learning environment for intensive study and collaboration through exchange and rigorous practice, has mentored dancers to further pursue full time Contemporary dance training. 2012 launched a weekly event called **Dance on the Move**, a platform conducted by a number of random visiting international practitioners embraced by the Maltese dance community. This simple yet influential platform nurtured a growing network of artists around the globe and now since 2016 is officially hosted as the Evening Space outreach programme offered by the University of Malta Dance Studies Department.

Slide No. 36

In 2008 Dorian Mallia founded Moveo Dance Company today a leading dance company made up of both local and international dancers rooted in strong technique. Producing work for many festivals focused on contemporary dance styles collaborating with various entities of interdisciplinary work. Diane Portelli Briffa pivotal to the growth of the company developed the educational context keeping the dynamics of their work accessible for younger audiences. This has proved to be one of their strengths active within the community. The now full time dance

company has an audience following through their own adversity but continue to struggle with growth infrastructure due to lack of financial support.

The Future and a Legacy Beyond

The island now buzzing with activity and practices infused by a new generation of Maltese contemporary dance makers with an openness potential for contemporary practice to become a significant contributor to the growing creative industry within the island has led to exciting work being developed in performance, community/education and outreach work as well as collaborative projects. Young Maltese practitioners are invested in making work and developing their practice in Malta. There has also been a visible shift in the choreographic language and craftsmanship being employed by independent practitioners on the island who are engaged in the exploration of contemporary sensibilities within their practice.

Slide No. 37

The allotment of funding by the government for the first full time professional contemporary dance company in 2014 demonstrated a tremendous development in favour towards Dance. In the current economic climate of Europe, it is tremendously gratifying to see support and belief for what Contemporary Dance can contribute to the socio-economic framework of a nation. ZfinMalta Dance Ensemble the first national dance company of Malta was launched with Mavin Khoo (Malaysia) as its first Artistic Director. The influences of Bharatanatyam, Kathak, fused with contemporary styles emerged. 2017 brought in a new Artistic Director Paolo Mangiola (Italy).

Indeed, Contemporary dance has certainly expanded and grown rapidly in the last 10 years with innovation, creativity, social awareness and professionalism. There is a contemporary relevance that is embracing approaches to choreography, performances, community/outreach and education work. Given the opportunity and support through the Arts council funding bodies such as the initiatives of professional platforms, dance Festivals, companies and independent projects

dancers of the future have the chance to produce work here in Malta and find continuum to create a hub that is significantly thriving with professional development be it in performance and research practice or cultural/arts management.

In doing so, it seems that this notion of 'identity' within a Maltese context might further develop into an identifiable construct, placing itself as a significant partner to the evolution of contemporary Dance with the rest of the world. This is questionable however. The lived in experience in recent years observing the shift of the many international artists that are coming to Malta to create work, live, teach, practice seems to be creating a conflict or rather duality of 'identity'. Whilst embracing the richness of diversity as a Maltese artist whom fundamentally looked out to bring in, it also becomes a dilemma. Prodding, provoking and pushing for thirty years for this identity both nationally and internationally, it has 'emotional conflicting moments'. Is there such an identity? Has it been allowed to surface? Is our Maltese Mediterranean voice emerging? Or are the post-colonial skeletons of embedded history still suppressing this freedom of expression? Where can we go from here?

Conclusion

Speaking from a Maltese lens I strive to connect to audiences through the artistry of the individual dancer, always focused around the authenticity of the dancer not where they come from, drawn to dancers who possess inner strength and clear artistic voices: ones who take risks and are more concerned with honesty than perfection. The humanistic experience. My aspirations as a choreographer is to create something meaningful and gratifying for both dancers and audience members alike. But there is a conflicting voice in my head that screams to push to be true to who I am as a Maltese choreographer from a tiny island significant or not, reaching for the power to connect to the deepest parts of humanity but leaping all the way into this journey and listen to my tiny Maltese voice that might allow me to find the true meaning of an identity

that is coherent to land, ancestry, tradition, colours, flavours, smells, textures blended into a 21st century global context. This is I.

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Francesca Tranter is a pioneerin Maltese dance practitioner and choreographer. In 1998 she founded Contact Dance Company touring internationally and Dance Hybrid Malta, an annual intensive dance platform, in 2001. She has curated several interdisciplinary dance productions, contributed widely to the dance community in Malta while also developing numerous international collaborations. In 2010 she joined the University of Malta's Department of Dance Studies.

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Performing the Medieval Masculine Subject Through Grace

James Whitta

Abstract: Renaissance dance manuals and courtesy books privilege masculine grace as both an ennobling manifestation of class superiority and a moral virtue. As a moral virtue, the concept emanates in part from Neoplatonic and Ciceronian ethics, but an equally powerful source frequently unexamined in this context is high medieval monastic writing on grace. Expanding upon the Church's campaign to reform knightly masculinity in the Peace and Truce of God Movement and clerical masculinity in the Gregorian Reform, these medieval monastic precursors to Renaissance privileging of masculine grace allow us to more fully historicize the extensive attention in early modern sources to the subject as an attribute of elite masculine identity.

Reading grace before the Early Modern period

This paper came about as a result of a question I was asked at the DSA conference at Ohio State University last October: where might we historically situate the concept of “grace” as a determinant of courtly dance? How does “grace” come to be a central value in the discourse of Renaissance courtly gesture? Particularly when we think of early modern dance manuals and courtesy books, we find the concept fully formed – how do we get here?

I offer my remarks as a contribution to the history of emotion, which William Reddy has characterized as “the history of collective and individual experimentation and improvisation with idioms or politically significant ‘regimes’ of emotional expression” (Reddy 2015). Renaissance conduct literature certainly privileges a “regime” of “gracious” self-fashioning. The grace characterizing the courtly body's movements is designed as the “expression” – the externalizing in outward demeanor – of an inner gracious subjectivity, articulating a subject position that should be “ingratiating,” demonstrating a “charisma” (Greek *charis*) inspiring reciprocal mimesis in others, a culturally naturalized performance of self. This paper will offer a case study in the medieval history of the emotion of grace, within a specific emotional community (Rosenwein 2002, 842), as we observe the violent anger of knights (such anger both a sanctioned strategy to establish and administer justice and a profound challenge to the stability of that

justice) giving way to the construction and privileging of “angelic” gentleness within elite culture (Rosenwein 2002, 2006, 2010, 2016). Our focus will be on historical shifts in a specific emotional community’s ideal representation of itself: from ritualized anger to grace (gentleness, patience, piety, clemency, mercy) as central to masculine self-representation. In texts and documents, visual art and material culture, the medieval history of emotion is a performative practice which “focuses on styles of expression, affective bonds [and] practices of various forms of sociability and sensibility. . . . Examining the ‘performance’ of emotions becomes central to understanding social life in history” (Athanasίου, Hantzaroula, and Yannakopoulos 2008, 8-9).

In this paper I read several twelfth-century texts demonstrating this rich affective history by two reforming monks, Bernard of Clairvaux and Guigo the Carthusian. The era is one of monastic self-reformation, in which the rigor of early Christian ascetic life is rediscovered, shaped by disciplining practices of the body and radical conversion of the *psyche*, with a goal of attaining an angelic state of grace. The monk is to turn desire for god into a practice based upon a powerful affective experience of “conversion,” a “turning away” from complacency and a turning toward emotional investment in self-improvement and moral excellence: an *aristeia* of the soul. In this discourse, “grace” – as it does in the Renaissance courtesy books to follow – privileges such a conversion experience turned into practice. Its focus on “charismatic” (“grace-filled”) interaction with a powerful model through subjective as well as objective practices establishes paradigms of idealized being: one is to think or feel as well as embody or move like the exemplary model. Such twelfth-century monastic texts exemplify a particular type of charismatic modeling, aiming at the creation of an elite corps of masculine self-performances. The affect of “graciousness” instantiates spiritual and bodily practices codifying and reifying communal ideals of monastic self-representation. In Barbara Rosenwein’s articulation, such

shared valuation of emotion across the members of a social group forms an “emotional community” binding its members together on the basis of the centrality of the emotion to social expression; emotional communities are “social groups whose members adhere to the same valuations of emotions and their expression” (Rosenwein 2010, 1). Reading *gratia* as the key to the emotional community of twelfth-century reform monasticism allows us to trace the outlines of an important historical predecessor to the gracious courtly self emergent in the early modern period.

By taking a look at several medieval monastic precursors to Renaissance deployment of masculine *grazia* in dance manuals and courtesy books, this paper will historicize the focus on the embodied subject in early modern sources, in order to ground our understanding of the complexities of engendering the male subject – and male affect – within the pre-modern period. High medieval monastic writing on masculine grace reinforces the Church’s campaign in the Peace and Truce of God movements of the previous century (Head and Landes 1992; Koziol 2018)ⁱ to mitigate knightly violence across society and in the Gregorian Reform of the clergy launched by Gregory VII in the mid-eleventh century to eliminate its secular attachments (Miller 2003).ⁱⁱ The “graceful” knight or cleric who emerges from these reform movements offers a model for a definitive performative representation of masculinity, one that allows for a certain elasticity in its evocation of “grace” as a cultural practice (Saccone 1983).ⁱⁱⁱ If grace is an emotional “regime,” a “modality, . . . the ‘graceful’ using of qualities so as to provoke ‘grace’ or favor” in one’s lord or courtly peers (Saccone 1983, 54), it is a Bourdeauian practice or *habitus*: a “skill, . . . a virtue . . . resulting from habit, [which becomes] in itself a habit, a habitual state” (Saccone 1983, 51-52).

