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Imitation as Learning and Misrepresentation in Dance Video Games
JoDee Allen

Abstract: The release of motion detectors on video game consoles opened up new possibilities in game design and game scholarship. These systems were designed to track player movement using a camera, and computer vision software, and as such provided an opportunity to study how these new gesture controlled interfaces affect player interaction with the virtual world. The new advent in gesture-mimetic gaming practices also created a platform for a previously unconquered domain: the commodification of popular dances through video games, raising questions on authenticity and access through this new medium.

This paper examines how the immersive potential of mimetic game interfaces in dancing games provides dodgy access to uncritical reproductions of popular culture. The social consequence of this, depending on the narrative of the game, is inappropriate imitation of stereotyped cultural signifiers for the purposes of entertainment. Pausing on how the game design and narrative design might contribute to media curated street dance aesthetic by distancing dance from culture for: the purpose of accessibility and the creation of a sellable fetishized product.

The connection between video games and dance is perhaps not obvious when picturing the proverbial video game player sitting on their couch, staring at a screen, playing a digital game via a hand-held controller. However new developments in video game consoles have made it possible for players to use their whole body to interface with video games. These new gaming technologies track movement, using various methods from wearable technology or hand-held devices to camera tracking, where the player’s body becomes the game controller.

In 1988 and 1989 Nintendo developed the Power Pad and the Power Glove: the Power Pad was a specialized controller that players stood on and used their feet to control, and the Power Glove was a glove with buttons worn over a player’s hand and tracked the player’s hand gestures and button presses to control the game. These controllers represent the start of mimetic game interfaces where the movements of the player reflect ‘real’ movements of an appropriated real-life activity, such as fighting or sports, featured in the game. Then in 2006 came the release of the first generalized gesture console, the Nintendo Wii which opened up development to video
game development companies were able then to design games for these consoles which led to a variety of different video games for each console. This shift towards gesture gaming began to draw attention from the game world or what’s on the screen to the player’s body in physical space (Jones and Thiruvathukal 2012).

Most current dance video games are playable with the Nintendo Wii, the Xbox Kinect and the PlayStation Move consoles. Two popular console franchises are Dance Central (Harmonix 2010-2015) and Just Dance (Just Dance 2012). Fewer dance video games are made for mobile devices such as: Bounden (Bounden 2014) and Floor Kids (MERJ 2017). Probably the best-known dance video game however is still Dance Dance Revolution (Konami 1998), or known as just DDR to fans of the game. First launched as an arcade game machine playable with a specialized foot controlled game pad, then eventually as a home gaming experience playable with most of the commercial consoles listed earlier with a portable adaptation of the game pad.

Generally the game play in the major dance video games, produced by the larger game studios (Harmonix, Konami, Ubisoft) can be summarized as: the player chooses a song from a list similar to a juke box style interface then physically imitate the choreography made for that song as it is shown on screen. In contrast, many other non-dance video games for more ‘traditional’ controllers (i.e. handheld controllers) are designed to allow players to engage somewhat in free play; where they have much greater freedom to choose what to do and how to do it within the crafted game world, and as such personalize their time spent experiencing the game to a greater degree. Bryan G. Behrenshausen argues, in his essay Toward a (Kin)Aesthetic of Video Gaming: The case of Dance Dance Revolution, that dance games as of yet do not allow this kind of free play. He cites Atkins when he says players usually have a relationship with
games that involves what Atkins calls the ‘game gaze’, a “focus, always [...] not on what is before us or the ‘what happens next’ of traditionally unfolding narrative but on the ‘what happens next if I’, which places a player at the center of experience as its principal creator, necessarily engaged in an imaginative act, and always oriented towards the future” (Behrenshausen 2007). This ignition of curiosity in the player towards acting imaginatively gives players the agency to become co-creators in their gameplay experiences. Eric Zimmerman (game scholar, game designer and educator) reasons that this type of game design is based on systems thinking and “thereby leads to the kinds of improvisational problem-solving skills that will be critical for creative learning and work in the future” (Zimmerman n.d., 25). Only one dance game on the market approaches this type of systems thinking approach to dance gaming. In sharp contrast to the primarily frontal facing game-play of mimetic interfaces, Bounden, pushes the parameters of dance gaming by eliciting graceful spins from its’ players that move beautifully through 3D real-space. The spatially orientated puzzles are not shown through a gesture-mimetic interface but rather use a touch interface with more visually abstracted movement indicators on how to adjust the position and tilt of the device. This mobile game requires two players to remain physically connected and simulates the feel of a ‘pas de deux’ in ballet with its intricate twists, turns and sweeping arm gestures. While the game is still reliant on a screen, the mobility of the device and the brilliance of this video game design require the device be moved in ways that compel players to discover a dance together, rather than it being overtly prescribed (Allen 2015).

Specialized gesture controllers highlight player movement but Graeme Kirkpatrick proposes player movement is an integral part of player experience in all video games, as discussed in his book Aesthetic Theory and the Video Game (Kirkpatrick 2011). He states, “Movement is integral to all game play as it links the real world of the player to the virtual world
of the game through the controller – both a traditional controller as well as gesture controllers” (Kirkpatrick 2011, 136). Ian Bogost uses the term Exergaming in reference to games that use these types of specialized gesture controllers because these games “hint at an intimate relation between physical movement — especially rhythmic, repetitive movement — and video game play itself” (Bogost 2007). For Bogost, these gesture based games proceduralize movement – agility, in such a way to produce the effects of exercise as a by product of gameplay. Some games do this through the game and system design but others achieve this through the use of an external rhetoric such as fitness or dance (Bogost 2007, 306). If we consider this inherent relationship of game play and movement, the role of a dance game designer and a choreographer are not so very far apart - in the case of dance games the roles of game designer and choreographer intersect.

Dance Dance Revolution, or DDR, is the first game to popularize dance as rhetoric in video games. DDR has sometimes been called Karaoke for the feet, and was made and popularized in Japan where Karaoke is a bit hit. Prior to the creation of DDR, there was a steady rise in the popularity of Karaoke that began in Japan in the 1970s (Smith 2006). Jacob Smith also draws a link between the introduction of Hip Hop to Japan and the inspiration for the creation of Dance Dance Revolution. In the USA, Rap was the biggest commodity of Hip Hop culture but according to Ian Condry (Smith 2006), in Japan Breakdancing took top billing. He felt that Breakdancing, via the film Wild Style, was more widely accepted into Japanese culture because of the universality of physical language versus verbal. Rap was still adopted by Japanese youth, but the texture of it was dramatically changed into something called Party Rap: a filtered, ‘bubble-gum’ adaptation of the original Gansta Rap that had emerged from Hip Hop artist in the United States. For Smith, this global appropriation of Hip Hop helped to trigger the adoption of
dance gaming practices through DDR. Dedicated DDR players would also create their own choreographies by hacking into the game and changing the game code, or inventing methods to subvert the game rules such as: practicing spacing changes with a partner where they would swap sides on the game machine during game play. “Players do not just play games; they mod them engage in meta-play between games, and develop cultures around games. Games are not just about following rules, but also about breaking them…or breaking social norms…that create and celebrate taboo behavior [sic]” (Zimmerman n.d., 27). DDR created a space for a new kind of performance that broke social norms within the gaming arcades. DDR produces exercise as an emergent outcome of play itself as does Dance Central. Dance Central however relies on an external cultural referent to create meaning in the game; that of street and club culture featuring popular dances, particularly Hip Hop.

The dance rhetoric of Dance Central 3 narrates the player through discovering ‘dance crazes’ and associated popular songs over the past decades, for example: the Macarena was used as the 1990s dance craze. In this narrative, the main characters travel back in time to discover each decade’s dance craze and stop an evil plan hatched up by Dr. Tran! When the game narrative focuses on the 2000s, the main characters are overtaken by a mind-control device and are made to dance against their will by Dr. Tran; by dancing the next choreography well, players help free these characters from external influence and cease their puppetry. Once they are freed, the characters exclaim, “Dr. Tran can’t innovate, he can only imitate!” This dialogue suggests that the game choreography and how the player performs it is more original and creative than Dr. Tran’s mechanical, mind-controlled dances.

This type of call for creative expression over imitation calls is a major component of the hip-hop dance mentality of promoting individual style and innovation. “Hip-hop fosters
diversity, and competition is inherently understood as an open call for critique especially from within the culture itself; that is what battling is all about. It’s a demand to have your work taken seriously by testing it against the work of others (Schloss 3). This game dialogue is calling for a renewal of style, but relies on appropriating Hip-hop culture as its base rhetoric. Additionally, drawing attention to the importance for innovation and self-expression embedded in a game whose game design places high value on imitation, more than on aesthetic choice and does not provide paradigms for assessing variations within the games prescribed logic. When compared historically to rap music, Breaking and graffiti are notably absent from mass media, as Joseph Schloss wrote in *Foundation* “B-boying was an advertisement with no product” (5). He goes on to say that academic scholarship often focuses on Hip-Hop through the lens of mass media, however true “B-boying doesn’t really exist in the mass media” (Schloss 9). The differences between how practitioners of this dance experience it and how the mass media represent it are vast. He also points out *Breaking is something that needs to be experienced*; Breaking vernacular is physical and it must be danced in order to be understood, the term ‘hip-hop culture’ also suggests something that is lived rather than bought and sold (Schloss 5). Gesture video games have made it possible to create a dance product although the experience of dancing in such games is still far removed from the lived experience (Allen 2015).

Marcus Boon in his essay On Appropriation writes, “All technology, as Heidegger tell us, is a framing. Within the framing, certain kinds of appropriation are possible, in that certain materials are taken, transformed and renamed. Thus, the whole history of recorded sound and music, turning it into a kind of raw material that stands ready to be called forth and used by humans” (Boon 2007). In the newest iteration of the Dance Central franchise, *Dance Central Spotlight*, those who conceive the dance sequences in the game are credited as authors rather
than as choreographers. Harmonix released a statement explaining that the authors’ work with a
databank of movements, compiled from previous iterations of the game, and assemble the dance
sequences for each song from this resource (Brezinski 2014). This new dance game terming,
authoring, suggests that dance in video games can be written, and that the once motion captured
movement can be transformed into raw materials (Allen 2015).

While the field of video games is dominated by large scale game companies with
commercially focused business models, the field is also ripe with independent game developers,
or Indies, who make games that are socially conscious with diverse narratives¹. Indie games are
often treated as art objects and are exhibited in curated game exhibitions and events². Game jams
are also popular where artists and programmers will join together in small teams, often chosen at
random, to make a game from start to finish in a weekend. The games resulting from these maker
events span the topics of, to name a few: consent, sustainability and gender³.

Bounden is a dance game for mobile devices that steps outside of the generalized model
for dance media representations. This game uses a simple visual interface on the game but the
beauty lies in moving the mobile device on choreographed trajectories that twist and turn the
players. This is an ideal use of a control scheme for a mobile dance game because it feels as
though the game-play is inspired directly from the movement. The players discover they are
dancing rather than it being prescribed by means of an imitation interface.

For Eric Zimmerman, the role of a game designer is not to force an experience upon a
player but he says rather, “…the creation of meaning is a second-order problem. The game
designer creates structures of rules directly, but only indirectly creates the experience of play
when the rules are enacted by players” (Zimmerman n.d.). In this way players create meaning
and this becomes clear especially when player subvert the rules to create new possibilities. In
this way game design could be considered an improvisational structure, where the players act with varying degrees of freedom within a specific conceptual framework. Both dance and video games are meant to be performed and are given meaning by the act of bodies enlivening and experiencing them. However as with all good improvisational structures, game design and choreography alike, the experiences people have while performing them are never exactly the same twice are repeatable and distinct as an experiential art object. Zimmerman further explains that by considering meaning a ‘second-order problem’ that game design “is not about the creation of a fixed object. It is about creating a set of possibilities” (Zimmerman n.d.).

Notes

1 Two Indie games that exemplify this are: Gone Home – a first-person, non-violent exploration game with a thought provoking narrative - by Steve Gaynor (2013) and Get Water – a mobile game about the water scarcity in India and South Asia, and the effects it has on girls' education – by Decode Global Studio (2013)
2 One example of an experimental game arcade is Arcade 11, a yearly event hosted by the Technoculture, Art and Games lab at Concordia University in Montreal.
3 Gamerella is a yearly game jam located in Montreal dedicated to fostering diversity in games that specifically welcomes self-identified women, people of color, non-gender conforming and like-minded people.

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Rethinking Appropriation: The Reciprocal Relationship of Yoga and American Modern Dance

Jen Aubrecht

Abstract: In 1907, Ruth St. Denis performed *The Yogi*. In 1965, Merce Cunningham included *asana* in *Variations V*. Today, college modern dance programs often include yoga *asana* in technique classes. Yoga has been used consistently throughout the history of American modern dance (see Shelton 1990, Novack 1990, Bales and Nettl-Fiol 2008, among others), however, it has mostly been discussed using the language of appropriation, where yoga is merely a static tool to be used by individual choreographers. Priya Srinivasan, yoga scholar Mark Singleton, and others work to redefine this narrative. In line with these scholars, I suggest that the appropriation model hinders our understanding of the intertwining relationship between these two practices.

Analyzing the various ways that yoga has appeared in modern dance over the past century, I demonstrate the impact that yoga instructors’ choices had on the development of modern dance, and the power of knowledge transmission as generations of dance students learned yoga from their predecessors. Using the language of appropriation to describe the relationship between dance and yoga, East and West, reifies a differential power relationship. This rhetoric around lineage, genealogy, and the transmission of yoga practice then remains a key tool in the retention of Western power. By examining the ways in which yoga and yoga teachers shaped the trajectory of modern dance, we can construct a history that more accurately represents the reciprocal relationship between yoga and American modern dance.

Modern dance choreographers have been using yoga in their personal practice, choreography, and technique since the early 1900s. For example, Ruth St. Denis performed *The Yogi* beginning in 1908 (Schlundt 1962, 12), and taught “yogi meditation” classes to her students at Denishawn (St. Denis 1939, 176-177). Martha Graham’s interest in *kundalini* (*shakti*, cosmic energy rising up the spine) is well documented (Graham 1992, 122), the positions in her floor-based warm-up bear strong resemblance to yoga *asana* such as *baddha konasana* and *upavista konasana* (Helpern 1991), and the breath work included in her technique has been said to be yogic or yoga-inspired (Horosko 2002). In his 1954 book *Every Little Movement*, Ted Shawn said that, because of his excellent breath control, Delsarte must have been a yogi (26, 59). In 1965, Merce Cunningham included *sirsasana, mayurasana*, and variations of *halasana* in
Variations V (1966). In Sharing the Dance, Cynthia Novack includes a photo with the following caption:

The Performance Group, directed by Richard Schechner, warms up for rehearsals of Dionysus in ’69. Schechner explained to me that the warm-up consisted of exercises designed to ‘give and get energy and motion from each other.’ The man at the left performs a modified yoga pose (‘We didn’t know then that it was yoga’), and those in the center do a shoulder stand taught to the group by Polish director Jerzy Grotowski. (1990, 48)

Bill T. Jones writes of his yoga practice and the time he and Arnie Zane spent in the Hare Krishna movement (formally known as the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, or ISKCON) (Jones 1995; 114, 122). Pieces such as Blauvelt Mountain (1980) and Freedom of Information (1985) include yoga poses such as bakasana and sirsasana (Jones 1995; 142, 160). The Pilobolous dance company published a playful book of images of their dancers in partnered yoga-inspired poses titled Twisted Yoga in 2002. Today, college modern dance programs often include yoga asana in modern dance technique classes, and, according to authors in the collected volume The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training, professional dancers often substitute yoga asana classes for daily dance technique classes, and yoga constitutes a key part of the flexible dancer’s multidisciplinary training (ed. Bales and Nettl-Fiol 2008; 15, 20, 40).

These are just a few examples of the long-standing interweaving of yoga and modern dance, which demonstrate the inextricable relationship between the forms.

Until recently, such instances of concert dance choreographers including yoga in their careers have been found disjointedly, with mentions of yoga practices scattered across autobiographies, interviews, biographies, and scholarly work. This places yoga as one element among many influences on a choreographer, and reduces yoga to something static that the choreographer astutely and intentionally appropriated for their own use. For example, Mark Wheeler’s 1984 dissertation, “Surface to Essence: Appropriation of the Orient by Modern
Dance,” discusses the incorporation of yoga (and various other ‘Eastern’ practices) through the rhetoric of a gradual increase in the level of authenticity seen in the versions of yoga practiced by selectively appropriative dancers. Kara Miller’s 2015 dissertation, “Re-imagining Modern Dance as Transnational Phenomenon through the Lens of Yoga,” takes a different track and uses her experience as a yoga practitioner and dancer to lay out the various ways yoga has been used by modern dance choreographers, and to construct a genealogy of the lineage of modern dancers who use yoga in their work (27). She suggests that the influence of yoga on modern dance can be seen through the similarities in movement vocabulary, the use of breath, and the internally- and experientially-focused visualization exercises or prompts used when teaching dancing (26). This longstanding use of yoga in modern dance brings up issues of authenticity and appropriation, as modern dancers represented, misrepresented, and selectively used aspects of yoga traditions to further their choreography and technique practices. Because the habitual way of discussing yoga in modern dance texts relies on the rhetoric of appropriation, it is necessary to find some way to address the politics of race in discussions of yoga in modern dance without reifying negative power relationships.

According to appropriation scholar and law professor Susan Scafidi, cultural appropriation is “Taking intellectual property, traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, or artifacts from someone else's culture without permission…. It’s most likely to be harmful when the source community is a minority group that has been oppressed or exploited in other ways or when the object of appropriation is particularly sensitive” (cited in Baker 2012, see also Scafidi 2005). Because of the focus on permission and sacredness in Scafidi’s definition, yoga in a Euro-American context forms a particularly interesting object of study. Yoga has radically changed over the past 500 years, as some elements of the practice were banned by British colonizers,
others were emphasized by Hindu nationalists, and musccularly-oriented movement practices from Europe and the U.S. increased the interest in bodybuilding and physical training in India (Singleton 2010). Furthermore, as yoga has changed as a practice, the link between South Asian yogis and the culture they produce and transmit has increasingly been ruptured. It is no longer always necessary to have an “authentic” Indian yoga instructor, and the ties between yogi, yoga practice, and yoga as product are no longer fixed. This process is related to what dance scholar Anthea Kraut discusses as the gendered and racialized separation between the individual as an inalienable owner of their representation, choreography, and circulation in a capitalist economy, and the individual as a cultural producer who is separate from their products. According to Kraut, “in the case of choreography, because the body is implicated in both the person of the author and the substance of the work, property rights in the body prove an insecure site of privilege” (2016, 39). As in dance, the cultural production of yogis—their movements, philosophies, and practices—is intimately and inextricably tied to their bodies, as well as their history, lineage, and genealogy. This complicates questions around ownership of yoga in modern dance, as the embodied cultural production of the yogi becomes leverage in the embodied cultural production of the (white) artist, who is often positioned as an individual genius (see Kraut 2016, 65). There is also a disjunction between circulation of yoga as yoga and the circulation of yoga in modern dance. The use of yoga in modern dance was facilitated by the separation between yogi as individual and yoga as product, and discussions of appropriation must address that rupture in order to break the cycle of not recognizing the influence of yogis and yoga on concert dance values, technique, and choreography.

The meanings tied up in current representations of yoga practice in the United States speak to a legacy of yoga instructors modifying yoga to make it more palatable to American
practitioners (Jain 2014). These shifts are indicative of what yoga studies scholars such as David Gordon White, Andrea Jain, and Mark Singleton, among others (White 2012, Jain 2014, Singleton 2010), view as the mutable nature of yoga itself. According to White, “Every group in every age has created its own version and vision of yoga. One reason this has been possible is that its semantic field—the range of meanings of the term “yoga”—is so broad and the concept of yoga so malleable, that it has been possible to morph it into nearly any practice or process one chooses” (White 2012, 2). The language used in yoga histories supplements this stance, as noted by yoga historian Stefanie Syman: “American society has been able to assimilate any number of versions of it [yoga], more or less simultaneously” (2010, 7). In order to see the changes made to yoga by yogis, I examine the ways that yoga instructors from India modified yoga in bringing it to the U.S., and the effects those modifications had on the development of both concert dance and yoga in the United States. I emphasize the back and forth transmission of practices between yoga and modern dance to disrupt narratives that place yoga as a static and appropriate-able object, and to position yoga as a practice that has shaped modern dance just as much as modern dance practices have shaped yoga.

Based on the mutual influences between yoga and modern dance in the United States, I construct a multi-pronged argument: first, the conscious choices of South Asian yoga popularizers facilitated the spread of yoga to Europe and the United States in general, and to concert dance choreographers in particular. Second, yoga has been influenced by its interactions with generations of American concert dance choreographers, who learned yogic practices from their predecessors and shifted yoga to suit their own physical, meditative, and spiritual ends. Third, the genealogy of choreographers who were also yoga practitioners, as established by Kara Miler, complicates straightforward notions of appropriation, as there is evidence that yoga has
not only been instrumental to the careers of individual choreographers, but has been a key part of
the foundation of modern dance technique and choreography in the United States. Finally, I
argue that the common rhetoric around “Western” appropriation of a static “Eastern” yoga reifies
the power relationship that it purports to dismantle, while fixing South Asian yoga instructors as
non-agentive culture bearers whose wisdom had to be interpreted by shrewd Western culture
creators. I provide several examples in order to illuminate the reciprocal relationship between
yoga – practice, instructors, philosophies and methodologies – and modern dance.

As mentioned previously, many medieval Indian yogic practices—such as militant
asceticism, wandering naked, carrying a weapon, and militaristic organizing to disrupt the trade
routes of the British East India Company—were banned in India beginning in 1773 (Singleton
2010, 38-41). Instead, yogis were often forced into showmanship and mendicancy to make a
living, resulting in images of yogis as dirty beggars in contorted and extreme postures. As a
result of this pressure on yogi sects by British colonists and the simultaneous rise of Hinduism,
yogis and yoga practice were separated from yoga texts, and English translations of yogic texts
in the 1800s focused on the meditative, Sanskritic, and textual aspects of the practice (Singleton
2010, 44). This shift towards yoga as a textual and philosophical practice was epitomized in
Anglo-American Victorian culture by the teachings of Swami Vivekananda (1836-1902).
Vivekananda’s raja yoga, which positioned yogic spirituality as universally beneficial regardless
of the practitioner’s religion, and minimized the importance of asana, made yoga appealing to
middle- and upper-class members of countercultural groups, artists, and members of non-
traditional Christian religious groups (de Michelis 2004). Vivekananda was one of the first
popularizers of yoga in the United States, and his work set the stage for future interactions
between yoga, physical culture practices, and concert dance.
Swami Paramananda (1884-1940) was a student of Vivekananda’s and one of his successors as a leader of the Vedanta movement in the United States. He gave a lecture on yogic techniques at Denishawn in the summer of 1916. According to Ruth St. Denis,

“The Swami sat on and on, and just as [the students’] impatience was becoming more and more pronounced an extraordinary tone came from his throat, the pronouncing of Aum (God) opened his prayer, and it was done with that extraordinary vibration which is like the striking of a great gong. It was deep and thrilling and seemed to sound throughout his whole body. Of course the girls did not realize that he was teaching them their first lesson of the East—patience, reverence, and humility—but I do not think any of them ever forgot the effect of that afternoon. (St. Denis 1939, 198-199)

St. Denis’s description of the lecture emphasizes Paramananda as a provider of authentic Eastern knowledge, and does not take into account the shift in yoga practice that Paramananda participated in and furthered. Through his work with the Vedanta centers, he continued the trend to position yoga as a universally applicable spiritual practice, with a basis in meditation, breath, and stillness. This impacted St. Denis’s contributions to modern dance, as she also emphasized the use of breath in support of movement, and used her dancing to express what she saw as universal spiritual ideals. Her students participated in her “yogi meditation” classes (St. Denis 1937, 176-177), which initiated the lineage of dance students learning elements of yoga as a part of their dance training. In *The Yogi* (1908), St. Denis’s portrayal of the figure of the yogi as a peacefully seated meditator caught up in a blissful union with the divine continued the separation between South Asian yogis and the use of meditative and philosophical elements of yoga practices in the United States (St. Denis 1939, 98, 107; Schlundt 1962, 12).

This separation between Indian yogis and yoga practice was somewhat reversed during the rise of the Indian nationalist movement in the 1930s, as the highly athletic and physical practice crafted by Tirumalai Krishnamacharya (1888-1989) and his students worked to assert Indian male strength, virility, and capacity for self-governance in the face of British colonialism...
Yet, this yoga was itself radically changed by its encounter with Euro-American spiritual seekers of the early- and mid-1900s, as Indian yoga practitioners were influenced by translations of Delsarte techniques, Swedish Ling gymnastics, and harmonial gymnastics. The influence of the religious philosophies of New Thought and Theosophy served to position yoga in the United States as “spiritual stretching” and to make its conceptions of the relationship between spirit, self, and divine palatable to American audiences (Singleton 2010, 143-162). Beginning in the 1930s, vinyasa-based yoga practices, which focus on the connection between breath and movement and use rapid and repeated sequences of poses, rose to prominence. The confluence of influences between Krishnamacharya’s yoga and modern dance practices can be seen in the floor-based warm-up in the Graham technique, which includes poses that could have been derived from yoga asana and, like many of Krishnamacharya’s yoga teachings, focuses on breath as impetus to movement. Graham’s use of yogic methods in her technique continues the lineage of dancers using yoga.

In 1957, a man by the name of Yogi Vithaldas (1909?-1989?) published a book on yoga titled The Yoga System of Health and Relief from Tension. According to a caption of a photo of an elderly Vithaldas by Getty Images, he was born in Bombay (now Mumbai) in 1909, and began to study yoga around age 14 or 15. He began teaching four years later, and photographs of him providing instruction to Westerners appear by 1941 (Getty 1969). His book provides a thorough introduction to the practice of yoga through asana, pranayama, clean eating, and yoga philosophies around the control of the body as a means of leading a happier and healthier life. Unlike Vivekananda 50 years earlier, Vithaldas does not aim to convert readers to any particular spiritual viewpoint, or to see yoga as a universal expression of philosophical truth, but rather presents his teachings as a scientifically and medically sound means of creating increased health.
This increased reliance on the medicinal benefits of yoga is in line with the midcentury trend to view the body through the framework of hygiene, as discussed by anthropologist Emily Martin (1994, 24-29). Yoga scholar Joseph Alter’s analysis of the use of scientific and medical experiments in the 1930s also supports this framing of yoga as medicine (Alter 2004). Vithaldas argues that “The exercises here given cater for every need of the body, and that systematically practised [sic] and made a habit, a great improvement in the constitution of the student will result, making for a renewed outlook on life generally, of optimism, confidence, and happiness” (1957, 37-38). According to Cunningham dancer Carolyn Brown, Vithaldas’s book was a jumping off point for Merce Cunningham’s lifelong use of yoga asana as a morning ritual and choreographic element, while Vithaldas’s yoga classes in downtown New York in 1961 were a site of exploration and discovery for dancers including Carolyn Brown, Robert Ellis Dunn, Judy Dunn, and Remy Charlip (Brown 2007; 23-24, 338). By 1965, Cunningham had begun to include recognizable yoga asana in his choreography (Variations V (1965)). Instead of trying to represent yogis as a means of presenting spirituality onstage, as done by St. Denis, or to use yogic breath techniques in dance technique, as done by Graham, Cunningham used yoga as one more movement that could be incorporated into his dance creations. Vithaldas’s emphasis on yogic techniques as physical, mental, and spiritual healing modalities, as well as his emphasis on the relationship between the self and the divine, could have prompted Cunningham to see yoga as both a set of poses that could be incorporated into dances as a “non-dance element” and as a means of understanding the relationship between artist and art (Merce Cunningham Dance Foundation, Inc. records, Additions, Box 31). In this era, the transition from the yogi as sole informant and a necessary symbol of authenticity, to the yogi as a culture bearer whose work could be taken up piecemeal, solidified.
In the 1960s and 1970s, the direct influences of yoga on modern dance become harder to trace as yoga proliferated, immigration laws changed, and Indian-derived spiritual practices gained momentum in the United States. By that time, yogic philosophies and breathing techniques had been embedded in modern dance practice for several generations of artists, and the use of yoga *asana* became increasingly common in technique classes (see, for example, Kara Miller’s slow realization of yoga’s embeddedness in her modern dance training, Cynthia Novack’s account of yoga in contact improvisation practices, Bill T. Jones’s participation in ISKCON and use of *asana* in choreography). As American students learned yoga from dance teachers who did not always explicitly name the practices they were drawing on, the particularity of the yogic practices in use often became diluted. Choreographers and dance teachers had a stake in positioning themselves as individual geniuses, which often led to them eliding the influence of yogis and yogic practices on their dance techniques and choreography.

The separation between yoga and yogis is in line with one of the central identifiers of modern appropriation: appropriation lets people show love for the culture of people of color, but remain prejudiced against the people who created that culture (Johnson 2015). The common rhetoric around “Western” appropriation of a static “Eastern” yoga reifies the differential power relationship between an “East” and a “West,” while fixing South Asian yoga instructors as non-agentive culture bearers whose wisdom had to be interpreted by shrewd Western culture creators. In order to begin to remedy this, it is essential to recognize the yoga teachers who facilitated the use of yoga in modern dance, and to see the intentional and well-calibrated shifts they made as they brought yoga to the United States. The history of yoga in modern dance cannot be a history of intentional choices by white choreographers and dance teachers who appropriated yoga, an
inert object, but must instead bilaterally recognize the mutual exchange between yogis, dancers, their students, and the practices themselves.

Bibliography


“What Are You Looking at?” - The Representation of ‘African Dances’ in Portuguese Documentaries of the Colonial Period
Sérgio Bordalo e Sá

Abstract: This paper will focus on excerpts of “African dances” in Portuguese documentaries from the Portuguese Film Archive collection. Being the first images of Africans dancing that were shown to Portuguese audiences and were made by Portuguese filmmakers during the dictatorship, they reveal an expectable colonial look. They were shot in the Portuguese colonies of Angola, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe in the late 20s and 30s, but also for instance in the Portuguese Industrial Exhibition in Lisbon in 1932, where a Guinea village was recreated. We will be able to see how the camera shows different types of bodies and dances, and how the dancers connect with the camera, because as we know from the intertitles most of the dances were performed to be filmed. There is a focus on the exotic and the different (for example, close-ups of body parts), but we will also see how the camera shows the articulation between the dancers and the audience, which in some cases also participate in the performances. What do these images reveal and what do they conceal? What can we conclude about the way dance is filmed? How is “African dance” represented? Is there an exclusive colonial gaze or there is something else? Looking at these antecedents can we see traces of how this stigma is going to be reconfigured in the context of expressive practices in post-colonial Portugal?

This paper is part of a post-doctoral research held in INET-md (Ethnomusicology Institute – study center for music and dance), branch of the Faculty of Human Kinetics of the University of Lisbon, Portugal. My background is in Cinema as I have a Master of Arts in Film Studies from The University of Iowa (2001) and a PhD in Artistic Studies – studies of cinema and audio-visual from the Faculty of Arts of the University of Lisbon, Portugal (2013), and my thesis was about propaganda films in Portugal. Considering this background, you may ask: how do I happen to be in a Dance conference? Well, I was hired as a post-doctoral researcher to work in the relation between cinema and dance, with a special focus on films about the colonial period in Portugal. Having come from Film Studies, my main focus is not only what we see on the screen, but also how we see it, how it is shown and how it is shot. Because the way something is shot reveals at least as much as what it is shot.

My main task is to work in our database: Terpsicore (http://weebox.fmh.ulisboa.pt). As you may guess from name of the goddess of dance, this is a database about dance, but there is a question one may immediately ask: how do we archive dance? A dance
performance is, as everybody knows, intangible. Having no material existence, we cannot ‘archive’ it. So we archive dance reviews, dance programs, flyers, interviews with the choreographers, etc. I’m doing the filmic part of the archive: indexing and describing dance sequences in Portuguese films, especially non-fiction, since the beginning of the twentieth-century. We are not focusing on ‘dance films’, but on ‘films with dance’, and this is not a minor question as what is relevant for our database is to be able to rapidly track the dance sequences in the films to help future researchers. Because we are not considering the films as a whole, it would be wrong to deal only with ‘dance films’.

All the films mentioned in this paper are available at the Portuguese Film Archive website (www.cinemateca.pt/Cinemateca-Digital/Video.aspx). They have so far 438 non-fiction films from 1896 up to 1967 available to be seen, completely free, mostly documentaries short films. The six movies I’m addressing were all made in the late twenties, early thirties of the twentieth century and were probably the first images of African people widely shown in Portugal. Since the sixteenth century and the time of the so-called ‘Discoveries’, Portugal had five colonies in Africa (Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Principe, and Guinea Bissau). Moreover, one must take into account that in the period the films were shot Portugal had a dictatorship, which lasted for 48 years (1926-1974) and it was by far the longest in Europe. To justify the presence in Africa, it was in the best interest of the regime to show how the colonization was very peaceful with mutual acceptance. The Brazilian sociologist, Giberto Freyre, was very much appreciated by the dictatorship, as he said that the biggest advantage of the Portuguese was not to treat the white as ‘superior’ and the black as ‘inferior’. He stated that the Portuguese were good colonizers, because they were themselves a mixture of races, especially with the African. Freyre came up with the term “lusotropical” to define the new society the Portuguese tried to settle in the
colonies, a society in which there were “no submission nor assimilation, but instead the integration of all” (Meneses 2009, 384).

I am going to pay a close attention to the films themselves now to see what type of discourse they produce. Because this is a written paper and I can’t show the excerpts, I will make a small description of the dance in each of them and make my remarks from there.

*Primitive Customs of Indigenous in Mozambique (Costumes Primitivos dos Indígenas em Moçambique)* is a movie from 1929, directed by Fernandes Tomaz and the Portuguese Cinematographic Brigade. Two intertitles set the tone: “Indigenous dance – Mozambique” and “Warrior dances of Angonia”. We have men in costumes dancing facing the camera and close-ups of two of them looking at it, while other men in the audience are in a circle in the background. Another intertitle: “Warrior dances of Inhambane”. Also in a circle, people are on their knees and start to move. A woman in bare-chested is dancing and is followed by three men also dancing facing the camera. Musicians play a wooden idiophone and there is a close-up of a membranophone being played. A man with a spear and shield dances and in the background every men is also carrying a spear and shield while dancing. This sequence has a very dynamic montage, with several different shots.

This film was shot in the north of Mozambique, near the Malawi border, by one of the so-called ‘Cinematographic Brigades’ that were sent to Africa during this period precisely to record the inhabitants and their way of living. We see an extremely mediated relation, because there are almost no Africans who don’t look at the camera. They are aware of it and it provokes both estrangement and fascination. There are several shots of their dance which allow us to make an assumption that it was performed to be filmed. This construction of an external and colonial gaze is reinforced by the close-up shots of the traditional costumes they wear, which emphasize the difference. In one of the shots we see an African woman bare-
chested, but there is a neutral look contrary to what we will see in *Africa in Lisbon – The Indigenous of Guinea in the Portuguese Great Industrial Exhibition*.

On the other hand, in the case of *Academic Mission to Angola – A Few Cinematographic Aspects of the Trip* (*Missão Académica a Angola - Alguns Aspectos Cinematográficos da Viagem*) directed by Maximino Correia and also from 1929, the dance doesn’t seem to have been performed on purpose to be filmed. There is an intertitle saying “in honor of the Mission” and we see adults and children posing to the camera. Women get together in semicircle and move their hips in a very low angle shot, probably on the top of a building. Women are in line with their backs to the camera, moving their hips, while men are playing musical instruments in the background. Another intertitle says that a ‘batuque’ was also organized “in honor of the Mission with a beauty pageant and decorative arts”. Two women in costumes dance in front of a big crowd who claps to set the rhythm.

The camera being always outside from the circle in which the women are dancing in the first sequence and the fact that there are no details of the costumes or close-up shots of any sort makes us assume that the dance was performed for the Mission, but not for the camera. Again, we have a film made during an ‘academic mission’, there is always this sense of discovery and we also have Africans posing to the camera, something that happens in every of these films.

In *Agricultural and Industrial São Tomé (São Tomé Agrícola e Industrial)* directed by Augusto Seara and still from 1929, there is a change from the previous films: an intertitle informs us that “in the end of a work day, people have fun”. The audience is surrounding the dancer who wears a prop to amplify the movement of his hips. Three men play membranophones and there is a close-up of a fourth one with a defying gaze to the camera. Despite the fact that the movie is silent, we see him moving his lips: he is speaking directly to us. Another man is also looking at the camera, but with a more neutral gaze. There is a low
angle establishing shot of the inhabitants dancing in face of an audience that also participates. Children make a circle and dance between themselves. Adults also dance with children and two people play membranophones and other two reco-reco. The final shot is a girl playing membranophone while looking directly at the camera.

This is not so much about traditional dances, with specific costumes, but more social dances. The participation of children reinforces this aspect. Not surprisingly, there is also a fascination for the camera, as everybody looks at it, however with a small nuance: we see three close-ups of people with a defying gaze at the camera. Could this more assumed interaction with the camera signify that people are more at ease with it? It is a question without an answer so far.

We move forward two years and Plateau of Huila (Planalto de Huila) is directed by António Antunes da Mata and José César de Sá. One intertitle states: “… it was Sunday. The women were dancing to the sound of kuas…” Three women dance while two people play membranophones. The audience is in a semicircle and claps to set the rhythm. The dancers are coming in and out from the audience and dance to the sound of the membranophones. Another intertitle: “one of the dancers falls with casumbi – she felt ill with the spell”. While she falls and is being assisted by other women, two other women are dancing and the people from the audience keep coming in and out from it to the foreground to dance. There is a close shot of a woman dancing with a child on her back and the sequence ends with three women dancing facing the camera.

We have an establishing shot much more open than in the previous movies. There are no inserts, or close-up shots with details, something that is also different in relation to the previous movies. After a while, the camera gets near the performers and they dance to it. Everything seems to happen in the verge of the moment.
In 1932, Colonizing Action of the Portuguese (Acção Colonizadora dos Portugueses) was directed by António Antunes da Mata in the context of the “Angola colonial series” as we are told from the intertitles. Once again we have a film which is part of a series thought to show the life in the colonies. There are two defining intertitles which summarize perfectly the message of the movie:

1) “The dance of the shepherd’s women…” We see a group of African women in a circle clapping. Two of them are dancing in the middle (one has a child on her back). There is a pan over the audience (all women) and two men are playing membranophones. We see a close-up of the women in the audience clapping and looking at the camera. There is back and forth cutting between the dancers and the audience;

2) “Near, a few kilometers away, another dance… the dance of the civilization”. It takes place at an elementary school in Angola: two pairs of children in costumes (the girls are white and the boys are black) make a traditional dance (Portuguese folklore) in the recreation area with audience in the background. There is an establishing shot in the beginning and during the dance, and close-ups of three of the dancers at the end.

In the first sequence, the camera is slightly lower than in the previous movies, at the level of the chest. The use of several shots reveals that the dance was made to be filmed and probably was done more than one time. Again we have the fascination for the camera, with girls looking directly to the camera and women dancing with children on their back.

The “dance of the civilization” was only “a few kilometers away” and was performed not near the huts and on clay ground as the previous one, but on the constructed recreational area of a school. The fact that the dancers were both white and black also emphasize the intended ‘civilized’ aspect. The audience is made from students and it is mostly white. In this case, “civilization” is connected to a sort of folklore, which is very typical of Portugal.
Finally, *Africa in Lisbon – The Indigenous of Guinea in the Portuguese Great Industrial Exhibition* (África em Lisboa - Os Indígenas da Guiné na Grande Exposição Industrial Portuguesa) is also from 1932 and was directed by Salazar Diniz and Raul Reis. One of the intertitle states: “the *fulas* in their dances and singings full of picturesque and of color… black”. With the audience displayed in a circle in the background, there is a man dancing in the middle and others play membranophones, idiophones and chordophones. A man and a woman dance and there is a pan over the chiefs of the village in the audience. We see a close-up of the feet of the dancer and of the musicians playing. These musicians also participate in the dance. The sequence ends with the musicians laughing and playing lying on the ground.

This film was shot in Lisbon, during the Great Industrial Exhibition, and all these people were living on the site throughout the whole exhibition. This wasn’t the only time, as it also happened in the Portuguese World Exhibition of 1940. There’s no other way to put it: it resembles a kind of zoo and it is the quintessential colonial gaze. Before this dance sequence, there is an intertitle: “indiscretions of the lens [of the camera]”. Girls were shot bare-chested, somewhat surprised, and they blatantly pose to the camera. There is an African man laughing, in a slightly low angle shot which gives him some importance. He stands for us and sort of justifies our look and our smile too. If he does it, the message that is being given to the viewer is that it is also ok for him to react like that.

On the other hand, the “color… black” (in Portuguese, the adjective comes after the noun, which gives a little more edge to the phrase) reinforces the difference and the picturesque the film wants to show.

Concerning the dance sequence, the dancer steps into the field, differently from the other movies, in which he is already in the field. It is a performance made for the camera. There are many shots of the details, close-ups, profile shots, a great variety. They walk
towards the camera – again they are very aware of its presence and there is also some interaction with it.

Of course this is just a small sample of movies from this period, but nevertheless we can always try to make a kind of conclusion:

1) The camera assumes itself as a participant in the reality, never tries to go unnoticed. It represents the other, the one who looks and is looked at (therefore the title of this paper, borrowed – and now for something completely different to quote the Monty Python – from the beginning of Madonna’s Vogue in The Immaculate Collection album). And the camera is taken as a character by the participants in the movies, which is best seen by the close-ups of the gazes they make to it.

2) From what I’ve seen so far in the movies of the Portuguese Film Archive, there are much more close-up shots of the details in films with ‘African dances’ than in movies with traditional Portuguese dances (for example, Alpiarça – 1928 – and The Pearl of the Atlantic – Madeira – 1937). Almost as if there was an intention of thoroughly showing the differences.

3) With the understandably exception of the “civilization dance”, there is never a mix between Caucasian and Africans. Neither in the dances and nor in the audiences.

4) The intertitles (“color… black”, “indiscretions of the lens”, “civilization dance”) emphasize the status of colonial power, but always safeguarding the (future) ‘mild manners’ / ‘gentleness’ (expression made famous later on by the dictator Salazar to define Portugal) and what it would become the future ‘lusotropicalismo’, to quote again the expression Gilberto Freyre used to define the relation of Portugal with its colonies in the tropics: the (supposedly) successful adaptation of Portuguese people in that region was due not to political or economic interests, but to an inborn empathy.
Works Cited


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Sérgio Bordalo e Sá has a Master’s Degree in Film Studies from The University of Iowa (2001) and a PhD in Artistic Studies – Studies of Cinema and Audiovisual from FLUL, Lisbon (2013). Currently he has postdoctoral scholarship to work in INET-md (Ethnomusicology Institute – Study Centre in Music and Dance).
Abstract: As a librarian involved in developing international cataloging standards, I am exploring ways in which linked data can be used to catalog dance. This presentation will demonstrate the results of my experimentation in cataloging resources associated with Martha Graham, using RIMMF, a data visualization tool. By building relationships between entities, the library catalog becomes a complex interconnected network that branches in many directions, encouraging exploration and discovery. It makes it possible to envision an imminent future in which a simple Web search will provide wider and faster access to dance resources, both tangible and intangible.

A little background

Some of you might remember the “good old days” when, in order to find out what a library owned, you needed to enter the library and consult the card catalog. Card catalogs were essentially data silos independent from one another. To find out what another library owned, you needed to travel to another part of town, another city, state, even country. Since then, much has changed. Thanks to the invention of automated library systems and the Internet, you can now access library catalogs from the comfort of your home. However, what many people don’t realize is that most library catalogs are still data silos. In order to access an online library catalog, you must first enter the library’s digital front door. To access another catalog, you must visit another library catalog’s website. In general, you cannot access catalog data directly on Google, which is where most people start their research today. To solve this problem and bring visibility to the vast world of resources they own, many cultural institutions are working on fascinating projects to unleash their data to the Open Web, the public part of the Web viewable by all.¹

As a catalog librarian with a special interest in dance, I am exploring ways to make data about dance available on the Open Web. This presentation will demonstrate the results of my experimentation in cataloging tangible and intangible resources associated with one of
“America’s Irreplaceable Dance Treasures,” Martha Graham (Dance Heritage Coalition ©2011).

However, before I go ahead, I would like to disclose four facts:

1. Unlike my co-presenters, I am far from a specialist in Graham and her works;
2. I rarely catalog dance resources in my daily work (—but I do have a background in dance history).
3. Most library staff who catalog dance resources do not know much about dance.
4. Finally, unlike other disciplines, such as art, divinity, law, music, etc., to my knowledge, there is no dance and/or archive association involved in the development of international cataloging standards.

Is dance research doomed? Maybe not, as you will see…

The challenge

Behind what you recognize as a bibliographic record of *Blood Memory* is something called a Machine-Readable Cataloging record, or MARC record.² MARC is a format invented in the mid-1960s that uses fields, subfields and tags to describe bibliographic entities. Behind this record are also MARC authority records that control the forms of names, titles, and subjects that should be used in bibliographic records and in searching the library catalog.

Even though MARC bibliographic and authority records are stored in and processed by computer systems, they are designed to be used by humans because most of the information in these records is text. Let’s consider for example the authority record for *Appalachian Spring*. Even if you never saw a MARC record, you can understand from this record that *Appalachian Spring* was choreographed by Graham; the music was composed by Aaron Copland; the set was designed by Isamu Noguchi; and the premiere occurred in Washington, D. C., at the Library of
Congress, on October 30, 1944; and you can infer that the Martha Graham Dance Company performed at the premiere.³ We humans can extract the meaning of this text; machines—the Web—cannot. In some respects, machines are still dumber than humans!

The challenge facing libraries is therefore to create bibliographic data that is meaningful to machines. The solution is linked data, that is, “a method of exposing and connecting data on the Web from different sources” (Webopedia 2016). Uniform Resource Identifiers (URIs)—instead of strings of words—are used to describe “things” on the Web. A “thing” can be whatever has information value: it can be a tangible object, like a book owned by a library, or it can be a living thing, like a person, or events, like a dance performance, or an abstract concept, etc. Each “thing” has, so to speak, its own little website identified by a Web address starting with “http,” so that people can look it up on the Internet. Each little “website” contains meaningful information about the “thing” being described and is linked to other “things” using meaningful relationships also described by URIs. For example, to describe Appalachian Spring in a meaningful way to a machine—or, to make it machine actionable—one would use a URI (for example, http://viaf.org/processed/LC%7Cn%20%2097820286) and link it to a URI representing Martha Graham (for example, http://www.worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n79-59674/) by using a URI of a meaningful relationship, such as “has choreographer” (for example, http://metadataregistry.org/schemaprop/show/id/23975.html). We humans understand strings of words; machines understand URIs. Over time, useful information and additional links to other entities are added to the record of each of these entities. The more links are created to an entity such as Graham, the more she becomes visible on the Web.

You can often see linked data in action when Googling. For example, if you do a search for “Martha Graham,” a box called a Knowledge Graph appears on the right side of the search
results. No one has really created this box. Google gathers information, such as Graham’s birth date, from various sources in the hope that your information needs will be met here instead of down the long list of results. But the system is far from perfect. Consider for instance a Google search for “Graham Blood Memory.” The Knowledge Graph is ambiguous in that it does not make any distinction between Martha Graham’s *Blood Memory* and Neile Graham’s poetry collection by the same title.4

Librarians have worked for years to create bibliographic data as reliable as possible to describe resources. Bringing library data to the Open Web could enhance such results and bring more reliability to Web searches. This Knowledge Graph could easily disambiguate between the two different works called *Blood Memory*. Graham’s Knowledge Graph could link to the Martha Graham Collection at the Library of Congress. Wouldn’t it be nice if Google would help you target your search by adding a prompt that says “Find it in a library, archive, museum near you” in addition to boxes such as “Shop for … on Google,” and “In the news”? These are some of the improvements that could occur when the data of cultural institutions are released on the Open Web.

**My project: a drop in the ocean**

In the last five years, I have been involved in the development of Resource, Description and Access (RDA), an international cataloging standard “designed for the digital world” (RDA Toolkit, 2016).5 In essence, the developers of RDA are creating the elements, guidelines, and instructions—the infrastructure, so to speak—needed to catalog in a linked data environment.

Compared to the impressive projects going on in large cultural institutions around the globe, my project is a drop in the ocean. My goal is to evaluate if RDA is adequate to catalog
dance resources for our “digital world.” In order to do so, I am using a program called RIMMF to create what is referred to as an “r-ball,” a file containing “linked data … representations of cultural heritage resources.” (R-balls, 2016). I have chosen Graham as the subject of my r-ball in part because I know that libraries and archives contain many types of resources by and about Graham: books, videos, photographs, movies, programs, reviews, scores, archives, etc. Creating a Graham r-ball would therefore allow me to look at a broad range of RDA instructions. As I proceed, there are a few facts to keep in mind:

- RIMMF is not an online tool: the r-ball I created is held on my computer at work. However, my data could easily be published online.
- My r-ball is far from perfect because RIMMF is a tool to practice cataloging in a linked data environment, to experiment, and most importantly, to fail and try again.
- Like MARC records, RIMMF records are not intended to be viewed by library patrons as is. For this reason, some things might look strange. Some labels used to link entities, for example, are not user-friendly; they are cataloger jargon.
- At the moment, RIMMF has limited capability to link to and from subjects: I cannot link resources to topics (such as “history”), genres (such as “biography”) and places (such as United States). Because I must still use words to describe such concepts instead of URIs, they are not yet machine-actionable.

**Examples and comparisons**

Let’s go back to *Appalachian Spring*. The MARC authority record for this work cannot be meaningfully used online. It exists by itself: the data are strings of words not linked to any other bibliographic entities, not even to the creator of the work, Graham. On the contrary, my
RIMMF record already contains several links to other bibliographic entities. By viewing the relationship tree for this work, we can see that it is linked to:

- the choreographer of the work;
- the music on which it is choreographed;
- the television adaptation;
- a dance score;
- works of which it is the subject.

Unlike in a MARC record, the names and titles you see are not strings of words even though they appear to us humans as such. They are in fact URIs linking to many more bibliographic entities. We can dig deeper into this relationship tree and discover:

- the names of persons associated with the television adaptation;
- the original 1959 version.

If we dig even deeper, we will notice links to:

- people who perform in the television adaptation;
- a film reel from 1959, a VHS from around 1985, and a DVD from 2002. Online, each of these resources could be linked to specific items held in specific libraries.

Now, let’s consider Graham. Currently, to retrieve resources by and about Graham in a traditional library catalog, I have to do several searches: including by author, title, subject and keyword. Each list of results has to be closely examined to determine what relationship exists between each resource and Graham. Yet, Graham herself is a meaningful entity on which we should be able to focus much more directly. This is possible in a linked data environment. My
RIMMF record for Graham is much too long to display in its entirety: it already contains links to 96 entities that link to even more entities. I did not create it this long. It slowly grew as I cataloged resources that were related to Graham, and those of people who closely worked with her. As you can see, the relationship tree generated from my RIMMF record for Graham quickly and precisely links to other entities such as:

- works she choreographed;
- dances in which she performed;
- texts she wrote;
- resources in which she is the subject;
- persons, like her students, with whom she is related in some way;
- corporate bodies, such as dance companies and schools, with which she is associated.

From here, I could delve even deeper and discover many facts about Graham. For example, I can learn that *Blood Memory* was translated into several languages and easily find out the title of each translation. I can also quickly discover the names of members of Graham’s dance company, and delve even deeper to find out interviews they conducted, performances in which they danced, and dances they choreographed. All I have to do to retrieve this data is open Graham’s record. Compare this with the current MARC authority record for Graham that says so little and links to nothing, not even her own works, and you will see the advantage of using linked data to describe library and other cultural institution resources.

My r-ball is minuscule compared to the amount of Graham material described in a library catalog such as the New York Public Library catalog. You can imagine how quickly a Graham record would grow on the Open Web if enriched by the data from many cultural institutions and
dance specialists such as you who are here today. Information sharing is, in fact, one of the goals and benefits of bringing data onto the Open Web.

**Lessons learned and next steps**

Building my Martha Graham r-ball, I already have learned several lessons and found cataloging issues that need to be addressed:

- Dance is extremely complex. It can be difficult to fit the performing arts, in particular dance performances, to a conceptual bibliographic model that was created for the tangible and the enduring.

- Describing the proper relationships between the choreographer, her works, and other persons and groups involved in dance performances is not always easy or even possible at this point. For example, there is no relationship designator to clearly link set designers such as Isamu Noguchi to a choreographic work. Therefore, additional and more accurate terms need to be defined to better describe such relationships.

- The cataloging instructions for music are much more developed than those for dance. For instance, a cataloger can easily describe the number and type of instruments or voices for which a musical work is conceived—this is called medium of performance. On the contrary, there is no meaningful machine-actionable way of indicating the number and gender of dancers needed to perform a choreographic work. There is also no term to describe a dance score because the term score is reserved for music notation.

- When I started this project, I was looking forward to be able to describe specific performances of a work, such as the first performance of *Appalachian Spring*. Doing so can enable us to link objects held in a library, such as programs, reviews, and
photographs, to specific performances and to people and groups involved in these performances. In fact, it is already possible to create RDA records for musical performances by using the term “performed music.” However, there is no equivalent for dance: “performed movement” does not exist in RDA. The only performances that can be described are those that have been filmed because they can be described as “two-dimensional moving images,” that is, as movies or television programs. In my opinion, where dance is concerned, this is by far the biggest shortfall of RDA. Even if a dance performance has not been filmed, we should still be able to describe it. The ability to catalog dance performances would enrich library and cultural institution data.

Obviously, I will discuss my findings with the developers of RDA, and propose changes and additions to the current RDA instructions. I plan to share my Graham r-ball online alongside the r-balls of Jane Austen, Leonard Bernstein, and Jim Henson so that other catalogers can learn from it.

**Conclusion**

By building relationships between and among entities, the dance catalog becomes a complex interconnected network that branches in many directions, encouraging exploration and discovery. By sharing this information on the Open Web, the network will grow by leaps and bounds. It makes it possible to envision an imminent future in which a simple Web search will provide wider and faster access to dance resources, both tangible and intangible.

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1 Among those projects are the Bibliographic Framework Initiative, Linked Data for Libraries, OpenGLAM, OCLC’s WorldCat Linked Data project.
2 An Apple Keynote Presentation with illustrative examples accompanied this lecture. For a copy, contact the author at dominique.bourassa@yale.edu.

As of October 15, 2016, the Knowledge Graph for this search showed a photograph, along with a summary of Martha Graham’s autobiography *Blood Memory* (Graham ©1991). However the name of the author was listed as Neile Graham (see Graham ©2000).

RDA is defined as a “a package of data elements, guidelines, and instructions for creating library and cultural heritage resource metadata that are well-formed according to international models for user-focused linked data applications” (RDA Toolkit ©2010).

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Shouting across the Centuries: Affective archives and the politics of transmission
Carol Brown

Abstract: Traditions of dance, be it the diasporic modernism of Central European Ausdruckstanz, or the indigenous dances of the Pacific, are stored through kinesthetic memories and passed on through acts of inter-corporeal transmission between generations of dancers. However it is clear that in experiencing forms of the past in the present we are also altering them. Releasing the Archive is a trans-hemispherical project involving dancers from the New Zealand Dance Company, with their diverse histories of Pacific, Māori, hip hop and theatre dance, coming to know and incorporate the kinesthetic specificity of choreographer Gertrud Bodenwieser's work (b. Vienna 1890 – Sydney 1959). The research seeks to inhabit the affective force of early photography of her work in Vienna, as well as embodied memories of her teachings (passed onto the lead researchers through Bodenwieser trained dancers) in Australia, New Zealand and the UK. Through this process the author, together with dancer-scholar Thomas Kampe, tests what potential a somatic releasing of archives might hold in the development of new choreography. To visibilise the process through which dancers in Bodenwieser’s company realized arcs of ecstatic movement, the process draws on the somatic foundations of these expressive gestures through a reconsideration of the role of Dr Bess Mensendieck’s Functional Exercise System. This ethico-aesthetic project reconfigures a modernist legacy through an affective releasing of its corporeal and visual archives into the repertoire of the New Zealand Dance Company. The research attends to both the potentials and problems in appropriation of modernist legacies that are largely forgotten and marginalised, across hemispheres, genders, cultures, places and times.

“The new is not found in what is said, but in the event of its return.
Foucault” (1971, 28)

Shouting Across the Centuries is an insistent dialogue between the unfinished business of twentieth century European modernism and contemporary dance practices in New Zealand today. It is mediated by a host of bodies – living and deceased – and includes my own corporeal memories as well as those of my collaborator, the movement artist and researcher, Thomas Kampe (UK).

History is undeniably something we carry with us, we wear it, and, we habitually reproduce it in our gestures. It is before us as much as behind us. But the vicissitudes of written histories impose regulatory fictions that also disappear bodies, in particular radical, experimental bodies that disrupt narratives of cultural coherence. In releasing the dispersed, embodied archives of dancers who worked with Viennese expressionist choreographer Gertrud Bodenwieser (1890-1957) through a choreographic process of embodied
transmission and translation, Thomas and I have been interested in an alternative genealogy of presence that remains largely unwritten through attending to the somatic-kinesthetistic-expressive logics of this exiled dance legacy. We seek to both uncover the process of history’s erasures and make possible an interpellation of gestures from the past that resist the stasis of identity and representation. As creative research scholars in the field of contemporary dance, our project is about initiating, not so much something new from a recuperation of dancers’ labour, but a bodying forth of the strange. This process of revitalisation is conditioned by the contingencies of contemporary experiences of decolonisation, exile and migration, by the dancers who participate and collaborate with us, as well as the audiences who witness the outcomes in public performance and video installation. At its core is our commitment to create work that provides experiences for peoples of diverse backgrounds and cultures to be witnesses rather than accomplices of the past (Lepecki 2015; 2016).

Releasing the stale breath of archives, we return to a multiplicity of bodily forces that speak to the resilience and survival of exiled dancers. Besides the archives of Gertrud Bodenwieser (held in the National Library of Australia in Canberra Australia), the research engages with the writings, teachings, archives and choreographies of dancers who trained and worked with her including Hilde Holger (b. Vienna 1905- d. London 2001), Trudl Dubsky (b. Vienna 1913 – d. Los Angeles 1976), Bettina Vernon (b. Vienna 1920 – d. London 1995), Evelyn Ippen (dates unknown), Hilary Napier (b. Mokanshan, China 1919 – d. Eastbourne, UK 2000) and in particular Shona Dunlop, the sole surviving dancer who left Vienna with Bodenwieser in 1938 and who continues to be informed by her practice and teachings today (b. Dunedin 1920 -). This trans-hemispherical project has developed through Thomas and my insistence on the ongoing value of listening to the voices of these dancers and adapting their dance knowledge for contemporary practitioners today. This has involved a series of
workshops with New Zealand Dance Company dancers Katie Rudd, Lucy Lynch, Chris Ofanoa, Karl Torentino, Chrissy Kokiri, as well as University of Auckland Dance Studies students Kisha September, Elijah Kennar and Maryam Bagheri.

The project’s primary goal concerns the affective charge of the distributed corporeal archive of the Bodenwieser Method as it is translated into a set of somatic principles and choreographic tasks. In sharing, transmitting and translating this dance knowledge to a younger generation of contemporary dancers who have no prior history of connection with the Bodenwieser legacy we release it from an enclosed and exclusive pastness that preserves it as archival. In this experimental process our bodies become archival laboratories, recovering, transmitting, testing and tasting trace-memories; and the studio becomes a clinic for transmission, transformation, invention and release as the work re-enters the repertoire of the dancer’s embodied experience. This emphasis on the processual corporeal logic and dynamics of the Bodenwieser method asserts the primacy of what Huxley (2015) calls the “dancers’ world” in dance history in the period 1920-1945, a period when Bodenwieser was active as a choreographer.

Bodenwieser is unusual in that hers is one of only two dance companies that escaped more or less intact from Nazi occupied Europe, the other being Kurt Jooss’s company. However, unlike Jooss, Bodenwieser was never invited back from Australia where she arrived as a refugee in 1939. Her body of work falls between two continents and two periods of dance modernism: from her first performance in 1918, to her escape from Vienna in 1938 marked her Austrian/European phase at the height of Ausdruckstanz; and from her arrival in Sydney, Australia in 1939 and her death there in 1959 her second phase as a pioneer of modern dance in Australasia, offering something quite different from the cultural dominance of North American modern and postmodern dance in a later period (Vernon-Warren 1999).
We considered a revisiting of the early period of Bodenwieser’s legacy as timely for a number of reasons, perhaps the most critical was the invitation by Shona Dunlop to assist in the archiving of her dance history and extensive Bodenwieser materials about her training in Vienna and career with the company in Australia. As a member of the Tanzgruppe who fled with Bodenwieser in 1938 and doyenne of modern dance in New Zealand, she bridges the two phases of Bodenwieser’s legacy in European and Australasian dance modernism. I had also been bequeathed Hilary Napier’s dance notebooks from her studies with Professor Bodenwieser in Vienna at the Akademie für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in 1936 – 1937 and wanted to return to these to research the links to Bess Mensendieck. An early twentieth century feminist health reformer, about whom little is known, Mensendieck was a key somatic source of body knowledge for Central European Expressionist dance.

However history has a way of catching us off balance, for a further pressing driver in this research is what ghosts the present of this telling in the figure of the refugeed artist of the 30s and what she escaped. To remember is, as Hugo Rifkind writes in a moving essay about the Holocaust, to “remain aware that we, as humans, balance on the very lip of the unspeakable; always far closer to toppling than we might wish to admit. All of us, everywhere, all the time” (Rifkind 2015).

As media today streams to us constant images of children, young people and adults fleeing violence in Syria, on the long walk through northern Europe, or on perilous boat journeys across the Mediterranean, or being cleared from camps in Calais fleeing conflict and destruction, we are reminded of other forced migrations or periods when refugees left their homes, their families, their cultural milieu to live in exile. What haunts the current experience of migratory flows and crises in the context of a rising tide of fascism and oppressive refugee policies in both Australia and Austria as well as globally, are memories of earlier experiences. As Jonathan Jones in the Guardian writes:
The images come swimming back. The old black and white photographs are suddenly new again. It is March 1938 and Jews are being forced to scrub the streets of Vienna. Uniformed Nazis and non-Jewish members of the public laugh as they watch the humiliating scene. Jewish men crouch and kneel on the ground at their feet. These photographs are documents of cruelty: obscene artefacts. (Jones 2016).

What the past teaches me is that but for the luck of my place of birth my story could be different. I could be treated with suspicion, refused entry, sent away at a border, or treated as an alien, a stranger as part of this obscene scene.

In 1938, Shona Dunlop and Hilary Napier were young English speaking dance students, they were invited by Emmy Steininger to join the much more experienced European dancers of the Bodenwieser Tanzgruppe on their escape from Nazi occupied Austria. The only thing that Gertrud Bodenwieser was guilty of was being Jewish and being a Jew in 1938 meant being a saboteur of the nation-state, a person whose allegiances could not, by definition be patriotic. As the image used by Gustav Metzger in his Historic Photographs exhibition reveals, in 1938 Jews were being forced to scrub the streets in Vienna. Metzger re-staged this image in the exhibition mentioned by Jones above, inviting visitors to lift a curtain, a yellow shroud, a veil on the past, to crawl inside and feel the image from inside so that the visitor is in the position of the Jews in the photograph. The work asks that we kinesthetically empathise with the experience of the humiliated and abject. To become with a moment of history. Like Metzger, Thomas and I have been returning to black and white images of the past, attempting to inhabit their postures and their backstories, to become interpellated by them and provoked to witness their affect. In this process we invite the questions: How does this feel? How do I move? What lies behind the image?

**Behind the image**

In working with the concept of a living archive we were drawn to the work of two women photographers whom Bodenwieser collaborated with: Dora Kallmus (1881 - October 28, 1963) an Austrian-Jewish fashion and portrait photographer who became known as
Madame d’Ora and worked out of the Benda-d’Ora Studio in Vienna and from 1924 in Paris, and Margaret Michaelis (1902–1985), an Austrian-Australian photographer of Polish-Jewish origin who also worked with Dora in Vienna before fleeing to Spain and eventually migrating to Sydney where she was under surveillance by the Australian government until she was naturalised in 1945 (Ennis 2012).

Their black and white photographs, Hilary Napier’s hand written notebooks in German and English documenting Bodenwieser’s Akademie classes in Vienna, my own embodied memories of Shona Dunlop’s teachings in Dunedin, and both Thomas and my recollections of Hilde Holger’s teachings, formed the basis for creating a series of short films of dance moments that arose during the research process and that resonate with this past. Performed as fragments of the embodied process of the research, the videos capture the New Zealand Dance Company’s interpretations of Bodenwieser’s version of expressionist dance.

The heterogeneity in Bodenwieser’s approach is marked in the constitution of the dancer’s physicality that is less concerned with self-expression than the liberatory potential of the body and the collective. As the video Ecstatic Solos reveals, the dancer expands out into the space around her body through circular patterns, figures of eight and spirals as well as turning inward, folding and encircling around her core. Speaking with the dancers who worked with her in the studio they talked of the ‘magic’ feeling in the room, they felt they were part of a creative process, that they were seen as individuals, encouraged to become artists who were intelligent, outward looking and physically strong at the same time they felt that they were part of a community.

Whilst performances and choreographies function as what Diana Taylor calls “vital acts of transfer, transmitting knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity” (2003, 3) what lies behind these performances - the training, practice and corporeal stylisation of the dancers whose movements instantiate the choreography - is less considered as an object of analysis.
in dance studies. Our method situates the archive within an inter-generational, inter-corporeal relational field, that includes touch, voice, embodying images and kinesthetic perception.

**Dancing a world of problems and fight**

In 1941 Gertrud Bodenwieser whilst living as an enemy alien under surveillance in Sydney, makes the dance drama *Cain and Abel* for her recently reformed company the Bodenwieser Ballet. Performed by a female cast, the dancers in this work are tasked with expressing the forceful violence of what is known as the ‘first murder’; an act of fratricide as Cain in a jealous rage kills Abel, his brother. Though no recording of the work remains, photographs from the original production are striking. Shona Dunlop performing the role of Cain in a blood red tunic stands out for the eruptive force of her open mouthed, full bodied extensions as she arches in an expression of visceral joy in an act of primordial violence. Dance, for Bodenwieser was one way to address “a world full of problems and fight” (The Viennese Ballet Australia Tour 1940 Programme). In returning to these images through the *Releasing the Archive Project* we sought to incorporate images, appropriate the sequential corporeality of the choreography and attempt to re-inhabit the concept of the work beyond a fidelity to reconstruction. In this way, what was important was the logic of expression and not the original choreography. In other words, what lies beyond it and what future gestures it unfurls.⁶

But what was the experience of the dancers who co-imagined the work of Bodenwieser and her dancers’ artistic processes but for whom there was no direct historical lineage as there was for Thomas and myself? Embodied acts that gesture to instances of traumatic violence might be recognised by other communities who share cultural memories of trauma. In reviving the praxis of Bodenwieser’s dance, individual dancers in the New Zealand Dance Company spoke of their own community’s experience of cultural assimilation and cultural losses in the Pacific.
Bodenwieser’s body of work challenges received histories of pre-war expressionist dance through its interdisciplinarity. Her entanglements with Freudian psychoanalysis, collaborations with theatre directors Karlheinz Martin, Frederick Rosenthal and Max Reinhardt, her work on the dance-architecture of Frederick Kiesler, relationships to the neue sachliekeit movement of Hagebund, and the painter Oskar Kokoschka, and body kultur of Bess Mensendieck are some of the many ways that Bodenwieser demonstrates her approach to dance as a pluralistic practice. However, our research, unlike the recent Source Code Project involving an online website archive relating to Bodenwieser’s final work, *Errand into the Maze* (Roller 2015), is concerned less with a reconsideration of specific dances and choreographic content, than with the concept of dance and corporeal agency, the distributed legacy the exiled work of Bodenwieser proposes. Our research questions how a reconfiguring through a re-somaticisation of the corporeal archives of Bodenwieser’s dance legacy might activate singular, if not eccentric, conceptions of what it means to be a contemporary creative practitioner in dance today? We test Lepecki’s (2010) claim that a re-enactment of movement codes is a form of invention that politicizes time by unlocking, releasing and actualising what is held in reserve within dances of the past. In this work, we invite reflection on the affordances of this work as a politics of resilient creativity in a time of resurgent issues in relation to the contemporary migrant crisis.

Bodenwieser, in her work and practice, called for her dancers to

Embrace all human feelings, not only harmony, lightness and charm but also passionate desire, immense fervour, lust, domination, fear and frustration, dissonance and uproar. The new dance does not content itself with being enchanting and entertaining only; it wishes to be stirring, exciting and thought-provoking. (Bodenwieser in Cuckson 1971, 79).

*Cain and Abel* could be said to be an attempt to understand what it is to be a victim and what it is to be a perpetrator of violence. But what lies behind these images is sorrow, trauma and hardship. It is wartime and the dancers are paying for class by dropping coins into a jar on
the end of the piano and they are darning socks to survive. Bodenwieser’s husband the theatre director Frederic Rosenthal has been arrested in France and sent to Auschwitz.

Conclusion

We develop creative strategies for surviving traumatic ruptures. *Shouting Across the Centuries* is an invitation to pay attention to a history of displacements. To become unsettled in the partial spaces between past and present by considering the way performance remains rather than disappears, but on the edges, in the periphery through a logic of expression that resists a static quest for identity, at the toppling point of the “unspeakable” (Rifkind 2015).

To finish I insert some comments from the New Zealand Dance Company dancers who participated in the research, allowing their voices to resonate with the ongoing traces of the Bodenwieser legacy and its ability to continue to invite questioning as we witness the past in the present:

Such a hard style of dance to imitate, to learn in such a short time. For me the thing that has stood out today was hearing you guys (Carol, Thomas) talking about getting advice from your elders/masters. I am a strong believer in asking for advice from my grandparents, and parents and people who have really lived. I just wonder if asking for advice from your elders is still a practice of today or are they just looked at as old. Tupua

Watching the films and reading old and original documents was useful to see because it brings a body, feel, mind & spirit to the people we are trying to remember through this workshop.

Lucy

Pelvis forward mind flowing
Still not sure
But I keep going
To dance with the dead
Is a gift
To dance with the living is bliss
Katie

PELVIS
MOVING FREE
Space in the body
Articulation of the spine
Movement of the dead.
Carrying culture.
Notes:

1 Research for *Releasing the Archive* has taken place in Auckland New Zealand at Wellesley Studios, (8-15 December 2015; 14-16 September 2016) and Berlin, Germany (Somatische Akademie, 2-6 February 2016) with the New Zealand Dance Company supported by a University of Auckland Faculty of Research and Development Fund. It has been presented through workshops at the University of Bath Spa (20 November 2014), Coventry University (Dance and Somatic Practices Conference 10-12 July 2015) and in Hannover at the Tanzkongress 2016, 16-19 June. The outcomes of the research will be presented through performance and video installation in 2017-18 in Auckland with support from Creative New Zealand.

2 Lepecki writes that the “transmissibility of experience, of memories, of the narration of events that one has lived through is an imperative in our age when experience is being crushed” by the culture Instagram and information (2015, 19-20). Alternatively, he calls for a renewal of the audience-as-witness, rather than as spectator, as a strategy of resistance to being an accomplice to historical violence.

3 I would like to thank dance historian Laure Guilbert, University of Frankfurt for this observation.

4 For example, Sasha Waltz, a German choreographer with a background in Ausdruckstanz, through the project ZUHÖREN (Listen) in June 2016 invited international artists, journalists and human rights activists to enter into dialogue with contemporary artists from Syria and northern Europe to discuss the impact of asylum on culture, creative resilience and survival. Accessed 14 December 2016. [http://www.sashawaltz.de/en/zuhoeren-improvisations-and-conversations/](http://www.sashawaltz.de/en/zuhoeren-improvisations-and-conversations/)


7 Collaborations with theatre directors include Karlheinz Martin on Wedekind’s *Franziska* (1924); Klabund’s *Der Kreidekreis* (The Chalk Circle) (1925); Max Reinhardt’s *Mirakel* (Circus Renz 1927); and *Der Brenande Dornbusch* (The Burning Thornbush based on a text by Oskar Kokoschka, 1926). Source (Amort 2009, 127).

8 Although politicians in Europe and North America tend to stress the singularity of the current "refugee crisis," the situation is by no means unprecedented. Over the course of the past seventy years, Western Europe, North America as well as non-Western societies have repeatedly experienced the arrival of massive numbers of refugees and other forced migrants within short time spans.
9 In the article *Migration and Memory* (Brown, 1999) I have previously written about the experience of the company in exile in Sydney in the late 30s, early 1940s.

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The Video Album Releasing the Archive documents the research outcomes through a series of short video clips created by Meek Zuiderbyk and can be found on Carol Brown Dances Vimeo site: https://vimeo.com/album/4304183. Accessed 14 January 2017.