While Renaissance courtesy books and conduct literature privilege the representation of grace most fully in the “favor” one wins in carefully choreographed relationships in court society,^{iv} my remarks will focus on the Christian theology of grace, exploring how this discourse plumbs the psychology of the elite male who desires to be infused with and transformed by divine grace into a mimetic vehicle. Within the totalizing institution of high medieval monastic culture, grace is the fundamental quality a monk must manifest in conduct, comportment, carriage, manner and, most importantly, disposition. The inner grace of a subject aligned with the monastic project is one that the history of emotion teaches us is central to the Christian project. Its mimetic impact on medieval court culture is a well-documented phenomenon, reproducing “bodies that matter” in their display of acculturated “cogmotion.”^v

Considering how emotions motivate actions, one might add Diana Taylor’s qualifier, who privileges the term “performatic” to designate non-discursive, non-verbal forms of embodied or psychologized performance. In a bid to construe the history of pre-modern dance as a chapter in the history of pre-modern emotion, perhaps the “performatic” might signal a space in which linguistic performatives gesture toward another level of being framed in conjunction with them but not constrained by them (Taylor 2003, 6). In Castiglione, for example, debate ranges between whether “grace” is acquired (as part of training in *ethos*/character) or innate (“natural” through noble birth). The courtly nonchalance that pulls off spontaneously the appearance of an easy and immediately graceful response to any social challenge, termed *sprezzatura* by Castiglione, is viewed as the courtly performance of *grazia* (Rubin 1995, 376),^{vi} essentially a “performatic” misrepresentation of a hypothesized pre-socialized self. Here, self-fashioning is the staging of a socially mandated role, the integrity of which one has just cause to be suspicious (Berger 2000). Nevertheless, Renaissance critics of painting such as Giorgio Vasari or Paolo Giovio understand

grace as a moral quality. According to Patricia Rubin, “Held to be a quality of both art and manners, [grace] was linked with beauty as both a moral and aesthetic ideal.” “Charming” grace in “virtuoso” form aesthetically pleases and morally elevates the viewer (Rubin 1995, 377; Neville 1991).^{vii}

Reading grace in medieval theology

Christian theological discourse is our primary medieval source, and it is to several twelfth-century texts I now turn: Bernard of Clairvaux’s *In Praise of the New Militia* (c.1129) and *On Grace and Free Will* (c.1128), and Guigo the Carthusian’s *Ladder of Monks* (c.1180). These texts, written for monks drawn from the noble class, provide a template transferable across the elite spectrum (Iguchi 2008, 675-676). Integrating Neoplatonic and Ciceronian ethics, medieval Christian ethics correlates inner and outer states: what you carry in your heart will manifest in the comportment of your body. To reemphasize the Neoplatonic axiom, the *soma* here is a *sema* for the *psyche*: the body is the sign of the soul. And the soul for medieval Christians is the heart of the matter (Appleby and Olsen Pierre 2015, 163; Olsen 1990).^{viii} One’s state of grace is key to one’s purpose in life and one’s redemption in the life to come. To move – or dance – in a “gracious” manner is to be saved, to do the body right, to perform its incarnation in the “best” kind of way. This excellence or *aristeia*, the “noblest” state of being, is commended in early modern European courts and their cultural artifacts (dance manuals, courtesy books) in order to “ingratiate” their practitioners within that affective world. To look back to the medieval period for signs of bodies in states of grace, we most productively aim at Christian theology. Bernard and Guigo represent grace as an affective positioning of the monastic *psyche* within an emotional community predicated upon desire for God and love of one’s brethren, in surrender to gracious relationship with God (Reddy 2012; Rosenwein 2016,

88-113).^{ix} The texts encourage elite males to play the masculinity game in different ways: no longer armed knights privileging violence, monks elicit a disarming graciousness (and a profound gender anomaly). To be such a monk was to be a virtuoso in the life of the emotions, freely choosing radical conversion away from the gendered affects and effects of secular society. Reading these texts on grace with this historical reality in mind allows us to tease out their affective purposes.

Medieval theological debates on the nature of grace and free will are founded upon the Augustinian view that we are dependent on a predetermined decision by God to open us up to, or make available to us, His grace. Without God's largesse, we can do nothing to effect grace in our souls. Nevertheless, we are enabled by grace to "freely choose" to participate in or coordinate our efforts toward salvation. Bernard's view is that our free will (*liberum arbitrium*) allows us to "do what is in us" or "what we are capable of" (*facere quod in se est* or *quantum in se est posse*) to participate in the good. Such cooperation implies agency (*voluntas*) in the free arbitration of moral choice, commitment (through *liberum arbitrium*) to the process of naturalizing grace in the self. The ascent of Guigo's fourfold monastic ladder is divided into internal and external processes, viz., reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation. The monk is instructed in the formation of a subjectivity demonstrable in external practices. We are authorized by such texts to develop an affective relationship with our identities as elite male Christians fashioning the self as a "gracious" (graceful or grace-filled) vehicle.

Bernard of Clairvaux is concerned in his treatise, *In Praise of the New Militia* (c.1129), with the formation of a "new" knighthood, to retool expression of socialized anger in service of the crusade mentality. While Bernard admits violent anger may be legitimate in the context of fighting heresy, in his reformation the Cistercian monk takes the warrior's place, and the "new

Jerusalem” of the monastery marks the site of ultimate crusade pilgrimage, wherein the knight-errant-monk remakes an acculturated tendency to violent self-exertion into radical representations of self-denial in perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and stability. Bernard distinguishes two types of knightly violence, “legitimate” anger in controlled circumstances against heretics and “frivolous” competition in chivalric tournaments, rejecting the second to reshape the first as a means of battling schism within the self (Scaglione 1991, 59). The ideal site for Crusade pilgrimage for Bernard is “the heavenly Jerusalem of the monastery” (Werblowsky 1977, 117).^x In Bernard’s vision, the Knights Templar eschew the violence of secular privilege, opening themselves up to the radical transformations of grace in ascetic practice (Kienzle 2001, 80).

Bernard’s treatise on grace and free will dates from the same period as his advocacy for the Knights Templar. *On Grace and Free Will* (1128) is written in the form of a letter to his close associate, William of St. Thierry, to “fortify the loving-kindness of the brothers” (*lectoris caritas aedificetur*) in his care (Leclercq et al. 1963, 165). Bernard acknowledges the need for a new affectivity, to naturalize the choice to cooperate with the innate presence of grace in the soul. Grace, freely given by god, anterior to our choices or actions, a sign or actualization of an inherent human disposition (what Bernard calls *gratia creans*), relies on the practices of ethical development for its mature expression. On the level of social practice, grace is a habit acquired and expressed. “Gracious being” becomes a socialized marker of compliance with or merging with the prevailing norms of the emotional community; i.e., the monastic disposition toward the praxis of conversion, in which the knight is reformed and re-acculturated into a self-effacing ascetic regime.

Bernard stresses the consent of the will as essential to the “interior renewal” (*renovatio interior*) of the knight-monk. He must consciously choose to allow not only the natal state of grace endowed by the Creator (sc., *gratia creans*) to do its work, but transform the self by saving grace (*gratia salvans*) in order to become a fellow-worker or cooperator (*coadiutor*) with the divine will, in freely willing the good. Emotions born in us “naturally,” when “ordered” by grace, become virtues (Leclercq and Rochais 1963, 178).^{xi} The “natural” capacities of the will transformed by the agency of grace become a mimetically redemptive excellence within the community (Leclercq and Rochais 1963, 178; O’Donovan 1977, 72).^{xii} There are rewards for these merits, in the community of one’s peers and beyond time itself (“God uses angels and men of good will as his allies and comrades-at-arms whom, at the hour of victory, he will most amply reward”) (Leclercq and Rochais 1963, 198; O’Donovan 1977, 104).^{xiii} Men of good will, aligned with the angels, become coadjutors of the divine will (Leclercq and Rochais 1963, 197; O’Donovan 1977, 102).^{xiv} The performance of grace in such angelic persons, in the process of interior renewal, grants them joy, love, and peace of mind (Leclercq and Rochais 1963, 202; O’Donovan 1977, 109).^{xv} This performance of grace “accomplishes what must be done” in cooperation with the divine will, transforming the monk into a vehicle of divine grace, an instrument “meriting grace” (“What, in fact, can an instrument merit, by means of which . . . something is effected? What else but grace can that merit with which [God’s service] is done?”) (Leclercq and Rochais 1963, 198; O’Donovan 1977, 103).^{xvi} The message is clear: the praxis of grace models an ideal self, as a mirror for self-perfection and one in which others may find reflections of their own mimetic best self, when violence becomes gracious self-representation.