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In the article Migration and Memory (Brown, 1999) I have previously written about the experience of the company in exile in Sydney in the late 30s, early 1940s.
Que Corpo É Esse? (What Body Is This?) – Grupo Corpo Brazilian Dance Company Under the Lenses of Antropofagia and Transculturation.
Rosely Conz

Abstract: Using two post-colonial theories, Transculturation and Antropofagia, this paper discusses the uses of Afro Brazilian dances and Ballet by Grupo Corpo dance company. The combination of ballet and “ginga” by the resident choreographer Rodrigo Pederneiras results in a movement vocabulary that this research observed beyond the binary colonized/colonizer. Through the description and analyses of movements, gestures, costumes, scenery and music of two Grupo Corpo’s choreography, Nazareth (1993) and Breu (2007), I argue that the aesthetic developed by Pederneiras is attached to ballet codes and principles, not allowing transculturation to happen completely.

Introduction

The dancer steps on stage. Her hair is tied in a bun and she dresses a skirt that reminds me of the tutus from the classical period of ballet. Her hip follows the curves she makes with her arms, confusing my first impression, since this movement is not part of the classical ballet vocabulary. She smiles, as if there is no effort required to perform the movements. Her body seems light and there is no conflict, difficulty or anxiety. I find myself in a strange space. Although she doesn’t send me to a world of fairies and princess, she still portrays a happy, clean and vertical realm that reminds me of ballet.

This is the description of the first minutes of Nazareth, choreography created in 1993 by Rodrigo Pederneiras, founder and resident choreographer of Grupo Corpo (literally translated as Body Group), one of the most famous and well-funded Brazilian contemporary dance companies.

Despite its rich history, one contradiction about Grupo Corpo’s aesthetic remains as a major topic of discussion for dance scholars and critics. Some of them, such as the Brazilian scholar Paulo Paixão argues that: “On the other hand, Pederneiras’ choreographic strategies assemble all the stereotypes associated with being Brazilian” (2009, 100), such as laziness, docility and over sexualized people.
Other scholars, such as the Brazilians Helena Katz (1995) and Cristina Rosa (2015), defend that, even using ballet as the main training technique and background of his cast, Rodrigo Pederneiras created a new movement vocabulary using what Rosa calls Brazilian *ginga*: “Concisely defined, *ginga* results from the articulation of syncopated dialogues between different parts of the body, especially between hips and feet” (2015, 69). This type of movement is historically related to Afro Brazilian dances, such as *maracatu*, *frevo*, and *maxixe*.

Using two post-colonial theories, Transculturalism and *Antropofagia*, my intention is to demonstrate that the contradictions in *Grupo Corpo*’s aesthetic encompasses complexities beyond the binary colonized/colonizer or the linear relationship between center and periphery. By analyzing the use of the body, costumes and music of two of *Grupo Corpo*’s pieces, *Nazareth* (1993) and *Breu* (2007), I argue that *Grupo Corpo*’s bodies present a very tamed, almost naïve example of *Antropofagia* and Transculturation. The use of *ginga* presents an exotic (but not too much) Brazil, marked by ballet principles that make *Grupo Corpo*’s pieces easily digestible for national and international audiences.

**Antropofagia and Transculturalism**

“Tupi, or not Tupi, that is the question” (de Andrade 1928, 3). The most famous quote from *Manifesto Antropófago*, written by Brazilian modernist poet Oswald de Andrade in 1928, is a parody of the Shakespearian phrase, referencing the *Tupinambás*, a Brazilian Native tribe that used to eat the foreigners to absorb their strength.

The cannibalistic metaphor is a powerful one. As a form of resistance to the influence of European traditions, the *Manifesto Antropófago* inverted the roles, transforming the colonizers into objects to be consumed. The idea of cannibalism can be interpreted as a Brazilian post-colonial theory that, instead of portraying the colonized as passive and vulnerable, give them
agency. This means that not all foreigners will be devoured. The natives will choose only the strongest, smartest and most beautiful to make them ‘blood of their blood’. The image of violence, embodied by Antropofagia, subverts views of civilization and savagery, cultural superiority and inferiority.

A strong theory that, however, is an utopia. And, as any utopia, Antropofagia can only be imagined. However, utopias can be useful in the attempt of creating a better world. Thus, instead of abandoning the cannibalism metaphor, I combined it with a theory that, on the contrary of Antropofagia, does not propose something that should happen, but actually analyzes the dynamic and continuous process that happened/is happening Latin American; a theory called Transculturalism.

The term transculturation was coined in 1940 by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz to name the transformation that happens when a society is exposed to foreign language and culture, a term that acknowledges the specificity of the colonizing process that occurred in Latin America, called by the United States’ scholar Diana Taylor internal versus external colonization (2003, 102). It can be summarized in a three-stage process consisting of “the acquisition of new cultural material from a foreign culture, the loss or displacement of one’s own culture and the creation of new cultural phenomena” (Taylor 2003, 104). Unlike acculturation that emphasizes the acquisition of a new culture and the losses of one’s own culture, transculturation complicates the model by saying that, even aware of their cultural losses, the Latin American people “proudly reaffirm the vitality of their new ones” (Taylor 2003, 108). This means that, instead of just mourning the cultural practices lost due to genocide or acculturation, the colonized nations recognize their power in taking (or eating, according to Antropofagia’s metaphor) and modifying the hegemonic culture, creating new cultural practices that, now, belong to them.
Grupo Corpo

“Ballet caught my attention since I saw my first show, with my sister Mirinha as part of the cast.” (Pederneiras 2008, 33). Rodrigo Pederneiras, one of the founders and resident choreographer of Grupo Corpo, the fourth of six siblings (three of them involved in the production of Grupo Corpo) started practicing ballet around the age of eighteen, practice he continued for many years with the Argentinian Oscar Araiz, who in 1976 choreographed Maria, Maria, Grupo Corpo’s first piece. Paulo Pederneiras, oldest brother of the family and artistic director of the group also studied ballet, and, as quoted earlier, the same happened to “Mirinha” (Miriam Pederneiras), Grupo Corpo’s assistant choreographer.

Ballet, consequently, is the technique that constitutes the foundation of the group. Until today, Grupo Corpo’s dancers are chosen mainly based on their ballet skills. Carmem Purri, Grupo Corpo’s former dancer and choreographer assistant reinforces: “All the dancers in Grupo Corpo to this day need and must have a strong formation in classical ballet, which for us is both the basis and the departure point” (quoted. in Rosa 2015, 76).

The first official state-sponsored ballet school was implemented in Brazil in 1927 by Maria Olenewa, a Russian dancer from the company of Anna Pavlova (Pereira 2003, 35). At the same time, both in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, a popular genre achieved a huge success: The Teatro de Revista (Theater Magazine), a kind of vaudeville show that presented ‘exotic and sensuous’ Afro Brazilian dances such as maxixe and lundu. The two genres, ballet and Afro Brazilian dances, represented opposite worlds. Ballet was labeled as high culture while the popular genres most of them originated from Afro Brazilian enslaved people, were seen as products to be exported (because of their exoticism) but not suitable for the national elite.
Brazilian dance scholar Cristina F. Rosa argues that in Grupo Corpo the combination of ballet and *ginga* creates a “mechanism across which the concept of Brazilianness acquired a new, modern legibility and credibility nation-wide” (2015, 77). However, analyzing the choreographies Nazareth and Breu, I disagree with this interpretation. Grupo Corpo didn’t “digested” ballet well enough to create a Brazilianness (a concept that also needs further explanation), remaining very attached to ballet codes regarding the use of body weight, center of gravity, and movement dynamic.

It is also equally important to emphasize that Afro Brazilian dances are not part of the training of Grupo Corpo’s cast, nor required as a background of the dancers, which constitutes a paradox for a group that is, allegedly, influenced by Afro Brazilian’s aesthetic.

**Nazareth**

In *Nazareth*, the dancers’ arms and hips swing and undulate to the rhythm of *choro*, a Brazilian genre that was born from the juxtaposition of different European influences, such as waltz and baroque music, with Afro Brazilian rhythms, such as *lundu* and *samba*. The overall organization of the body, however, remains attached to ballet codes. The center of gravity is located in the sternum, while the polyrhythm of Afro Brazilian dances is weakened by the verticality of the dancers. The use of the body weight and pelvis reinforces lightness and uprightness, one of the main principles in ballet.

The title of the piece is a reference to the Brazilian composer Ernesto Nazareth (1863-1934). Considered one of the most significant Brazilian composers, Nazareth mixed his classical piano training with popular forms of Brazilian music, such as *lundu*, *samba*, and *maxixe* to create the *choro*, an example of transculturation. Several partnering moments in this piece can be related to the Afro Brazilian dance and rhythm *maxixe*. However, the dancer’s hips in *Nazareth*
are always apart, taming the sensuousness of this Brazilian dance. The Afro Brazilian aesthetic is being served as a side-salad, complementing the main meal that tastes like ballet.

To deepen the discussion about the encounter of ballet and ginga in Pederneira’s works, I chose *Breu* (2007), choreography that presented a use of space and risk taking movements that differ from *Nazareth*.

**Breu**

Set to the music from the Brazilian contemporary composer Lenine, *Breu* constitutes a counterpoint to *Nazareth* in terms of use of the levels of space and movement dynamics. The theme of this choreography is, according to Grupo Corpo’s website, the individualism seen as a result of the obsession for success at any cost, which makes people disregard each other in our society.

The scenery and lighting are darker than in *Nazareth*, although the black and white of the tight costumes are still present. The movements are harsh and angular, with dancers throwing themselves to the ground, often flat bodied, using feet and hands to propel their bodies to verticality, just to fall again. Sometimes, as soldiers in a battlefield, the dancers use their elbows, wrists or knees to creep.

In a long section six dancers hold their pelvis off the floor, as if avoiding the sitting position by crouching, using the support of the hands and feet, wheeling their legs and throwing their bodies to a flat position from time to time. This moment can be related to *frevo*, a popular dance from Northeast Brazil, especially when the dancers go from crouching to leaping and intertwining their legs like the floor is boiling (the word *frevo* comes from *ferver* which means “to boil” in Portuguese). The origins of *frevo* are both connected with Central European polka and Brazilian *capoeira*, which gives the dance a hint of fight. The most challenging aspect of
*frevo*, however not completely applied to *Breu*, is that the dancer is never fully upright. The impulse for the leaps in this dance comes from a crouch position with a low center of gravity (not present in the Grupo Corpo’s dancers), combined with turns and kicks.

*Breu* is a choreography that presented innovations regarding Rodrigo Pederneira’s style with the incorporation of risk taking movements of falling. The risk of defying and subverting ballet aesthetic, unfortunately, was not fully accomplished.

**Conclusion**

The theory of transculturation seems more complex if compared to *Antropofagia*. This last one is a metaphor that could happen only in a utopic world. In the “real” Brazil, sadly, the natives were killed before they could eat all the foreigners. They kept coming along the years, waves of immigrants from Italy, France and Japan, with the difference that, now, Brazilians are also going abroad.

To complicate a little bit more the binary aspect of colonization, I quote Diana Taylor:

Globalization has furnished us with a variation of the center/periphery model of colonialism. Now the center and periphery often occupy the same space, in concentric circles rather than a linear here-there…In Latin American countries the past five hundred years have been marked by all sorts of invasions, migrations, and relocation. Brazil has the second largest Japanese population in the world, for example. What do judgments such as ‘very Latin American’ or ‘too European’ mean in face of this reality? (2003, 233)

Taylor is arguing for a broader understanding of the political and economic relationships embedded in performances. The use of ballet by *Grupo Corpo* as a source of inspiration and training seems legitimate since this technique is well structured and offer many benefits to the dancer in terms of body organization, coordination and conditioning. The danger is to consider that this technique is enough to prepare dancers to perform any kind of movement. Even dangerous is to take Afro Brazilian dance forms and reduce them to syncopated hip movements that serve as a way to please international audiences with ‘exotic’ movements.
If a choreographer is using a specific dance technique in a piece, then it is important to know where it came from, how and when, in order to not run the risk of appropriating. It seems that Grupo Corpo is taking these precautions with ballet, but not with Afro Brazilian dances, all of them reduced to *ginga*. I am not saying that because Grupo Corpo is from Brazil they necessarily have to use Afro Brazilian dances, but if they say they do, as informed in Grupo Corpo’s website and in one of Pederneiras’s interviews, a deeper research about these practices is essential. Moreover, the same importance directors, choreographer, and assistants give to ballet in the process of selecting and training the cast, should be given to Afro Brazilian dances.

Last, I wonder about a movement language that embraces *Antropofagia* and Transculturation. As the cannibal that I am, I finish this paper with a parody from Aurora Levins Morales (1986) poem “Child of The Americas”. Something I would love to see on Grupo Corpo’s bodies:

*I am not African. Africa is in me, not as a given but as a process.*

*I am not Indio. Indio is in me, but there is no one left of us.*

*I am not European. Europe lives in me, but I have no home there.*

*I am many and one. History made me. I was born from encounters and fragments, at the cross roads and I walked on the margins. Yet, I am a whole.*

**Works Cited**


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Ethnic Décor: People of Color as Props in Music Videos
Rainy Demerson

Abstract: This presentation examines how singers employ dancers to represent and align themselves with cultural identities and their “appropriate” movement vocabularies, exposing group identity and authenticity as increasingly malleable and multi-purposed concepts. Analyzing choreography in Gwen Stefani’s Sweet Escape, Miley Cyrus’ We Can’t Stop, and Avril Lavigne’s Hello Kitty, I question whether these videos are exploitive, and look for the line between appropriation and collaboration. Finally, I review Beyoncé’s Superbowl performance of Formation, and how her alliance with Black dancing bodies and their signifying gestures were scrutinized and vilified as the public came to terms with Beyoncé’s “unapologetic Blackness.”

In 2007 when Gwen Stefani debuted Sweet Escape, featuring two skilled Japanese dancers, the public responded mostly with pleasant admiration. She created heated controversy, however, by parading her “Harajuku girls” around town in matching outfits, allegedly without allowing them to speak, only to smile and wave. Six years later, Miley Cyrus struck a nerve “twerking” with three Black women in We Can’t Stop. Like Stefani, Cyrus pushed sensibilities beyond the highly-edited virtual experience of television, and into her live Video Music Awards performance in 2013, where she smacks, gropes and grinds her pelvis into the muted participants, while half-imitating, half-mocking their movements. Avril Lavigne’s Hello Kitty further exploits ethnic and gender stereotypes as she claims to showcase her “love” for Japanese culture while uniformly dressed dancers stare blankly outward with robotic movements. I will problematize the ethnic and sexual dynamics surrounding the dancers’ placement, gaze, costumes, and choreography. Lastly, I will look at Beyoncé’s 2016 Superbowl performance as another example of casting back-up dancers to prove an alliance with an ethnic group, this time, one shared with the singer.

In 2004, Stefani began to hire dancers for her Love.Angel.Music.Baby album tour, giving each woman a moniker from this title. In the Sweet Escape video, all are prisoners in a gold
plated jail cell. Stefani rocks a skin-tight body suit while the dancers sport the oversized shirt and pants representing their Hip-Hop allegiance. Just before the end of the video, the dancers are shown scaling the building on Stefani’s golden locks to help her escape, but once she does, she rides off in an SUV with Akon, leaving the two dancers behind in a gas station parking lot—tilting their heads, smiling, and waving goodbye. Then in a moment of déjà vu or bad directing, all three women are back in jail and Stefani sits in one cell looking dismayed while the two dancers in another cell are smiling and popping—movements of short staccato freezes—again emotionally inexpressive.

As a Bay Area native, it was refreshing for me to see dancers who looked like the ones I grew up with, where the Hip-Hop scene was dominated by Asian-Americans. I was also excited to see a music video with fully clothed women dancing assertively with large dynamic movements usually reserved for men in Hip Hop videos. The trio became a quartet known to the world as the Harajuku Girls—referencing the Tokyo neighborhood Stefani frequented to see the latest in unique hand-made clothing and accessories for sale by young Japanese designers.

A number of journalists and performers have sharply criticized the dynamic of the group and the way they engage with Stefani and with viewers. Mihi Ahn writes:

They shadow her wherever she goes. They’re on the cover of the album, they appear behind her on the red carpet, she even dedicates a track, “Harajuku Girls,” to them. In interviews, they silently vogue in the background like living props; she, meanwhile, likes to pretend that they’re not real but only a figment of her imagination. They’re ever present in her videos and performances — swabbing the deck aboard the pirate ship, squatting gangsta style in a high school gym while pumping their butts up and down, simpering behind fluttering hands or bowing to Stefani. That’s right, bowing. Not even from the waist, but on the ground in a “we’re not worthy, we’re not worthy” pose. She’s taken Tokyo hipsters, sucked them dry of all their street cred, and turned them into China dolls. (Ahn 2005)

My first reaction was to share the author’s stunned and offended response. Then I began to wonder if it’s problematic to assume that the dancers are so naïve and ignorant as to allow
themselves to be exploited, when in fact they may be experiencing a sense of empowerment by performing with Stefani. Perhaps they prefer sharing aspects of their culture themselves rather than having it co-opted by another performer and never receiving credit in the form of payment or public acknowledgement as has happened with so many other artists.

In an interview, Jennifer Kita, known as Angel, an American dancer of Japanese decent states, “I love living in Gwen Stefani’s fantasy world because I’m living with two Japanese girls and learning about my heritage.” (YouTube 2006) Maya Chino, who goes by Love, says, “I’ve never been conscious of being Japanese, but in Gwen’s world I had to be aware of my nationality. It was great! I can express my background through Hip-Hop dance which I love most in my life.” (YouTube 2006) So Kita and Chino felt more aware of their Japanese heritage after having to constantly acknowledge it as part of their performing character. Love names Hip-Hop, a decidedly American form, as how she identifies her Japanese culture, expressing the extremely thorough Japanese appropriation of Hip-Hop rooted in the African and Caribbean-American experience.

If, as Tommy De Frantz writes, “black is the manifestation of the Africanist aesthetics,” (DeFrantz 2014, 5) then these women are in fact claiming and reimagining Blackness in Japanese bodies; and yet are a far cry from the ganguro or other clans of Japanese teens who get their “B-Style” clothes at Baby Shop, where the store motto is “Black for Life,” and deeply tan and bronze their skin and use dramatic make-up to create a look somewhere between blackface and anime. As Stefani doesn’t claim to be Japanese, but rather highlights her own limited American perceptions of Japanese cultures by employing the women to perform them, the Harajuku Girls are not pretending to be Black, but rather studying and embodying Black aesthetics through Japanese and Japanese-American lenses.
In another interview, Baby wears her hair an iconic style with one side in cornrows and the other half “permed” into an afro. But states, “It’s a great collaboration between American pop star Gwen, and us Japanese dancers, and at the same time we can appeal to our culture too. In choreography we have a special dance that only Japanese people know and I think that will please our people.”(YouTube 2006) Baby simultaneously mimics African-American hairstyles while affirming her Japanese roots and alliance to the creators of a unique variation of Hip-Hop.

Another dancer wears a plaid Pendleton style shirt with a bandana wrapped low across her forehead – a sort of uniform of the Chicano “cholo” style common amongst California gangsters. It is unclear whether or not the performers are aware of the tension surrounding the appropriation of these aesthetics or just see the imitation as the sincerest form of flattery. What the women are actually expressing in fashion and dance is a unique contemporary fusion of cultures that could only have been created in the highly integrated and ethnically diverse cities of California, and because of the massive popularity of Hip-Hop culture in Japan. The irony is that most of what the dancers are wearing reflects the style of Japanese youth culture which takes influences from many places, but most of what they are doing is expressing the popularization of the Black aesthetic via Hip-Hop, accented with stereotypical Japanese tropes such as bowing and coy giggling with hands covering the mouth. Anita Gonzales writes,

If Black identity is constructed by those outside of the “race” then performances of blackness are created in response to those imagined identities as well as to cultural retentions and Africanist histories...I view black as a dialogic imagination – an outsider response to the very existence of people from Africa who carry their own shifting cultural ideologies and metaphysical worldviews. (Gonzales cited in DeFrantz 2014, 6)

Indeed there is an idea, or perhaps an ideal, of blackness and of Japaneseness which exists in the American collective unconscious, and in the imagination of each individual, and that differs based on one’s status as insider or outsider, and based on lived experience. In this case,
each culture becomes essentialized into caricature and the potential for real intercultural exchange is lost in non-representative iconography. Appropriation, that slippery umbrella term that can cover everything from outright theft to consensual shared experience, implies a change in the intention and expression of a form once it is taken up by an outsider. Whether that change is destructive, beneficial, or neutral, varies in each case.

When the Black and Caribbean youth of 1970’s New York started a musical revolution that drew upon some of their most genius skills and sensibilities to create Hip-Hop, and then saw the next generations using it to highlight some of their most detrimental behaviors, the result was a not-so neatly packaged product for mass consumption by those with little or no other interaction with Black culture. In the case of Japanese youth, it also provided a means to re-enter the American imagination and be seen.

Korean-American comedian, Margaret Cho, wrote an online essay explaining her conflicted response to the Harajuku girls, and highlights the tragic and ironic place of Asian culture in the American outsider imagination – a well-defined stereotype referencing almost no real experience. She writes, “Even though to me, a Japanese schoolgirl uniform is kind of like blackface, I am just in acceptance over it, because something is better than nothing. An ugly picture is better than a blank space…”(Cho 2005) In dance, the body and its movements can house and convey stereotypes in ways that are not as easy to pin down, but can be just as powerful. For underrepresented communities, filling the void of a public voice becomes a matter of choosing the best candidate to showcase during your fifteen seconds of fame.

In several online interviews, Stefani’s dancers describe their first encounter with her in an imaginary and fantastical way, and describe their experience working with her as, “living in Gwen’s world.”(YouTube 2006) At first it sounds a bit shocking, maybe even offensive…but is
it any different than what many dancers experience? The all-encompassing desire to be immersed in the artistic world of their choreographic idols, be they George Balanchine or Bill T. Jones? The natural and genuine desire to commune with someone you admire and respect, is often mired by the unequal power dynamic that exists between a director and performer wherein the latter is nearly consumed by the former. The tension is exacerbated when the lead performer is White and the back-up dancers are not; and when they are dressed uniformly and perform in unison, the manifestation of their homogenous devotion conveys a loss of individual personhood.

In Lavigne’s video the expressionless dancers in uniform costumes enact simplistic robot-like movement. They are clearly not there because of their specialized skills but rather for their exoticized ethnicity – attempting to validate Lavigne’s presence in Japan. The dancers cover giggles, take photos, and perform homolateral movement with bound flow, in contrast to Lavigne’s free flowing, large scale gestures and direct gaze into the camera. Her smile is huge, but the dancers are expressionless – lifeless. Again, the Asian women are muted even in movement – any individualized expression swept away by the stoic uniform choreography that frames and contrasts Lavigne’s playful loud Whiteness.

Alternately, Miley Cyrus’ twerking was part of the re-branding of her Hannah Montana childhood persona into the “bad girl” we see today. The dancing itself, only part of the package which sometimes included wearing a gold tooth, a bandana, and imitating gang-related hand gestures popularized in multi-ethnic urban communities. Cyrus highlighted her dancers and inserted herself between them, desperately trying to imitate their moves in her videos and live performances on the “Bangers” tour. Like Blackface, this gentrification of performance space puts governance of the body in the hands of the new settlers who marvel at the native dances, at once mocking and admiring them. Rather than just appropriate fashion or dance steps, she brings
in more experienced dancers, presumably members of the representative Black social dance community she wants us to believe has accepted her. The White singer gets to maintain or demolish her innocence based on the degree to which she participates in the sexually suggestive pelvic thrusts and booty bounces, dancing with her “Black friends” in teddy bear back packs, while profiting from the imagined hyper-sexual Black body as commodity.

There was not only controversy over her performance but a media onslaught against her dancers – questioning their talent and their dignity. I have to wonder if all the reactionary backlash is just another form of women-bashing already so abundant in mainstream media. After other journalists called the women props and the video a minstrel show, Jennifer Swann took the time to interview the dancers of the L.A. Bakers for an article in LA Weekly. None of the three women had been formerly trained or were aspiring performers, and they didn’t really see what the big deal was. They were selected to dance in a video and do things they’d normally do at a club without getting paid. One dancer, Brittany Stephenson, said, "It's weird that I'm becoming an idol for shaking my butt." Le’Ana Hill stated, "What we had on was the prop. I'm a human.”(Swann 2013) In their comments, I see the dissonance between the embodied experience and the perception of it, and between the differing perspectives from viewers inside and outside of the dancing community. I am reminded of nineteenth century ballerinas, or colonial era devadasis who were viewed as prostitutes by those misinterpreting the controlled display of their bodies.

Although it may seem naïve of the women to dismiss the racial and sexual tension in the video and VMA performances, is it really fair to expect three recreational dancers to popularize social dances and ameliorate our race relations? After all, Black women and men have ostensibly been “twerking” for centuries in traditional dances of seduction and fertility, so if Cyrus is
creating a gravy train, why shouldn’t they ride it and benefit from it? We have to wonder, who is ultimately responsible for the way a dance is received – the performer or the viewer? No matter the genre or the audience size, artists are charged with mediating intention and perception, the “truth” of the body, and the power of the gaze. The camera creates a third agent of perception.

The camera phone has created an unexpected and powerful way of seeing and being seen for African-Americans as instances of police brutality are routinely recorded and distributed via social media by onlookers. In an environment of heightened awareness about unmitigated violence against Blacks, Beyoncé Knowles like Stephani, and Levignge, made an artistic and political move to align herself with an ethnic population in her casting and choreography of back-up dancers. In her 2016 Superbowl show, her dancers (most having darker skin than she) are all wearing Afros, berets, and militaristic jackets with short shorts, alluding both to the Black Panther party and their own feminine sexuality as strong forces to be reckoned with. Beyoncé wears a similar outfit but with bikini-cut bottoms instead of shorts, and a jacket emblazoned with a design resembling the bullet holsters of a guerilla soldier. She remains in front with long blonde “good” hair. Though not entirely dissimilar to her previous performances, the unique attributes of these dancers placed in the most “American” of all sporting events intentionally introduced the tension of being an American of African decent. Making visible the ability to rise to superstardom as an entertainer while simultaneously being marked for state violence committed with impunity. The dancers performed a combination of ‘90’s and present-day Black vernacular dances, and moved in time with the live drumming that was added to the Formation track honoring the Black dancing bodies of HBCU’s drumlines. This performance worked in tandem with Beyoncé’s Formation music video where she places herself in alliance with those other “Negroes” she had previously been seen as separate from. Her use of dark-skinned
professional dancers as well as what appears to be more candid footage of Black communities in New Orleans puts her in formation with suffragettes and slaves with period costumes; homegirls from the hood in puffy coats and bamboo earrings; and the Black Lives Matter movement, through the image of hooded Black boy standing alone against a line of police officers.

There was so much chatter in social media circuits that Saturday Night Live performed a sketch about White America’s utter shock upon learning that Beyoncé is Black. The effect of shock and outrage over Beyoncé’s Blackness could not have been created in solo performance. In this case, she appropriated tropes, stereotypes, fashions and lived realities of African America to situate her political allegiance. The bodies dancing around her represent an Other which she reclaims as her own at a moment of peak celebrity and social unrest.

The four videos explored bring up very different, but not entirely unrelated issues around the opportunities and challenges of attempting to align one’s self with a community seen as outside of one’s own ethnicity, social class, or culture. As an artist making decisions about casting and choreography, representation matters. The dancers decorate the empty space surrounding the singer. The entourage effect dancers are often used for in music videos tells a story of alliance, allegiance, and belonging whether it is based on subservience, admiration, or authenticity. As America grows increasingly intercultural, we must continually ask ourselves, where do we draw the line between appropriation and collaboration?

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Preserving and Honoring the Guedra Through Transnational Performance
Carolina Varga Dinicu/ Morocco

Abstract: This essay summarizes my process of documenting the Guedra, the trance ritual of blessing of the Kel Tagelmousse (The Blue People/ Tuareg Berbers) of the Sahara Desert, through research which I undertook during numerous trips to Goulemine, Tantan and Marrakesh, Morocco over a 23 year span, from 1963 to 1990. Here I narrate my methods for learning and documenting multiple instances of the ritual (co-performance, video documentation, ethnographic field notes), and what I argue has served as a process of preservation of this embodied ritual (through teaching and performance practice). This ethnographic, historical, and methodological example addresses many public debates with regards to the preservation of designated "folk" arts across cultural and geographic boundaries, as well as ongoing debates in dance and performance studies. Through the example of the Guedra I hope to illuminate new ways of undoing the many binaries constructed in these debates: "first" versus "third" world, "self" versus "other", "insider" versus "outsider", while also addressing questions about distance and objectivity (positionality).

This paper summarizes my process of documenting the Guedra, the trance ritual of blessing of the Kel Tagelmousse (People of the Turban - The Blue People/ Tuareg Berbers) of the Sahara Desert, through research which I undertook during numerous trips to Goulemine, Tantan and Marrakesh, Morocco over a twenty-three year span, from 1963 to 1990. Here I narrate my methods for learning and documenting multiple instances of the ritual (co-performance, film/ video documentation, ethnographic field notes), and what I argue has served as a process of preservation of this embodied ritual (via teaching and performance practice). This ethnographic, historical, and methodological example addresses many public debates with regards to the preservation of designated "folk" arts across cultural and geographic boundaries, as well as ongoing debates in dance and performance studies. Using the example of the Guedra I hope to illuminate new ways of undoing the many binaries constructed in these debates: "first" versus "third" world, "self" versus "other", "insider" versus "outsider", while also addressing questions about distance and objectivity (positionality).
I believe – from experience and observation of others – that one should approach assimilating (rather than imitating) ethnic dances as close to tabula rasa as possible. Filtering dances of another culture through the lens of one’s own culture is dangerous. It might imbue them with a subconscious dismissive or racist judgement that will come through in performance, making it condescending, disrespectful and cooptive.

Truly learning any ethnic/ folk dance or ritual, so that it is neither co-opted nor disrespected, involves far more than imitating its movements. A robot could be programmed to do it perfectly but that does not make it a dance and it certainly does not make it the specific, culturally significant ethnic dance or ritual one intends to share. Physical movements, simple or complex though they may be, are really the least of it. I understood that far more important to an accurate (“authentic”) representation is determining:

1. When is it done – at a special time or whenever participants want to?
2. Why is it done – is there a specific reason or reasons or is it just for fun? To show off?
3. How is it learned by its own people? Is it formally taught, casually assimilated or both?
4. It’s never just movement to music, so what is the pertinent attitude underlying this dance?
5. Is it done by one sex or both? How? Together or in gender-separated groups?
6. In unison or alternating groups (if any)? Are there soloists? For whole or part of the dance?
7. Does everybody participate or are there dancers and audience? How are they separated?
9. Is the accompaniment by a separate group? The group dancing? A combination?
10. Is it done in “everyday” clothing, dress-up clothing or something specifically for that dance?

11. Does that clothing – or any item of it – have significance or play a specific part? Why?

12. How long does it go on? Is there a time limit and why?

For the **Kel Tagelmousse** of the Sahara Desert (which stretches from Mauritania to the border of Egypt), **Guedra** is not a dance – it is a trance ritual of blessing not only of great importance to them, but one which commanded such respect in Morocco that King Hassan II had an official **Guedra**, named **B’Shara**, do it to bless many important events. Nowadays, except for extremely watered-down snippets in tourist dinner shows, **Guedra** has almost disappeared in its original, ritualistic form due to several factors, especially the forty+ year drought in the Sahara and resulting necessity for too many to move into cities in order to survive (leading to several of their long-held traditions being diminished or lost); a need to assimilate into the prevailing City culture in which they now find themselves (far more patriarchal than their own in the desert); and a desire to be – or at least appear to be - "up-to-date"/ modern.

How did I come upon it? By a stroke of luck I first saw a bit of real **Guedra** in 1963 at a private event in New York City, performed by three women from **B’shara’s** group who would also be doing it several times a day at the 1964 World’s Fair in Flushing Meadow Park in Queens in the Moroccan Pavillion. It was so mesmerizing that, to satisfy my curiosity about it, I borrowed the plane fare, flew to Casablanca and continued by train, bus, jeep and donkey to Goulmim, Morocco (on the edge of the Sahara) later that year. I connected with **B’Shara**, who, during the time I was there and on subsequent visits, shared with me all she could about the ritual and the life/culture of the **Kel Tgelmousse**, because the two were inseparable.
Unlike Zar (from Sudan, also popular in Egypt’s poorer sections), Hadra (from Morocco) and Tunisia’s Stambouli, also trance rituals, but whose purpose is to appease or exorcise "demons"/bad spirits, thereby often curing minor psychosomatic illnesses (frequently the only “socially acceptable” outlets for female frustration in areas where their public behavior is very circumscribed and must be at all times beyond reproach), the Guedra is a blessing ritual, wherein the intent is to "channel" all the "good forces" and feelings of peace and soul’s love from the center of the earth, sending them out into the world via the fingertips of the female Guedra or "vessel", blessing all those present in person or in spirit with "good energy" - spiritual love, not carnal - transmitted from the depths of the Guedra’s soul via her fingers and hands. A female, not an intermediary spirit (djinn or afrit) delivers the message/ the “force”. Only a female can be a Guedra.

Guedra isn't a dance, it is a ritual, one in which anybody and everybody can participate, although the central figure/s is/ are the female Guedra/s (sometimes two women do it together, or a woman and young girl). Guedra is a nighttime ritual, usually in a circle around a fire, under the light of the moon or inside one of the larger tents.

Clothing often has an effect on movement, especially in ethnic forms where tradition leaves very little leeway for individual choice or expression. Those garments, their styles and reasons for being that way, usually pre-date dances and rituals done while wearing them. Not so theater dance, where costumes are (hopefully) designed to facilitate and accentuate the choreography or to portray a specific historical period or class, a character, an idea or symbol. The Blue woman's unique headdress is also a result of adaptation to desert conditions - and germane to the overall effect of the Guedra.
In the Guedra, the vast majority of movement flows from the fingers and hands, with some arm movement from the elbows down. The ribcage is lifted and lowered, as in many African dances. When extra emphasis is called for the head can be gently turned from side-to-side, causing the braids to sway. As the Guedra comes to a crescendo, accent in the chest movements transfers from lift to lowering and the head swings more strongly from side-to-side with chin lifts, causing the braids to "fly". When done "for real", a Guedra goes on for quite a time, gradually increasing in tempo and intensity, but still keeping the heartbeat rhythm.

When a man joins in, it is as an accompaniment, to induce a woman of his choice to accept the magic necklace from him and bless him and the others with her soul's energy via the Guedra. After she accepts and takes the necklace, he unfolds the shoulder drappings of his ‘dra, holding it out in his fingers to its full width, dipping and swaying from side to side, until she is ready to focus her energy and go on with the ritual alone. In the group, the men concentrate on driving and maintaining the clapping and chanting that encourage the Guedra and deepen her trance.

Anybody – male, female, adult or child – can play the drum (also called guedra), which is often a large cauldron, covered with an animal skin. Sometimes a large gourd is slapped and shaken. All others present do complex clapping and chanting to drive the rhythm and the ritual, starting out calmly and increasing in intensity as it goes along, having a like effect on the Guedra, herself. It is a group effort.

Getting a good quality soundtrack was virtually impossible in 1963: peripheral conversations, diversions, etc. among those present and the minute any visible recording device appeared, the dynamic immediately changed and became something other than “spontaneous” or “authentic”.
In 1976 Rachid el Idrissi, one of the two men responsible for both the gala at which I first saw *Guedra* and the Moroccan Pavilion, arranged for a special evening of *Guedra* and *Schikhatt* on the grounds of King Hassan II’s Marrakesh palace, for me and the special group I’d organized to see the Marrakesh Folk Festival. It was outdoors, at night, around a fire, but there was a nearby windowsill, an extension cord and a tiny cassette recorder (nonexistent in 1963), invisible to those doing the ritual. Though the loudest frogs I’ve ever heard come through at the beginning of the tape, I now had an hour of various chants, usable in different sequences and circumstances.

What made me think such an intense interactional ritual could even work on a stage? The first time I saw just a bit of it, incongruously presented in the midst of a gala dinner for an *haute couture* fashion show, it totally transfixed me and the rest of that jaded crowd. I could only imagine what a fuller theater presentation might do. To share with a non-“native” theater/dance public what I found so mesmerizing about this and other wonderful but rapidly disappearing ethnic dances of the Middle East and North Africa that I had learned “in culture” - which were mostly group endeavors - I formed a dance company, a daunting enough task – especially in non-mainstream ethnic dance. The Casbah Dance Experience was born in 1977.