Emero Stiegman termed this praxis in Bernard’s work the “aesthetics of authenticity.” Tracing an arc from Bernard’s early work on the status of the human person, Stiegman observed

a tripartite human anthropology grounded in monastic asceticism; based on growing self-knowledge (a Christian *notitia sui*), beginning with shame-filled awareness of one's fall from an original state of likeness to God (created fully in his image), purging the self of its fallen status through ascetic practices, aiming toward the end of time when the divinely-modeled self is fully reintegrated, body with soul (Stiegman 1984; Appleby and Olsen Pierre 2015, 169).^{xvii}

How does this “authentic” body look? What is the gracious appearance that betokens the presence of a grace-filled soul? In Bernard of Clairvaux's writing, such a body will appear “righteous”; that is, it will embody rectitude (*rectitudo*), demonstrating in its “upright” (*rectus*) stature the essentially human position, both intermediate between and participating in the nature of animal and angel. The soul yearns to move upward (and so our eyes and gaze rise heavenward gesturing toward perfection), while the body in its struggles with affect and desire reifies the postlapsarian human state of imperfection (the penitent gaze of the self-effacing monk, humbly cast upon the ground). The body also, however, serves as the primary vehicle through which the ascetic regime manifests itself. Salvation cannot be won without the body as its laboratory and helpmate. In standing “erect,” we reflect an inherently divine nature and beckon the soul to be worthy of its embodied vessel. Appleby and Olsen Pierre cite the logic of this dynamic as developed by Bernard in a sermon for Ash Wednesday:

[The body reminds] us of our dignity, nobility, and beauty (*pulchritudo*) as created in the image of God. The body retains its rectitude and suitability as the instrument of the rational mind and will, even after sin has effaced the human likeness to God. Bernard repeatedly draws attention to the disorder, incongruity, and ugliness of the contrast between a body that resembles a nature higher than itself, and the soul that resembles a nature lower than itself. In other words, in this sermon Bernard views upright stature as a lasting index of Man's created beauty, recalling those who would know themselves to a spiritual condition in which the soul no less than the body attains the beauty that it was meant to have (Appleby and Olsen Pierre 2015, 170).^{xviii}

The inner self is a fulcrum coordinating bodily senses to spiritual ones. “Pointing as it does both toward human dignity and human degradation, the contemplation of the body inspires the emotional momentum leading from shame to sorrow to fear, which is the spiritual path Bernard hopes his audience will take” (Appleby and Olsen Pierre 2015, 171). Likewise, in Bernard’s sermon 24 on the *Song of Songs*, expounding *Song* 1:3, “*Recti diligunt te*” (“The upright/righteous love you”), the body itself speaks (*ait corpus*) to the soul, encouraging it to consider how best to realize its divine likeness. In Bernard’s reading of the verse, the

upright body is a rebuke to the soul, not because it is an unworthy substance, but because it is a worthy one, designed to reveal the glory of God. The soul that abases itself is now said to be unworthy of the dwelling place of the body; and the body, presented as a faithful servant, appears an entirely fitting place for the soul to live. . . . The human body consequently has a role in the drama of salvation, and [has an] ability to reveal spiritual realities, such as the necessity of the soul to realize its spiritual “uprightness.” Bernard’s sense of the dramatic potential of the human body is so strong that he is able to personify the body as instructing the soul (Appleby and Olsen Pierre 2015, 176-177).

In Bernard, grace is a dynamic played out dialogically, as body and soul commune to elevate each other, representing the “emotional momentum” of monastic performance of an ideal self.

Guigo II the Carthusian was the ninth Prior of the Grande Chartreuse; his *Ladder of Monks* survives in an abundance of manuscripts, many in fact attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux. Once again, the *Ladder* is written as a letter,^{xix} to brother Gervase, its opening salutation offering a clear representation of the dialogical context of the emotional community of love binding brothers together: “Brother Guigo to his dear brother Gervase: rejoice in the Lord. I owe you a debt of love, brother, because you began to love me first.”^{xx} Guigo’s discussion in chapters 8-11 of the effects of grace in the contemplative soul depicts a dialectic of affective interiority and exteriority. Throughout the passage, the monk (sc., his *anima*) is feminized as the *sponsa* (“bride of the spouse”) of the Song of Songs. The “signs of the coming of grace” (*signa adventus gratiae*) to the “bride” mark contemplative praxis as a dialectic, in which interiority is positioned

agonistically against exterior states of being qualified by loss and absence. Monastic subjectivity is represented as that of a lover seeking “her” beloved, bereft and suffering the consequences of longing. Nevertheless, the sweetness of grace accompanies the process. “Signs of its coming” are “consolation and joy” (*consolatio et laetitia*) through “sighs and tears” (*suspiria et lacrimae*), an “inner cleansing” (*ablutio interior/interioris hominis*) offering the “consolation” of an “outward washing” (*ablutio exterior*) of tears, “the honey and milk of consolation [sucked] from the breast of the spouse” (Isaiah 66:11: *suge ab ubere consolationis mel et lac*). Commitment to the asperities of the ascetic regime is the ultimate sign of a state of profound internal joy.^{xxi} This is the embodied form “gracious” subjectivity takes in Guigo’s monk.

Guigo admits that articulating the process is ultimately ineffable within the capacities of human language, and offers a caveat: “Why do we try to express in everyday language affections (*affectus*) that no language can describe? Those who have not known such things do not understand them, for they could learn clearly of them only from the book of experience where God’s grace is the teacher” (Colledge and Walsh 1978, 89).^{xxii} The elusive interiority of grace, an ineluctable part of the bridal psyche, for the Bridegroom “stays, directs us, gives us grace, joins us to Himself”^{xxiii} even in periods of desolation, clearly manifests itself in the ascetic regime. As in Bernard of Clairvaux, interior experience is expressed dialogically within an embodied “performativity” of grace.

Conclusion: saving grace

The grace grounding all performances of the courtly self in Renaissance courtesy books operates in this very manner. To be “saved” parallels the performance of a socially transformed and redeemed self, in which “grace” is naturalized as essential to human identity. *Sprezzatura* or *mesura* (“measure”) or *aiere* (“lightness”) as the foundation upon which the fifteenth-century

courtly self performs its core identity is analogous to the theological self modeled as a vehicle in which God's grace is manifest. The Christian informed by divine grace, like the courtier, is exalted, spiritualized, rendered the embodiment of virtue itself.^{xxiv} As Guglielmo Ebreo puts it in his fifteenth-century dance treatise, *De pratica seu arte tripudii*, "The virtue of dancing is as an action demonstrative of spiritual movement" (Neville 1991, 6).^{xxv} So too, in monastic reflection upon the nature of grace, the performance of a reformed, renewed, converted (non-violent) self depends on a modality in which grace guides the inner and outer man toward performances of perfection.

Notes:

ⁱThe Peace of God movement was proclaimed in 989 by the Synod of Charroux, the Truce of God in 1027 by the Synod of Elne. For a collection of primary documents and scholarly essays, see Head and Landes, for recent reconsideration of the movement, see Koziol, *The Peace of God*. Original documents are collected in Giovanni Mansi, ed., *Sacrorum conciliorum nova, et amplissima collectio* (Florence and Venice, 1759-1798), 31 vols.; rev. ed. and cont. J. Martin and L. Petit (Paris, 1899-1927), 60 vols.

ⁱⁱPrimary documents outlining what Gregory considered his "reinstitution" of ancient practices include the *Dictatus papae* of 1075 declaring papal superiority and the bull *Libertas ecclesiae* of 1079 defending church freedom against the incursions of temporal lords. Maureen Miller characterizes Gregorian gender discourse as "the construction of alternative images of masculinity by and for the 'reformed' clergy," rejecting secular masculine privilege only to instantiate an image of hyper-masculine self-control and confraternity excluding women.

ⁱⁱⁱInherent in the staging of courtly identity as a marker of elite status, Renaissance *grazia* is, in Saccone's estimation of its use in Castiglione's *Courtier*, a specific "modality" or means of establishing and practicing a relationship. Historical contextualization is the only means of establishing definitive meanings for the concept: "the question of grace cannot be propounded absolutely but only relative to Castiglione's specific time, place, and intended audience" (54).

^{iv}Saccone begins by citing the *TLL* definition of the term: *proprie favorem significat, (1) inclinatio animi ad bene faciendum alicui, colendum aliquid tam ultro quam ob beneficium ante acceptum, hinc transfertur ad statum eius personae, cui hic favor accidit. Similiter de qualitate rerum, quae placent, adhibetur* (*Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (Leipzig, 1934), VI, 2205). [Saccone's translation: "Strictly, *gratia* signifies favor, the inclination of the soul toward doing well to someone, or toward cherishing something, as much gratuitously as because of any benefit previously accepted. Whence it is transferred to the condition of the person to whom this favor

pertains. Similarly it is applied to the quality of the things that please.”] To be “in favor,” then is to practice a reciprocal relationship in which one gives and is compensated in return. Its etymological link, moreover, with the Greek *charis* implies the charisma or joy and free will involved in the exchange (Saccone, note 5, 65-66). In Latin usage, *gratia*, then, connotes 1. relationship, agency, process, reciprocity, praxis; 2. the thing exchanged in this process; and, ultimately, 3. the quality of “pleasing” that these things produce.

^vEmotions are not “merely” subjective, but have discernible bodily effects, not only in facial expressions and (in)voluntary gestures, but cognitively, in the brain. A growing body of neuroscientific evidence points to the integration of cognition and emotion in development. The body shapes its orientation to three-dimensional social space and the acquisition of knowledge in response to this “cogmation.”

^{vi}*Il Libro del Cortegiano*, ed. V. Cian (Florence: Sansoni, 1957), book 1, ch.14, pp.41-42, cited in Rubin 376.

^{vii}Rubin 377, citing Pliny’s *Natural History* 35.36.79 and Quintilian’s *Institutes of Oratory* 12.10.6. Cf. Neville for a thorough treatment of this subject.