Choreographing, implementing how to best present *Guedra* in a theater/performance setting, being true to it without compromising it, presented quite a challenge because it is not a dance, able to charm with its grace, musicality and movement technique, but a ritual of mostly specific and proscribed hand and finger movements, one that was usually done outdoors, under the night sky, in an intimate circle around a fire.

Were the movements difficult for dancers to master? Seemingly so simple, a real difficulty lay in preventing dancers from trying to embellish or make the movements more
“Oriental”/graceful. My problem as choreographer was in making the specific, limited movement vocabulary of this ritual varied and interesting enough in its presentation that the audience “gets it”. Specific flicks of specific fingers, a bit of hand and arm movement, some rising and falling of the ribcage/chest, their sequence and repetition, minimal movement of feet or “travelling”. Who does what, when and with whom. Why? What should I add to or subtract from the presentation to make it work? An actual Guedra could last hours...

I shortened it considerably, opened the circle into a semi-circle, letting the audience “in”. I found four different chants that worked when spliced together into a 10 ½ minute sequence and devised a “story” with “characters”, for audience involvement and understanding. I started with some dancers already seated, as if waiting for the rest to arrive. The others come, the women’s heads already covered by the tail end of their haiks, each greeting the two main Guedras, who are seated back center of the semi-circle on either side of the lone male (only one male dancer in my company at the time!), one at a time, with the triple, clasped hand-to-head salute of the Kel Tagelmousse. They seat themselves at either end of the semi-circle and join in the rhythmical clapping and swaying.

One dancer from each end rises to a kneeling position, they slowly approach and pass each other stage front, blessing the stage area and dancers. As they cross in the center, another Guedra rises and starts towards center downstage, doing T’bal (what the Guedra is called when done standing up) and blessing those in the audience and semi-circle. The first two perform some of the ritual’s movements at the opposite ends of the semi-circle, then re-cross, sit in their original places, uncover their heads and join the clapping. The first chant is over, blending into the second one.
The two main* Guedras*, representing a bride and her mother, cover their heads and shoulders with the tail ends of their* haiks*, rise from their seated positions and do the next chant standing (*T’bal*), crossing from side to side, one behind the other, circling back to back, facing each other, then the others on stage then the audience, together then apart. The second chant ends, and a third, more intense one starts. They uncover their faces, blessing all present, make several turns and sink to their knees to really “get into” the* Guedra*. As the third chant ends, the “mother”, still on her knees, returns to her place in the circle, sits and the male stands, holding his dagger by its corded belt.

We are about to incorporate the* Betrothal Dance of Tissint* into this* Guedra* Suite. He approaches the still kneeling “bride”, who rises and starts fluttering her shoulders like a frightened bird, moving away from the “groom”, who pursues her in a circle, his proffered dagger the offering of his protection - an official “proposal”! After a bit of his pursuing her all around the semi-circle and stage front, she turns to face him, approaches and stops long enough to allow him to slip the dagger’s belt over her head, signifying her acceptance of his proposal. If this were Tissint, they would now be betrothed.

She again drops to her knees and finishes the* Guedra*, simulating collapsing into a trance. The fourth chant ends with the groom encircling/ covering the tranced-out young* Guedra* with the long, flowing sleeves of his* ghandura* or ‘dra. Curtain or lights out.

Why did I combine* Guedra* with the* Betrothal Dance*? Female clothing and movements aren’t the same for both, but male clothing and the manner of holding the magic/ blessed necklace out to the* Guedra* of his choice were almost exactly the same. I wanted a bit of “drama”, a real role for the male dancer, so I used artistic license.
At first some of my dancers found the rehearsals/“tableau” repetitious but those who’d been to Morocco or were of African-American heritage understood totally and gave some very effective and affecting performances. I explained what it was about to the rest and they really got into it, even in rehearsals, which were different in that I gave my dancers more leeway to develop their characters and movements—within the context of the authentic vocabulary—than I ordinarily would have, rather than teach them a set choreography, thus making it easier for them to find the emotion and its expressions and get them across to the audience.

*Guedra* is done in what was everyday clothing for the *Kel Tagelmousse*’ women. Usually over a caftan (long, loose robe), sometimes not, the women wear a length of fabric, five to six meters long by about two meters wide. Wound around the body, folded over a bit in the front, both front and back portions are caught at the collar bones after each turn by two elaborate fibulae, the world’s first “safety pins”. Long chains are suspended from the fibulae to hold them in place and as ornamentation. A rope or belt is tied around the waist and fabric pulled up for a blouson effect and so the skirt just reaches the top of the foot. The last two meters are left unwound, to be pulled up and draped over the wearer’s headdress, should circumstances or the desert heat require it. This train-cum-veil plays a very important part in desert survival—and the *Guedra*.

The Blue woman’s unique headdress is also a result of adaptation to desert conditions—and germane to the overall effect of the *Guedra*. Anywhere from two to six inches high (or more), the front is made of leather, canvas, felt or woven horsehair decorated with cowry shells, silver coins, turquoise, coral and the occasional mother-of-pearl button or Coca–Cola bottle top. From this front, a circlet of wire sits on the crown of the head and the wearer’s hair, interwoven with horsehair and braided over and down, fastens it firmly to the head. Cowrie shells, silver,
turquoise and coral beads are also woven into the multiple braids. From the back of the circlet, a “handle” rises to the same height as the front piece, up and over the center of the head, approaching but not touching the front “crown”. Horsehair or wool is woven around it.

Such a time-consuming and elaborate hairdo is usually redone every one to one and a half months. The headdress supports the aforementioned two-meter fabric end, keeping it off the the wearer’s head and leaving an air space that maintains her normal body temperature of 98.6°F, thereby keeping her cooler in the heat of the day and warmer in the cold desert night.

Before starting the ritual, the Guedra drapes those last two meters of her haik over the top of her headdress, covering her head and chest entirely. This “darkness” signifies the lack of light until the spiritual love she will share with the blessing “enters” her. When she is ready, she unveils, her movements gradually increasing in intensity and focus until she has finished.

We live in New York City, home of the garment district and wholesale fabric stores and could sew. We made the costumes and headdresses ourselves. I brought back several authentic fibulae and a few tourist copies that were more than good enough for the stage and a real headdress that we could copy and adapt so it could be attached and removed. Dark blue and black cotton was easy to get, so it was not difficult to design something a dancer could get into easily and quickly, and looked as real as the actual thing, which was more complex and would have required far more time to get into or out of – especially the headdress. We could do the Guedra as the perfect opening, put a soloist or two on afterwards and change for the next group dance.

Did my experience with other rituals (Dervish, Zar, Hadra...) help or inform my interpretation of Guedra? Of course! Being aware that there were many rituals still existing in these areas, each unique, really helped me to not fall into the trap of assuming what went for one,
went for the other. I strove assiduously as I could to respect and honor what it was that made

**Guedra** so effective and affecting.

I was asked: “What did you keep for authenticity's sake that you weren't sure would work in the presentation? What did you leave out and why?”

I kept everything, except a real fire on stage, the “blessed/ magic necklace” or actually going into trance. No fire or actual trance for obvious reasons. The necklace took too long to take off, drape the covering over the headdress and put back on, fine when a **Guedra** has time, but really breaking the “spell” within such a short context.

Nothing like this had ever been seen in this form in the U.S., certainly not within the context of the slowly burgeoning Oriental dance scene, still very suspect in theater circles (the man who hired us for that performance put his job on the line to do so!). I was risking my reputation when I debuted it and my dance company at Lincoln Center in August, 1978.

However, the more I learned about and did **Guedra**, the more certain I was that I had to take that chance.

Lincoln Center’s Damrosch theater is outdoors, but has good lighting and sound and a great backstage crew. Too anxious to trust **Guedra** as the opening number, it started the second half, in half-light, gradually working it up to full after the “greetings”, as the two kneeling **Guedras** started across the floor. Ten and a half minutes can seem like years. When the tape ended, there was total silence. “Omigod, I thought: they didn’t like it.” Three seconds passed, then waves of applause broke out and shouts of “Bravo!” I could now exhale!

Afterwards, many waited at the stage door, to ask about **Guedra**, saying that they could feel the waves of love and blessing washing over them, as the dancers’ fingers flicked at them. This was especially significant since there was no detailed explanation in the program. We now
open all our concerts with a *Guedra*, either the group tableau or me doing it as a solo. Over the years, the response has been overwhelmingly positive and many audience members have come, sometimes with tears in their eyes, to tell me that they “got” it and felt really blessed. I must admit, so do I.

I was asked if I ever did *Guedra* as a solo before staging it with the troupe – I did, but not for an audience, but with my mentor, *B’shara* and her people: I learned by assimilating and doing. Then, when I was asked to teach it at dance seminars all over the United States and Europe, it was impossible to take the whole troupe, so I started doing it solo, all 10 ½ minutes, but with a longer entrance/ salutation, coming on to the stage through the audience, and no “Betrothal Dance”, but full-out *Guedra* till the end.

How do the *Kel Tagelmousse* feel about non-natives doing their ritual as performance? I asked them, years ago. They were shocked at first, then thrilled that anybody outside of their country even knew it existed, let alone cared enough to learn it properly and perform it in theaters and with respect. In their own country, they’d seen it bowdlerized, condensed, thrown at tourists’ in careless, two-minute-long snippets at “cultural” evening Fantasias and dinner tent shows. Due to time constraints, even the fabulous Marrakesh Folk Festival could only have five minutes of *Guedra* and *T’bal*. I captured several of those “performances” on Super-8 sound film – no portable video cameras back then! (You can see some of it on my #2 DVD – the Marrakesh Folk Festival and More…” Dinicu 1984)

It has been suggested to me that the reconstructed, performed *Guedra* perhaps creates a new kind of memory -- a sense for audiences that they are experiencing a "real" cultural practice, since something of the ritual’s function survives in its theatrical form. I have been unbelievably fortunate to have had the unique opportunity to introduce it in this manner to thousands of people,
who would not have the opportunity to experience it in any other way. Many, also intrigued by what I was able to show them in one performance or seminar/explanation situation, have come to me to learn more and gone on to perform and teach it themselves.

It took the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Joe Cocker and other “foreigners” to bring real American music, that had long been unappreciated and underestimated at home because of its origins in African-American music, back to the USA. To me, *Guedra* represents an important cultural memory, transformed by an "outsider" into a performance situation that might be truer to its origins than one finds in many places in its present-day but modernized "back yard", with aesthetic conventions that could possibly be the true link to preserve the actual ritual for loving return to its original "owners" - an example of how reality made into theater rescues the continuity of that reality.

Glossary:

1. **Afrit**: mischievous spirit, imp;
2. **Djinn**: evil spirit, troublemaker;
3. **Dra (ghandourah)**: rectangular, loose-fitting male garment;
4. **Guedra**: cauldron/large cooking pot and, in this instance, also the trance ritual of the *Kel Tagelmousse*, the woman who “performs” the ritual, the drum, formerly made from a cauldron, used to play the rhythms for the Guedra, the basic rhythm of the ritual;
5. **Haik**: loose, wrap dress, formed from 4+ meters of fabric, pinned with *fibulae* at the chest and shorted to it the tops of the feet with a rope at the waist. Worn by women of many different Amazigh nations in Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria;
6. **Haute couture** (French): high fashion;
7. **Kel Tagelmousse**: “People of the Turban” – what they call themselves. Foreigners call them Tuareg Berbers or Blue People;

8. **Tabula rasa** (Latin): empty/blank slate;

9. **T’bal**: what **Guedra** is called when done standing up, also the **Darija** (North African Arabic) word for the drum called **tabla** in Egypt and **darbukka** or **derbeki** in the Levant;

10. **Zar, Hadra, Stambouli**: trance rituals of exorcism/release.

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Abstract: South Africa has in the last twelve months experienced an increasing amount of large scale social protest movements involving embodied activism, such as the “toilet wars”, #RhodesMustFall, and #FeesMustFall. These events have drawn into focus the relationship between social meaning produced via staged performance, and the potential to read political events through the lens of dance focused research. My current research aims to locate dance-makers in the processes of meaning-making through both the form and content of their work. I seek to understand the potential of the dance-maker to both construct and enact sociopolitical interactions through the choreographed actions of the dancing body. This paper will apply a critical reading of recent contemporary dance produced in South Africa to understand how they generate sociopolitical meaning, while reflecting this study back on recent sociopolitical movements as agents of dance based knowledge. As an exploratory paper that will inform my dissertation writing process, I aim to better understand how the choreographic practices used by some South African contemporary dancers offer unique lenses through which to understand the relationships between socioeconomic mobility, physicality, and identity politics.

In November of 2014, the Cape Town based Tokolos Stencil Group was invited to participate in an exhibit along with other artists providing the city’s “voices of dissent” with prominent gallery space. Rather than contributing to what the anonymous graffiti group asserted was a bourgeois conversation, the group marked the exterior of the Brundyn+ Gallery space with anti-establishment messages the evening before the exhibit’s opening night. Building on this subversive act, the Group provided a much more visceral exhibit on opening day. Brought in and left in the middle of the gallery floor was a portable toilet, the type of which that has been distributed to township residents in lieu of sanitation infrastructure and flushing toilets.

The South African Civil Society Information Service estimates that in South Africa over three million households and 18 million people are without access to sanitation. One of the most stark and shameful examples of economic inequality in post-Apartheid South Africa is the lack of access to toilet facilities in the townships. As a quick fix to this sanitation concern, the government offered chemical toilets to township residents—one by three foot plastic containers
to be kept in what is normally a six by six foot tin walled shack. This disgraceful response to the problem caused a public outcry that led to sustained protests dating back to 2011. Protesters brought their full toilet containers to public areas, such as the main highway leading out of the Cape Town’s international airport, and quite literally spread their shit around—using their own bodily waste to call attention to the grave inequalities still experienced by many citizens. The corporeality of this very basic human need, the common physical requirement to eliminate waste from our bodies, and the denial to many of an adequately safe space to do so, exemplifies the enduring indelible violence marking a vastly underserved population in post-apartheid South Africa and calls for a body-based research approach to better understand the affective relationships between citizen, protester, and artist.

The Tokolos Stencil Group called attention to the ongoing indignity caused by this issue by bringing a used chemical toilet into a space reserved economically and institutionally for the privileged, and traditionally for the white. Referring to the toilets as “inhumane”, the Tokolos Group removed the lids from the toilets, exposing opening-night attendees to, “the smell of decades of indignity and oppression meted out against Cape Town's poor.” (A quote from the Tokolos Group describing their action in an online culture magazine).

So it is not without precedent that in April of 2015 a group of activists on the University of Cape Town campus spread human excrement on a statue of Cecil Rhodes as an act of defiance against the structures of white-privilege that are still in operation in many South African universities. The UCT campus sits on a tract of land donated by the British colonialist, nestled into the majestic Table Mountain overlooking the city. Shortly after the fecal act, a movement rose dubbed Rhodes Must Fall that called out a dominantly placed statue of Rhodes as an inappropriate symbol of past colonial rule. While the statue continued to be defaced with graffiti,
public rallies were held to decry the continuance of colonial monuments and symbols in public spaces, public debate broke out at a national level as to how the countries many public symbols to both its British colonial and Afrikaans apartheid past should be handled. The dominant issues included the role of monuments, access to public space, and the erasure of history. Should these monuments and symbolic celebrations of a colonial history remain in place, in the new democratic South Africa? Does their removal erase a history that should not be forgotten? Or if they are left in place does their presence prevent attempts to empower those disenfranchised by the legacies of colonial and apartheid rule?

The statue of Cecil Rhodes was removed from the University of Cape Town campus on April 9th of 2015.

Only a few of months after the successful #RhodesMustFall campaign, performance artist Gavin Krastin brought a project to the 2015 Cape Town Fringe Festival titled Trophy. Described as "a performance response to public statues and monuments, and the history and political gestures embedded in their significance and function, or lack thereof." This work included images of the Rhodes statue being dismantled, and other national emblems being rendered in compromising situations. An independent guide to the fringe described Krastin’s work as “multidisciplinary, loud, unapologetic and uses the resilient yet fragile body in vulnerable and perturbing ways to dismantle our contemporary ideologies and prejudices.” In a recent interview with an online Cape Town based arts hub, Krastin was asked why he situates his body as central to his work, he responded that “The body is both time and space (it lives and occupies), it is also incredibly fragile yet absolutely resilient, so as an artist operating in a time-based medium it is really the ultimate choice of instrument for me. It is also irreplaceable and its productions ephemeral when present in live performance. I think the body is relatable and yet contentious and
highly politicised and to be in a body is an incredibly treacherous feat to endure. My own body is also often a starting point or point of departure in my work – being conscious and critical of my body as white, male, androgynous, homosexual, and ‘other’.

I think it is worth drawing attention to the relationships and pathways that connect a South African township resident using his own bodily waste to protest the conditions which render his dignity and personhood fragile, to a performance artist, one who teaches at the University of Cape Town, who through critical self-reflection, uses his work to place his own body in states of fragile vulnerability. The trajectory of the conditions that led to the toilet wars, the overlap of excrement vis-a-vee the #RhodesMustFall movement, and Krastin’s performed bodily engagement with these issues are interconnected and demonstrative of what Susan Foster emphasises as integral to reading social movements through a dance studies lens, Foster focuses her analysis in *Choreographies of Protest* (2003) on “the corporeal in relation to a changing structuring of power”. I posit that the untidy relationships that bind together the marginalized township resident with the objectively privileged artist creates an awkward site of bodily vulnerability that articulates the ethos of South Africa’s shifting socio-economic mobility, physicality, and identity politics. The shifting modes of power and agency, as they are rooted in the body, begin to slip from one body to another. As protesters use the waste that their own bodies produce to claim space and visibility, they not only affect change directly on the issue of inadequate toilet facilities, they also set in motion a cascade of corporeal responses that further affect South Africa’s social fabric.

Building on the momentum of #RhodesMustFall, the #FeesMustFall movement take root in Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg this time last year. A sustained student protest, now in its second year, that began in response to the proposed raising of university fees for the
coming academic year. This student led movement is now massive in scale with many universities campuses involved. Marching protesters are facing down State military aggression in ways reminiscent of the apartheid era. Similar to the toilet war protests, the #FeesMustFall movement is fighting back against an institutionalized system of marginalization and oppression, arguing that University tuition is now so high that the majority of South African’s can not pay the fees to access the education and degrees necessary to move out of conditions of poverty. The lack of access to sanitary toilets, and the lack of access to tertiary education are symptoms of the same political and economic issues, both evidence of rainbow nation promises that have long been reneged. The movement won a partial victory last year when president Jacob Zuma announced that there would be no fee increases for the 2016/2017 academic year, however, the movement has sustained itself with the mandate of fighting for a zero tuition system and decolonized education.

Here again, Foster provides a primer on the possibility of understanding how social movements make use of corporeal intelligence to interact and enact social change, in her own work she aimed to “probe both the collective connectivity that is achieved among protesting bodies and the violence of the encounter between their bodies and those defending the status quo” (12) The intelligence of group body thinking can also be understood through Andre Lepecki’s terms choreopolitics and choreopolicing (2013). Defining choreopolitics as the choreography of protest - that is, the ultimate expression of the political inherent in the freedom to mobilize, and choreopolicing as an act “to de-mobilize political action by means of implementing a certain kind of movement that prevents any formation and expression of the political.” In the ongoing conflict on South African campuses, the basis of the student movement, to politically mobilize, is to gain greater freedoms in their immediate situations as
well as a hopeful future, the response by the state is to de-mobilize the movement, restricting the freedoms of the students, not just in the immediate, but also by preventing their ability to gain upward mobility. The students have everything to gain and nothing to lose by continuing their fight.

I will conclude by briefly discussing one last performance. Staged in a small venue in Cape Town one year ago, choreographer Jared Musiker debuted with his first public work #BalletMustFall. Inviting audience members in with this enticing manifesto:

Dear non-dancers; the definitely-not-athletes-of-God; those of you with more than one left foot; the bitter has-beens/ once-upon-a-time-I-was-a-prima; bigots & those who just don’t care, Our dance industry is in perpetual recession. We, the dancers, are not slaves to those stuck in 1970-something. Audiences resemble privileged hospices, money is disappearing, orchestras are owed, & we are tired of Swan F**** Lake! Here is our manifesto: #BALLET MUST FALL & we demand change! This is a house of the revolution, so leave your white tendencies at the door & see dance as never before.

While, given the depth and history to the current social movements as they stretch back through the apartheid era, it may be easy to write Musiker’s work off as sensationalist or trite. Perhaps a shallow comment on the current movements that may not be well understood. However, though Musiker does not seem to be applying the level of social critique and self-reflexivity that Krastin applied to his work Trophy, Musiker’s manifesto does seem to be genuine, I don’t believe he is intending to be ironic, rather I think he is trying to align his sense of insecurity within the dance world within the larger social shifts that are happening in the world around him. One reviewer claimed to have been blown away by one of the best shows they had seen, describing the work as a largely satirical dance-play that uses on-point humour and personal narrative to critique the South African dance industry. I believe this suggests that there is a ripple effect moving from strong socioeconomic protest movements to the many corners of South African life. While the toilet wars, #RhodesMustFall, and #FeesMustFall have
impacted the social fabric to a noticeable degree, the aftershocks of these events will be found in many facets of the social sphere, picked up on and created back through the performance community in an ongoing relationship.

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Agency & Self-Interpellation in Cross-Cultural Dance Practice
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Abstract
Authenticity and appropriation mark imperfect poles between which unfold a range of transcultural dance practices. These potent extremes provide a framework for engaging with the concept of agency in the in-between, where dancers carve out distinct methods of interrogating identity, history, and performance. Informed by praxis, this paper focus on the balancing of agency and responsibility that accompanies cross-cultural dance participation. The work proposes the concept of self-interpellation as a means of grappling with positionality and exploring the contingencies of agency through questions of ownership and ethics that arise in studying and performing dance across cultures.

As an embodied form, dance straddles multiple arenas. It is a discipline of study that is also personal—entwined with the body, narratives of identity, and self expression. This dual aspect of dance—as technique and as self—can be viewed as a simultaneous unfolding of fields delineated by Ben Spatz as “what one has (knowledge) and what one is (identity)” (2015, 51). In celebrating skill, one might even use the phrase “own it”—make it yours, make it you. Sam Gill positioned this process as “self-othering,” the phenomenon that “something completely other than self can be experienced as self” (2012, 101). These examples share a framework of ownership and instrumentality—the absorption of an externality deployed and identified as self. Dance in this regard is a field of study and a platform through which the self is explored and communicated.

But what does it mean to “own it” when the dance studied and performed is from a culture that is not “one’s own”? How does one ethically balance self expression and cultural difference? This paper builds upon these questions through the interrelated themes of agency and self-interpellation, presenting these theoretical tools as means for examining responsibility and relationship in cross-cultural dance practice.
Much has been written about dance in the space between the extremes of authenticity and appropriation: dancers navigating transcultural careers;\(^1\) developing and interrogating hybridities;\(^2\) queering forms;\(^3\) merging distinct techniques; dynamically engaging with traditions;\(^4\) and creating new language for this terrain of the in-between.\(^5\) Within the complexity of identities kaleidoscopically viewed as fractured, postmodern, or transnational, agency and self-interpellation provide a ground, a space to pause and delve into the complications involved in crating a dancing self intimately connected to and embedded within cross-cultural fields.

This research is informed by on-going work as a member of Ragamala Dance Company, a Bharatanatyam company based in Minneapolis, MN. This paper is the latest in a series of essays focused on agency within cross-cultural dance practice and is the beginning stage of an examination of ethics within this field of study.\(^6\) While building on personal experience, the research presented primarily examines theoretical tools of potential relevance to dancers, choreographers, and scholars whose work engages with cross-cultural dance practices. I begin by outlining the core terms of agency and self-interpellation, using this base to unpack distinct modes of considering the self embedded within networks and relationships. Beyond this theoretical agenda, I position agency and self-interpellation as connected to action—tools that combine internally focused reflection with external opportunities to rethink and alter systems, platforms, and practices.

Agency provides a perspective for examining navigations between opportunities and limitations, yet it can be difficult to define, given its location at the intersection of actions, options, and stances. Agency can refer to possibilities such as intentionality, self-determination, strategy, choice, or capability for action (Emirbayer & Mische 1998, 963). It can focus on self-positioning—embodied or performative “individual ‘enunciation’” or the ability to take “a
subject position that defies categorization” (Walsh 2012, 400). It can also suggest wider impact—capacities to inform or transform cultural systems or social structures. Additionally, Mustafa Emirbayer and Ann Mische have proposed a temporal layer to agency as informed by the past, oriented toward future goals, and unfolding within the possibilities and hindrances of the present (1998, 962).

Appropriation is an extreme example of agency, particularly notable in its root meaning of taking for private use. Yet agency also provides a lens for exploring choices and self-crafting throughout a range of dance experiences. While agency interpreted as potential could suggest liberatory undertones, it is mitigated rather than free-flowing. It offers a foundation for considering personal choice, self-fashioning, or performance as decisive actions that are nevertheless steered by social structures and hierarchies, and informed by expectations, habits, norms, and histories. As Simone Bignall notes, “the self is always embedded in a network of power relations,” hence the implication of freedom suggested by agency “will never be absolute, and will always be situated, relative and contextual” (2010, 141). This aspect of agency as a relative capability points to longstanding debates around representing the agency of marginalized or subaltern subjects as well as the potential inability of institutions or scholars to recognize agential acts (Spivak 2010, 228). Furthermore, agency becomes a contested concept in instances where individuals chose actions that reinforce their own domination, framed by Ritu Birla as a split between agency and the acting subject (2010, 89).

Agency therefore creates a lens for viewing actions in situ and in relationship to power, networks, and opportunities. Adding self-interpellation to this study extends agency as a tool for examining not only choices and actions, but also accountability in cross-cultural dance practice.
Interpellation was developed by Louis Althusser as a Marxian interrogation of the reproduction of ideology as an apparatus for reinforcing class dynamics. In that context, interpellation was presented as a simultaneous calling out and actualization of a subject position, described in the metaphor of a police officer hailing an individual on the street. Through acknowledgement and deference to the hail, the individual becomes a subject, taking on a position within a hierarchy of relationships. Writing in the context of dance, Mark Franko highlighted the visceral nature of this address (2002, 59) as well as a self-reflexive aspect, noting that it is “through the experience of self recognition” that individuals “become enlisted as subjects of ideology” (2002, 60). Judith Butler stressed the pre-existence of social relations into which the subject steps, with interpellation not a one-time action, but rather a repeated and ongoing performance that she likened to ritual (1995, 15-17).

By recasting this concept as self-interpellation, I seek to maintain the element of self-reflexivity, but instead of focusing on the pinning of an individual within structures of power by authority, the goal here is to delve into how one might hold oneself accountable. Drawing upon Butler’s notion of interpellation as the ritual of accepting a subject position, self-interpellation opens up the possibility for transforming habits, the establishment of practices that not only etch different modes of being within the individual, but potentially ripple outwards as well. In the context of cross-cultural dance practice, self-interpellation is a reflexive and destabilizing examination of one’s position and practices within unfolding histories, networks of power, and global flows of culture, a process that encompasses both a calling out and a call to action.

This paper began with the idea of “owning” movement, but praxis and performance are enmeshed within circuits of representation, pulling what could be an inward focus on agency in artistry, the embodiment of technique, or an intimate experience of dance practice into larger
conversations. For Jean-Luc Nancy, “The body is first an interiority . . . it is the ‘inside’ of representation, and at the same time the representation of that ‘inside’ . . . the sign and the sense” (1994, 20). A dancing body continuously both is and is representing, reframing personal agency as bounded by its manifestation as agency in dialogue.

Representation, however, is not limited to representation via spectacle, but encompasses the act of self-narration as well, what Judith Butler referred to as “giving an account of oneself.” The multifaceted condition of the self featured in much literature around transcultural dance performance connects directly to Butler’s exploration of a “divided, ungrounded, or incoherent self,” which she posited forms a base for ethics (2001, 22). Butler proposed that: “[s]uspending the demand . . . for complete coherence . . . counter[s] a certain ethical violence that demands that we manifest and maintain self-identity at all times and require that others do the same” (2001, 27). Acknowledging the partial incomprehensibility of the self to the self therefore entails acknowledging comparable elements of complexity within one another and within relationships, which for Butler holds the potential for cultivating a “disposition of humility” and an open-ended form of engagement (2001, 28). The self in this regard is not a set of facts to be neatly defined, but rather a process to be variously unpacked at individual, interpersonal, communal, and intercultural dimensions.

Viewing rupture and destabilization as preconditions for ethics, Butler wrote that:

Although some would say that to be a split subject, or a subject whose access to itself is opaque and not self-grounding, is precisely not to have the grounds for agency and the conditions for accountability, it may be . . . this way in which we are, from the start, interrupted by alterity and not fully recoverable to ourselves, indicates the way in which we are, from the start, ethically implicated in the lives of others . . . beholden, derived, constituted by what is beyond us and before us. (2001, 35)
Part of what being ethically grounded in a fragmented state may entail is therefore an avoidance of the comfort of an endpoint, a clear resolution. In this regard, Hari Krishnan’s reference to queering Bharatanatyam as “being lost in the world of hybridity” while “complexifying” or “interrogating” this state offers rich potential (2013). Agency here can be seen as not solely a matter of having choice, but of choosing a process of concentric inquiry of self, representation, and relationships.

If appropriation is an act of cultural crossing that entails taking away, Butler helps to reorient cross-cultural dance within a focus on participating in—a state of being in on-going relationship, a “sustaining address” that provides space for complexity, uncertainty, and on-going transformation (2001, 31). This destabilization, however, does not remove the self from being embedded within networks, histories, hierarchies, and structures. Although multifaceted, the self still occupies a space from which to enact agency and self-interpellation, what Mikhail Bakhtin described as a “non-alibi in Being” (1993, 45). Likening accountability to the personal contractual commitment of signing one’s name, Bakhtin framed accountability as a singular act of answerability from a position wherein one is unsubstitutable (38).

There is a physicality to Bakhtin’s positioning of the subject, where “to live from within oneself does not mean to live for oneself, but means to be an answerable participant from within oneself” (1993, 49). He emphasized an active and committed, rather than indifferent, stance, an affirmation of experience in an “emotional-volitional manner” (34). Although variously fractured, the accountable subject is nevertheless present, invested, and embodied in all the physical, emotional, and mental registers that embodiment implies.11

Developed along these lines, agency and self-interpellation provide tools for fostering a critical analysis of individual performance, representation, and self-narration within cross-
cultural dance practices. However, such attention to self assessment and personal learning, particularly in the arena of inward reflection on white privilege, has been critiqued for severing the cultivation of awareness from action that would lead to political, economic, or social change. The situated nature of agency and self-interpellation places individual dance practices, self-conceptions, and choices within the context of larger fields of possible action.

Bringing to the fore the gap between ideals of multiculturalism and their actualization, Brenda Dixon Gottschild outlined relational models drawn from dance practice that encourage pluriversal rather than universal approaches. The participatory format of call-and-response that shares platforms for creativity and communally supports individual voices here provided a base for anti-hierarchical refocusing and reprioritizing. Gottschild noted that “[c]all-and-response implies that every part of the community is important to its continuity and richness, that every one has a voice and, through it, the power to act, enact, react.” From the intimate and mutually reliant sharing of weight in contact improvisation, Gottschild elaborated an embodied metaphor for “equality-with-difference,” awareness, responsiveness, and responsibility to the dancing bodies of one another (1996, 144).

Building upon these examples, for agency to be both personal and relational, it calls for facilitating space for a plurality of agential acts, and hence an engagement with the interconnected realms of culture, politics, and economics that establish conditions of possibility for agency. In the context of contemporary conversations on race and privilege that have taken root across the United States, self-interpellation not only asks what it means to be accountable in a delimited realm of cross-cultural dance practice, but also presents a framework for examining individual action or inaction across interrelated sectors and spaces.
Part of the relational component of agency entails viewing the self within structures that hinder but also networks that can enhance and effect change. In this vein, José Medina wrote of agency and responsibility in the context of activism as neither “purely individualistic” or heroic nor relegated to mass collective movements (2103, 226), but rather chained, “a mixed and hybrid kind of agency in which . . . acts of individuals and groups become interwoven” (244). This perspective highlights the significance of individual actions as feeding into, echoing, and building upon burgeoning strategies, discourses, and movements.

When considered in the context of agency and self-interpellation, “owning it” in cross-cultural dance practice can be viewed as an embodied stance that expands beyond the exquisite lines, nuanced musicality, or expressive fulfillment of a dancing body. “Owning it” provides an avenue for acknowledging a place within histories, hierarchies, and global flows. “Owning it” fosters questions regarding how to advocate for pluriversal platforms or social justice initiatives. Finally “owning it” cultivates an ongoing vulnerability in giving an account of oneself. From a personal level, this paper comes not from a place of set answers, but rather from a place of ongoing grappling that views dance practice within a larger field of both expansive and intimate cultural and historical relationships. Agency and self-interpellation can be seen as perturbing, open-ended, and individualized, yet, it may be these very qualities that make them meaningful tools for deepening cross-cultural dance participation by situating personal practice within relationships, systems, actions, and choices.

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Notes

1 See Kedhar, “Flexibility and Its Bodily Limits: Transnational South Asian Dancers in an Age of Neoliberalism.”

3 See Krishnan, “Vulgarity is a Perspective” and Chatterjee & Lee, “Solidarity – rasa-autobiography – abhinaya: South Asian tactics for performing queerness.”

4 See Lopez y Royo, “Classicism, Post-Classicism and Ranjabati Sircar’s Work: Re-defining the Terms of Indian Contemporary Dance Discourses” and Fonteyne, “The Great Art of Bharatanatyam: Alarmèl Valli Speaks Up In Interview.”

5 See See Banerjee, “(Mis-)Taken labels and multiplicity of identity” and Cools, *In-Between Dance Cultures: On the Migratory Artistic Identity of Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and Akram Khan*.

6 I previously explored embodied aspects of agency in a paper presentation titled: “Docile Bodies & Technologies of the Self in Bharatanatyam’s Transfigured Past and Transcultural Present” at the conference Doing the Body in the 21st Century, organized by the University of Pittsburg’s Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies program (April 2016). Elements of that research informed the essay, “Embodying Agency in the In-Between: Transcultural & Cross-Cultural Bharatanatyam Practice” which further unpacks agency as a theoretical tool for dance scholars (*Diálogos com a arte*, forthcoming).

7 Ashley and Plesch wrote: “The fundamentally active nature of appropriation is manifest in its etymology, from the Latin verb *appropriare*, ‘to make one’s own,’ a combination of ‘*ad*, meaning ‘to,’ with the notion of ‘rendering to,’ and *proprius*, ‘own or personal.’ Beyond the simple acknowledgment of borrowing or influence, what the concept of appropriation stresses is, above all, the motivation for the appropriation: to gain power over” (2002, 3).

8 Carrie Noland also linked agency and capability for action, writing, “[a]gency . . . is the power to alter those acquired behaviors and beliefs for purposes that may be reactive (resistant) or collaborative (innovative) in kind” (2008, 9).

9 Davesh Soneji, writing about interviews with devadasis, hereditary Bharatanatyam practitioners, in the early 2000s, noted that: “women in devadasi communities were, and still are, subject to structural inequalities, and . . . ‘agency,’ understood in contemporary feminist terms, is, and for the most part has been, unavailable to most women in these communities” (2012, 13). Simultaneously, Soneji emphasized 21st century devadasis’ awareness of their own marginal status as well as an active relationship to dance that facilitated “complex even contradictory subjectivities,” which provided a counterpart to archival and historical interpretations (2012, 191). Thus while praxis or discourse may provide agential fields of action, such action may still lack visibility, platforms, or recognition.

10 This notion of a “sustaining address” might be distinguished from the commonly explored phenomenon of white consumers embodying an “Other” as a means of temporary self-liberation that nevertheless relies upon another’s constant state of marginalization. In particular, Sunaina Maira wrote of the gap between embodied practice and relationships, exemplified by the disjuncture between celebratory participation in belly dancing and the simultaneous lack of commitment to political action or social justice advocacy around U.S. policy in the Middle East (2008, 337).

11 This sense of investment can be used to view obligation a more than simply a burden, succinctly framed by Vilém Flusser in the statement that “[f]reedom is the gesture of assuming responsibility” (2013, 156).

12 Writing in the context of white appropriation of Native cultural practices and aesthetics, Deborah Root underscored, “[s]incerity is not enough and can be damaging in its own right, in
part because it can be used as a pretext to gain discursive terrain, while evading the question of who controls, or is trying to control the discourse” (1997, 230). Highlighting the potentially ineffectual result of self-focus alone, Sarah Lucia Hoagland wrote that “promoting self-consciousness about whiteness does not necessarily lead to relational thinking; it can rather be a solipsistic inward-turning, a non-relational self-examination whereby the focus remains on white folks” (2007, 99).