^{viii}Cf. Appleby and Olsen Pierre’s observation that the twelfth century re-centered the ancient medical tradition’s placement of the heart at the center of the production of bodily affect and energy (rather than the mind): “a more positive appraisal of the body’s contribution to the human person [arose,] based at least in part on the ancient medical tradition. One of the intellectual forces at work here was a doctrine of the human person centered on the heart, not the mind. . . . By Saint Bernard’s time, it was possible to see the heart as the point of spiritual and intellectual contact with the divine, and as the center of a human person that included body, appetites, and affections as well as rational mind” (163).

^{ix}The history of love (*affectus/affectio, dilectio, caritas, amor*) in monastic literature is vast. Cf. Rosenwein’s discussion of Cistercian *amor* (and its semantics: *caritas, cupiditas, affectus, dilectio*) in *Generations of Feeling*, especially 88-113. For a groundbreaking study examining the history of love in medieval Europe beyond the monastic context, see Reddy, *The Making of Romantic Love: Longing and Sexuality in Europe, South Asia and Japan, 900–1200 CE* (Chicago, 2012).

^xCf. Bernard’s letter to the bishop of Lincoln regarding his cleric Philip, who had stopped (permanently) at Clairvaux on his way to the Holy Land (Werblowsky 115-116).

^{xi}*Simplices namque affectiones insunt naturaliter nobis, tamquam ex nobis; addimenta ex gratia. Nec aliud profecto est, nisi quod gratia ordinat, quas donavit creatio, ut nil aliud sint virtutes nisi ordinatae affectiones* (Leclercq et al. 178).

^{xii}“Free choice, accordingly, constitutes us willers; grace, willers of the good. Because of our willing faculty, we are able to will; but because of grace, to will the good. Just as, simply to fear is one thing, and to fear God, another; to love, one, and to love God, another, – since to fear and

to love, on their own signify affections, but, coupled with the additional word “God,” virtues, – so also will is one thing, and to will the good, another” (O’Donovan 72). *Itaque liberum arbitrium nos facit volentes, gratia benevolos. Ex ipso nobis est velle, ex ipsa bonum velle. Quemadmodum namque aliud est timere simpliciter, aliud timere Deum, et aliud amare, aliud amare Deum, – timere quippe et amare, simpliciter quidem prolata, affectiones, cum additamento autem virtutes significant – , ita quoque aliud est velle, aliud est velle bonum* (Leclercq et al. 178).

^{xiii}“Anyone who follows [Paul’s] example may rest assured that there is laid up for them a crown of righteousness because they obeyed by the consent of their will” (O’Donovan 103). *Quicumque similiter sapient, quoniam quidem ex consensu voluntatis oboediunt, repositam sibi esse confidunt coronam iustitiae* (Leclercq et al. 198). And again: “God uses angels and men of good will as his allies and comrades-at-arms whom, at the hour of victory, he will most amply reward. To quote Paul again, boldly referring to himself and his imitators: ‘We are God’s fellow-workers’ [1 Cor. 3:9]. God, therefore, kindly gives man the credit, as often as he deigns to perform some good act through him and with him. That is why we presume to apply to ourselves the titles of ‘God’s fellow-workers,’ co-operators with the Holy Spirit, meritors of the kingdom, in that we have become united with the divine will by our own voluntary consent” (O’Donovan 104). *Utitur angelis et hominibus bonae voluntatis, tamquam commilitonibus et coadiutoribus suis, quos, peracta victoria, amplissime munerabit. Denique et Paulus de se sui que similibus audacter pronuntiat: Coadiutores enim Dei sumus. Ibi itaque Deus homini merita benigne constituit, ubi per ipsum, et cum ipso boni quippiam operari dignanter instituit. Hinc coadiutores Dei, cooperatores Spiritus Sancti, promeritores regni nos esse praesumimus, quod per consensum utique voluntarium divinae voluntati coniungimur* (Leclercq et al. 198).

^{xiv}“Then there are those through whom and with whom God works; such are the good angels and men who both do and will whatever God wills. For God truly communicates the work he carries out through them to those who consent in will to what they do in act” (O’Donovan 102). *Porro per quos et cum quibus operator Deus, boni sunt angeli vel homines, qui quod vult Deus, et agunt pariter, et volunt. Qui enim bono, quod opere complent, voluntate consentiunt, opus omnino quod per eos Deus explicat, ipsis communicat* (Leclercq et al. 197).

^{xv}“Our intention, bent down under the weight of earthly cares, rises again slowly from depths to heights; our affection, languishing in fleshly desires, gradually gains strength for spiritual love; and our memory, sullied by the shame of former deeds, but now become clean once more with continual good works, reaches each day a new measure of joy. In these three things it is that interior renewal consists: rightness of intention, purity of affection, and the remembrance of good work, this last leading the memory, in full self-awareness, to shed its light about it” (O’Donovan 109). *Intentio terrenis incurvata curis, de imis paulatim ad superna resurgit, et affectio circa carnis desideria languens, sensim in amorem spiritus convalescit, et memoria veterum operum turpitudine sordens, novis bonisque actibus candidata in dies hilarescit. In his nempe tribus interior renovatio consistit, rectitudine scilicet intentionis, puritate affectionis, recordatione bonae operationis, per quam bene sibi conscia memoria enitescit* (Leclercq et al. 202).

^{xvi}“Let us see in respect to the threefold manner of God’s working what the creature merits for its service. What, in fact, can an instrument merit, by means of which . . . something is effected? What else but grace can that merit with which [God’s service] is done?” (O’Donovan 103). *Videmus secundum triplicem Dei operationem, quam posuimus, quid creatura quaeque pro suo ministerio mereatur. Et illa quidem, per quam . . . fit quod fit, quid mereri potest? . . . Quid [illa mereri potest] cum qua fit, nisi gratiam?* (Leclercq et al. 198).

^{xvii}Cf. Appleby and Olsen Pierre 169 for discussion of Stiegman’s conceptual framework: “Stiegman refers to this conceptual structure as an aesthetics of authenticity, by which he means the contemplative self-knowledge . . . characteristic of twelfth-century spirituality.”

^{xviii}Appleby and Olsen Pierre 170, reading Bernard’s sermon 12.1 for Ash Wednesday (*Sermones de diversis*. 1970. In *Sancti Bernardi Opera Omnia*, 6.1.127-128. Edited by Jean Leclercq and H.M. Rochais. Rome: Editiones Cistercienses).

^{xix}In most manuscripts, the text is titled “*epistola de vita contemplativa*.”

^{xx}*Dilecto suo fratri Gervasio frater Guigo: delectari in Domino. Amare te frater ex debito teneor, quia prior amare me incepisti; et rescribere tibi compellor, quia litteris tuis ad scribendum me prius invitasti* (I.1-5; Colledge and Walsh 1970, 82).

^{xxi}(VIII; Colledge and Walsh 1970, 96-100; Colledge and Walsh 1978, 88-89). Guigo cites Matthew 5:4 here: “Blessed are they who weep, for they shall rejoice” (*Beati qui lugetis, quia ridebitis*).

^{xxii}*Cur inenarrabiles affectus verbis communibus conamur exprimere? Inexpertis talia non intelligent, quia ea expressius legerent in libro experientiae, ubi ipsa docet unctio* (VIII.203-206; Colledge and Walsh 1970, 98-100).

^{xxiii}*Manet tamen praesens quantum ad gubernationem, quantum ad gratiam, quantum ad unionem* (IX.222-224; Colledge and Walsh 1970, 100; Colledge and Walsh 1978, 90).

^{xxiv}The introductory paragraph of Guglielmo Ebreo’s *De pratica seu arte tripudii* will serve as a model: “Whoever wishes diligently to pursue the science and art of dancing with a joyful spirit and a sincere and well-disposed mind must first understand, with resolute heart, reflecting mind, and with consideration, what dance is in general and its true definition; which is none other than an outward act which accords with the measured melody of any voice or instrument.”

^{xxv}Guglielmo Ebreo, folio 3v, cited in Neville 6. Neville comments that “for Guglielmo, movements of the body could be ‘reflections’ of movements of the soul, striking the onlooker thereby with a redoubled impression of gracefulness. . . . If the movements of the body were ungraceful then the movements of the soul would be also. It would be an outward manifestation of a soul that was full of vice, corrupt, ugly and bad. In Renaissance thinking, a dancer moving ungracefully would be like a soul out of step with the movement of the cosmos that bound heaven and earth together” (6-7)

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Discourteous Courtesies and Irreverent Reverences: Rethinking the Renaissance Bow

Emily Winerock

Abstract: Bowing was an essential component of social interactions in Renaissance Europe, and instructional manuals describe it with care. Bowing showed respect on and off of the dance floor, and when performed by those of different ranks, ages, or genders, acknowledged and confirmed power relationships and social hierarchies ... in theory. That dance instructors described proper reverences to those who did them daily suggests awareness of the alternative messages that a bow could impart. This paper compares the respectful and reverent message that bowing was supposed to convey, with examples from English Renaissance plays where bows show tension, aggression, and scorn.