13 This framing of inaction as choice is informed by Charles W. Mills’ writing on white ignorance: “Ignorance is usually thought of as the passive obverse to knowledge the darkness retreating before the spread of Enlightenment. But . . . Imagine an ignorance that resists. Imagine an ignorance that fights back. Imagine an ignorance militant, aggressive, not to be intimidated, an ignorance that is active, dynamic, that refuses to go quietly—not at all confined to the illiterate and uneducated but propagated at the highest levels of the land, indeed presenting itself unblushingly as knowledge” [italics original] (2007, 13).

14 “When acts of resistance are not simply isolated instances without repercussions, but they become the chained actions of individuals and groups linked through social networks, these acts of resistance become echoable, that is they acquire a repeatable significance and, therefore, they are memorable, imitable, and have the potential to lead to social change” (Medina 2013, 225).

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Everything is Authentic Something: What is “real” if you consider dance’s relationship to shamanism and to “the experience economy” of commercial brands?

Jennifer Fisher

Abstract: The idea that research can confirm authenticity circulates widely in the materialist academic world. In dance, we discuss the “authenticity” of choreography, costumes, music, ritual or celebration dances. But because rituals, celebrations, and theatrical performances are never static, authenticity seems like a battleground on which no one wins. What if “winning” weren’t the goal? This paper uses “everything is authentic something” as a heuristic device to ask what happens when you accept that authenticity is ever-elusive. It considers dance in two different contexts, that of shamanism, providing experiences that illuminate the human condition; and Pine and Gilmore’s “experience economy” model, where the creation of resonant experiences sells products.

For years, I have been using the phrase, “everything is authentic something” as a heuristic device to be provocative, and to facilitate discussion. I think I first heard it around Marcia Siegel and Deborah Jowitt in the 1990s, who along with other dance critics were having a collective heart attack, because they were increasingly being asked to be authoritative about staged dance from all over the world. To do this, critics often thought they needed to know how much of it was authentic.

I like the phrase, everything is authentic something, because it questions authenticity in dance as a solid thing that you can hope to identify or document through archival and ethnographic research, a great preoccupation of dance critics, historians, and reconstructors. I’ve always loved that topic and have enjoyed many a seminar with Millicent Hodson and Kenneth Archer, describing how they remade The Rite of Spring from historical sources.

But the debates over “what is authentic” in Hodson and Archer productions, and those over new versions of ballets based on the past, like the recent Ratmansky new/old Sleeping Beauty, although fascinating, are often too heated for me. To discuss how the present compares
to the past is one thing, a very interesting thing. But to preach that the present is not authentic if it doesn’t reproduce the past, is a kind of folly.

“Everything is authentic something” challenges authenticity as an unquestioned goal, as if one authentic version exists, frozen in time. To start with, “everything is authentic something” makes for a hermeneutic discussion instead of one that turns into a turf war over who can produce the most facts. What if the object were not winning and being right? What if the object is to understand what’s authentic to different people in lots of contexts, for a variety of reasons, throughout time?

I actually don’t want to suggest that “anything goes”—that we now give up the whole idea of evidence and history, and consequently our jobs as academics. I just want to excavate authenticity from a few points of view here, and mostly to set it in motion as a concept seen from different perspectives. I do this with the somewhat optimistic notion that we’re all connected, and that authenticity is just a way to talk about what seems most true for now and what is always in motion.

So, perspective number one: Historians and scholars document and manipulate the past—it’s what we do—and that’s useful, especially if something has been stolen or unacknowledged. I don’t think we should stop doing that. We need to understand and credit who invented or developed things, and we don’t want to invisibilize contributions from the past, the way Beyoncé does, for instance, in the videos where she lifts whole choreographic works of others without acknowledgement. But determining authenticity through the recovery of facts beyond this kind of ethical mandate is tricky.

And so I shift my perspective from historians to shamans, because they look for “authentic experience” for different reasons. I mention them early on in my own study of
shamanism, because I think their pursuits bring something to the discussion. Shamans look for connections to something that feels real, and therefore is considered real. To define shamanism (briefly and inadequately), it’s a series of healing, creative practices that have developed all over the world (Siberia and Central Asia in particular, but, really, all over the world), throughout many centuries (Eliade 1964). It’s not a religion but has been called “a recurrent phenomenon on the religious horizon of the world” (Perkinson 2005, 46). A shaman can be male or female; it’s not hereditary necessarily; it’s a healer who uses trance, usually drums, and has sometimes been called a medicine man, a witch, or a magician, all inadequately reductive terms.

Shamanism acknowledges spiritual longing as important; it seeks to change mental and emotional states, to find your true, “authentic” self, and it’s always in motion to shuck off what gets in the way, what is an illusion. It’s intended to get to the heart of the matter—pain, confusion, illness, anxiety, and other dilemmas of human existence. Which I think art aspires to do as well, and that’s the connection. Scholars have linked shamans to artists (see, for instance, Lommel and Tucker), because shamans take on the task of portraying myths and beliefs of a particular people, so they end up singing, painting, dancing, and creating performances. Shamans, in the words of one scholar, “render the mythological images of the group tradition lively and productive,” (Lommel 1967, 147), and by performing rituals and ceremonies they can strengthen the self-image of a people, what’s called “the soul force” of a people (146-48). In the theatre, communal feelings arise in a different context but in ways that are no less persuasive. Performance often seeks to win “hearts and minds” of people, which leads me back to what might be considered “authentic” on the secular stage.

My next perspective is that of a staged folkdance scholar, Anthony Shay in his seminal study of how folklore and ritual have been theatricalized by national dance companies (2002). I
think the tools Shay offers expand our ways of thinking about authenticity in staged dance. I propose him here as a kind of academic shaman who sets out to uncover what is in the heart and minds of peoples and nations by advising ways to look at staged folkloric dance. Shay’s definition of authenticity is “fidelity to original forms,” and he recognizes that some staged folkdance is closer than others to its original existence. He gives us history and politics, and a lot of clues about how to consider this “fidelity to original forms,” but his main contribution has to do with his focus on the results of theatricalization. What happens from “village to stage” often renders the theatrical versions shorter, and more uniform or otherwise altered for a “mixed program.”

What Shay points out, like a shaman, is that the staged dances may still contain key truths of their original incarnations. This means that you may not find onstage exact copies of dances from villages, fields, and church halls—far from it many times—but you still might find the “hearts and minds” of a people. You will often find an embodiment of what people want to communicate about themselves to others, based on key aspects of their dance and music, no matter how much it’s dressed up for the stage.

To help us understand both departures and resonances, Shay gives us the important concept of “parallel traditions,” which says that staged dance has so much in common with dance in its original existence that it runs parallel to it, similar but not the same—not authentic in one way but maybe in another. This nuanced acknowledgement of variable authenticity is often difficult to teach, because students and audience members (and maybe academics) want it to be one way or another—real or fake—and Shay gives us a continuum. That’s a long line I always sketch in the air, putting something fairly close to its original existence at one end—Shay uses Lado, a relatively unadorned Croatian folk dance company—and on the other end, something
lightyears away from the village, maybe the flashy Moiseyev troupe, with its trained Bolshoi dancers.

My next perspective shift is to the advertising world’s ideas about authenticity, through the scholarship of Gilmore and Pine and what they call an “experience economy,” where resonant storytelling creates experiences that sell products (1999). They are not the first scholars to point out that consumers will pay more when they see something engaging and memorable, something that appeals to the emotions, but they have written extensively about it. In advertising, storytelling is all about connecting to what buyers want, or can be made to think they want. In the ad world, it’s clearly a danger to say that “everything is authentic something,” because it may end up meaning “authentic hucksterism.” But I find their discussion of fabricated authenticity, their descriptions of the “experience economy,” fascinating. One of their slogans is “everything is fake,” meaning that fake is as “good” (or effective in selling) as “authentic” in many instances—which seems to take scholars out of our critical thinking, moral, ethical, artistic universe. But they’re right in that Disney World is often perceived as a real thing if not “the real thing,” the most authentic version of how to fake the real world.

The irony is that, in the end, advertisers are after the same thing that shamans and the theatre are after—they want to tap into the power that sways hearts and minds of consumers. In an age when so many people feel disconnected to communities and have few strong ties they trust, you can see how this plays out when you look at fan culture, for instance. People subscribe to experience economies when they become addicted to Star Trek, or to the universe of Harry Potter, or to the makeover economy of HGTV (Home and Garden Television). Fans of any such world become part of what sociologists would call a “taste culture” that helps them accumulate “cultural capital.” Curiously, I heard a podcast of On Being on NPR recently where a religious
scholar added a possible spiritual dimension to the craze for “makeovers” like those on HGTV. Evidently, house and garden renovations might symbolize the longing for a fresh start, a new life, or mapping a kind of order onto your world, which is something that religion and shamanism and theatre all aspire to do.

Shamans, like many artists, seek a kind of authenticity that can have a healing impact and significance, while acknowledging that authentic experience can emerge and shift through performance. Shamans try to locate the true or authentic self through performative ceremonies, and their practices have endured through centuries. Michael Harner has said that shamanism seems to have such a long history in so many places, simply “because it works” (42). Where it’s been outlawed, it surfaces again, as it did in Mongolia in postsocialist years of the 1990s (Pederson 2011). Shamanism is practical; it can shift moods, move forward, adapt to situations, and still be authentic. For shamanism, in other words, the focus is the authentic journey to change hearts and minds, not fixing authentic experiences in time.

To return to dance, then, I think when you are encouraged to look for authenticity in a variety of ways—when you begin with “everything is authentic something,” it enfranchises those who watch dance, as well as those who would update and revive past dance. The idea that research can bestow authenticity with enough facts—confirming steps, costumes, music, ritual artifacts, and chants—only goes so far. Rituals, celebrations, and theatrical performances have never been static, so fixing authenticity seems like a battleground on which no one can win.

To return to one of my first questions, what if “winning” weren’t the goal? This paper uses “everything is authentic something” to suggest that the pursuit of historical authenticity—while an informative pursuit to keep us grounded in what records and artifacts tell us and what people want to believe is true about themselves—is always incomplete. Authenticity will always
be elusive and protean. When we are released into that way of thinking, authenticity means more than chasing the past and trying to repeat the past. It means discovering the future and embodying a possible future. Or, more precisely, it means embodying the present moment, as Buddhists would phrase it, as fully as possible. Which sometimes feels as if it makes the future possible.

Something is authentic, in other words, because it works. It helps to know the past, to connect to meaningful aspects of the past, but authenticity works best when it responds to the present to become the future. It’s not about evidence, although the historical findings can contribute to understandings in significant ways, but it’s about experience. It’s about asking what it means if everything is authentic something. There’s always the danger of “the experience economy,” with ad executives designing emotional experiences to flog their merchandise—or when commercial competition dance ramps up choreography to win points and loses all idea of what art can do. All the concepts and layers of authenticity need thought, consideration, and discussion in a non-competitive manner. What that may mean is that we absorb the past as a kind of root system and keep moving forward.

We can’t rely on the idea that a version of dance reconstruction or staged folklore can recover the past, nor that the past should be recovered exactly. We may have to get used to what Pauline Boss identifies as “ambiguous loss”—unresolved grief for the past—which is a loss you have to live with; there’s no answer, there’s no closure. We mourn the loss of our idea of an authentic past. We can talk about evidence of what has gone before, but it’s no longer with us except in what we create, in motion, authentically, in the present.
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It’s All Greek To Me … Or Is It? Balkan Bandit Ballads
And Identity Politics On Stage
Joan Carol Friedberg

Abstract: I will present a brief diachronic review of the restrictions imposed on traditional songs in the border town of Florina in northwestern Greece. The decades-long political repression of the local Slavic language contributed to the polarization of its citizens into dual ethnic identities. Ottoman era Balkan bandit ballads played instrumentally provide the music for local folk dance performing groups in Florina, creating a provocative dilemma: whose dance is it, the historically Slavic-speaking majority in the region or those who identify as Greeks?

Introduction
In the presentation of a staged folk dance performance, every element, from the kinetic pattern to the music to the costumes, is intended to represent a cultural, ethnic, or national identity. In the case of three performing groups in the border town of Florina in northwestern Greece, the polarization of different ethnic identities has created a provocative dilemma: whose dance is it, the historically Slavic-speaking majority in the region or those who identify as Greeks?

Although language equality has now been tolerated for nearly two decades, during a long period of language repression, traditional Slavic songs could be performed instrumentally but not vocally. This paper focuses on two popular tunes that are today frequently used by local performing groups for the Florina region’s most characteristic dances. Beyond purely linguistic distinctions, we discover, through the lyrics of both songs, further insight into the unique dance music of the Florina region.

Decades of language repression
When Ottoman rule in the Balkans collapsed in the region of Macedonia in the early 20th Century, borders were drawn through the disputed territory (Danforth 1995, 69). In some re-
regions, the borders seem to have been based upon natural geological barriers, such as the massive Voras Mountain range that forms a natural divide between Aridea, Pella, Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the north. But to the west, in Florina, no such physical barrier exists. The resulting arbitrary frontier separated families, who were subsequently forbidden to cross the border. In some cases, family members could only meet at the border and wave to one another.

In addition, although the vast majority of the population in this region were South Slavic language speakers (Danforth 1995, 55), they formed a minority in the new Greek nation overall, and they were forbidden to speak their own language (Human Rights Watch/Helsinki 1994). The political repression of the local Slavic dialect may have been due in part to a residual “legacy of nineteenth-century European romanticism” that held Greek heritage in high esteem (Carabott 1997, 67).

From a historical perspective, we can see that nationalism and the rise of Fascism across Europe during the decade of the 1930s promulgated such repression. In Greece, minority language repression began following the Balkan Wars and was harshly enforced during the dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas from 1936 to 1940. (Carabott 1997, 66; Danforth 1995, 54; Roudometof 1996, 266).

In subsequent years, although the Slavic language itself was recognized, repression continued, because a Slavic-speaking minority was not consistent with the Greek national narrative tracing its history all the way back to the conquests of Alexander the Great in the 4th Century BC.

Language repression was still an issue when I visited the Florina village of Polypotamos (formerly Neret) for a village festival in 1993, when Greece was governed by Prime Minister
Konstantinos Mitsotakis. Although the band sang numerous Macedonian (Slavic) songs, I observed a palpable anger, silence, fear, bitterness and paranoia on the part of various people I met there and in the town of Florina.

The dialect was referred to as “Makedonski” among Slavic speakers themselves but by the Greek word “dopia” (meaning local dialect) publicly. New acquaintances were reluctant to speak it in my presence until I had gained their trust by demonstrating an understanding of a few words.

By 1994, local Macedonian activists demanding language autonomy defiantly formed the Rainbow Party, and in 1995 they hung a sign in the Macedonian language in downtown Florina. Four activists were charged with the crime of the “use of mother tongue.” But in 1998, the European Court of Human Rights found Greece in violation of Article 11 and exonerated the activists. (Greek Helsinki Monitor 1998).

When I returned to Florina in 1999 and attended a village festival in Kato Ydroussa, numerous Slavic language songs were sung all evening long with no apparent fear of repercussions.

**Bandit ballads from the time of Ottoman rule**

Florina’s dance traditions, as represented by performing groups, use a choreography for the Gerontikos, or Starsko Oro, that was taught internationally by the late Simos Konstantinou. Two traditional Slavic Macedonian ballads, Ibraim Odza and Dafino Vino Crveno, are played instrumentally for stage performances of this dance by Florina’s two main Greek dance organizations, Aristotelis and Lykeion ton Ellinidon Florinas as well as Lygistes, a performing group directed by Simos’ son, Yannis Konstandinou.
During the many decades of language repression, bands were permitted to play these and other South Slavic songs instrumentally but not vocally. Use of the Slavic lyrics would have been contrary to the aims of the long-time dance teacher for the local Lykeion, Vasilis Papachristou, who made public declarations as to the continuity of the dances “from ancient Greece to the present day” and of their “incontestable Greekness.” (Manos 2002, 94-95)

These two traditional Slavic folk songs give us a glimpse of rural life during the years of Ottoman rule (the Tourkokratia) in the Balkans when bandits (hajduks) roamed about. Both are historical ballads that describe hungry bandits who come down from their hideouts in the mountains looking for a bite to eat and red wine to wash it down.

In Ibraim Odza, the bandits coerce a couple of poor charcoal burners to threaten the village to prepare a feast, or else (East European Folklife Center 2009). In Dafino Vino Crveno, a bandit steals a jacket from a sleeping man and sells it at a tavern so he can drink red wine and rakia, a local brandy (Neierich 1977; Tamer 1981).

In spite of the fact that bandits survived by robbing travelers and plundering villages, they often became glorified heroes in legend. Though in life they were outlaws, in death, the myths of their exploits transformed them into romanticized anti-heroes, partly due to their defiance of Ottoman rule. (Bracewell 2003, 23, 31-32, 34, 392).

According to Eric Hobsbawm, who published a study of bandits, the lyrics of such ballads provide the primary source of our knowledge about these legendary figures. These ballads seem to be imbued with nationalistic pride for Slavic speakers in spite of the fact that hajduks, bandits, were known for their savage brutality. (Hobsbawm 1969, 62-4).

While Greece has its own rich tradition of historical klephtic songs, the lyrics in each of these ballads specifically refer to hajduks, subjects of a genre of songs in Bulgaria (Hobsbawm
1969, 61-71), and they also contain Slavic place names (for example, Guchevo, a village in Western Serbia). Greek klephtic songs are typically unmetered and not usually associated with folk dances (Chianis 1980, 676).

While the two Slavic ballads discussed here have been recorded instrumentally by contemporary brass bands in Greece, the folk songs themselves are widely regarded as traditional in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The language of traditional ballads such as these is important beyond the obvious aspect of being able to understand their content. Lyrics “become the narrative of the nation and its people.” (Kalogeropoulou 2013, 64). Florina’s populace has experienced a generational acculturation, transitioning from a traditional Slavic heritage to the dominant cultural identity of Greece. Older generation ethnic Slavic speakers of Florina may recognize and understand the first two Slavic language ballads, even when they are not being sung. But for a younger generation assimilated into a Greek identity, while the melodies may be familiar, the songs may long ago have lost their meaning, although some Slavic songs have experienced a revival.

Political and social pressures have resulted in the co-existence of dual ethnic identities, not only among the populace itself, but also in the dance culture. (Manos 2002, 0-2). The longstanding dispute about the ethnic provenance of the name “Macedonia” has politicized the music and often erupts into vulgar, hate-filled outbursts by enraged posters on YouTube when Slavic language songs such as the above are uploaded.

**Distinctive musical meter**

An assymetrical musical meter provides the rhythm for the most popular folk dance in the Florina region, the Leventikos (Friedberg 1997). The name finds its root from the Greek word
leventis, a brave young man, which references those who fought to liberate the region from Ottoman rule and prevailed in 1912. The traditional Slavic name for the dance is Pushteno.

A slower version of this dance, with the same footwork, known as the old men’s dance — Gerontikos (Greek) or Starsko Oro (Slavic) — is performed by local dance companies but is rarely danced at festivals or weddings. The Gerontikos, or Starsko Oro, begins at a very slow tempo, allowing an accomplished lead dancer to perform improvised figures.

According to one Florina informant, Vangeli Mitrou, the old men’s dance has virtually disappeared from participatory dance events in the Florina region, and I failed to find any evidence of it during two brief visits to the region. But I finally managed to witness a man in the village of Kato Ydroussa (formerly Dolno Kotori) leading it in 1999, on my third research trip to Florina.

The metric structure for both of these dances is S+Q+Q, S+Q. This metric pattern occurs in songs and dance music in 12/8 (alternating measures of 7/8 + 5/8). A variant in 16/8 (alternating measures of 9/8 + 7/8) has been performed by several brass bands more recently and can result in a more complex rendition, with overlapping polyrhythms.

This same 12/8 musical meter and variants of it can also be found in historical folk ballads in the Albanian language (shqip), in South Slavic language songs in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and in dance music in the Voiou Mountain region of Epirus west of Grevena. These unique musical meters disappear altogether in the traditional music of other regions of Greece, including Edessa, to the east, although many Greek dances have now become not only pan-Hellenic but known internationally.

Musical meters correlation with poetic meters
In addition to the colorful historical vignettes that emerge from the two bandit ballads, the lyrics also provide insight into the 12/8 (3+2+2, 3+2) musical meter.

The study of poetic meters is usually reserved for the study of the ancient poetry of Homer. But if we apply it to the ballad Dafino Vino Crveno, by delineating stressed and un-stressed syllables in the lyrics, we find a poetic meter with a “long-short-short, long-short” pattern.

Borrowing from prosody, this meter would be defined as a dactyl followed by a trochee. This juxtaposition of stresses produces a catalexis, in which the end of a line of poetry is shortened by a “foot.” The catalectic line of the lyric is consistent with the S+Q+Q, S+Q musical pattern, in which an anticipated second measure of 7/8 is shortened by a beat. The result is a close correlation between the poetic meter of the lyrics and the 12/8 meter of the music played for the old men’s dance of Florina.

The syllabic pattern in the lyrics of the first verse (transliterated from Cyrillic into English) of the traditional folk ballad version of Dafino Vino Crveno is as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Da} & \quad \text{fi} & \quad \text{no} & \quad \text{vi} & \quad \text{no} & \quad / & \quad \text{cr} & \quad \text{ve-e} & \quad \text{no-o} \\
\text{S} & \quad \text{Q} & \quad \text{Q} & \quad \text{S} & \quad \text{Q} & \quad \text{S} & \quad \text{Q} & \quad \text{S} & \quad \text{Q} \\
\text{Dafino, red wine} \\
\text{Mom ce to ti e / zas pa lo} \\
\text{Mom ce to ti e / zas pa lo} \\
\text{Na Ka ra Ka} & \quad \text{men / Pla ni na} \\
\text{My sweetheart has fallen asleep} \\
\text{My sweetheart has fallen asleep} \\
\text{On Black Rock Mountain.}
\end{align*}
\]

In a Dimitris Paraskos brass band recording, which does not contain lyrics, there appear to be polyrhythms or overlapping meters of 12/8 and 16/8.

Here are the lyrics of the first two lines of Ibraim Odza with the same syllabic structure:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Bog da go bi e / toj Ibra im Od ža}
\end{align*}
\]
God should punish that Ibraim Odja
A real crook!

These ballads were traditionally played in 12/8 (3+2+2, 3+2), although both ballads are also sung and played in 11/8 (3+2+2+2+2), particularly in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and, as mentioned earlier, have evolved into interpretations with more complex meters, such as 16/8 (2+2+2+3, 2+2+3).

Both ballads diverge from the typical iambic 15-syllable line common to most Greek folk music (Chianis 1980, 682; 1989).

Conclusion

By examining the lyrics of the two Slavic language traditional ballads, both a thematic and poetic significance of the music is revealed. It is no surprise that these insights further substantiate the ballads’ Slavic provenance, which is consistent with the ethnic Slavic heritage of the majority of the local population of the Florina region.

A holistic approach to dance research

In researching a dance tradition, oral testimonies may reveal important historical information. Using an approach such as analyzing a foot pattern or floor pattern has limitations. Analyzing the traditional music associated with a dance can yield additional insight, as we have seen, into a dance’s cultural context, providing a more holistic understanding.

Works Cited


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The Body as Archive: In Search of Authenticity
Jamey Garner

Abstract: This panel explores processes through which somatic information provides verifiable evidence. Novelty and unfamiliarity of sensory perceptions draw attention, stimulate learning, heighten memory, and ignite the choreographic impulse. Entering the sensory realm alone in search of authenticity, we face these challenges with no other ground than our selves and the transient evidence that moves through the body as archive. Presenters examine: the articulation of knowledge drawn from sensory experiences with dance cultural artifacts; the ‘memory palace’ as a construct to liberate sensate data from ethnographic writing; and somatically engaged fieldwork as a pathway to personal authenticity.

Memories from the field: the choreography of field-based inquiries

A memory from the field:
We are sitting outside in the country by a small, empty house. The women are cooking over an open fire stove. After lunch, we lie down on woven mats inside for a nap – Amma, Auntie, Sister, two nieces and me. Later that evening, after our naps, as the sun was setting, we ate food similar to savory pancakes cooked over the outdoor stove. I was not feeling well and had not been eating very much. Amma fed me pieces of the pancake with her own hands. Auntie told me this was custom. Her mother-in-law had fed her like this also. I sat there like a little bird and accepted the morsels of pancake from Amma’s hands into my open mouth.

Authenticity

I was searching for authenticity in my yoga practice in an effort to move beyond appropriation in my yoga instruction. I have studied a range of codified yoga techniques since 1997 and have taught yoga since 2002. Always intimidated by the breadth, history, and complexities of this ancient system, I decided that if I was to continue to teach the form, then it was imperative for me to learn and understand the culture that created yoga. This search for authenticity led me to Tamil Nadu, India first in the winter of 2014 and again in the summer of 2015.

A result of my desire to expand and deepen my experiential understanding of India was a friendship with a Brahmin priest. This relationship led to a trip with his immediate family to the
countryside near Thiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu, India. Staying with his extended family of at least fifty, I slept on straw mats surrounded by women from an ancient Brahmin lineage. My quest for personal authenticity as a yoga teacher delivered me to this community, these people, and Arunchala -- the indomitable mountain of the Hindu god, Shiva.

In Andre Lepecki’s paper *The Body as Archive: Will to Re-Enact and the Afterlives of Dances*, he writes of the role of the body as archive (2010). The corporeal --- the bones, blood, muscles, cells, neurons -- store the knowledge. The body acts as a repository, holding and carrying information through time and place. The feel of a lover’s hand on your low back can be carried across continents, oceans, and time. The sense of shakiness and ungroundedness found in exploring foreign lands is remembered and transmitted through movement in shapes and images months, or years, later. The memory of being nurtured and nourished stays alive in the cells, to be articulated at a later time, in a different language, in a different country.

**Liminality**

The British cultural anthropologist Victor Turner’s ritual process, derived from the anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep’s critical work *Les rites de passage*, is imperative to theorizing my field-based research (1960). Turner’s elaboration on Van Gennep’s three-part structure of *separation, limen/margen, and reaggregation* helps me conceptualize what happened with my time in India.

The liminal space is a place in-between, like dawn or dusk -- it is not dark, it is not light. It is a threshold space, not here nor there; existing outside the mundanity of everyday existence. This is a place that will change you.

The liminality inherent in leaving my country of origin produces unsettled feelings as a
result of the environmental and cultural unfamiliarity. This unstable, fluid feeling, as if I am balancing on a surfboard, floating out past the break and waiting for the waves, is a place that is not stable or concrete. This disruption of normality and routine is a zone where my senses enliven and the differences I encounter awaken me. I experience an impression of heightened presence. Worlds are shifting and overlapping in this razor sharp liminal moment.

Exiting the liminal space of my Indian investigations, re-entering, reaggregating, back to the culture of my current home in the southwest of the United States of America, I return altered. Something deep inside me has changed. One of the founders of Performance Studies and close colleague of Turner’s, Richard Schechner asserts that the liminal creates change (2014). Part of my process in negotiating this change is the choreography of this liminal tale onto the human form.

When I went to India the first time, I had a certain set of lenses that filtered my reality into a particular vision. I came back a bit altered. I saw differently and to express this, I created the first version of *this is the dream before i die* – an improvised duet between dancer Felix Cruz and myself, and also the durational, improvised piece *lemon lips in the house of tantra*. To explain my chrysalis, I use movement in time and space. Writing, the quality of words, cannot fully express the dimensionality of my experiences. The metaphors and symbols inherent in the language of dance is a more appropriate vehicle to communicate my time in the liminal space.

When I traveled to India the second time, I was reshaped again. The liminality of my two field-based research trips to India created a significant internal shift. By encountering the liminal in India -- not just once, but twice -- a transformation occurred within myself. I expressed this development by choreographing the second version of *this is the dream before i die* – a duet created with two Arizona State University dance majors. I culled movement from the previous
duet of Cruz and myself in addition to the performance piece *mirrored* – a durational solo for myself improvised inside a built architectural environment, also a product of my time in India. I built the material of these pieces from the field memories of my bodily archive.

**Another memory from the field:**
On the way back to Chennai from Thiruvannamalai, we stopped to visit relatives living somewhere between these two places. After sitting on the floor and eating traditional Indian fare served on banana leaves, the grandmother of the house laid down on the floor beside me and began to nap. As it was late, and I wasn’t feeling well, I decided to emulate the old woman, so I too laid down on the mats and napped while the rest of the family sat, moved, and talked around the two of us sleeping.

While I am in India, I absorb the sights, sounds, smells, dress, and customs --- sitting on the floor, eating with my hands, wearing a shawl, figuring out how to use an Indian toilet, bathing with a bucket. When I return to my home country, I carry these experiences with me --- wearing the shawls, eating with my hands, riding on the back of a motorcycle in Chennai traffic, accepting morsels of food into my mouth from Amma’s hand, sleeping together on straw mats.

The culture of Tamil Nadu, India has seeped under my skin, and I am carrying it home with me.

The corporeal, the body, acts as a repository, storing the information, in which the knowledge is synthesized and later designed into a piece of art meant for performance. My body is the vessel; organizing, selecting, forgetting, remembering, and accessing information. The unknown allows me to I carry what I learn, experience, eat, smell, love, hate, fear, desire -- the experiences and memories of my time in the field -- within my corporeal self.

**Body as Archive**

The memories stay alive and change inside the body. In this carnal storehouse, a synthesization occurs. Does the information look the same on the other end of the journey?

While living inside the archive, unlike a museum with the registrar documenting what comes in,
how long the contents have resided at said museum, and when the items leave, all kept in a detailed and up-to-date database, the body transforms and transmutes the information into knowledge that is unique to the repository.

Herein lies the beauty in the impermanence of dance. Just like reality, it is ever changing. Nothing stays the same. Even in the museum, no matter how careful one is with tracking the humidity, mold may make its way inside the archive, challenging the static environment. With the body, the memories are continuous and fluid.

My body is the repository, carrying the knowledge, the archive shifting due to time inside the space of liminality. Performance is a way of communicating memories of my field-based research into the inconstant language of art.

**Conclusion**

Encouraged by Diana Taylor’s book *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* to reexamine the juxtaposition of writing and embodiment (2003, 16), I began to consider choreography a legitimate route to transmitting the knowledge of my Indian field-based experiences and hopefully extending the perimeters of what is considered relevant academic reporting, I used the language of dance to report my experiences in the field. Dance is a language of metaphors, symbols that can express something that cannot be expressed in words, a perfect vehicle for telling my liminal tales.

Lepecki writes “dance can only find its proper archival site onto/into a body---the body understood as an affective system of formation, transformation, incorporation, and dispersion” (2010, 43). My field-based research conducted in India resulted in dance pieces. I can best describe the depth of the multi-dimensional experiences, occurring in the complexities of the
physical body and fluidity of mind, via the symbolism inherent in the art of dance. My question is: why is it that writing is considered a more acceptable mode of reporting my investigations juxtaposed with choreography and performance? I consider this preference for the written word an antiquated patriarchal epistemology of the academy. Drawing from Sarah Rubridge’s theory of Artistic Practice as Research in relationship to theory and practice in the academy (2004), I encourage a conversation around these questions: 1) how are we transferring knowledge, and 2) what is the importance we place on the vehicle of that transference -- be that channel a written document or a performance? I encourage the academy to continue to rethink its approach to art, artistic practice as research, and pieces of art as valid and acceptable systems of reporting research.

Works Cited


Biography
Jamey Garner is a dance artist, educator, student, and adventurer. Her works have been seen in a variety of venues, including the Williamsburg Fashion Weekend in Brooklyn and the Walker Art Center’s Choreographers’ Evening in Minneapolis. Jamey is pursuing a Master of Fine Arts in Dance at Arizona State University.

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Can We Have Sex? Michael Turinsky’s Dancing Against Compulsory Ableism
Doran George

This presentation takes the form of a letter from artist/scholar Doran George to choreographer Michael Turinsky. In their letter, George proposes having sex with the choreographer. This represents a performative response to Turinsky’s dance, My Body Your Pleasure, which challenges the de-sexualization of bodies marked as disabled. George’s sexual proposition also critiques the exclusionary constitution of diversity in academia and contemporary dance, which conceals what Turinsky insists is a fetishization of disability. Detailing the nature of their attraction to Turinsky, while refusing to ignore how the choreographer is marked as disabled, George crafts a text that performs the affect of Turinsky’s choreographic strategy in My Body Your Pleasure: Turinsky taught his movement, as a man with cerebral palsy, to dancers who are not marked as disabled. He thereby claimed subjectivity through authoring the objectification of his own movement patterns in a process of transmission that breaks taboos about authenticity and appropriation.

Dear Michael,

You are hot and I want to have sex with you. I’m revealing my desire because one of the central premises of your dance, My Body Your Pleasure, is to challenge how bodies marked as disabled get de-sexualized. Although declaring my attraction isn’t just rhetorical, I am consciously resisting the exclusion of the erotic from scholarship. My embodied response to your dance is intended to challenge the belief in absolute objectivity that requires a disavowal of the body. As an artist scholar, I’m interested in dance and sexual cultures, in this case in relation to disability, and propose that observing from a safe distance turns the bodies being studied into objects. Well voyeurism just isn’t my thing.

By rejecting chaste objectivity, I’m also extending work that’s being done in the study of disability, race, gender, indigenous cultures, sexuality and other critical area studies. Many scholars in these fields insist upon the role of bodily experience and the conceptualization of bodies in the making of meaning, and in the institution of power through social hierarchies. By letting you and my listeners know that I want to get in your pants, I’m having fun, but also rejecting intellectual detachment, which I see as part of the will to absolute knowledge that we inherit from European
colonialism. This letter is thus consciously ruffling academic feathers by opening up
pleasure, sensation, and desire as strategies for thinking (or should I say feeling),
about dance, disability, sexual culture, and social power.

There’s yet another purpose to my making a pass at you, which is
questioning the middle class protocols by which the political aim of cultural
diversification has been embraced by art and educational institutions that want, or
need, to affirm that they include marginalized voices. In the absence of bawdy
working class humor (a kind of “call a spade a spade” sensibility), language and
behavior gets regulated through professionalization, which since the late 20th
century, has been increasingly infused with identity politics. I’m happy that we see
greater diversity in the arts and education, yours and my position in those fields are
probably in part a result of this process. But middle class propriety invariably leaves
marginalized bodies carrying the dimensions of the body that are unsettling for the
professions, including the erotic and its discontents. As you put it, bodies marked as
disabled get fetishized for their intellectual capacity and creativity, while being
robbed of the pleasures of being sexually objectified, and you want to be sexually
objectified.

I would add that contemporary dance covets the kinetic difference that
disability offers. Choreography that includes disability validates the art form’s
rejection of compulsory ableism, affirming contemporary dance as progressive. But
some key elements of compulsory ableism get left in place. Historically, classical
and modern dance, the precursors to contemporary dance, idealized versions of
elegance and capacity that excluded sexual practice and disability. Disabled bodies
began achieving visibility on the concert stage by presenting themselves as uniquely
elegant and capacious, while complying with the exclusion of sexuality.
The British company CandoCo that I danced for, and Oakland’s Axis, broke new ground in the 1990s by staging a unique movement language built through kinetic cooperation between disabled and non-disabled dancers. Yet, in line with your frustration at not being sexually objectified, the choreography made disability available for dance viewership while assuring its audience they wouldn’t have to confront their erotic attraction or repulsion toward disabled bodies. In order to gain access to contemporary dance stages, disabled performers had to disavow their sexualities. This sustains a pattern in compulsory ableism of desexualizing disability, which is rooted in the infantilization of disabled people, based in part on an assumption that they can’t or shouldn’t reproduce, let alone experience pleasure. So while pussyfooting around sex supports the inclusion of disability in the professions, scholars and artists that are marked as disabled get fetishized for their intellectual and creative prowess, while having to make a dirty little secret out of how their bodies are invariably constructed as undesirable and undesiring.