However artificial it may seem today, bowing was an essential component of social interactions in Renaissance Europe. Everyone bowed to those who held a superior rank, and elites bowed when meeting and departing from their social equals, as well. It is unclear whether commoners bowed or made an equivalent physical gesture when encountering their social equals, since the surviving dance manuals only discuss the rules for bowing for elites. One might speculate, though, that even if commoners did not bow to *all* their peers, they likely saluted members of the opposite sex, strangers, elders, and others who held a position of respect within the community. Moreover, everyone bowed when asking someone to dance, and elites also bowed at the beginning and the end of a dance, and sometimes in the middle, to honor their partner and the spectators. Bowing framed everyday social interactions like meeting, greeting, and dancing, delineating their beginnings and endings.

Whereas meeting and dancing bows were frequently practiced, there were also rarer, “special occasion” bows. The modern-day marriage proposal, where the suitor “gets down on one knee,” is probably a vestige of what one might call the “prostrating bow,” a lower or deeper bow that emphasized the bower’s subservience and dependence on the response of the bow’s recipient. We see this bow in political situations—prisoners begging for mercy or lords

petitioning a monarch—but we also find it in courtship—the lover begging for “kindness” or forgiveness from the beloved. Interestingly, the kneeling lover is a frequent feature of Renaissance genre paintings, but my intuition is that this was a rare occurrence in real life. Unusually, we find examples of both types of bows in *Bal sous Henri IV* by Louis de Caullery (c.1610). The man in the right foreground kneeling before the seated woman is depicted in the iconic lover’s bow, whereas the man in the left middle ground is executing the more typical standing bow of meeting, greeting, and dancing. That there is clearly a processional dance happening in the room increases the likelihood that at least one of the gentlemen is asking a lady to dance, rather than making a greeting bow.

Today I will explore scenes from two Shakespeare plays with noteworthy bows. Whereas dancing manuals focus on how one *ought* to bow, examining plays enables us to see bows in action and in context. In these scenes, the bowers subvert the bow’s intended purpose: to show respect and subservience, and instead convey scorn and pride. To illuminate how these bows deviate from expectation, and also to glean hints as to how they might have been performed in Shakespeare’s time, I will connect each of these bows with relevant descriptions in Renaissance dancing manuals. In addition, to complement the early sources, I will show video clips of bows from modern productions and reflect on how their staging effectively (or ineffectively) conveys the import of these moments.

First, I will examine a curious set of bows in *Love’s Labor’s Lost* (1598). This comedy explores the consequences when the King of Navarre and three of his courtiers take an oath that they will devote themselves to study and foreswear the company of women for three years. Shortly thereafter, the Princess of France and three of her ladies arrive as ambassadors from the French King. The men do not want to break their oath, but they are anxious to see the visiting

ladies, so they find a loophole. They will meet and talk with the visitors, but they will not formally welcome them. Thus they house the women in a field instead of in the castle, and otherwise withhold the hospitality due to a visiting princess and her entourage. Of course, this is a Shakespearean comedy, so everyone falls in love, but the men's oath makes them loathe to acknowledge it. Instead, they devise a device: the men will disguise themselves, entertain the ladies with a masque and dancing, and try to suss out whether their love is returned.

However, the women get wind of this plot and resolve to undermine it, wanting to punish the men for their inhospitality. Explains the Princess to her ladies:

There's no such sport as sport by sport o'erthrown,
To make theirs ours and ours none but our own.
So shall we stay, mocking intended game,
And they, well mocked, depart away with shame (*LLL*, 5.2.160-163).

The women also don disguises and when the masquers arrive, they refuse to dance with them. However, the women do not simply say "no thank you." Rather they use bows to tease and mock their suitors. (The following discussion centers on a 1999 production I directed, *The Bard's Galliard ... or How to Party Like an Elizabethan*. It features an abbreviated version of this scene from *Love's Labor's Lost* that skips some of the speeches and repartee and shifts the timing of the ladies turning their backs, although not the intended message. Video Clip 1, <https://youtu.be/-Vayyoatjrs>.)

Here the men bow when they enter the room, the men and women bow and curtsy to each other in asking and accepting the offer to dance, and together they perform the opening révérence of a dance, all very correct. However, the princess then stops the music and halts the dancing, the women turning their backs on their partners, and literally leaving them "off balance." The men are understandably confused, and the King and Princess have a witty exchange where he tries to convince her that the women should resume their dancing. The Princess seemingly agrees,

saying that they should “take hands,” but instead of dancing, she and her ladies skip to the *conge*, or end-of-dance bow, and leave the dance floor.

But why choose this particular method for mocking and humiliating? In this scenario the women perform the correct bows to begin and end a dance, but they skip the dancing that ought to go in between; their dance is literally nothing but empty courtesies. In so doing, the women point to the emptiness of the men trying to “honor them” on the dance floor, when they have not treated them honorably off of it. While the women’s curtsies are intentionally misleading, their discourtesy is motivated by their desire to show the King of Navarre and his courtiers just how dishonorable the men’s behavior has been.

If you were staging this scene for a production of *Love’s Labor’s Lost* set in Shakespeare’s time period, you could turn to surviving Renaissance dancing manuals for help. As many of you are aware, Thoinot Arbeau’s *Orchésographie* (1589) and Fabritio Caroso’s *Nobiltà di Dame* (1600), among many others, describe the bow for dancing, the *révérence*. Less well known, but certainly relevant, is Arbeau’s description of women turning their backs to reject suitors, which we find in his playful choreography for a courtship pantomime using coranto steps. In this coranto, the men approach the women one by one, “playing the fool and making amorous grimaces” only to be rejected, each woman “refusing his suit and *turning her back upon him*” (Arbeau 1967, 123, my italics) The men return to their side of the room, which causes the women to feign despair, but then the men return together, “each to claim his own damsel and to implore her favour *upon bended knee* with clasped hands” (Arbeau 1967, 123-124, my italics). This demonstration of subservience meets with success, “the damsels fall into their arms and they all dance the coranto helter-skelter” Arbeau 1967, 124). Here we see that turning one’s back was a recognizable, if stylized, way to reject a would-be lover or dance partner. Moreover, this

choreography suggests that kneeling down before one's lover was viewed as an extreme measure that one might resort to only when other, more mundane demonstrations of affection were unsuccessful. Thus, in this short choreography we see the extremes of reception—from scornful rejection where the women literally turn their backs on their suitors, to warm welcome where they embrace and then, at last, dance with them.

One wonders if the King of Navarre and his courtiers had taken a page out of Arbeau—kneeling down on one knee, unmasking, and each making a heartfelt plea for forgiveness—whether the Princess and her ladies might have relented. Although the men had bowed to them and requested them as dance partners, they had presumably used the everyday slow *révérence*, not the kneeling, pleading, penitent lover's bow. While this might have sufficed for ordinary circumstances, a mere *révérence* did not compensate for the men's inhospitality off the dance floor. The men did not beg, only exercised their wit, and so the women remained steadfast in their refusal.

We find an arguably more conventional but similarly expressive use of irreverent bowing in Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1600). Whereas the conflict in *Love's Labor's Lost* is primarily a playful war of the sexes, the conflict in *Henry V* results in a real war between England and France. In Act I, scene 2, the French ambassadors use bows subversively to mock the English king and his court, heightening the insult of the Dauphin's gift of tennis balls that they present. While the stage directions merely indicate that the ambassadors enter, we can assume that, following standard protocol, they and their attendants would have bowed to Henry. The number of bows and their insinuations, however, are left open to interpretation.

Here follow two versions of this famous scene: the first is from the 1944 film with Lawrence Olivier. (Video Clip 2, <https://youtu.be/nbORzHHwcBI>.) The ambassadors enter with

ceremonial pomp, which ordinarily would indicate the importance of the king they are saluting. However, once the insult of the Dauphin's gift is revealed, the elaborate ceremony that preceded it, the many bows, hats doffed, and kneeling attendants, seem, in retrospect, to add to the insult. The ambassadors have been mocking Henry, the mock king, with mock reverence. They, like the Dauphin, believe he is only fit for reveling and recreations, for dancing and tennis.

The St. Louis Shakespeare Company's 2011 production of *Henry V* takes a different approach. (Video Clip 3, <https://youtu.be/pYJw6IrG39E>.) The French ambassador arrives with few attendants, and he makes his lack of respect for the English king clear from the start. His bows are low and elaborate ... and numerous, their excessiveness clearly meant to mock. The ambassador also repeatedly turns his back to the king to address the audience, emphasizing that he wants his condescending audacity to be witnessed by all. In this production, the Dauphin's gift comes as less of a surprise, foreshadowed by his ambassador's mocking tone and excessive bowing.

That excessive bowing was ostentatious and insulting is noted in dancing manuals. The eighth of Caroso's notes on conduct in *Nobiltà di Dame* is entitled "How Superfluous Formalities Should be Shunned." Caroso warns the bower:

You need to be aware that unnecessary, empty and precious courtesies are scarce-hidden flatteries; on the contrary, they are so clear and obvious to all, that those who make too many *Reverences* (by sliding their feet, kissing their hands or doffing their bonnets while bowing and scraping before their favourite ladies) lose just as much favour in the eyes of others as they think to gain, for their blandishments only displease and bore them" (Caroso 1995, 139-140).

Caroso concludes, damningly, "Those who strive to behave so affectedly and unsuitably do so from thoughtlessness and vanity, like men of little worth" (Caroso 1995, 140).

Of course, the depth and number of bows that was correct versus excessive varied according to the situation. When approaching a peer, one or two was sufficient, with another

short bow just before departing. Approaching a monarch required more bows, and making a request of a king demanded still more. In his third note on conduct, Caroso recommends eight bows when presenting a petition to a monarch: four for approaching, and four for departing. The fourth and fifth bows, he explains, should be “very low, so as almost to touch the floor with your knee, pretending to kiss the king’s knee” (Caroso 1995, 136). And all these reverences, including those made while departing, should be performed “without ever turning your back upon the king” (Caroso 1995, 136). Still, it is worth noting that Caroso does not suggest bowing during one’s speech to the king. Perhaps this would be seen as excessive rather than respectful.

Regardless, in his conduct notes, Caroso assumes that someone bowing excessively does so from vanity and ignorance. However, the French ambassadors in *Henry V* seem perfectly aware that their excessive bowing and scraping is an empty courtesy that will displease the king. Their assignment *is* to mock the English king, and they do so through their bowing, as well as through the presentation of the tennis balls. Whether subtly, as in the Olivier film, or overtly, as in the St. Louis Shakespeare Company production, the ambassadors’ bows play an important part in demonstrating the dismissive scorn of the French, a scorn that it is critical to convey because it makes Henry’s success on the battlefield, and the French’s ultimate submission, that much more surprising and significant.

Indeed, today’s lack of bowing presents a challenge for productions of *Henry V* set in the modern era. Without elaborate ceremony, the French ambassador’s entrance lacks impact, the ambassadors lack import, and the gift of tennis balls seems silly not insulting. This modern era production in 2013 by the North Fulton Drama Club is one of many examples of the French ambassador’s entrance *sans* bows. (Video Clip 4, <https://youtu.be/6UhSbmsLsiY>.) The ambassador’s mocking tone effectively conveys her and, by extension, the Dauphin’s, lack of

respect for Henry, but the absence of ceremony diminishes the power of her position, and thus her ability to truly insult the English king. I would argue that the lack of irreverent reverences in this production helps us see how essential they are to the play. It is the mocking ceremony that accompanies the Dauphin's insulting gift, performed publicly by the French ambassadors before all of Henry's court, that raises the stakes, genuinely rousing Henry's anger, and steeling his resolve to go to war with France.

Conclusion

Bowing was more than just a graceful way to begin or end a dance: it showed respect on and off the dance floor, and when it was performed by those of different ranks, ages, or genders, the bow acknowledged and confirmed power relationships and social hierarchies. Or, at least, that was how it functioned when it was performed "properly." This paper has highlighted how the Renaissance bow could also be used to question and critique. That dance manual authors like Thoinot Arbeau and Fabritio Caroso felt the need to describe proper reverences to those who did them all the time suggests that they were well aware of the alternative messages that a bow could (and sometimes did) impart.

Today, a bow or curtsy is still expected when greeting and departing from a monarch, but the requisite length, depth, and number of bows has been reduced to a curt nod for gentlemen and a brief bob for ladies. (See, for example, Princesses Kate Middleton and Meghan Markle curtsying to Queen Elizabeth II of England on Christmas Day, December 25, 2017. Video Clip 5, <https://youtu.be/y3mmjjMtUok>.) Some might argue that today's diminished use of the bow reflects a widespread lack of courtesy in modern life. Others might contend that it is a sign of progress, that we are less concerned about marking social status in everyday interactions. Regardless, for better or worse, by no longer bowing frequently, we have lost our expertise in

and appreciation of a silent, subtle, elegant, and embodied form of insult: the irreverent révérence.

Thank you. [curtsies]

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Yeichi Nimura's Dance Career in Twentieth-Century America

Emi Yagishita

Abstract: This paper focuses on Yeichi Nimura (1897-1979), a Japanese-born dancer who primarily performed in the West. Nimura trained in America with modern dance pioneers Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn. In the 1930s, he attempted a fusion of East and West in his dance. With his American dance partner Lisan Kay, he toured Europe and the United States to great acclaim. Unfortunately, Nimura's performing career was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II. He remained in America, choreographing and teaching. After the war, Nimura encouraged the reconciliation of Japan and the U.S. by supporting Japanese cultural performances in America.

Introduction

In this paper, I will mainly focus on the activities of Japanese dancer Yeichi Nimura in the U.S. My sources include Nimura's autobiography, written in Japanese, and materials held at the New York Public Library and Carnegie Hall. I will discuss: Nimura's life in Japan (prior to his move to America), his stage name, how he became interested in dance and decided to become a professional dancer, his U.S. dance career, the creation of his dance school (Ballet Arts), whether he was interned during World War II, and the relation between Nimura and his Japanese homeland.

Yeichi Nimura's early years in Japan

Yeichi Nimura achieved prominence with his dance activities in the West, not in Japan. In the twenty-first century, Nimura has been somewhat forgotten. Consequently, his Japanese background is not well-known in the U.S. His real name was Tomizo Miki, and he was born in Suwa, Nagano Prefecture on March 25, 1897. He was a member of the sixteenth

generation of a Samurai family. His father, a retired police commissioner, died of pneumonia at the age of sixty-three when Yeichi Nimura was only six years old. His mother was separated from Yeichi at his birth, so he never knew her. After his father died, he was raised by his grandfather and an uncle. They taught him many Japanese traditions, such as the tea ceremony and martial arts (Nimura 1971, 7-14).

Yeichi left Suwa for Tokyo at the age of fifteen, after his grandfather died and his family went bankrupt. He tried several different jobs in Tokyo before deciding to move to the United States. Another one of Yeichi's uncles had become a wealthy importer in America and resided in Boston (Nimura 1971, 16-21).

Nimura's arrival in America: a new name

Yeichi worked as a cabin-boy for a Japanese steamship company in order to sail to America. When his ship docked in Seattle on September 1, 1918, the twenty-one-year-old Yeichi left the boat, never to return to Japan. Although he could not speak English well, he visited a dance hall, a vaudeville show, and a theater in Seattle (Nimura 1971, 22-23). He had been fascinated by Kabuki theater in Japan but the American theatrical arts were entirely new to him. Later he would devote himself to the world of dance and theater.

He departed from Seattle in May 1919, needing to earn his way across the U.S. While riding on a train to Chicago, Yeichi read a Japanese newspaper article about a woman named Mrs. Nimura who helped people. He thought that the name had a perfect sound, so he

changed his own to Yeichi Nimura (Nimura 1971, 25-27). In Chicago, he was employed as a house-boy and, in the summer, he worked in Minnesota on a lettuce farm with some other Japanese.

The development of Nimura's interest in the performing arts

His uncle relocated from Boston to New York because of a business failure. In 1920, twenty-three-year-old Yeichi finally arrived in New York City. He was amazed by the size of the buildings in the metropolis. His uncle, Matsuki, returned to Japan, but Yeichi decided to remain in America. He was able to get a temporary job as a replacement for a Japanese actor who was retiring. He portrayed a butler in the play *White Lilies in the Field*, and since he had no previous experience as an actor, he recalled being quite nervous on stage (Nimura 1971, 34-36).

After that, he worked as a waiter in New York City tea rooms to earn money. In the evenings, he sought out dance halls. However, in this era, most of these facilities did not admit people of color. Only one dance hall allowed him to enter. The waltz and the tango were very popular, and Yeichi quickly attracted attention with his innate dance talent.

One day, he decided to become a professional dancer. He began to study with a Spanish dance teacher, Aurora Arriaza, as well as with two Russian teachers, Constantin Kobeleff, a ballet dancer who had worked with Anna Pavlova, and Ivan Tarasoff (Nimura 1971, 38-39).

Nimura's attendance at the Denishawn School

At this time, the Denishawn Dance Company toured all over the U.S. and had a good reputation. Nimura saw one of their performances and was very impressed. In 1923, he decided to enroll in a Denishawn winter workshop in New York City (Nimura 1971, 165).

The course lasted from October to April. Nimura attended class for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon. The workshop's cost of 600 dollars was a large expense for the young man, but he felt he was investing in himself. Because St. Denis and Shawn were away on tour, he studied with Katherine Edson, a former ballerina. Edson believed Nimura had the ability to be a professional dancer (Nimura 1971, 40-41). After their tour ended, Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn taught him directly.

Nimura received a scholarship to attend the Denishawn summer workshop and focus on dancing. The summer workshop was held in Studio 61 at Carnegie Hall; coincidentally, the site would be used later as Nimura's own studio. In March 1925, twenty-seven year-old Yeichi performed at Carnegie Hall as a member of the Denishawn Dance Company.

Nimura and Michio Ito

In 1925, he studied briefly with another Japanese male dancer, Michio Ito, but their movement styles were very different. Michio thought that Nimura should dance more delicately, but Nimura believed that Michio's movements were feminine and this was not his style (Nimura 1971, 43).

Nevertheless, Nimura was a strong, exciting dancer, and so Michio hired him to perform two musical numbers in the 1927 revue, *Changeling*. The agreement between Ito and Nimura is at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts (Nimura Papers, Series II: A: Contracts and Invoices 1927-1934). Michio's manager, Virginia Lee, was so impressed by Nimura's magnetic dancing that she decided to promote his career and serve as his manager (Nimura 1971, 44-45).

Nimura's dance style

Yeichi perceived that American audiences desired to see the exotic: a Japanese style of dancing. Understanding that he served as a kind of cultural ambassador of Japan to the U.S., Nimura performed a Japanese-influenced dance while wearing a kimono, as Michio Ito had done, to earn money for a short time. But he was more interested in creating his own expressive style. In 1930, when Nimura performed in New York City, he tried to accomplish a fusion of East and West in his dance (Nimura 1971, 47). In a New York recital, he performed his original choreography with Pauline Koner, who had previously been a dance partner of Michio Ito. The following year, Nimura did a recital at the Guild Theater, demonstrating his versatility and creativity with a variety of dance pieces (Nimura 1971, 50). He moved extraordinarily well in space and possessed a charismatic intensity. His former teacher, Ruth St. Denis, saw his performance and praised his accomplishments. Later, Nimura met his long-term dance partner, Lisan Kay.