But by focusing on these terribly earnest reasons for talking about sex, I’m failing to proposition you, and sanitizing my desire. I found you handsome when we sat talking in Mainz city theatre’s canteen after your show at Germany’s oldest integrated disabled and non-disabled arts festival. I had hoped we might go back to the budget hotel together, maybe I’d see the inside of your room, leave fingerprints on the accessible bathroom grab bar. But I have to admit that along with your looks, your intellect was beguiling. You engaged eagerly as I probed beneath the surface of your choreography. While conceding that my undressing of the dance might reveal one dimension of an image or action, you insisted that others were at play, and disrobed your dance for me further, drawing me into its undergarments.
For example, mid-way through *My Body: Your Pleasure*, an East Asian woman enters the space, referencing her objectification by wobbling jello on two plates she holds overhead. Exceeding the color of any fleshy breast, the body part to which I assume the quivering desserts refer, the racialized bright pink jello nevertheless conveys the commercial sex-industry’s idealization of white female availability, also drawing attention to the more than willing approximation that Asian femaleness signifies in the same context. Manaho Shimokawa, the jello holder, sits in a wheelchair I’d imagined was meant for you. The intensity of her sexual objectification lubricates your first entrance onto the stage. Enjoying the comfort of anonymity in the darkened auditorium, I want to gawk at your disabled perambulation, something middle class prohibitions on staring would never allow for. But the pink bikini, hackneyed smile, and accompanying physical language of Shimokawa, instructs my attention that it is required elsewhere. I must focus on her.

In hyperbolic seductive tones, she delivers a diatribe that would be at home in any continental philosophy syllabus, then dismisses interest in her intellect by charging “if you are really radical you will consider me as you sexual partner.” Now I understand her role as a surrogate for you rather than for white female sexual availability. She represents how you are objectified because your perambulation and speech are marked as disabled. I’m confident I’m unlocking the meaning of the scene you’ve directed: her sexualized image thwarts our association of her scholarly utterance with her, which I suppose equates to difficulty we might have taking in what you have to say because our spectacularization of your disability masks your personhood. So convinced was I that Shimokawa represented you, this critical project of propositioning you was fueled by her incitement to consider her as a sexual partner. You confirm some of my suspicions, but inform me she also
symbolizes your desire to be sexually objectified. While a pink bikini-d Asian woman struggles to claim intellectual prowess and artistic leadership, it is sexual objectification that eludes you and other bodies that are marked as disabled.

I took this discursive back and forth with you as our foreplay that while intellectually driven, was also physically charged. The multidirectional, contrapuntal motion of your head, shoulders, elbows and hands, lips and jaw, beckoned me into your motile maze. Your words stretched time, and stretched across time, with verbal melody. You punctuated your ideas with surprising lurches of your voice that were in delicate accord with your polycentric bodily motion, seducing me in the process. As ideas, body parts, and tones gathered in impeccable staccato rhythm, I noticed tension in myself, an unbidden desire to dampen the motile and verbal fireworks you set off in our conversation. I think I may have subconsciously experienced the way you were speaking as a physical struggle; one I wanted to ease. You aren’t the first person with cerebral palsy that I’ve talked to, but perhaps previously I’ve been too insistent on my liberal conviction that I must model equality, to notice my underlying assumption that the motion and speech associated with cerebral palsy needs correcting. With greater awareness of the personal dynamics propelled by compulsory ableism, I reassured myself that any urge I had to make you more comfortable was probably me avoiding my discomfort.

I breathed into the moment, taking in the aesthetics of your embodiment. You’d taught me how to do this in My Body: Your Pleasure. At your behest, your dancers performed your movement, unmistakably that of someone with cerebral palsy.

The performance begins with two well-lit male dancers seated side by side in chairs downstage left, facing out. You’re upstage right, in half-light, with a laptop at your knees. The audience quiets after sustained stillness and silence, then a
tremble begins in the ribcage of one of the men; movement radiates through his arm, and fingers struggle to separate as if glued together, then coming back together with suddenness. He’s emulating cerebral palsy’s patterns much better than I’d imagined when, before seeing the show, I learned of your choreographic strategy.

The dancers’ skilled execution of your movement alleviates some of my concern about your choreographic approach. When people not diagnosed with cerebral palsy imitate the angular holding patterns, and juddering shifts from intense muscular flexion to extension, it’s usually to demean those who are diagnosed. Yet rather than mocking you, your dancers demonstrate dedication to your vocabulary, the two men joined in this later by the Shimikowa and a white female dancer. However, there’s another problem. Activists criticize casting the non-disabled in disability roles as robbing disabled performers of the few employment opportunities in which they can excel. Disagreement about Oscar winning performances, such as Daniel Day Lewis’s rendition in the bio-pic My Left Foot of Christy Brown, the famous Irish painter and writer with cerebral palsy, are a case in point. Are you denying dancers with cerebral palsy some of the few available roles in contemporary dance? But it’s because your cast doesn’t share your diagnosis that I’m looking at the movement as dance. You’ve asserted the aesthetic value of your everyday kinetic patterns, establishing them as fair game for contemporary dance, revealing the general assumption of seamless able-bodied motion as a foundation for composition.

Despite the cultural gains made by having dancers without cerebral palsy embody movement language that we associate with the diagnosis, I still see a problem with appropriation that lingers, like you did half-lit in the corner at the beginning of your dance. By embodying your movement signature, alongside
perambulation and other quotidian movement that generally connotes physical normality, your dancers not only establish the aesthetic value of how you move, but also claim skill and dexterity that eludes you. The way that you’ve made your vocabulary attractive to me has moved me beyond fetishizing your intellectual prowess. But I fear my desire is for the artistic innovation that the inclusion of disability promises; the kinetic difference that I earlier suggested contemporary dance covets. The problem is that with this creative development, non-disabled bodies reassert themselves as normal, being bodies that can ‘do’ disability when they choose, or not do disability, while the existential challenges of disability disappear into excitement about the next wave of artistic innovation. Disability becomes a kind of sublime difference, elegance powerfully reinvented, even to the point of it being inelegant, and therefore all the more interesting. Don’t get me wrong, this is an artistic maneuver that excites me no end, but if we consume cerebral palsy for its ground-breaking artistic potential, don’t we risk jettisoning the social critique that engaging with disability can also promise?

I think this is why your sexual provocation is so important. As either a metaphor for, or a practice of, social engagement, erotic entanglement has a greater potential for mutual vulnerability than middle-class protocols that are bound up in politesse. That’s why I’ve decided to proposition you in order to talk about your work. My vulnerability is also on the table, because the question remains, are you attracted to me. Having sat and talked, you know I’m not obviously marked as disabled, so fetishization of my intellectual prowess isn’t a major problem. But you’ve also tasted how I circulate in an erotic economy of attraction and repulsion. I transgress gender ways that makes me conspicuously queer. Queeny as I am, it’s easy to value me for my humor rather than my intellect, even when I’ve said
nothing funny. Bodies like mine tend to be hypersexualized, but struggle to be taken seriously in their sexual desire. Some straight non-transsexual women enjoy how my flaming nature signifies a lack of sexual threat for them, while gay guys are often repulsed by what they see as a lack of power in my sissyness, (the prime target for schoolyard homophobic violence) even while they delight in what they see as my heroic visibility. Straight men, at least the non-transsexual variety, or lets say Cisssexual, especially those raised as the kind of masculine that we inherit from European colonialism, see my gender as a threat by association. Don’t stand too close, or you might seem gay, and thus they prefer highly sanitary encounters, making me want to ooze my nelliness all over them, perhaps like you do your cripness, claiming sexualized space where it is simultaneously enforced and denied.

By explicating the way that my body, like yours, is marked as other than normal through a sexual economy of attraction and repulsion, I’m exploring a textual strategy to intervene into the sanitization that I think you are rejecting in your dance when you invite your audience, including me, to look at you as sexual fair game. Much like the anonymity of darkened theatre seating, the pretension to academic detachment would normally hold the sanitary relationship between audience and artist, non-disabled and disabled, viewer and viewed, in place. So I’m sullying this scholarly project by marking myself, while perhaps also aiming to ameliorate my anxiety about how people will react to hearing me describe your movement and speech patterns. I’ve broken the middle-class code of promising not stare and brought with me the parachute of my own social vulnerability. In postmodern dance historical terms, both of us are anything but pedestrian. I’m thus fantasizing about the discordant sexual music we might make together: My pronounced assimilation of f’s and s’s (snakey s’s as they’ve been called) tinkling
through your atonal enunciation. My frivolous hands and arms, coy tilts of my head, brazen puffed out chest and scattergun laughter dancing in maniacal bliss with the rapid jerking joints, obtuse angles, and gamboling emphasis of your quotidian movement.

Will you enter into this erotic economy with me? Don’t get me wrong, I’m not making myself vulnerable to you as a way to fish for compliments. While I know that your soundtrack for My Body: Your Pleasure moves from Jamaican dance hall to queer rap; Homophobia to homo-hop, I also noticed that you chose to have the female dancing bodies show more flesh on your stage than the boys, so there’s no guarantee that you would find my male embodiment enticing. I might not be your type. But I’m looking for the same kind of honesty that you demand of your audience, be that repulsion or attraction. Like you assert in your work, I’m curious about practices of intimacy as means of resistance, and in this sense, I’m calling your bluff. You wanna do some resisting with me?

With kisses like mead wine,

Doran

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Knowing Gertrude: My Journey Forward into the Past
Stephanie M. Hart

Abstract: This paper explores ideas of Hauntology, the constructs of time, where the past and the future sit, and the articulation of knowledge drawn from sensory experiences with dance cultural artifacts and dance scholars. Research on how college undergraduate dance majors interacted with a dance archive and what the importance of such archives are in a university setting led to an exploration of a larger journey tying the author/researcher to a greater arch of dance scholars.

In the 2003 documentary Derrida by Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering Kofman, Jacques Derrida speaks of the differences between future and l’avenir, which is French for “things to come.” He says, “There’s a future which is predictable, programed, scheduled, foreseeable. But there is a future, l’avenir (to come), which refers to someone who comes whose arrival is totally unexpected. The Other who comes without my being able to anticipate their arrival.” (Dick and Ziering, 2003) For me, that Other was Gertrude Kurath who traveled through many years and reached across many miles to change what my “predictable, programed, scheduled, foreseeable” future would be.

Rafael E. Nunez and Eve Swester in their article for the journal Cognitive Science, titled With the Future Behind Them: Convergent Evidence From Aymara Language and Gesture in the Crosslinguistic Comparison of Spatial Contruals of Time, speak of the language of Aymara; a language spoken by the indigenous peoples of Western Bolivia, Southeastern Peru, and Northern Chile; who believe that the past is in front of us. We can see what has happened and know it. The future is unknown as we have not experienced yet. When they talk of the past they gesture in front of them as it is a known entity and the embodied gesture for the future as behind them as we have not yet experienced it (Nunez and Swester 2006, 1-3). This is the story of my journey forward
into the past as I look at how the specter and presence of Gertrude Kurath and Cross-Cultural Dance Resources, Inc. led me to my present and will always haunt my future.

In the fall of 2014, I was beginning the second year of my Master’s program at Louisiana Tech University. Although I have one foot firmly planted in dance and the other firmly planted in theatre, the small university didn’t have a dance program, so I was getting my Masters in Theatre. I had just finished writing a paper on my experience the past summer in Toronto attending an intensive with Kaha:wi Dance Theatre. The company was created by Santee Smith, a Mohawk dancer of the Six Tribes Nation who had grown up attending Pow-wows on the Reserve and spent several years dancing with the Canada National Ballet. She created a company that infused the traditional stories and embodied knowledge of her youth and ancestors with contemporary dance to create a kind of cultural kinesthetic storytelling that is just now beginning to be recognized and appreciated.

My four weeks there were filled with learning Hakas from a Maori dancer; studying with the resident choreographer of an Aboriginal dance company from Sydney; experiencing traditional Aztec dancing with an indigenous couple from Mexico; attending the Grand River Powwow; and interacting with and learning from dancers from all over the world. I had just discovered the term Dance Ethnology and was very drawn to these amazing embodied expressions of culture.

As I was conducting a job search for after I graduated, I came across a posting for Curator of the Cross-Cultural Dance Resources Collections. Here was an archive that was “a monument to the study of dance in cultural context” (CCDR, 2010) and they were looking for someone whose job it was to spend their day interacting with and submerged
in dance from all over the world. It sounded like a dream job to me. Sadly, I realized that I didn’t actually have the educational qualifications and background for the position, but the posting stuck with me and for some reason, I kept a copy of the job listing on my laptop.

As I continued my search for jobs, I began to realize that the work that I really wanted to do would require me to get my PhD. That is when I started looking at programs and since there aren’t that many PhD programs in dance, and I had a stronger background in theatre, that is where I started looking. There were only a couple of programs that I was really drawn to, one in my home state of Louisiana and one in a land foreign to me, Arizona. Having lived in Austin, Chicago, San Francisco and New Orleans, I craved a new adventure and decided that Arizona State University was where I wanted to be. ASU is the only place I applied to and after several nail-biting months I was accepted into the Theatre and Performance of the Americas program, a program that is based on cultural exploration and the performance of the great diversity of the Americas.

It wasn’t until much later that I actually put together the fact that the CCDR Collections was housed at ASU. I couldn’t wait to experience it. As I prepared to embark on this new journey I began studying course offerings for my first semester. Most of my classes would, of course, have to be in the theatre program, but we were allowed an elective. I turned to the Dance program and discovered they offered a class titled “Ethnochoreology”. Without hesitation, I signed up for that class.

As I walked into the classroom, I was immediately thrilled to find out that not only was the professor the president of the CCDR, but the co-professor was the Curator of the CCDR Collections, the very person holding the position that nearly a year before
had spoken to me so strongly. Something or someone was leading me to a place that would come to mean so much to me. Some of those people were my professors, Pegge Vissicaro and Adair Landborn; their mentor, Joann Kealiinohomoku; and her mentor, Gertrude Kurath.

I remember the first time that I entered the collections. To some people, it may have been just a room full of books and papers and boxes and instruments and costumes. My eyes instantly filled with tears; to me, it was home. Jacques Derrida speaks of “the figure of the ghost as that which is neither present, nor absent, neither dead nor alive.” (Davis 2005, 373) Within that space, I could sense the ghosts of everyone who contributed to this collection. I could smell the blood, sweat and tears of the people who cared as much about this work as I did. I could hear the voices of scholars before me. They were whispering to me, “Welcome, explore, feel, and know.”

Through the ethnochoreology class, I began to formulate a research project that I thought would be very engaging. Dr. Vissicaro was talking about her Ethnography class that she usually taught in the spring semester and the research she had her students do involving the CCDR Collections. I had recently become aware of the work of Dance and Oral History scholar Jeff Friedman and his article ‘Muscle Memory’: Performing Oral History in which he discusses his research of “performance as an outcome of oral history production […] allowing oral historians to further interrogate their areas of interest through an exploration of embodied interpretation of memory construction.” (2005, 35)

I developed a research design that would integrate the students lived experience with Friedman’s methodology. I worked with both Dr. Vissicaro, who facilitated the class, and Dr. Landborn, who facilitated the archive exploration. I then interacted with
the participants about their experience. I gathered written, embodied and verbal reflections about their time exploring the archive in general and specifically the personal belongings and writings of Kurath. I hoped to ultimately use their responses this as the grounds for original choreography based on the research creating my own embodied interpretation of their words, movements and meta-gestures. I would be interrogating how these dancer’s bodies acquired, stored, accessed, and transmitted lived experience.

As I processed the data, I realized that it was not what I had anticipated. The work was beautiful; it was haunting and authentic to their experience. One student stated that it was like Kurath had “been sitting right there with me going through the pictures or walking through explaining everything to me.” However, much of what I heard was things like feeling small, hesitant, cautious, and “I wasn’t necessarily comfortable.” They had been guarded and withdrawn when asked to move what they felt, walking around with their hands in their pockets, often looking at the ground and moving in small ways.

They were extremely forthcoming in their discussion and writing of the experience, however, when asked how their experiences would color their practice as dancers and dance makers, they began speaking of how they would create and curate their archives. The discussion turned to technology and how social media has changed the definition of the archive. They seemed to be much more engaged in how their experience would influence their research as opposed to how it would affect their creative practice.

I began to work through the participants’ writings, the video that I had taken of our movement exercises, verbal explorations of their experiences, and my notes taken from the session. As I dug into the data, I began to write about the Western construct of
favoring the written and spoken over the embodied. Still, the data analysis and conclusions I was coming to seemed to be leading me to another place.

Slowly I came to understand that this research was not about them, it was about me. It was about a journey that started nearly three years ago and half-way across the country. Without my knowing or understanding it Gertrude Kurath, Cross-Cultural Dance Resources, Inc. and all of the brilliant scholars of the CCDR Collections; including anthropologists, ethnomusicologists, performance scholars, religious scholars, and sociology scholars; were calling me through space and time. They were leading me to a place of emotional, personal, and scholarly exploration that I had not previously been aware of. This was my l’avenir, my future, my Others who “came without my being able to anticipate their arrival.” (Dick and Ziering 2003)

In Diana Taylor’s *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, she speaks of how writing has “come to stand for and against embodiment” placing the archive in opposition to the repertoire (2006, 16). However, I would agree with Benjamin D. Powell and Tracy Stephenson Shaffer who claim in their writing *On the Haunting of Performance Studies* that “Taylor…does not spend enough time discussing the ways that the archive and repertoire share tactics and methods in their mutual production – how they haunt each other.” (2009, 9)

The next step in my journey will be to create a solo movement piece inspired by the writings of the participants; incorporating the traces of Gertrude and their experiences in the archives left on me through these dancers; how the archives of the Cross-Cultural Dance Resources Collections and the written words of the research participants haunt my movement. Rather than being inspired by my initial idea of their gestures, I am inspired
by their words. The creation of this work will be my authentic relation to the archives through my lived experience flavored with the transmitted memory construction of the participants in the research.

I hadn’t formally decided how I would analyze the data I was gathering. My main idea was a system of coding that I had not worked the details out on yet. When the written reflections were assigned, there were no guidelines to the form given. Most typed an essay; some handed in handwritten pages torn from their notebooks. That is when I came across an abstract reflection hand written in calligraphy with short phrases inspired by the participant’s experience. It was so moving and emotional and visually inspiring. Several phrases stood out to me and that is when I decided rather than code single words I would look at phrases that caught my eye.

I have never formally studied poetry, but have been exposed to much and am constantly drawn to spoken word poetry and how powerful it can be. I would like to end my presentation with the spoken word piece that I created from the words of the participants in the research. The phrases in this piece are all directly taken from the 20 essays I received. I have not added any text, merely arranged the phrases in a poem.

BONES OF THE PAST
Mother Goddess
Presence, ritual, and company
Bones of the past
Eyes on top of eyes
White porcelain faces
Black traditional clothing
Bare feet, pressing into the earth
Ankles, wrists, fingers, and hips filling the space
Elegantly circling and twirling
I sense history, now and the future all at once
A lot of history
I just wish I knew more
What is the object, how did it get here?
Given, traded, bought
Artifacts lying in front of me
Some strange, some broken or damaged
Dancing, rejoicing in the opportunity to be seen
My eyes feast on a hundred things I’ve never seen before
Yet somehow identify with
Ground being pounded by the dancers moving to the music
Breath rhythmically panting while the tempo waxes and wanes
Whispers of the past fill the room
I rummage and question, wonder and dig
All at once I feel my connection to hundreds of years of dance artists
Older than time
Infused with wisdom
With my curious voice and my roving eyes
I feel like a disturber of the peace
Smell of dust, old paper, and book bindings
Musty, not unpleasant
I smelled the pages of the books
It made me feel at home
Paths into the future
Hidden history
History that had not been silenced
Waiting to be opened and rediscovered
Connecting to something deeper within myself
Authentic and true

Notes

1 Group Interview with Arizona State University Dance Ethnography Students, 18 January, 2016. Personal Interview

Works Cited


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A PhD student at Arizona State University in Theatre and Performance of the Americas, Stephanie’s current research is based on the performance of the Archive. She holds a Masters in Theatre from Louisiana Tech University. Her interests in embodied movement stems from her study of Stage Combat and dance.

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“If Amy Winehouse was a beehive then I guess I’m a blonde bob”: De/Constructing Sia’s fame through contemporary dance
Carolyn Hebert

Abstract: Hebert examines Sia’s 2015 Trilogy videos in which the pop icon transfers her physical identity into an inanimate blonde-bob wig. By analyzing the representation of Sia’s personal identity through Heffington’s choreography, it considers the social, cultural, and economic conditions that are necessary for Sia to achieve international fame while also remaining literally “faceless” within the public sphere.

In “My Anti-Fame Manifesto,” an article by popular music artist Sia Furler in the October 2013 publication of Billboard Magazine, Sia declared, “[i]f anyone besides famous people knew what it was like to be a famous person, they would never want to be famous” (Furler 2013). Released in 2014 and her first album since resigning her own career, 1000 Forms of Fear debuted at number one on US Billboard 200 as Sia actively sought to remain literally faceless in any and all media surrounding the record’s release and promotion (Billboard 2015). A blonde wig with a bob-style haircut has consequently come to represent her physical identity in the public sphere since it was first worn by reality television star and 11-year-old dancer Maddie Ziegler in the video for Sia’s song Chandelier (SiaVevo 2014). Sia herself has referred to this “gimmick” as “a game, an art project, and a form of self-preservation” (Wiig 2015) which has allowed her to simultaneously achieve self-expression, by singing about her personal experiences, and self-conservation, by concealing her physicality, through her music and art.

This presentation explores how identities are conceptualized of and circulated between animate and inanimate bodies in choreographies of transmission through an examination of three music videos created for Sia’s 1000 forms of fear album. Through this brief and admittedly surface-level choreographic analysis of, what I have termed, the Trilogy videos, I aim to question our conceptualization of personal identity, to challenge distinctions between the material and
emotional body/self connections, and open possibilities to how we might co-perform and transmit these identities in movement. What does Sia’s separation of bodily self from her artistic product, by adorning herself and the other performers in her videos with, what has now become, an iconic bob-styled hair wig, represent about bodily-self identity? And how does this impact our public perception and reception of this popular art product?

I assess the costume and choreographic choices made by contemporary dance choreographer Ryan Heffington and co-directors Sia and Daniel Askill in the production of the trilogy music videos for *Chandelier* (SiaVevo 2014), *Elastic Heart* (SiaVevo 2015a), and *Big Girls Cry* (SiaVevo 2015b). I have grouped these videos together because of their similar casting, production team, costuming, and representation of themes. In a 2014 interview, Sia stated that these three songs specifically address her personal experiences with addiction (*Chandelier*), mental health issues (*Elastic Heart*) and the entertainment industry (*Big Girls Cry*) (VDvault 2014). The narrative of Sia’s lived experiences with fame is expressed and performed by wig-wearing Ziegler, and in one video, actor Shia Labeouf, through Heffington’s choreography. Through the work of cultural theorist Hebdige, we understand that objects and meanings are together discursively constructed signs (Hebdige 2003). Barker refers to *bricolage*, the process of resignification whereby an object may take on a particular and often contradictory meaning (Barker 2000). Thus, as will be described and discussed through this analysis, the bob-styled wig, through a process of choreographic transmission, no longer represents the trying on or disguising of identity, rather it comes to represent the constructed identity of Sia the pop music artist herself, and challenges our understanding of our own identities in relation to hers. This process of resignification might be referred to as a *choreography of bricolage*, whereby an
assembling of animate and inanimate bodies together establish new meanings of identity for both participants and viewers.

**Analysis: The trilogy**

*Chandelier* was the first video released from Sia’s 2014 album and features Ziegler dancing alone in an apartment (SiaVevo 2014). The apartment is barren and sparsely decorated with worn, old looking furniture. Speculation as to the meaning of the video suggests Ziegler’s character represents the loneliness and isolation faced by those who suffer from addiction. Her sporadic and spastic movements convey a process of internal struggle for emancipation from substance abuse (Cliff 2014; Dobris & Davidson 2015).

The second video, *Elastic Heart*, features Ziegler and actor Shia LaBeouf dancing inside a large dome cage (SiaVevo 2015a). In an interview, Sia explains that the cage symbolizes the human skull, with Ziegler and LaBeouf representing two warring selves, a bipolarised conception of identity (DanceOn 2015).

The third and final video of the Trilogy, *Big Girls Cry*, centres on Ziegler (SiaVevo 2015b). The video is shot with a completely black background, and the camera focuses mainly on Ziegler from the chest upwards. In the last quarter of the video, there is one shot where we see Ziegler’s legs and feet. A second character enters the video at the end, but only her hands are made visible. A reading of the video suggests that the manipulation of Ziegler’s facial expression represents the scrutinizing public gaze associated with fame and its emotional and psychological effects on the artist.
Choreography:

The choreographer for the three *Trilogy* videos, Heffington, is a successful contemporary dance choreographer who has worked within both the commercial and concert dance industries (CargoCollective 2015). To maintain a link between the *Trilogy* videos, Heffington’s choreography contains particular elements that are recreated in each video. Through this presentation I will briefly discuss three of these elements, which I have labelled as the “growl,” “eyeballs,” and “say cheese!” As will be demonstrated through an analysis of these three elements, the interfacial relationship between facial expression and full bodied expression, as theorized by dance scholar Sherril Dodds (2014) is an important aspect of how we make meaning of this choreography.

Dodds argues that facial expression is a key component within choreography because, through expression, the face performs the “symbolic structures of gender, sexuality, race, and class” (2014, 46). The facial aspects of the choreography in the *Trilogy*, therefore, act as sites for the process of meaning production, as: the mobility and ambiguity of facial choreography opens a dialogic space through which meaning is generated and social and political critique take place. (2014, 52)

An assessment of these choreographic elements demonstrates how choreography is used in conjunction with the costuming and the other elements of the performance, such as setting and music, to address our conceptualization of identity and to facilitate its transmission across/through choreographed bodies (animate and inanimate) in the *Trilogy* videos.

*The Growl:*

The growl is a barring of the teeth with a wide eyed and angry scowl used throughout the *Trilogy* to convey both anger and fear in Ziegler and LaBeouf. It resembles the facial expression
an animal might make when it feels threatened and is defending its territory. In *Elastic Heart*, the growl is associated with bent knees, a forward leaning body stance, and arms and fingers stretched wide to the sides of the body. The growl is used here as a scare tactic as one character, most often Ziegler, seeks to defend its territory from the threat of the other character, LaBeouf.

In *Chandelier*, however, the growl is comprised of a jolting shift in facial expression, a turn of the head, and a focused glare in the eyes to the side of the camera. Ziegler’s character growls at some threat unseen through the camera’s lens. In *Big Girls Cry*, the growl is no longer a scare tactic or means for communicating fear, but a weapon against the attacker. In various instances, Ziegler’s character actually bites her arm or fist to display her fighting back against the threat.

In its evolving role in this narrative, what does the growl tell us of identity? The growl is animalistic, referential of an innate or primitive behavior that is resorted to for self-protection. Although the threat is actually physically external in *Elastic Heart*, in all of *Chandelier* and for most of *Big Girls Cry* the threat is unseen, and therefore suggestively internal. This internal strife reflects a conflict of self, indicative of the struggle with identity we see across Sia’s trilogy videos.

*Eyeballs:*

I use the term “eyeballs” to describe instances in the *Trilogy* choreography where the viewer’s focus is directed to the performer’s eyes through either direct gesture or the camera’s lens. In *Chandelier*, eyeballs symbolizes a wide-eyed, dumbfounded look on Ziegler’s face, almost like the phrase “a deer in headlights”. The character stares away from the camera and into the distance appearing almost brain dead. This same notion of eyeballs appears in *Big Girls Cry*, particularly in the final 30 seconds of the video. Ziegler bobs her head side to side,
appearing dazed and confused, but seemingly unaware of this confusion. Perhaps this notion of eyeballs represents a drug induced coma either resulting from substance abuse, or from a mental health misdiagnosis? Both situations are experiences that Sia herself has encountered (VDvault, 2014).

Across all three videos, eyeballs appears in a direct gestural form, where characters pull and prod at their eyelids. In a few sections of the videos, Ziegler’s character places her thumb and forefinger together over her eyes to form goggles. This might symbolize the ever-watching gaze of the public eye that popular artists like Sia are subjected to through fame. It also may be the character’s attempt to wake up from the comatose state described above. Similarly, gesturing to the eyes might draw attention to the pupils, which, when under the influence of drugs and alcohol, are abnormal in size.

The final element of eyeballs used to convey identity in the Trilogy is emotion. In Elastic Heart, LaBeouf’s eyes convey sadness and disappointment. In the final instances of the video, Ziegler pulls at LaBeouf, desperate to help him escape the cage with her, but he cannot fit through the bars. His sad eyes, coupled with the limpness of his body as Ziegler pulls his arms, tell the viewer that he is aware that he cannot leave the cage and is thus destined to be trapped inside for eternity. This moment depicts the realization and acceptance of multiple sides to the self, and the understanding that existing with our pasts and accepting that we must do so is a continual process. It is the moment that made me as a viewer feel an emotional connection with these videos.

Say Cheese!

The “say cheese!” moments of choreography in Sia’s Trilogy describe instances where the performers use a smile to convey a particular, though not singular or universalistic message.
In the *Trilogy*, the smile challenges our understandings of fame, identity, and their relationship to performance.

For Dodds, the smile is often perceived as a “trope of western femininity that signifies ‘availability, passivity, interest, approval and a nonthreatening or submissive attitude’” (2014, 46). I see articulations of this concept of the smile in *Big Girls Cry*, where, Ziegler, after messing up her hair and rubbing her hands all across her face, becomes still, stares at the camera, and struggles to smile. The following sections of choreography show her poking at her face to try to maintain her smile, but her eyes tell the viewer that it is almost painful for her to do so. Signifying submission, the smile here connotes suffering. This exemplifies Dodds’ argument that, “the smile does not possess a singular meaning but can only be determined in its individual, interactional, institutional, and cultural contexts, and in relation to behavioral expectations” (2014, 47). In this instance, Heffington’s choreography engages with the smile and upsets the semiotic legibility of the face.

A second articulation of the smile in the *Trilogy* choreography occurs in both *Elastic Heart* and *Big Girls Cry*. Ziegler rubs her fist around her mouth and along her cheek before she curls her lips into a smile. It almost appears as if she is smearing lipstick across her mouth and then smiling to show it off. Her smile is quickly executed and fades again once she returns to smearing her fist across her lips. This makes her appear to be smiling for a camera, like saying “cheese” for someone to take a picture. Is this a criticism of the requirements of femininity and performativity as dictated through popular culture? Perhaps this forced, put-on aspect of the smile in this section indicates, as Butler argues, that femininity is not a natural or innate essence of the body but a performance (1990)?
The last aspect of the smile appears in the final moments of *Chandelier*, where Ziegler repeatedly curteys to the camera and forces a big smile at the viewer through gritted teeth. In a review of his choreography, Heffington describes this action, saying, “the veil has been lifted, we are now letting you in on our joke,” which demonstrates the breaking of the fourth wall of theatre (NowNess 2014). In breaking the fourth wall, performers acknowledge the existence of an audience and indicate an awareness that they are being watched. This moment reiterates our confusion between actual and performed identities. It challenges us to question the existence of identities, and to understand their performative nature.

**Costuming:**

According to Hebdige, clothing and costumes are mundane objects that play a strong role in creating and shaping meaning and aid in the performance of our identities (2003). Butler similarly asserts that clothing performs character, gender, and identity, as do the individuals who wear them (Butler 1990). For the purposes of this paper I will only briefly touch on the attire of the performers and the most importance accessory, the wig, though there are other aspects worth examining later.

In all three videos, Ziegler wears a light peach or “nude” colored body suit. As dancers, we recognize the obvious pragmatism of the body-suit, and might associate it with a costume in the concert dance world. In the commercial dance world where Ziegler regularly participates in dance competitions, and through which these music videos are distributed, the body-suit is more connected with technique class and rehearsal, and not necessarily to formal performance or costume-like attire. The only other clothed character in the *Trilogy*, LaBeouf, is also minimally costumed, with fitted shorts that are the same color as Ziegler’s body suit. Again,
his costume is a practical choice for a dancer. Because of this minimalistic costuming choice, an amateur viewer might easily mistake the trilogy videos for rehearsal footage. Is Sia letting us in on the secret that the characters in her videos are just dancers performing for the camera? That participants in the entertainment industry – Sia included – are just performers, that they rehearse these performances, and that they play a role in our and their lives through their music, acting, etc.?

The blonde bob style wig was first introduced to the public through Ziegler in *Chandelier*. It is worn in the other two *Trilogy* videos by Ziegler, and has also been featured in every subsequent performance of Sia’s music (and is now represented as half blonde – half black). Ziegler is not the only character to wear the wig, but she is the only character who wears the wig in the *Trilogy* videos.

According to Sia, self-representation through an inanimate object, such as a wig, allows her to more freely communicate her experiences and express these experiences through her music. The wig not only conceals Sia’s face from the public gaze, but may be both literally and figuratively worn by any viewer of her performances or listener of her music.

Perhaps this gimmick has been so successful because it reminds us of our own lived performativity? The blank canvas of the nude costume allows us to see ourselves represented in Ziegler and Laboeuf’s dancing bodies, and the nature of the wig allows us to imagine ourselves wearing it. Through these choreographies of transmission where identity is moved and performed across bodies, the wig included, we are reminded of the multiple and shifting nature of our identities. Further, we are reminded that we are always rehearsing our-selves, that we are always practicing and performing our identities in relation with one another. It is on these blank
slates that we might (re)write our own narratives so that we might see ourselves represented in their performance.

Except, perhaps not everyone may see themselves represented in these white, normalized bodies. When I originally wrote this paper, Ziegler and Laboeuf were the only two performers used in Sia’s work, but she has now incorporated a variety of professionals into her performances to perhaps integrate a more culturally and racially diverse perspective (for example see SiaVevo 2015c). Nevertheless, her choice of bodies and of the wig itself demonstrates the limitations of identity representation and transmission that go beyond the confines of this presentation.

As a white woman viewing these videos, I am challenged to contemplate my conception of identity in relation to my own body. I recognize myself in the choreographic portrayal of the struggle with addiction, the warring selves of bipolarity, and the struggle to maintain agency and autonomy, despite my own actual lived experiences. Placing the performers in nude, minimalistic costuming opens possibilities for the viewer’s interpretation of these bodies and encourages us to imagine ourselves in their place. It encourages ownership, so that Sia’s story becomes a part of our own.

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Excavating Sensory Data: A Somatic Ethnography Revisited
Adair Landborn

Abstract: This panel explores processes through which somatic information provides verifiable evidence. Novelty and unfamiliarity of sensory perceptions draw attention, stimulate learning, heighten memory, and ignite the choreographic impulse. Entering the sensory realm alone in search of authenticity, we face these challenges with no other ground than our selves and the transient evidence that moves through the body as archive. Presenters examine: the articulation of knowledge drawn from sensory experiences with dance cultural artifacts; the “memory palace” as a construct to liberate sensate data from ethnographic writing; and somatically engaged fieldwork as a pathway to personal authenticity.

I am a dancer of many styles, primarily in the contemporary and flamenco dance genres. I identify strongly with movement, always have, and probably always will. A certified Laban movement analyst, choreographer, and somatic practitioner, I am keenly interested in the patterning of movement. I am alert to movement. I see it everywhere. I am keyed into it; I seek it out; it catches my eye.

My doctoral studies entailed intracultural research focused on flamenco dance and bullfighting: their shared aesthetics, similar movement techniques, related cultural practices, and overlapping social spheres. Examining flamenco and bullfighting through the lens of movement and absorbing Spanish culture as lived experience, I inferred intentionality, purpose, motivation, values, and meaning from these two movement practices, and published a book on this topic (Landborn 2015).

I emerged from my intracultural study of flamenco dance and bullfighting with a different understanding of how dance and movement function within what I call kinesthetic culture. The late Joann Kealiinohomoku, anthropologist of dance, headed my doctoral committee and influenced me to see dance as the microcosm through which holistic culture can be examined and understood (1974, 106).

That my perspectives had changed became evident to me in April 2015 at the Re-imaging

Many dancers and dance scholars attended, as did many Laban-trained movement analysts. These were my people, my tribe. I loved the enthusiasm, sense of community, and shared interest. I was in my element, but found myself in disagreement with an assumption made by many in attendance that movement is the key feature of dance. To the contrary, I believe that in cross-cultural dance research, focusing on movement phenomena alone is a mistake.

Cross-cultural research should examine dance holistically, investigating and identifying the roles dance plays in individual lives and in human societies. Movement is an important element of dance culture, certainly, and movement analysis can reveal much about the values, circumstances, histories, motivations, interests, and talents of individual people, cultural groups, and societal organizations. But when people dance, their participation involves much more than movement. Dance—whether it occurs in a single, spontaneous outburst of improvisational movement play or in traditional, highly-structured recurring events—involves parameters, paraphernalia, costumes, designated spaces, designated roles, social hierarchies, as well as aesthetic standards, emotional content, and spiritual purpose. To fully understand a dance, you must see it in context—see its deep penetration into the human psyche, zeitgeist, and cultural meaning-making projects of a society.

To fully appreciate the tree, see also the forest. Recognize that without the forest’s nurturing field of interconnected rhizomatic roots and complex layers of organic debris, the tree will not survive. So too, dance does not live uprooted from its human ecology. I advocate the use of multiple perspectives in the study of dance cultures. So speaking for myself and for the
record: Dance is a human universal that will never be understood through an investigation of movement alone.