Nimura's tours in Europe and the Middle East

Nimura and Kay, with Virginia Lee as their manager, toured Europe from 1932 to 1937. The invasion of Manchuria by Japan in 1931, and the secession of Japan from the League of Nations in 1933, led to some anti-Japanese sentiment in the West. However, Nimura and his partner performed in eighteen European countries: France, England, Poland, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Latvia, Estonia, Belgium, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, Austria, and Rumania, as well as in Palestine and Egypt. In Paris, Nimura created a dance summer school, in addition to giving several performances (Nimura Papers, Series II: A: Programs 1930-1937).

He received acclaim in many places. The prestigious Parisian newspaper *Figaro* reported, "Nimura is more than a dancer. It is impossible to translate the significance of his work into words!" Russian choreographer and dancer Michael Fokine wrote: "My gratitude to Nimura. His is a beautiful art!" One reviewer called Nimura: "The greatest dancer since Nijinski" (Nimura Papers, Series II: A: Clippings).

Nimura's U.S., Canada, and Cuba tours

Nimura, Kay, and Lee returned to New York City in January 1937. Then the trio set out on a North American tour. After recitals in New York and Canada, the dancers performed in Boston, Detroit, Chicago, Tacoma, Seattle, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, and Los Angeles (Nimura Papers, Series II: A: Programs 1930-1937). In San Francisco, Nimura held a

workshop at the San Francisco Opera ballet school. Before sailing to Cuba, he also performed in New Orleans. In Havana, he was hosted by the famous Cuban ballet dancer, Alicia Alonso.

Wartime and Nimura's Ballet Arts School

Two international incidents further inflamed anti-Japanese feelings. In 1937, the Marco Polo Bridge Incident occurred in Manchuria, and the Panay Incident happened near Nanking, when Japanese warplanes attacked the American gunboat Panay in Chinese waters. After these events, Nimura's performance contracts were canceled, and a planned second national tour was dropped. However, in early 1938, he was able to give several performances in New York, as well as in some other East Coast cities and Canada. In February, Nimura choreographed "Dance of the Seven Veils" for the opera, *Salome* (Nimura 1971, 105). This work was highly praised.

Around this time, Nimura redirected his passion from dancing to teaching. After the 1937 U.S. tour, Nimura had organized a dance school with Virginia Lee and Lisan Kay. They had decided to rent Studio 61 at Carnegie Hall. The location was significant for Nimura because, as noted, he had taken a Denishawn workshop there at an earlier age. The rent was expensive, but many students wanted to attend classes at his studio. While he was teaching, he was also able to choreograph new dances.

In May 1939, the all-female Takarazuka Opera Company came to America. Nimura supported these artists by arranging demonstration classes and holding a reception for them.

Following the Opera Company's return to Japan, Nimura maintained a close connection with Yonezo Kobayashi, the son of the founder of Takarazuka. In September 1939, war erupted in Europe, and Nimura's plans for another European tour were abandoned. However, he received an invitation to perform in Hawaii; consequently, Nimura danced in Honolulu (Nimura Papers, Series II: A: Programs 1939-1949). Since the Hawaiian audience included a mixture of Americans and Japanese, Nimura felt some nostalgia for his native land (Nimura 1971, 106).

At the beginning of 1940, the famous English ballet dancer, Anton Dolin, came to Studio 61 for practice. Nimura believed that studying ballet technique was very beneficial, so he asked Dolin to join the faculty at his dance school. Nimura changed the name of the studio to "Ballet Arts" (Nimura 1971, 106). In the summer, Vera Nemtchinova, a star of Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, also became a faculty member, enriching the program. Many other distinguished teachers taught at the Ballet Arts, including Anatole Obukov (Oboukhoff), Edward Kayton, Igor Syuwetwoff, Paul Petrov (Petroff), Bronislava Nijinska, Antony Tudor, Margaret Craske, Agnes de Mille, Nina Stroganova, Vladimir Dokoudovsky, Vladimir Constantinov, Dolita Ochis, Alexandra Danilova, Mia Slavenska, and Rosella Hightower. In addition to ballet classes, Ballet Arts offered classes in modern dance, Spanish, Oriental, jazz dance, etc. (Nimura 1971, 116).

A number of celebrated dancers were trained at Nimura's school: satire dancer Iva

Kitchell; Diana Adams, a ballerina of the New York City Ballet; Bambi Linn, who performed in the musical, *Carousel*, and received a Theater World Award; and Agnes de Mille's favorite student, Gemze de Lappe, who performed at the American Ballet Theater as well as in several musicals. De Lappe was also renowned as a Duncan dancer. The prominent American choreographer, Jerome Robbins, took lessons at Ballet Arts. At times, Leonard Bernstein played the piano at the studio (Nimura 1971, 116-17).

At the New York World's Fair in 1940, Nimura was invited to the Japan Day Dinner, where he demonstrated his dance for the Japanese in New York City. On October 12, 1940, he and Lisan Kay did their final performance together as part of a dance recital series (Nimura Papers, Series II: A: Programs 1939-1949). In May 1941, Nimura successfully directed the opera, *Madame Butterfly*, at Radio City Music Hall. However, he was concerned about the growing tension between Japan and the U.S. and the impact it would have on his situation in America (Nimura 1971, 108).

Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, hundreds of Japanese who lived in New York City were arrested and imprisoned on Ellis Island. The FBI checked each of the nearly 10,000 Japanese residents of New York City, including the American-born children of Japanese immigrants. Years later, the dancer Gemze de Lappe revealed that the FBI had questioned her about Nimura (De Lappe interview 2013). Although the FBI did not visit Nimura, he initiated contact with the agency. It was only near the end of World War II

that two policemen actually interrogated Nimura. They asked Nimura whether he wanted

Japan or America to win the war. Nimura replied:

I am against the war itself. People killing each other is extremely heinous. Therefore, I don't have an opinion about victory or defeat. I am managing this school, and if someone harms my school and students, I will fight even at the risk of death (Nimura 1971, 110-11).

The officers merely thanked him and departed. Many of Nimura's Japanese acquaintances were sent to Ellis Island, but most were allowed to return to their homes after they were investigated. Unlike their counterparts on the West Coast, most Japanese-Americans in New York were not confined to an internment camp (Nimura 1971, 111).

Even during the fiercest period of conflict between Japan and America, Nimura was able to live like an American citizen in the middle of New York City. Moreover, his American friends were kinder to him (Nimura 1971, 111). Nimura was an inspirational teacher, emphasizing a concept of molding the body called "plastique," and the number of students at his studio continued to increase.

Studio 61 in Carnegie Hall, under Nimura's management, was very important in terms of dance history. It was where Agnes de Mille created *Rodeo* for the Monte Carlo Ballet, where Eugene Loring choreographed *The Great American Goof*, and where Marquis de Cuevas's Ballet International first rehearsed. Rehearsals for *Oklahoma!*, *One Touch of Venus*, *Bloomer Girl*, and many other productions also were held there (Nimura 1971, 111).

Nimura's postwar choreography: *Lute Song*

While the U.S. and Japan were at war, Nimura could not perform, so he worked in his studio. After the war ended in 1945, the Broadway star Mary Martin asked Nimura to choreograph the musical, *Lute Song*, which also featured the noted actor Yul Brynner. This production, informally known as "Nimura's show," was very successful; it was performed in 1946 and in 1959 (Nimura 1971, 112-13).

Nimura and his homeland Japan

Nimura never returned to Japan, but he always thought about his native country, preserving connections with Japanese artists, business people, and officials. Nimura was not only the manager of a studio, a choreographer, and a dancer, but he also played a significant role in facilitating positive relations between the U.S. and Japan after the war. He informally served as a cultural ambassador. In 1949, he produced a program entitled "Japan Night," and he contributed to the dissemination of Japanese and American dance arts (Nimura Papers, Series II: A: Programs 1939-1949). In 1953, Nimura helped the Slavenska-Franklin Ballet Company arrange a Japan tour, and the following year, he welcomed Tokoho Azuma and Masaya Fujima to the U.S., supporting their performance as the Azuma Kabuki Dancers (Nimura 1971, 113). Azuma Kabuki Dancers and Musicians, the Takarazuka Opera Company, and numerous others were invited to teach at Ballet Arts and were often guests in Nimura's home. He was invited to address Japanese dignitaries at New York's Nippon Club events as well.

In 1966, Yonezo Kobayashi asked Nimura's advice on staging an American musical at the Takarazuka Opera Company in Japan. Gemze de Lappe then went to Japan to teach Kobayashi how to present de Mille's *Oklahoma!* In 1969, Nimura's Japanese students, Aiko Otaki and Katsuki Hoshi, created a branch of Ballet Arts in Tokyo. In November of that year, Nimura was awarded the Order of the Sacred Treasure by the Japanese government for his cultural contribution to Japan, and his highly-admired work in the U.S. (Nimura 1971, 117). In 1973, Nimura donated money (four million yen) to the city of his birth: Suwa, Japan. He hoped that this money would encourage a new generation of dancers. Each year a dancer is selected to receive the Nimura Award in Japan.