In July 2015, I accepted a position at Arizona State University as a clinical assistant professor of dance and curator of the Cross-Cultural Dance Resources Collections (CCDR Collections). Dealing with archival issues on a daily basis, my perspectives are again in flux. Despite the richly nuanced discussions by André Lepecki of the “body as archive” (2010) and by Diana Taylor of the “archive as repertoire” (2003), I am beginning to believe that using “archive” as a metaphor for bodily memory may be misleading. “Archive” generally evokes ideas of stability, continuity, and preservation; however, scholarly literature in the archival field challenges the assumption that archives function as passive receivers and holders of static informational resources. After all, archival materials deteriorate over time or are migrated into new formats; archival collections expand or condense in response to curatorial decisions and external events.

Professional archivists today recognize that the function of the archive is fluid over time, evolving to adapt to changing societal needs. Archivist Terry Cook notes that, in the last 150 years “the focus of archival thinking has shifted from evidence to memory to identity to community, as the broader intellectual currents have changed from pre-modern to modern to post-modern to contemporary” (2013, 95). As a curator, I know from direct experience about the fluctuating nature of archives. The CCDR Collections is a collection in transition, and transformation is on my daily to-do list.

We humans create metaphors based on our understanding at the time, of reality and how it seems to work; we craft metaphors to explain our experience and advance our lives, scholarship, and artistry. For the field of dance ethnology, is “archive,” with its connotation of
storing relatively unchanging materials, a useful metaphor? Might a deeper examination of human memory and how it re-creates sensory experience yield insights?

Brain research contradicts the idea that memories are fixed packets of information stored away that can be retrieved later, intact and unchanged. Instead, memories are reconstructions assembled on the fly from sensory fragments (Foer 2011, 27–29). A more accurate metaphor might be to envision the body-mind system as a living digital repository, a collection of fragmented impressions from which we reconstruct for ourselves or for others the reality we believe we experienced.

Also, in the liminal space between experiential data and emergent knowledge there is a creative presence, arbitrating what is essentially a story-creating process. The conscious and unconscious values of both the ethnographer/storyteller and his or her listeners contribute to this creative process. An ethnographer/storyteller crafts a story for listening ears, picking and choosing words, plot twists, and expressive emphases. The ethnographer/storyteller chooses words, but also particular memories from which to spin out those words. Dancers, like me, who are highly invested in understanding dance as a movement art, often emphasize movement phenomena in reporting our cross-cultural experiences.

But dance functions within the nervous system via the sensory-motor loop, with only one-third of our movement-related neurons conducting motor impulses while fully two-thirds of our movement-related neurons are dedicated to the conducting of sensory information (Kuiken 2016). Audiences that share our movement bias may appreciate movement-focused ethnographic research, but perhaps two-thirds of our study of dance phenomena should focus on sensory information.
When I teach flamenco dance, deeper knowledge bubbles up through both the imagery I offer and the technical demands I place on students. I know what I know based on experience, and I am certain that I know more than I articulated in my book. Curious and wanting to investigate further, I revisited my book *Flamenco and Bullfighting: Movement, Passion and Risk in Two Spanish Traditions*, asking what sensory elements were embedded in memories of my lived experience. Can I excavate sensory memories to more fully articulate what I know about the overlapping worlds of flamenco and bullfighting?

I begin by sharing a descriptive journal entry and how I discussed it in my book. I then re-open my memory files to reexamine and reconstruct this event through the lens of sensory experience. A travel journal entry quoted in my book describes an experience I had in 1999 in Madrid:

Came out of my *hostal* on a very rainy, cold (5 degrees centigrade), miserable afternoon and began walking down Atocha. Within just a few blocks there was some commotion. There were about 6 or 7 street cleaners, wearing bright yellow rain jackets and pushing green handcarts, producing a very visual effect. They were engaged via *jaleo* with an older rough-looking character, who, despite the cold and wet, had taken off his jacket to use it as a cape as he demonstrated his *toreando* skills for their entertainment. This went on for quite a while and he seemed pretty good, *verónicas* [basic two-handed passes] and behind-the-back passes of the cape, with lots of vocalizations, the street cleaners encouraging him, while he encouraged the invisible bull. Passersby seemed to ignore or sidestep him as if he were drunk. He was definitely making a spectacle out of himself, but didn’t seem drunk exactly—drunk on the moment perhaps, and the attention (Landborn 2015, 160–161).

In my book I explained:

Absorbing this unexpected scene, I gained new perspectives regarding the competitive play behaviors of working-class Spanish men. I saw that bullfighting, as a male-identified activity, brought Spanish males together in both competition and encouragement. I saw the influence of rural values being exerted within the modern, cosmopolitan context of Madrid. I saw that the qualities of emotional catharsis and participation were not always limited to the hours between midnight and dawn. That period of the night, the *madrugada*, is a temporal construct in the flamenco way of life that invites self-expression and excess. But the expansive spirit of the *madrugada* extends beyond the flamenco *juerga*, affecting all kinds of performative practices, including this duel between a would-be bullfighter and his imaginary bull. (Landborn 2015, 161)
Now, revisiting this memory and focusing on its sensory elements, I find sensory data relevant to my research that I did not address in my book.

Space is a significant element in the neurology of remembering. In the fifth century B.C., the Greek poet Simonides of Ceos introduced the “memory palace” as a mnemonic device based on the mind’s natural ability to remember places, locations, and spatial configurations (Foer 2011, 93–94). So, as I reflect on my past sensory experience by focusing on space, I remember that the street in Madrid is vibrant; it is a shared communal space rich with possibilities, unlike the tame, business-as-usual streets to which I am accustomed. Many older streets in central Madrid are narrow with three- to five-story buildings on either side, forming a city canyon, a visually and physically restrictive space, a corridor that channels the flow of both human beings and the winter’s cold winds. Sound, too, is contained; what matters is what is immediate, present, and happening here and now. Even semi-deserted streets are dynamic. I think of Laban’s theory of the *dynamosphere*, a kinesphere full of all the expressive potentialities of flow, time, space, and force (1974, 27–36). The streets in a culture such as Spain’s, which has a rich public ritual life, are at all times alive with possibilities. The streets resonate with past happenings, and each present moment contains its own potential for surprise, danger, or illumination as well as the certainty of future drama. The result on the sensory level is a heightened awareness of life’s three-dimensionality and an alert on-edge quality, a readiness to respond instantly and act with energy. This quality energizes the performances of both flamenco dancers and bullfighters.

I also remember an invigorating physical sensation, a unique awareness of the boundary between the challengingly-cold external environment and the inner warmth I was generating beneath my jacket. The top surface of my skin was chilled, while my body’s internal system was blasting like a furnace. These two temperatures met, not at the surface of my skin, which was
nearly numb from the cold. No, these temperatures met, matched, and competed at a deeper level in my body, stimulating resistance, robustness, exhilaration, and a life-affirming response that I associate with the intensive manual labor accomplished by Spain’s working class in the cold outdoors. Cold Spanish winters inspire the human need for an inner engine to burn bright and radiant. By turning up your body’s inner heat source, you are able to meet the cold’s challenge. By asserting yourself through physical exertion, you survive.

Another sensory memory was of my body walking forward on the right side of the street with no change of pace, while my head gradually turned to the left to maintain sight of interactions between the toreo and the street sweepers. What a curious set of contradictory intentions: keep walking, but do not lose sight of what is happening. Within this sensory memory, I now recognize the internalized boundaries of class and gender that kept me from approaching more closely a scene in which I obviously had great interest. Had I been a Spanish working-class male I might have approached and melded easily into the group of vocally active witnesses. My gender was the primary inhibiting factor. So this public ritual space, the streets of Madrid, also contains a socially constructed web of invisible boundaries, behavioral conventions based on social class and gender, that governs the behavior of people native to the culture and that visitors quickly learn. My outsider status was inevitable, but it was not just the result of my being a North American; it was based on Spanish social constructs related to femaleness.

Females as outsiders in the masculine world of the bullfight is a recurring theme in my research, and here in my body’s sensory memory I found evidence of the inhibiting effect of a felt boundary. The counter-tension between my body walking forward and my turning head was evidence of my unconscious response to socially constructed expectations. I could view this street scene “in passing,” but was inhibited by culture, gender, and class from joining in. This
excavation of sensory data reinforces my understanding that many spatial boundaries, rules, and expectations in Spanish society are actual and consequential; the crossing of a spatial boundary can precipitate events, actions, and responses. As discussed in my book, bulls have a keen sense of territory, known as *querencia*, and any spatial transgression relative to a bull’s territory will incite them to charge (Landborn 2015, 110–112). So too, invisible spatial boundaries govern human interactions; Edward Hall’s proxemics are always in play (1990, 131–164).

Revisiting movement experience through sensory memories is an additive, knowledge-generating process. I am the one who decides which information bits to keep close to the surface for easy access. I am the one who adjudicates information, and, in my reconstruction of events, filters out information that seems less interesting, less dramatic, or less germane. I know what I know, and yet much of my knowledge comes from unexamined sensory data.

In conclusion, dance ethnologists work to clearly articulate an embodied experience of culture, and to communicate this information across boundaries from one culture to another, from one living system to another. Movement observation skills and the ability to accurately record movement phenomena are useful tools that provide robust data sets for examination and cross-cultural comparison. However, to fully extract rich details and propose meaningful interpretations, it is equally important that dance ethnologists excavate subconscious sensory data and incorporate lived-experience perspectives in their research design and scholarly writings.

Notes:

1. *Hostal*, an informal hotel; *jaleo*, vocal encouragement; *toreando*, messing around with bulls or pretending to be a matador; *madrugada*, the hours between midnight and dawn; *juerga*, an extended informal flamenco party.
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Abstract: This article discusses the anatomical knowledge of the human body in the documents written by two dance artists of the eighteenth century, John Weaver (1673-1760) and Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810), as a means to experience dance movement. It develops the discovery process of the human body throughout the text from the dissections that occurred in the anatomical theaters as well as the possible impact on the written works of the aforementioned artists. By analyzing both dance masters’ texts, it reflects how these artists adapted the anatomical knowledge through the experience of dance language, an act that precedes and enables a different view of the body in dance. It also presents how these studies influenced the creation of the contemporary dance solo titled "From John Weaver to Steve Paxton: digging into the preparation of the dance artist through anatomical narratives”.

Anatomy is Us¹. A mobile and pulsating landscape that moves through our bodies in continuous coexistence. Whenever we are exposed to this reality in our bodies, we have the chance to transcend to a new tessitura with regards to our awareness of life in the form of a subtle perception of muscles, bones, organs and internal structures that interlace as inner content.

This article discusses the anatomical knowledge of the human body using the insights provided by two dance artists of the eighteenth century, John Weaver (1673-1760) and Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810), as the means to experience dance movement. The reported discovery of the human body through dissections that were carried out in the so-called anatomical theaters is of the utmost importance for such a discussion². The possible impact of these studies on the written works of the aforementioned artists is also discussed. A careful analysis of the texts by both dance masters shows how they built up their anatomical knowledge by taking advantage of their own experience with the language of dance. By considering both aspects, a clear similarity between those studies and the creation of the contemporary dance solo named "From John Weaver to Steve Paxton: digging into the preparation of the dance artist through anatomical narratives" emerges (Lourenço, 2013).
English dancer master John Weaver is considered a pioneer in the integration of the art of ballet and anatomy. According to historian Richard Ralph (1985), Weaver was the first Western, scenic dance artist to introduce the relation between dance and the knowledge of the inner body in a systematic and public way through a series of lectures titled “Anatomical and Mechanical lectures upon dancing.” Weaver’s lectures were given to a group of dance masters back in 1721 and published in London two years later.

This article also intends to ponder over the literary works of Jean-Georges Noverre, a French artist who created a theoretical and critical analysis about the scenic dance performances that were taking place in his country through a series of letters that were published in 1760 and 1807, respectively. It was possible to highlight some of Noverre’s proposals in his writings with regards to which anatomical knowledge was necessary for dance masters at that time.

Noverre and Weaver’s document excerpts as presented herein highlight the relevance such artists attributed to the contact they established with dance masters as well as to the anatomical knowledge during their respective periods. For Weaver, dance masters of their time would have the following issues without the anatomical knowledge of bones and muscles in the human body:

“[They] will never arrive to any certainty in their art, either in the performing, or instructive part, but will always be liable to vary, and change their manner of performance, and method of teaching, according to fancy or opinion. For this plain that without rules there can be no art [sic]; and that is impossible to be master of any art without the theory; since upon that foundation […], that the practice must be built.” [sic] (Weaver in Ralph, 1985, 1004-5).

There are similarities between Weaver’s opinion above and an excerpt in the set of letters Noverre wrote nearly eight decades later. In 1807, Noverre attracts our attention to dance masters’ studies of anatomy, and questions:

“would not there be a need for dance masters to have at least a general knowledge of anatomy and not a perfect one as it happens with painters? Why could not such dancer attain a certain movement? What about this defect in configuration? How can we limit
these questions to principles if we do not possess a notion of the constitution of the human body?” (Noverre, 1807, 170. Translation from French by the authors).

As mentioned in the excerpts above, Noverre and Weaver’s questions raise concerns that are inherent to both of them, for they inquire whether it would not be relevant for dance masters of their time to come in contact with anatomical knowledge and if such knowledge should be part of the set of skills dance teachers should develop in their contexts. There is a passage in Noverre’s letters, from 1807, where he sets out to explain how ballet teachings at that time would be. In one of his reflections, Noverre refers to dance masters who are unaware of anatomy, and demand from their students that they would copy their movements in their classes. Noverre (1807) states such dance teachers would demand the following at the top of their voices:

Do it as I do, raise your leg as I do, turn as I do, do a plié\(^5\) as I do. Then we have selfishness. Students would reply: I cannot raise my leg as high as you do; I cannot do a plié, nor reach the same tempo as you do; my arms and legs cannot attain the same proportions and circumference your body can. The master shall then say to his pupil that he is a fool and the former shall just be an ignorant in his routine. He shall demand from his students that they perform the same movements that are part of his own nature and shall not notice there are differences and difficulties his pupils will be unable to overcome (Noverre, 1807, 170-1. Translation from French by the authors)\(^6\).

Both Weaver and Noverre dealt with the tradition of court ballet at a time, when dance masters would be one of the professionals responsible for teaching how to act, dance and build the body posture in those environments. When teaching the sets of coexistence in court environments, dance masters would prepare individuals’ bodies to be placed in different aristocratic and social situations where symmetry in forms and the balance between beauty and grace would be required by those settings. Or as Weaver states it: “From the symmetry, and harmony of all the parts of a body, of a regular proportion, beauty arises. From a just position, disposition, and contrast of such proportionate parts, grace arises” (Weaver in Ralph, 962).
According to Foster (2011), the coexistence in an aristocratic society would enable a transformation in an individual’s perception before this social coexistence, when the body of an aristocrat was presented “as a singular entity to be observed by others” (2011, 95). Foster also highlights that posture became a behavioral attribute in aristocratic society that should be furthered and she points out to the fact that the spine, torso, pelvis and lower limbs would contribute to a person’s aligned presentation in social milieux. If we consider Foster’s rationale wherein posture and body alignment would contribute to an individual’s presentation in aristocratic settings, what would have prompted Weaver and Noverre to study human anatomy and to present its connection to the preparation of dance in their eras? Which path would both dance masters have undertaken in order to come in contact with the world of anatomy so as to integrate it to dance environments of the eighteenth century?

Since the advent of X-rays, CTs and MRIs in the twentieth century, the images of the inner parts of the human body are present in the imagination of urban Western culture. However, the knowledge regarding the inside of the human body could only be obtained in Weaver and Noverre’s time if an individual attended cadaver dissection sessions or if he studied anatomical treatises so as to understand the inner operations of the human body through illustrations.

Between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the knowledge of anatomy was transmitted through dissection rituals that took place in the so called Anatomical Theaters, spaces wherein human cadavers were displayed, dissected and presented publicly to those who attended out of curiosity and fascination for the anatomical knowledge of the inner human body. According to Sawday (1995), dissections were presented as entertainment that was disseminated around cities like Paris, London, Bologna, Padua or Amsterdam. A human body would be placed at the center of these spaces in order for it to be studied and presented to onlookers during these lectures; hence a new perception of the body in exhibition ensued
through a mixture of discovery and admiration.

Medicine students would attend these meetings, as well as members of local medical societies and representatives of the highest social classes. Sawday describes who comprised the audience in anatomical theaters, in which the following were present:

“[The] educated elite, members of the court, wealth merchants, senior administrators, even princes themselves. At Bologna, for example, where representatives of the civil authorities, the papal power, and the spiritual Church would gather to witness dissection, public notices were posted indicating the day and time at which Anatomical demonstrations would take place.” (Sawday, 1995, 42).

It is interesting to note that a part of the social, religious and economic elites that attended dissections in anatomical theaters were quite close to individuals who were present in aristocratic environments, whether in Weaver’s England or Noverre’s France. The looks that were previously mingled, taking notice of how individuals would behave socially, would then turn to an inanimate and dissected body before them in the dissection rituals. Using bodily representations in the court as a base, aristocrats would have the chance to perceive layers of muscles, skin, bone and organs as presented to individuals who were present at anatomical theaters. The body would slowly leave the field of observation the pronoun we brought with itself to the aristocratic coexistence and would transport it to another level of perception, for dissections brought the anatomical image of the cadaver closer to the pronoun it included therein that would have gradually turned itself away from the perception that coexistence and the control of gestures had built into the aristocratic environment.

The body would start being considered as an object in dissection settings, since it could be studied, scrutinized, sliced, hacked and presented in separate parts. When circulating between the gesture-controlled environment of aristocracy and the anatomical theaters, individuals could develop two different perceptions about the body, and perhaps circulate in both, for they would go through the perception of the body in social coexistence wherein the pronoun we developed and then move to the body-object in dissection sessions using the
pronoun it. Individuals could recognize themselves as an internal image of the self whenever they transited through the perceptions they acquired from aristocratic rituals and the demonstrations of dissected, bodily layers.

The writings regarding John Weaver and Jean-Georges Noverre’s anatomical studies are the foundation for the research titled "From John Weaver to Steve Paxton: digging into the preparation of the dance artist through anatomical inheritance" (Lourenço, 2013), which is currently under development at the UNICAMP (State University of Campinas, in the State of Sao Paulo) in Brazil. The anatomical analysis of bone structures in the human body is one of the fields of study of the research. This investigation is carried out from a dance artist’s standpoint who lives, dances and teaches art of movement in the City of Sao Paulo, and who integrates dance techniques and some strategies to dance students become aware of the human skeleton into his classes.

The development of a historical study of the anatomical knowledge using John Weaver and Jean-Georges Noverre’s works as a base is one of the stages of the research, whose final goal is to create a contemporary dance solo.

A drawing period of study by Lourenço (2013), which was part of the first stage of the research. On that period, the research analyzes John Weaver and Jean-Georges Noverre’s writings and integrates them to a period of pencil drawings that stems from the observation of bone structures in the human body.

There are two specific excerpts in Noverre and Weaver’s works that are the starting points for bodily awareness:

“The sole of the foot is the true base upon which our entire machinery rests. A sculptor would run the risk of losing his work of art by placing it on a round and immobile surface. The statue would inevitably fall; it would break and shatter to pieces perforce. Similarly, dancers need to use all their toes as well as the roots that increase the surface of support when they spread out on the floor, thus offering steadiness and maintaining the body in just and convenient balance.” (Noverre, 1998, 326. Translated from Portuguese by the authors)
“Hence we may easily conceive, that man cannot stand firm upon the Heel of one foot alone; because the heel being round and globular, will touch the floor almost in a point and so the line of innixion will fall from the Center of Gravity upon a point; and it is requisite for a Man standing upright […] because the human machine, and its solid and fluid parts, can never remain quiet, when its breathing and conflux of Humours […] Therefore a Man placed on either Extremity of one foot, will always be in a continual State of falling, as if he stood upon a sharp pointed stone, or on an acute piece of Timber.” (Weaver in Ralph, 1985, 975).

A bodily awareness study then stems from Noverre and Weaver’s writings, which takes place by means of tennis balls, bamboo sticks and fabrics that come in contact with specific bones and body structures, such as the space between the metatarsi, calcaneum bones, the structure of the occipital together with the spine, and the greater trochanter. Thus, experimenting with movement among these bodily structures develops creation laboratories.

Notes:

1 Michael Sappol (2003) is the author of the assertion “Anatomy is us”, which opens one of the chapters of the catalogue for the exhibit “Dream Anatomy”, as organized by the Exhibition Program of the History of Medicine Division of the National Library of Medicine.

2 Dating back to the period between 1500 and 1700, anatomical theaters were the places where dissections took place. They had an arena shape, in order for the audience to follow the whole process of exploring the interior of the human body.

3 The original title of John Weaver’s work is “Anatomical and Mechanical Lectures upon Dancing, In which the whole Art and its Various Excellencies are in some Measure Explain’d”. I shall use the abbreviated title “Anatomical Lectures” throughout the article whenever I refer to Weaver’s writings.

4 The versions of Noverre’s letters that are used for the considerations of this thesis are the original ones from 1807, as made available by the National French Library through the Gallica website. Noverre’s work “Lettres sur la danse” shall be introduced using the Brazilian version as translated by researcher Marianna Monteiro (1998).

5 When translating this excerpt into English, I chose to use the term “make a plié as I do” with the purpose of keeping the meaning of the phrase within the context of ballet teachings in Brazil. The original would be “plié comme moi”, and the English translation would then be “bend as I do”.
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Divided Bodies; Choreographies of Nationalism, Tradition, and Resistance on the Island of Cyprus
Anastasia McCammon

Abstract: How can the interaction of performing bodies both historically, and in the current socio-political sphere, act as a mediator and research tool for the Greek-Cypriot, Turkish-Cypriot, and further communities of the divided Island of Cyprus? By tracing the islands pre/post-war timeline of major events, I argue that movement has been a critical yet overlooked component of what Benedict Anderson calls ‘imagined communities.’ Acting both locally and transculturally by intersecting ‘nation states’: US, Britain (and its colonial/post-colonial influences), Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, and the unrecognized Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus; how have bodies been appropriated to further these nationalist agendas? I examine historical readings of the body-in-war, specifically the events of 1963-74, as a vessel of displacement, re-settlement, and physical violence. These choreographies of violence continue to shape the corporeal presence of the islands people. From its 2000 ‘missing’ bodies, the UN patrolled green line barrier (to this day limiting physical movement between North and South communities), to the presence of a growing refugee/immigrant presence, and the ignored population of ‘illegal’ bodies on the Northern side. With this, a more critical approach can help uncover the appropriated ‘histories’ of ethnically codified ‘Greek’ vs ‘Turkish’ dances/festivals/rituals, as well as provide a platform for the body as a resistance tool for healing. I examine how this has been occurring currently, and throughout Cyprus’ history, on the level of individuals, groups, and bi-communal engagements; one example being the musicians Monsieur Doumani, and their role as activists/anthropological historians in the resurgence of traditional ‘panygiri’ (celebration dances).

How has the Cyprus divide affected the corporeal actions of the islands inhabitants, both in the professional dance sphere and in the colloquial movement patterns of informal social dance? My first area of research focuses on the productions within Cyprus' professional dance-theater companies. The second, looks at the trends and growth within a broader social dance scene within the nation. In looking at these aspects of current movement trends, I will also touch upon the problems faced when relating these motions to a 'traditional' or authentic Cypriot folk dance. It is these different yet overlapping and often intersecting modes of expression that can consequently be seen as physicalized manifestations of the Cypriot culture. Thus, I argue that both the socio-political history and recent economic climate of the island has contributed significantly to the style, tendencies and social functions that movement plays in a contemporary Cypriot culture.
The island of Cyprus is situated in the Mediterranean Sea, at a vulnerable crossroads between Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Generations of bodies have been migrating, trading, moving and conquering the country since antiquity. From the Venetians, to the Ottomans, these historical intersections have all left their mark not only on the land, but on its people, cultures and artistic expressions. Since the early 14th century, Cyprus' ethnic makeup has consisted generally of Turkish-Cypriots and Greek-Cypriots. Yet throughout the island's history there has been a constant flux of emigrating ethnicities, most recently providing a safe land for the moving bodies of Syrian refugees. From the 19th century onwards the enormous presence of British Colonialism helped embed western ideals of modernity, Europeanism, and Nationalist 'Collective Identities' onto the inhabitants of the island. This 'divide and conquer' mentality of British colonialism thus fueled dispute and mistrust within the two main groups of the Cypriot population. The consequent gaining of independence in 1960, under watch by Greece, Turkey, Britain and the US only furthered the perception of difference within these groups. Cultural division and conflict eventually led to violence and to the Turkish invasion and war of 1974.

The division that was first drawn in 1974 still divides the two halves of the island to this day. Often called the green line, buffer zone, dead zone and many other names, this border was only partially re-opened in 2003. In fact one still has to show identification to cross between the small country. I grew up in the Southern half of the island. Because of this my research has unfortunately been mostly limited to the artistic scene that I have witnessed within a predominantly Greek Cypriot governed and populated region. The impacts of movement in the North is an area of study that I strive to learn more about as I continue to develop my research. So recognizing the historical context of the island, I pose the question, what does it mean to possess a Cypriot body? An 'Island Body'?
How has this changed through generations, migrations, trauma and division? How does it continue to change, and how do other bodies react and interact when placed within this island context? In Cyprus, the body has and continues to carry complex roles, standards and norms. In his book 'Alien Bodies', Ramsay Burt writes how the body can be perceived as a production of society. If this is the case then nations can in turn be referenced in embodied terms also (Burt 1998). The aftermath of a divided collective consciousness must therefore be viewed through this physical, embodied means. Only then can we witness the unique effects it continues to have on its inhabitants, as well as the role that a more defined dance form has played in terms of nationalism and cultural politics.

When researching a culture of dance in Cyprus it is important to discuss the difficulties of defining a 'traditional' or 'local' Cypriot technique. Wrapped up within its complicated history, folk and village dance within the Greek-Cypriot Southern half of the island has often been presented as a form of 'living museum.' In the aftermath of colonialism, war and division, this Nationalist form of preserving the body of the past, can be linked to ideas of modernity in the 20th century, both pulling Cyprus out of the rural past, while simultaneously re-asserting its presence as 'other'. The scholar Anthony Shay suggests that by connecting dance to an ancient or ‘village-based’ Greek past, support from the government, mainly based around the economic benefits of tourism, gained success (Shay 1987, 191.). For Cyprus this has at times aided in promoting the ideals of a purely 'Greek' as opposed to uniquely 'Cypriot' artform. For the viewer, this vantage point is magnified through the spaces these performances are limited to. Contained within religious festivals, school shows or political rally's, the more social, expressive and improvisational elements that once defined the character of these dances in their colloquial contexts, are often stripped away. They promote a strictly Greek-Cypriot collective identity of what Benedict Anderson terms his imagined Communities.’ As Ramsay Burt also describes, defining the term 'collective
identity' a group is then undeniably excluding non-members, strangers and as such their alien bodies (Burt 1998, 5.). In Cyprus' case, the whole Northern half of the island and its population of 300,000 constitutes a collective ‘alien body.’

It is perhaps the exclusion, denial and lack of research on the influences that Turkish, Middle Eastern and Balkan vocabulary has had on Cypriot dance that has stunted the more recent development, experimentation and necessary critique within these folk dance frameworks. In fact, even the names of these dances are often directly derived from Turkish. In his book 'Echos from the Dead Zone' the author Yiannis Papadakis recalls an encounter he had with a Turkish man: "Then came the time for dancing" he writes. ‘So What kinds of things do you dance?’ The Turk asked. ‘Well’ I replied, ‘karshilamas, chifteteli, Zeymbekiko, these are our traditional dances.’ They roared with laughter for they too knew the names of the dances and all the names came from Turkish. (Papadakis 2005, 13.).

As such, until more recent years, both the professional and social dance scenes within Cyprus have been reluctant in their use of a folk vocabulary within their own choreographic tool kits. However, this has seen change within recent years, mostly sparked through more experimentation within the field of music. The coming of age of a post-war generation, following the events of 1974, has given rise to a new group of artists, students and communities. These groups did not experience the invasion or consequent refugee crisis first-hand, yet have nevertheless grown up surrounded by these narratives. Stories, facts, mythologies, statistics, quotes, names of enemies and heroic figures are still very much engrained into the mindsets of communities from both sides, and tensions are still very much alive.

I have spoken about the history of the island leading into the 20th century. Since the year 2000 however, three events feature prominently in the collective memory of Cypriot culture that must now be placed within the islands historical timeline. These include the
partial re-opening of the borders on April 23rd of 2003, the 2008 acquisition of membership for Cyprus into the Eurozone, and the economic downturn and aftermath of the financial crisis in 2013. The more recently developed professional dance scene on the island has undoubtedly been influenced by a European and American framework of a 'dance company'. However, within these companies there has been less emphasis on athleticism, speed and technique. These are methods that are still utilized but that are known to be international, foreign methods of training. Within the productions of professional companies such as 'Asomates Dynameis' and 'Paravan productions', the main aspect that is taken from these international influences comes from the ideas found within post-modern dance. This includes concept based choreography, improvisational scoring, and most significantly, site-specific performance context. In turn this has created a more local Cypriot interpretation of international dance. Here, the interrogation of the body in space is a primary focus. In these works, the body is emphasized as ephemeral. Its impermanence and fluctuation makes the body a site of consciousness; a metaphor perhaps of people, homes and landscapes lost. The relationship to the body is problematic, difficult, questionable. The company name 'Asomates Dynameis' for example literally means 'body-less powers'.

This site-specific work ranges from large-scale territories to more inward, psychological fields. The dance-theater troupes 'Paravan productions' and 'RainZonances' have questioned space, utilizing demolished, half constructed and abandoned sites throughout the island. These include the old, abandoned Nicosia Airport, a deteriorating bank that closed post-crisis, and a now-demolished state theater. In one work entitled 'Prosexos', bodies move through an area along the buffer-zone (now a parking lot) where a large-scale cultural center was once scheduled to be built. Abandoned after the economic downturn of 2013, the ‘center’ is yet another ‘dead’ space added to the dividing Buffer Zone. Through their bodies
the artists attempt to outline a ground plan of an imaginary stage set. In turn these fictive designs are manifested through constructed and improvised movements.

Likewise, in Christina Georgiou's 2013 piece 'Sewing the Border Line' the artist maneuvers her body around the small crevices, bullet-holes and niches of the UN Buffer Zone. Her physicality points her into lands unknown, deteriorating and forbidden. Through a meditative circumnavigation of the dividing line, the implications of this ‘deadzone’ reverberate into an interrogation of wider issues. Georgiou's body is in turn a site itself, inscribed with the effects of economy, transnationalism and the islands own potent history located at the crossroads of East and West.

I now turn to the country’s social dance scene. Within this colloquial sphere, the climate of uncertainty and instability since the economic crisis has in turn seen an unprecedented increased interest in local, Cypriot culture and in turn its forms of artistic expression. The Cypriot dialect for example, once a source of embarrassment, backwardness, and of the un-educated rural villager, is now in what I call a state of an ‘active tradition.’ A tradition promoting Cypriot pride and identity as something distinctly different from Greece. This sense of an 'active' tradition has in many ways fragmented the notion of a 'living museum' that I mentioned above. When it comes to contemporary experimentation within traditional folk art, music has taken center stage. The music trio Monsieur Doumani are an example of the importance that a relevant local form of art can have on a community.

What has this increased local pride meant for dance? The development of new spaces for concert settings and community gatherings has in turn allowed for the more improvisational, experiential and social aspects that once formed a local type of movement to be present once more. At social events one witnesses stomping feet, circling hand gestures, shimmying shoulders and undulating hips. These movements harken to more codified middle eastern and Greek circle dances, however their expression is not based on a scholarly example of a past
artform. These new experiential and experimental outlets have instead created space where movement is organic, individualized and internationally influenced all at once.

It is perhaps within the increasingly popular festival scene that these ideas are best exemplified. These events are no doubt modeled on international festivals, and oftentimes feature multicultural artists. However, since their conception they have aimed their focus on what makes them uniquely Cypriot, and in turn questions what Cypriots have to offer to a global festival culture. This is unlike the internationally influenced club scenes that had mostly dominated social outings until recent years, especially within a 21st century world of increased globalization. Instead, the festival can perhaps be seen as a modern day ‘Panygiri,’ a socially engaged space of reverie, release and ecstatic movement; a space where both professional and social dance share and negotiate their power and authority. A local, engaged, Cypriot public has the potential therefore to organically participate in an ‘active tradition’ of social dance. And although there are countless problems that have yet to be tackled, this new ‘active tradition’ is one that is open, evolving and all-inclusive.

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The phenomenon of authenticity in Esmeralda Santiago’s *Almost a Woman* and *The Turkish Lover*

Rachel A. Oriol

Abstract (02/01/2016): My project centers around Esmeralda Santiago’s memoirs, *Almost A Woman* and *The Turkish Lover* wherein Santiago details her transition from Puerto Rico to the United States in her adolescent and early adult years. My research focuses on her experiences at the prestigious New York City Performing Arts High School, her work as an actress and dancer in movies and on Broadway, and her time as a student at Harvard where she produced and performed in a senior dance thesis. In particular, my intervention seeks to connect Santiago’s shifting sense of authenticity as a Puerto Rican woman with the modern dance scene in 1960s-1970s New York, and asks how her representations of movement and dance affect an interpretation of identity as authentic or appropriation. My research uncovers important history about Latinas in the New York modern dance scene, and probes into why modern dance choreographers sought out “ethnic bodies” for their dance repertoires. Moreover, as part of a larger dissertation on representations of dancing Latina bodies, this work follows in the footsteps of performance scholars like Diana Taylor and Rebecca Schneider who question how the body is both an archive for embodied knowledge and also an agent of “authentic” performative expression. Recent scholarship from Ramón H. Rivera-Servera and Rebecca Rossen supports my investigation into how the “authentic” dancing body is a layered process of tropes and images that reside in the memory (and memoirs) of U.S. audiences.

Abstract (06/15/2016): Abstract: My project centers around Esmeralda Santiago’s memoirs, *Almost A Woman* and *The Turkish Lover*, wherein Santiago details her transition from Puerto Rico to the United States in her adolescent and early adult years. My research focuses on Santiago’s shifting sense of authenticity as a Puerto Rican woman within Indian classical dance, specifically bharata natyam. I argue that being seen as an “ethnic” body allowed Santiago to create an identity in the U.S., not through Puerto Rican representations, but through U.S. conceptions of “ethnic” bodies. Santiago’s experiences at the New York City Performing Arts High School, as well as her work as an actress and dancer in movies and on Broadway, and her own choreographed dance thesis at Harvard, taught her that an ambiguous ethnic identity leads to flexibility and opportunity - even if it creates distance from her Puerto Rican roots. My work questions whether Santiago represents her love of Indian classical dance as appropriation or authentic interpretation of her own “ethnic” experiences. The project follows in the footsteps of performance scholars like Rebecca Schneider who question how the body is both an archive for embodied knowledge and also an agent of “authentic” performative expression. Recent scholarship from Rebecca Rossen and Janet O’Shea support my investigation into how an ethnic dancing body is a layered process of tropes and images that reside in the memory (and memoirs) of U.S. audiences.

This presentation outlines my research on the relationship between dance memoirs, bodily knowledge, and representations of dancing Latina bodies. Today I will discuss these
themes in relation to Esmeralda Santiago’s final two memoirs, *Almost a Woman* and *The Turkish Lover*. This research is part of a dissertation that seeks to open up an interdisciplinary methodology in how we archive Latina dance performance. My work is in dialogue with dance scholarship like that from Ninotchka D. Bennahum (2012), Melissa Blanco Borelli (2015), and Cindy Garcia (2013) who investigate the way choreography informs identity formation for Flamenca/o, Hispanic, and Latina/o groups in and outside the United States. These dancer-scholars have inspired my primary research questions: how does choreography signal national or ethnic identities? Who is able to participate in these choreographic identities? How are identities archived in the body?

Theoretically, I take a cue from Rebecca Rossen’s study, *Dancing Jewish: Jewish Identity in American Modernism and Postmodern Dance*, which describes how dancers and choreographers of Jewish heritage have navigated shifting ethnic and national identities. Rossen’s definition about the construction of Jewish identity is an important one for me: she argues that ethnic identity through dance is “not a matter of essences, but rather a repertory of images, themes, and frames” (2014, 3). In other words, she finds that “‘dancing Jewish’ is an action or process that embraces the fluidity and complexity of Jewish identity” (2014, 3). I think of Latina identities in a similar way. Although I am not arguing for an essential trait of Latina identity, I believe that dance provides a valuable area of study where we find traces and actions that signify the authenticity of performance in latinidad.