Conclusion

Yeichi Nimura's dance career did not unfold in Japan but in the West. However, the performances of Nimura represented the Japanese arts to curious Western audiences, and he functioned as an unofficial ambassador of Japanese culture. Unfortunately, Nimura's performance career was affected by the anti-Japanese sentiment sparked by events related to World War II. Yet he decided to remain in his adopted country, the U.S., rather than return to Japan. Therefore, Nimura is not as well-known in his native land. Nonetheless, the dance studio he founded, the Ballet Arts, currently operates in New York City and his contribution to the arts in the West is still alive.

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Acknowledgements

This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP17H04770.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and the Carnegie Hall Archives, for access to primary sources for this paper.

I am also indebted to Gemze de Lappe, who passed away in 2017, for sharing her memories of Yeichi Nimura.

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The Individualized choreography in the name of "Folk Dance" in China

Mu Yuⁱ

Abstract: With the frequent dance exchanges between China and foreign countries and regions, the original deep-rooted concept system of Chinese dance has gradually been challenged during the cooperation and communication with artists and educators. According to the standards of national attribute, historical time and space, cultural holders respectively, the speech will discuss the academic concepts of “national or ethnic dance”, “traditional dance” and “folk dance” in Chinese dance communities, including the mixed understandings of “folk dance” as well. Our understanding of Folk Dance differs not only from the international understanding, but also from other literary and artistic classifications in China.

Good afternoon, everyone. The title of my speech is: The Individualized choreography in the name of "Folk Dance" in China. Danscross is an international, intercollegiate contemporary dance research project. A Chinese-British scholar raised a question at the forum in Taipei at Danscross in 2011: why did choreographers of Chinese National or Ethnic folk dance participate in such a contemporary dance project? In fact, who is the choreographer of contemporary dance? There are no certain rules. Whatever the original purpose of this scholar's question, I would like to extend it to think about another question: What is the individualized choreography in the name of "folk dance" in China? Since it is called "folk dance", why is it seen as Individualized choreography?

Generally speaking, there are three kinds of difficulties, obstacles or disputes in translation or communication between different languages or dialects: First, some words of literary language is untranslatable. Second, it is because of the different perspectives. It's like a song: “You like to-may-toes /tə'meɪtoʊz/ and I like to-mah-toes /tə'mɑ:touz/”, or we can call it “西红柿”, but also “番茄” in Chinese, which is very

interesting. Third, there is no counterpart between two cultures, and the difference in naming is based on different cultural cognition.

In recent years, the Individualized choreography in the name of Chinese Folk Dance is called "中国民族民间舞/ Chinese National or Ethnic folk dance /zhongguo minzu minjian wu", but in fact it is a "staged and theatrical Dance using Folk movement ".If we translate it literally into "Folk dance," it's hard to communicate, because most of the Western stage has no such counterpart. Next, I will discuss the connotation of so-called "中国民族民间舞"from three aspects: traditional dance, national or Ethnic dance and folk dance.

1. Is literally " Chinese National or Ethnic folk dance " a "Traditional Dance"?

"Traditional dance" should be based on historical time and space, including ancient classical dance which existed or inherited in history, and ethnic folk dance before the arrival of industrial civilization from the perspective of both the Great Tradition and the Little Tradition respectively(Robert Redfield). When choreographers made the little tradition of Chinese Peasant Culture-Authentic Folk Dance into the staged Folk Dance of Urban Elite Culture, which is also regarded as part of "the Great tradition". According to the concept of the National Intangible Cultural Heritage "traditional Dance" protection list in China, it mainly includes ancient dance, traditional opera dance and folk dance, which are different from the contemporary creative form of "Chinese classical dance" and staged "Chinese Folk Dance". We can see these Dances as "invented traditions", which is the concept in "the invention of tradition" of the historian Eric Hobsbawm's monograph (1983).

2. What does "民族/nationality or ethnicity " mean in"中国民族民间舞/ Chinese National or Ethnic folk dance "?

In recent years, ethnologists have proved that the term "民族/Nationality or Ethnicity / Mínzú" was first found in the Book of the Southern Qi Dynasty (AD 479—502) ,which indicates that there is a word "民族/Nationality or Ethnicity /Minzu " in ancient Chinese literature, and it has been regarded as the standard of identification or discrimination based on culture. However, the Chinese characters"民族/Nationality or Ethnicity /Minzu" appeared frequently after 1870s. At that time, it was a new Japanese Chinese characters, which is the result of Japanese scholars' translation of the western words and the influence of Sinology at the same time.

It is worth mentioning that in the period of the Republic of China, the most influential Chinese words was not "民族/Nationality or Ethnicity /Mín zú", but"中华民族/Chinese Nation/Zhonghua minzu" named by Liang Qichao in the book of " The General Development of Chinese Academic Thought " (1902). From the beginning, it has both culture and political attributes.In June 1941, Dai Ailian and Wu Xiaobang, Sheng Jie, co-organized the "New Dance concert" in Chongqing, which was a truly historic performance and the first collaboration of Chinese stage dance pioneers. On June 19, 1941, the Xinhua Daily published a dance review. The most valuable thing of the article was the naming of "民族舞蹈/National or Ethnic Dance /Minzu Dance".

Since then, Chinese National or Ethnic dance came to national prominence in China, which included Dai Ailian's"边疆舞/Frontier Dance" and Liberated Areas 's "延安新秧歌/Yan'an New Yangge", Although different, they are closely related and

echo with each other. "中华民族/ Chinese Nation" does not directly correspond to Chinese Han nationality and minority nationality, ethnic group or citizen population classification, but has the concept of "state-nation". In addition, unlike the mono-ethnic states such as Germany and Japan, China itself is made up of many ethnic groups. Nowadays, the Chinese words "民族/ Mín zú", "Nationhood" and "Ethnicity" are deeply rooted and intertwined.

3. Who dances in the name of "folk dance" ?

The authentic version of "Folk Dance" is not a modern theater form in the concept of the Chinese National Intangible Cultural Heritage "traditional Dance" protection list. With regard to the study of "Folk Dance", we can approach it from several aspects: Where, why and when do people dance? On what occasion? How to pass it on? Is it a form of teacher and disciple inheritance or family inheritance? How did the aboriginal people dance before? and how do they dance now? etc. These questions all lead to a key core question——who organizes the dance? and who dances? The authentic "folk dance" should be created, shared, and inherited by the ordinary indigenous people.

Different from authentic folk dance, the biggest change of "staged folk dance" is the change of creative subject, from "collective creation" to "individual choreography" with collective unconsciousness. In the early days of the founding of the people's Republic of China, it was possible to read the words called "New Folk Dance" from some dance reviews. After the reform and opening up since the 1980s, "New Folk Dance" (Wu Xiaobang) is more abundant, for example, it embodies

the individual perspective of choreographers, carries forward the national spirit, and emphasizes the local folk style as well.

However, because of the big changes in the form and content of “New Folk Dance”, there are also a debate on classification. The key is that this "personalization" is from a more individual perspective, or the more perspective of "collective unconsciousness". Whether the “New Folk Dance” (中国民族民间舞/Chinese National Folk Dance) is Chinese staged folk dance or Chinese modern dance? Now, more and more dance artists and educators realize that "Chinese staged folk dance", inspired by folk dance and folklore should be in constant contact with folklore on stage, rather than civic cultural consciousness perspective of Chinese modern or post-modern dance.

Conclusion

Why did a type of dance that is nonexistent on the Western stage emerge in China? I think there are two reasons. First, China is a new and traditional nation-state. The national or Ethnic folk dance consists folk dance and "staged folk dance", should be regarded as the standard of National attributes, which includes the dances of 56 officially acknowledged ethnic groups, including the dance of the Han and the 55 ethnic minorities in China, and the dance of the Chinese nation as Oneness. For example, the "phenomenon of choreographer Zhang Jigang's staged folk dance " in the 1990s always makes us in such a reminiscent mood. because it precipitates and condenses the "Home Consciousness " and "group identity" of the origin of the Chinese nation, integrating nationality, regionalism and folklore. It is still a peak of

Chinese staged folk dance. Second, there is an idiom 叶落归根 in China that symbolizes a deep-rooted sense of belonging, just like the title of Fei Xiaotong 's book Earthbound China, which emphasizes the grass-roots level perspective. As Fei said, "Chinese society is fundamentally rural. "Chinese staged folk dance, which is based on agricultural society, has become a kind of theatrical art, which is the product of Chinese "traditional cultural consciousness".

Maybe we can't literally translate it as "folk dance", it should have the right name. In 2018, "饺子", the native Chinese food, were finally not called dumpling. "饺子" are not just "stuffed" food, so if you want to eat this food, Please use Chinese Pinyin-Jiaozi. the latest edition of Oxford English Dictionary also includes pinyin "JIAOZI". In order to deepen the exchange between Chinese and English, to understand "多元一体/the pattern of diversity in unity of the Chinese Nation"(Fei). for this Individualized choreography in the name of "folk dance" in China, when translating it into English, we might carry out "vocabulary borrowing" in Chinese pinyin and translate it into "Chinese Míngzú Míngjiān DANCE" as well. Thus, the effect of intertextuality is achieved.

Notes

ⁱ MU YU: muyu@bda.edu.cn, July 5, Friday, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m., Valletta Campus, Level 1, Lecture Room 1.

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