However, I think Rossen’s definitions become more complicated in a Latina context. For while she argues that some Jewish dancers were able to identify as both Jewish and American, I am not sure that works for the racialized body of the Latina. Many dancing Latina bodies are unable to signify as “American” unless they have avoided all “images, themes, and frames” of
latinidad. Therefore, I use Rossen’s ideas as a starting point for new research questions: what does it mean if a dance uses a “repertory of images, themes, and frames” of an ethnicity different from that of the performer’s? How do we define a “fluidity” of ethnicity through dance? I will discuss these ideas by investigating how Santiago narrates her life story as a Puerto Rican woman through Indian classical dance, and what implications these representations have for the idea of authenticity. In particular, I use the idea of embodied knowledge, or the way humans make sense of the world through bodily experiences, and their (conscious or unconscious) conclusions from these experiences, to bridge the gap between dance and self.¹

While some have criticized Santiago’s memoirs for missing deep reflection, or “hindsight” as Bliss Broyard of the *New York Times Sunday Book Review* wrote, I would argue that poignant reflection in these narratives comes through Santiago’s attention to dance throughout her young adult life (2004). Santiago uses dance to represent various identity options available to her in the U.S., and eventually, as a way to transform her life story into art. Santiago’s use of dance complicates the idea of an “authentic” self, revealing the way the dancing body both absorbs and expresses knowledge and identity.

For example, when she dances salsa at nightclubs with her family, Negi², as Santiago is affectionately called by her family, is a young Puerto Rican woman. When she plays Cleopatra for three years in high school productions, Negi is the exotic, ethnic woman. When she takes modern dance classes as a young college student, Negi is part of the vibrant New York dance scene. When she is told she “should be” an Indian classical dancer, Negi becomes one. Nonetheless, Santiago’s use of dance is more than a trope for her experiences in the United States. Her memoirs demonstrate that dance is a complex combination of performance, self, and embodied knowledge that allows Negi to connect to her self fully.³ Of interest to me is that she
duplicates decades of her life to studying Indian classical dance, specifically the bharata natyam and kathak. The bodily knowledge she learns through Indian classical dance affirms her American and Puerto Rican experiences, allowing her to be both exotic and familiar in how she understood her self.

Santiago began dance training in high school and continued to practice and perform into her mid-thirties. It is no surprise then that dance becomes an important topic in the memoirs of her youth. Caught between a strict Puerto Rican mother and the new world of New York City, her second memoir Almost a Woman emphasizes the role of performance in the acculturation and adolescent processes. Negi falls in love with her ballet and modern dance classes in high school:

“I welcomed the dull aches after class, the stretched muscles that vibrated for hours, the rush of blood to my face, arms, and legs. It was the only time I was warm, the only time in Brooklyn winters when my body moved the way I remember it moving in Puerto Rico – free, open to possibilities, unafraid” (Santiago 1998, 67).

Representing dance as a sense of warmth and freedom connects Santiago with her childhood in Puerto Rico, and these sensations show up again when she describes salsa dancing with her family:

“…The feeling came from the heat generated by the dance itself, had nothing to do with the way I looked but everything to do with the way I moved. I became the complex rhythms, aware only of the joy of moving freely, gracefully…” (1998, 96).

Surprisingly, Santiago does not write salsa dancing as a validation of her Puerto Rican identity because of its ties to the Caribbean, or because salsa music and dance was on the rise in 1960s New York. Instead the memoirs focus on finding a connection to Puerto Rico through the movements and rhythms of classical Indian dance. Santiago uses these representations to show that there are connections between various ethnic dance styles that can contribute to a familiar sense of self.
However, the image of Negi as a dancing Puerto Rican woman also gives way to roles that hinge on stereotypes. In high school, she is asked to play the role of Cleopatra for three years because of her “ethnic” look, perfecting her ability to embody the “exotic characters” (Santiago 1998, 130). One might expect Santiago to express discomfort at being typecast, but she approaches her ambiguous “ethnic look” with curiosity. For example, in her junior year she is approached by Matteo, a dance instructor at her high school. He tells her, “You must be an Indian classical dancer.” She responds, “No sir, I’m a Puerto Rican actress.” He corrects her, “I didn’t say you are, I said you must be. Come see me” (1998, 128). It turns out that this instructor is Matteo, of Matteo and Carla Goya, two of the more successful ethnic performers in the mid-to-late twentieth century (Bennahum 2012, 3). His comments spark Negi’s curiosity about why she “must be” an Indian classical dancer. Matteo, himself of Italian American heritage, specialized in Indian classical dance believing that all “ethnic” dances lead to a “humanistic message that dance must be understood as fundamental to human society and cross-cultural understanding” (Bennahum 2012, 3). Under his tutelage, Negi takes ten years of lessons in bharata natyam, eventually attaining a role on Broadway for the Children’s Theatre International company. Most importantly, the introduction of Indian classical dance into Negi’s life connects her with the musical rhythms she knew as a child in Puerto Rico. Santiago recalled in a personal interview, “I was really much more connected to the rhythms of my island. So, when I heard Indian classical music the first time, the complexity of the rhythms spoke to me. Somehow they were more familiar [than modern dance], and my body responded in a different way” (2016). Santiago indicates this recognition of embodied knowledge when she remembers one instructor telling her: “Stop thinking…and dance” (1998, 130). This is an important lesson for Negi. Santiago’s embodied knowledge from childhood supports the feeling of familiarity when she encounters
Indian classical dance. Thus, in this dance style Santiago expresses both the exotic role that she “perfected” in high school, as well as her inner knowledge and rhythms (1998, 130).

Even with her dedication to Indian classical dance, Santiago does try out for Puerto Rican roles. After she is cast in the film version of *Up The Down Staircase*, she goes to see a Warner Brothers casting director, Mr. Jeffers, about future parts. At first he seems enthusiastic about using her in an upcoming film, but later realizes that he confused her for another Puerto Rican actress. He says, “The other girl looks more Puerto Rican…You just don’t have the look. You’re a pretty girl. This is the movies. It’s about the look” (Mr. Jeffers quoted in Santiago 1998, 151). Overwhelmed by the idea of what she should “look” like, Negi locates pictures of famous Puerto Rican actors and dancers like Rita Moreno, Chita Rivera, and José Ferrer wondering, “Had I not known that they were [Puerto Rican], would I have said, there goes a compatriota?” (1998, 152).

It is a poignant moment because the authority on what “looks” good – i.e. Hollywood – tells Negi that what she identifies as is not an option, she begins to question the function of ethnic labels.

Rita Moreno, one of the most successful Puerto Rican performers, has also noted the complexity of being seen as an “ethnic” actress in the U.S. In her memoir Moreno describes the role of Anita in *West Side Story* as “the great ethnic role” (2013, 183). She explains, “While I had been balking all my life at playing stereotyped Hispanic roles in the movies, all of those Conchitas and Lolitas, I leaped at the opportunity to audition for the part of Anita. Anita was real! She was Puerto Rican, and she was fighting for her rights” (Moreno 2013, 183). For Moreno, playing Anita in the 1961 film allowed her to present someone “real,” or rather, someone more aligned with what she understood as a marker of her fellow compatriots: someone “fighting for her rights.” Yet only five years later, Negi thinks of Anita as a stereotype. She
dreams of playing a more complex Puerto Rican character, “[n]ot Maria or Anita or any of the Sharks’ girlfriends. I was to be a character with a name, a smart girl, someone my age” (Santiago 1998, 150). Both women are caught in a situation where playing a character of their own ethnicity can present a stereotype, but even attaining these roles requires more than simply being of that ethnic group. It gets at a philosophical question about the nature of performance: what is the separation between the performer and the representation? Santiago’s narratives rest on the idea that ethnic identity is made up of performance, but not necessarily of your own ethnic group. She demonstrates this through her representation of Indian classical dance as a way to feel at home with herself in her third memoir.

In The Turkish Lover, Negi leaves New York and her family to follow her lover, Ulvi Dogan, an award winning Turkish director. The narrative describes their quasi-abusive, tumultuous relationship: Ulvi does not allow her to dress, speak, or go out without his permission. Toward the fifth year of this relationship, Negi takes the chance and applies to Harvard as a transfer student. She gets in, and promptly moves to Boston while Ulvi moves back to New York for work. It is in the breakdown of this relationship that Negi begins her time at Harvard, where she promptly joins a ballroom dancing group, a theatre company, takes belly dancing lessons, and finds a guru for Indian classical dance. Her immediate urge to dance demonstrates the importance of movement to Santiago in the re-birth of her self, and it culminates with her senior thesis project, a dance interpretation of the Hebrew “Song of Songs.”

Santiago writes about her return to Indian classical dance while at Harvard, “I had not had a bharata natyam class in four years, but dancers rely on muscular memory, the concept that the body never forgets what it has learned” (2004, 264). In returning to Indian classical dance, Negi describes the “euphoria of its pure dance sequences” and how she feels “most myself in the
expression of music” (2004, 264). Although Santiago does not use the term “embodied knowledge,” she recognizes that the body holds onto knowledge from past experiences, just as she had retained the physical sensations of being a child in Puerto Rico. More significantly, Santiago writes of Indian classical dance as allowing her to be “most myself.” With a new guru in Boston Negi is introduced to kathak, which Santiago describes as a storytelling dance: it uses “body movements and rhythmic expression to move the audience through the artful suggestion of human emotions and actions” (2004, 265). Negi dedicates herself to practicing this choreography, and in doing so Santiago links her need for a more complete sense of self to dance and narrative.

In a personal interview with Santiago, she described the complex choreography of her senior dance thesis at Harvard to me: she danced different Indian classical dance styles to spoken actors’ interpretations of each speaker’s part in the “Song of Songs,” while also performing fire dances from the belly dance traditions as book-ends to the event. Santiago reflected that this multifaceted performance pulled together different parts of herself:

“It really was me trying to bring all aspects of my being in one performance, in one way, that would express all the things that were important to me: spiritualism, my physicality, my intellectual knowledge, my interest in language. All those things came together” (2016)

In the memoirs, it is precisely through the danced expression of embodied knowledge that Negi is presented as her complete self. The practice of these rigorous and demanding dance styles help Negi to grow – allowing her to center herself through dance practice. As she noted to me,

“[Indian classical dance movements] bring me to the home in my body that I carry with me. And that’s the one thing I got the most from having been a dancer. I found a home within myself” (Santiago 2016). It is perhaps not a coincidence then that dance scholar Janet O’Shea similarly
uses the word “home” in her book on bharata natyam, *At Home in the World: Bharata Natyam on the Global Stage*.

In her study, O’Shea explains the way bharata natyam “transcends national and cultural boundaries yet remains resolutely tied to them. It circulates globally but operates as a symbol of the exotic” (2007, 4). She argues that diasporic communities create local, home communities by founding dance companies that ground their dance in flexible yet traditional historical narratives. Both a historical and choreographic archive, O’Shea explains how bharata natyam experienced a revival in the 1960s and 1970s in North America, precisely when Santiago was training in the dance style (2007, 3). She poignantly argues that twentieth century choreographers of bharata natyam used “tactic and strategy, focusing on action and decision making” in order to engage political and national concerns about authenticity and tradition (O’Shea 2007, 12). Although O’Shea was not investigating non-Indian choreographers and dancers, I find her observations about bharata natyam in the late twentieth century to resonate with Santiago’s use of Indian classical dance.

Santiago crafted her senior thesis through Indian and Middle Eastern dance forms in order to engage in all the parts of her self, but she also relied on them as “symbol[s] of the exotic” (O’Shea, 2007, 4). I do not mean that she sought to exploit the repertoire of Indian classical dance, but rather, she needed a dance form that allowed her to be both exotic and familiar in how she understood her self. As O’Shea argues, the “interplay of social, political, and aesthetic concerns” drives choreographic choices “while recognizing dancers grapple with these issues in a range of different ways and through devices and decisions that are not easily or obviously predictable from their social identity, their stylistic lineage, or their performance history” (2007, 12-13). Although O’Shea was referring to diasporic Indian communities, the need
to bridge social identity, performance, and dance lineages applies to Santiago’s immigrant narratives as well.

As I have shown, Santiago’s dedication to Indian classical dance may not have come from her Puerto Rican identity, but it is also not without logic given the “interplay of social, political, and aesthetic concerns” of bharata natyam that she was able to express her experiences as the “exotic ethnic” during her move to the U.S. Santiago’s ethnic identity as a Puerto Rican woman is tied to “a repertory of images, themes, and frames” as Rossen suggests – but it just so happens that the repertoire she has access to is from Indian classical dance (2014, 3). Perhaps her instructor Matteo was right: she “must be” connected to Indian classical dance. In my interview with her, Santiago also revealed to me that she had recently taken a DNA test and found that “something like 25% of my DNA is actually from the Middle East” (2016). To Santiago, it was a suggestion of the authentic that spoke to her love of Indian culture. Thus, it is not surprising that Santiago’s memoirs argue for dance as a method to express embodied knowledge that goes beyond a single ethnic identity.

Notes

1 I place the use of the term “embodied knowledge” in conversation with performance studies scholars like Rebecca Schneider (2011) or E. Patrick Johnson (2003), who use it to describe the connections between lived experience and archival traces. But, I also recognize its use within rhetorical studies like that of A. Abby Knoblauch (2012), who argues for careful attention to what is at stake when calling attention to the ahistorical “embodied” form.

2 I will use “Santiago” to refer to the author, and “Negi,” to refer to the representation of the author.

3 I am purposefully drawing attention to Santiago’s subjectivity by using “her” and “self” separately at times, and not as a reflexive pronoun. In the dissertation, I define the relationship between the “self” and “identity” more clearly.

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Ralph Lee Collaborations with Erick Hawkins
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Abstract: Choreographer Erick Hawkins (1909-1994) and mask maker Ralph Lee (writer/director of the Mettawee River Company) collaborated in the production of several important works. Our research into their creative process reveals the cross-fertilization of their ideas and aesthetics. This presentation draws on primary source materials such as notebooks, letters, and interviews to describe and illustrate their collaborations. Sketches, photographs and video clips will also help tell the story of their processes and products. Additional anecdotal information will be drawn from our personal experiences as Hawkins Company soloists. These resources supply concrete evidence about the various ways Hawkins and Lee communicated their ideas and provide the through-line as they work over time. Perhaps the most striking and profound collaboration married choreography and masks for Plains Daybreak (1979). The animal masks, made of wood, feathers, horsehair, paper and yarn, were worn in rehearsal, inspiring both the creation of movement and fine-tuning of the masks. Their final work produced together, Killer of Enemies (1991), included headpieces, masks and body masks, language, movement and music that united to illuminate the themes of this creation myth. This wonderful journey through seed ideas, sketches, revisions, rehearsal and more revisions is traced via archival materials. Emphasis will remain on the primary-source content as we consider the commitment to collaboration as demonstrated by these two artists.

Ralph Lee (b 1935), the award-winning mask-maker, sculptor, puppeteer, writer, and founder and director of the Mettawee River Theatre Company, first met choreographer Erick Hawkins in the 1940s when the Martha Graham Dance Company was in residence at Middlebury College. Hawkins was a dancer in the Graham Company and Lee, whose parents were professors at the college, lived in Middlebury. Neither would have guessed that they would enjoy a long and fruitful collaboration as mask-maker and choreographer.

Many years after their first meeting, Hawkins hired Lee to create masks for his dances, including Lords of Persia (choreographed in 1965; masks created later), Parson Weems and the Cherry Tree, etc. (1975), Death is the Hunter (1975), Plains Daybreak (masks and sets, 1979), Ahab (1986) and Killer of Enemies (masks and costumes, 1991).
In a September 16, 2015 interview with Ralph Lee, Laura Pettibone learned that Hawkins and Lee’s first project, in the late 60s or early 70s, was the fashioning of a mask for the George Washington character in *Parson Weems and the Cherry Tree, etc.* After the mask was completed, Hawkins was so pleased that he decided to wait for the country’s bicentennial to choreograph the dance. The mask was originally fashioned from ‘solata,’ similar to papier-mâché. Although Hawkins was happy with the shape of the mask, he did not care for the material. He asked Lee to “do it in balsa wood” (Pettibone interview with Lee). Lee found the grain of the wood dictated the form of the mask producing a simpler, more geometric design. When Hawkins visited Lee in his studio and slipped on the mask, Lee thought, “oh no, he doesn’t like it” but he soon realized that the stern look was that of the mask and not that of the choreographer! For *Death is the Hunter,* Hawkins asked Lee to fashion the interior of the masks as exquisitely as the exterior so the dancers would stay focused and have no reason to consider an unfinished mask interior.

Hawkins preferred primary or ‘innocent’ materials such as balsa wood, paper, leather, felt, feathers and horsehair that were fragile, and according to Lee, frustrating to work with and impractical to take on tour. Following Hawkins’ lead, however, Lee found ways of using these natural materials inventively to create elegant designs that evoked the essence of the subject. He devised designs that stayed in tact through numerous performances and tours.

Hawkins believed the visual design, music and choreography should be refined and poetic, each a plenary achievement on its own. Hawkins’s standards were rigorous but there was a generosity of spirit to which collaborating artists responded favorably. Hawkins encouraged artists to find their own way while gently, yet often imposingly, guiding their process. Hawkins’s rigorous expectations set a high bar for Lee’s designs. Says Lee:
I used to dread Erick’s calls. The phone would unexpectedly ring at one-thirty in the morning. He was in high gear. I would be staggering toward bed after a long day. Now I was captured for another hour. Sometimes I would hold the phone a couple of feet away from me while he talked. I knew that what he had in mind for me would be like going on a secret mission. All faculties had to be fully alert. I’d have to plunge into unknown territory. There was no telling how long the trip would take and where it would lead. I couldn’t refuse him. My curiosity was sparked. And besides, he knew just how to flatter me. I’d always wanted to apprentice myself to a master. Working with Erick is the closest I’ve ever come to that. He was. Other people would be delighted with whatever I made. Erick would come to my studio and look hard at the work in progress. “Not good enough. Not good enough.” (Ballet Review 1996, 80)

Possibly Lee and Hawkins’ most successful collaboration was Plains Daybreak, a dance that Hawkins contemplated for nearly 40 years. His writings, while jotted in his studio or camping in the western United States, note his desire to express the dawning of the first perfect day in a perfect world. Instead of Adam and Eve inhabiting the opening of the world, Hawkins contemplated the world as one where humans and animals live harmoniously. The New York Times critic, Anna Kisselgoff stated on February 9, 1983 that Plains Daybreak “…one of Erick Hawkins’ most beautiful dance works…one of Mr. Hawkins’ nature pieces…a very ceremonial view of the Creation of the world…has the special translucent purity that is a Hawkins hallmark” (1983). She describes the dance as a ceremony inspired by “American Indian culture” but rather than copying the culture, it is a “poetic distillation of essences” (1983).
Lee created glowing discs representing the sun and moon, a mask worn by the human and masks representing animals. The creation of the masks was one where Hawkins initiated a design and then suggested developments by sharing photographs, sketches and descriptions of animal characteristics. Hawkins recommended books for Lee to read, as well to study Pueblo and Plains paintings, sand paintings, and pottery designs. Hawkins sketched mask ideas and shared them with Lee stressing the necessary abstraction of each character’s mask. Hawkins and the dancers delivered materials, such as reed and dried weeds, to Lee in his studio with which to experiment. Many letters were exchanged during the development of the masks. In a note dated January 19, 1977, Hawkins writes to Lee:

Dear Ralph:

Naturally after I leave you I keep ruminating about everything...(In reference to the buffalo mask) I strongly suggest that you try the black horse hair on the top of the cross piece of the horns and see if that won’t do the two needs of covering the face and breaking the white crossline. I love what you did so much...I love the boldness of the horns...The only trouble is that instead of just accepting the abstraction, stylization, design of the horns...I revert to seeing WATER BUFFALO...How to find the boldness of what you have done and make it register Plains bison horns a little more without suggesting anything else.

Here are some feathers.
An example of Hawkins’ uncompromising desire to fulfill his vision was that Lee was required to carve three sets of smooth and elongated antelope horns before Hawkins was satisfied. “And it was difficult carving those horns!” exclaimed Lee to Catherine Tharin in an interview November 2016. The horns were either too long or not quite the right shape. Ultimately, Hawkins, who was searching for a “purity of feeling,” was pleased with the third and final carving (Hawkins, letter to Lee, Dec 15, 1976). Lee in Ballet Review Fall, 1996 states: “He’d leave and I’d be furious, mainly because I knew he was right. Back to the drawing board. He showed me how deep you can search and how high things can soar” (1996). Their give and take continued for many months until, “Something tells me that you have arrived at the area that they are all going to be in.” (1996) “But also we are we. This is all a dream seen thru our eyes...I think your part in this can be a great work of art...I think it can come out absolutely brilliant” (Hawkins, letter, Dec 15, 1976).

Indeed, Hawkins and Lee found a satisfying collaborative balance between the overall vision of the dance and the expression of each of the mask essences, as First Man and the animals found a synchronous theatrical balance of existence in Plains Daybreak. This fruitful partnership continued in the development of their final collaboration, Killer of Enemies, their second and final creation myth.

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Catherine Tharin was a soloist in the Erick Hawkins Dance Company, 1988-1994. As 92Y Harkness Dance Curator, Tharin programs hundreds of notable artists. She was a Lecturer at Iona College from 1995-2015. Her choreography was most recently produced at WET, NYC, February 2017. In October 2016, she was honored by The Field. She serves on the Bessies.

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Organic Source Attribution and Transparency in Teaching Dance
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Abstract: As dance moves away from historically authoritarian teaching practices, dance educators are exploring methods that embrace a new culture of teaching and learning. Participants in this workshop will explore models that organically reveal the lineages, histories and contexts of concepts exchanged in movement. Practical opportunities to organically incorporate source attribution and transparent teaching strategies to engage students as partners in learning will be explored. Examples from the pedagogies of Erick Hawkins (modern dance), Martha Eddy (somatics) and Frank Abrahams (music education) illustrate alternative strategies.

As dance moves away from historically authoritarian teaching practices, dance educators are exploring methods that embrace a new culture of teaching and learning. Models that organically reveal the lineages, histories and contexts of concepts exchanged in movement classes demonstrate an inclusive and shared body of ideas. There are many practical opportunities to organically incorporate source attribution and transparent teaching strategies to engage students as partners in learning. Examples from the pedagogies of Erick Hawkins (modern dance), Martha Eddy (somatics) and Frank Abrahams (music education) illustrate alternative strategies.

Movement educator and somatic therapist Martha Eddy points out that “We must be careful not to co-opt knowledge. … At the very least, it is important to make time to credit sources” (Eddy 2000). In classes ranging from Dynamic Embodiment to Conflict Resolution, Eddy inserts historical, parallel, and cross-fertilized streams of knowledge into the flow of each class. One such reference might be a brief nod to a teacher, a technique or an artist. Another might be a comparison of similar principles or theories. Equally important, longer references to her personal lineage and resources provide a profound sense of history and place. Eddy demonstrates the ease with which one can reveal the multilayered, ever-expanding landscape of ideas.
In his paper on Critical Pedagogy for Music Education, Frank Abrahams (2006) offers principles for developing a new paradigm: “Four essential questions … guide the development of each music lesson: Who am I? Who are my students? What might my students become? What might my students and I become together?” These tenants provide a very different paradigm from traditional dance pedagogy. The teacher no longer represents the fount of knowledge; the lesson objective no longer has dominance over the process of information gathering. Learning is a conversation that changes all participants. With these questions in mind, dance educators can begin to deeply question the content and sequence of learning dance skills.

Choreographer and master teacher Erick Hawkins regularly cited material from varied sources in technique classes and rehearsals, transparently modeling how he continually developed his kinesthetic, philosophic and aesthetic ideas. Dancers were enriched by connections to history, science and current events; in fact, developing artistry and intellect were equally as important as training for physical facility. The following quotations are examples that Hawkins might espouse in exploring one movement idea, moving from center with weight transfer, through four different sets of principles: movement, somatic, philosophic and aesthetic. In the workshop experience of this paper, participants embodied the movement idea from these different points of view.

1. Movement principles: “Doing must be balanced by not-doing” and “Just do the movement.” (Hawkins 1992, 94). These concepts were heavily influenced by Herrigel’s *Zen in the Art of Archery*.

2. Somatic principle: “Direct and immediate apprehension of sensation; sensory awareness—which is proprioceptive awareness.” (Milz 1991)
3. Philosphic principle: “Pure fact: a continuum of ineffable aesthetic qualities, not an external material object. … Pure fact cannot even be expressed with words.” (Northrop 1947, 41)

4. Aesthetic principle: “The first function [property] of art is when art deals only in the primary elements of all arts – the senses. It is awareness! These are the primary materials of art. They are ineffable.” (Hawkins 1992, 18)

In conclusion, it is clear there are many tools to be adopted by dance educators throughout the spectrum of teaching and learning that will move the discipline to a more student-centered, explorative methodology. Within a dance technique class, change can occur by opening the body of knowledge through source citations, asking questions about who the students and teachers are and what they might become together, and inviting a wide range of ideas into the studio. Herrigel mused thus:

“I once asked … why the Master had looked on so long at my futile efforts to draw the bow ‘spiritually,’ why he had not insisted on the correct breathing right from the start. Herrigel was told, ‘A great Master … must also be a great teacher. Had he begun with breathing exercises, he would never have been able to convince you that you owe them anything decisive. You had to suffer shipwreck through your own efforts before you were ready to seize the lifebelt he threw you’” (Herrigel 1953, 26)

Authoritarian teaching practices can be stifling to student and teacher alike; instead, the process of curious exploration can enrich all.

Works Cited


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Abstract: After the fall of the colonial empire (1975), Portuguese cultural practices embodied many African influences. With decolonization, African social dances gradually became a social practice and more recently had a significant impact on Portuguese social habits. However, the presence of African features in contemporary dance has only ever been sparse. Why does this intercultural movement reveal such diverse intensities and speeds across different social and artistic contexts? This paper examines how post-colonial developments in dance practices contain distinctive layers that refer to broader debates only ever understandable within their own concrete historical contexts. This case study approaches dance analysis as a means of producing cultural criticism.

Lisbon 1974: a photo in black and white depicts an immensity of containers piled up next to the monument to the ‘Fifteenth Century Discoveries’. These bulky wooden boxes, enclosing the belongings of people who had hastily returned from the Portuguese African colonies, surrounded the monument portraying a stylized sea-going caravel, led by Prince Henry the Navigator (1394-1460) followed by some of the leading protagonists in the overseas exploration project of that time; navigators, cartographers, warriors, colonizers, evangelizers, chroniclers and artists. This isolated and high profile memorial, located in the historic site of Belém, on the bank of the Tagus river facing out into the Atlantic seafront, was built in 1940 – the golden era of the Estado Novo (New State) dictatorship (1926-1974) - to evoke Portugal's overseas expansion and synthetize a glorious past. Alfredo Cunha, the photographer of the impressive snapshot taken that year, entitled his work “The boxed empire”.

After the 1974 Portuguese revolution, hundreds of thousands of people fled the colonies fearing the consequences of African independence and the upsurge of civil wars in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau. Many such individuals came from families that had been in the colonies for several generations and/or had never been to Portugal. The so-called Carnation Revolution not only ended the five decades of Estado
Novo dictatorship: this brought about the final collapse of a five-century old colonial empire. Amidst the social and politically turbulent period of the following years, Portugal, a small country of ten million people, had to absorb this sudden influx of the then called *returnees*, who would strongly influence Portuguese cultural landscapes and social habits.

The symbolic return of the caravels – acutely encapsulated by Cunha’s photograph - constituted a fundamental historical reconfiguration of Portugal’s self-image and identity. On the southern periphery of Europe, Portuguese history and culture had merged its European roots with its overseas possessions ever since the fifteenth century. While the African presence in Portuguese society dates back centuries (Henriques 2009), connections with the south Atlantic remain crucial for the Portuguese culture and economy through to contemporary times.

The official state version reads that decolonization occurred exemplarily: the peaceful “Carnation revolution” opened a new democratic era, redefined the relationships between Portugal and its former African colonies all the while turning back to Europe and later the joining the European Union (1986). However, at a deeper, collective level, none of this happened without traumas.

Along the last two decades, symptoms of an unresolved past have been emerging. For instance, recent literature and film depict a kind of catharsis around silenced tragedies and violence. A certain African nostalgia is now breaking a wall of silence and correspondingly producing, as the Portuguese writer Lídia Jorge pointed out (2016) a new literary label: “literature of the return”.

This brief overview seeks to provide a framework for the questions I now wish to approach: how are these post-colonial processes reflected in theater and social dance practices? The departure point for this discussion stems from how these processes
attained quite different paces in the different social and theatre contexts (Roubaud 2016). This article addresses the meanings of these distinctive layers and how they refer to the broader debates envisaged in their historical and cultural backgrounds. Extending beyond a post-colonial Lusophone case study, these issues foreground the role of dance in the study of less visible dimensions of intercultural encounters and of local-global dialogues.

**Post-colonial skirmishes on the dancefloors**

These post-revolution demographic flows brought with them new cultural encounters. While counting on some support whether from the revolutionary state or their extended families, returnees had to restart their lives from scratch. Through the next two decades, many African music and dance houses opened up in Lisbon; these became both the gathering places and the opportunity to listen to the music people had become used to in their respective places of origin while also relieving their yearnings for homes lost through dancing together (Sedano 2015). While changing Lisbon’s night life, these places aimed primarily to recreate the ambiances of times past and their former urban colonial lifestyles. However, the artistic and intellectual elite of Lisbon, as well as younger generations, also became faithful clients. In the post-revolution years, this also displayed empathy and a statement of solidarity towards the new-born Portuguese-speaking African countries. Times were changing for the ex-colonizers and the ex-colonized alike.

Meanwhile, civil wars and political instability were ongoing in most of these newly independent African states; and the economic improvements that came with joining the European Union turned Portugal into an attractive destination for labor migration. This in turn bore consequences for the Lisbon social life. As Sedano points out in *´Kizomba Dance´: From Market Success to Controversial National Brand*
(forthcoming), from the 1990s onwards, a growing diversity of dance styles met on dance floors: there was a feeling of brotherhood and pleasure within a context in which immigrants were regarded indistinctly as foreigners and Africans; these Lisbon nights were the golden years for African social dances. An incredible new dance boom swept Portuguese society. More recently, economic crisis in Southern Europe has also played a role here (Sedano, forthcoming; Roubaud 2016). A couple dance style generally called *kizomba* became a profitable market: some African immigrants began teaching *kizomba* in order to make a living. This also then brought them a kind of social upgrade and added glamour and status.

This craze for *kizomba* reached prime time television and even arrived in small Portuguese rural villages, forming curious performative culture contaminations with local folk events in a way that had never before existed.

Furthermore, this unexpected craze reached beyond borders: as had happened before with tango or salsa, *kizomba* entered a global circuit spreading from Portugal all over Europe, the USA, Russia, Poland, North Africa or Asia. As Sedano suggests, the fact of being transformed from a spontaneous practice of backyard parties or African discos – whether in Portugal or in Portuguese-speaking African countries – into a globalized couple dance style led to the introduction of modifications that turned it into a codified and teachable dance form in order to address expanded western and northern (white) consumer expectations, social body codes and behaviors. This is currently producing heated debates and disagreements within the dance field: on the one hand, the aficionados, labelled as *kizombeiros*, on the other hand, the more spontaneous, open and diverse ways of dancing in African discos and backyards. Ultimately, these distinctive circuits have established distance between social worlds that find their correspondence
in different ways of embodying and dealing with dance practices. (Cavalcanti, Ademir, Sissi Bembom and Coreon Du 2012; Sedano forthcoming).

Rendered a global phenomenon, this correspondingly raises questions over the national belonging and labeling of kizomba. Even though the aura of the African teacher remains mythical on western dancefloors, the space is nowadays actually occupied by Portuguese and practitioners from other countries. Sedano (forthcoming) comments on how these debates around the origins and nationality of kizomba first arose and became particularly heated. Recently, a new actor joined this debate: the Angolan Ministry of Culture that launched an ambitious project - Kizomba Nation - in order to internationally promote the dance as a distinctive Angolan national brand; the term thereby refers to a group of practitioners spread all over the world, imagined as a national community. Jomo Fortunato, cultural critic and consultant to the Angolan Ministry of Culture, recently argued on Kizomba Nation´s YouTube channel:

“(…) strategically, we can link the outbreak of kizomba to the most important aspects of the reconstruction of Angola. It is important that (foreigners) know what Angola is and what are we doing, what we used to do in the old days (our history), in order to contextualize this emergence of kizomba. We Angolans have to take a smart profit from this international movement in order for our national image to gain recognition. This should mean associating the international kizomba movement to the important achievements of contemporary Angola.”

(Kizomba Nation 2013)

However, some teachers (mainly from Cape Verde) have maintained that this dance is not only Angolan but in fact an “African product”, claiming it for their own authenticity and legitimacy. In Europe, teachers have also argued that the dance style has become a “property of the world” and that their performances should thereby be recognized (Sedano forthcoming). Any tour of the social networks on this subject soon attests to how these discussions have become far more complex and intense.

African dancefloors became an intricate field where many layers of contemporary cultural issues enter into play. Surpassing specific post-colonial
Lusophone dimensions, the African social dance phenomenon raises debates on north-south and post-colonial gender negotiations, embodying identity processes, cultural stereotypes and national branding in these times of globalization. I shall return to this subject in the final discussion. However, first, let us briefly consider how contemporary Portuguese dance deals with the post-colonial heritage.

**Performing postcolonial Portugueseness on stage floors**

With the post-colonial cultural opening, a new generation of dancers and choreographers burst out of the fringes of the established companies. Contesting the canons of academic dance, these performances reflected both the discovery of western contemporary trends and the paradoxes and tensions brought about by the country’s reconfigurations (Roubaud 2006). Considering the freedom of “new independent dance” towards institutional dictates, it then seemed appropriate to ask just how was dance dealing with the new postcolonial encounters. Research has revealed that, over the post-revolution decades, facets of African heritage have remained virtually absent. Nevertheless, more detailed analysis of this mapping has shown that, despite this apparent refusal, we can observe how post-colonial themes have gradually entered Portuguese contemporary dance; with a slight intensification detectable since the new millennium (Roubaud 2012a; Roubaud 2016).

I shall now concisely address some examples before, in the final remarks, discussing them in relation to the different paces at which African dances entered Portuguese social practices.

The first example of such collaborations took place in the 1990s. Between 1994 and 1999, having been invited to create a dance piece within the scope of Lisbon European Capital of Culture (1994), the choreographer Clara Andermatt (b. 1963) held successive artistic residencies in the Republic of Cape Verde (Mindelo, São Vicente...
island). During this period and after, between Cape Verde and Portugal, she worked intensely with traditionally rooted local dance groups, correspondingly involving the participation of Cape Verdean and Portuguese musicians and dancers. The resulting choreographies evoked a miscegenation of Euro-American contemporary dance, Portuguese traditional folk dances, pop-rock concerts and Cape Verdean music and social dance events and would eventually address the dancer’s own immigration experiences (Roubaud 2010)

In Portugal, this “creole theatre dance” was very well received as a novelty of the time, especially amongst Portuguese critics, the dance milieu and other educated elites (Roubaud 2012a).

In Cape-Verde, her residence had quite an influence on local dance groups: opening a way into contemporary western dance concepts; with some Cape Verdean dancers moving to Portugal and trying to make their artistic way in Lisbon and Europe. Once in Portugal, many then started to teach Cape Verdean social dances in order to supplement their incomes; this is indeed one reason African dances entered Lisbon’s larger circuits and that later contributed to turning Lisbon into the launching point for spreading kizomba out into the world. However, in Cape-Verde, voices were raised in concern over a possible premature creative bleeding of the country (Deputter 2001; Roubaud 2008a).

“To dance what is ours” (Dançar o que é nosso) was an independent performative arts platform founded in Lisbon within the scope of the Alkantara association in 1998³. The platform’s aim was to foster exchanges between the Portuguese contemporary dance community and other Portuguese speaking African countries, within the scope of exploring the role of Lusophony and new paths for north-south collaborations. Interestingly the expectations of many of the African participants
during the platform’s first meeting in Lisbon involved “learning contemporary movements and steps to apply in their choreographies, and thus make their traditional dances more contemporary” (Deutter 2001: 18).

The creative projects developed under the auspices of Alkantara have included other long term initiatives, for example, that led by the choreographer Filipa Francisco (b.1971). Deriving from a series of workshops was a dance piece involving African descendants from urban poor suburbs alongside ethnically African dancers who had been brought up in the urban bourgeoisie and with previous contemporary dance experience. Not only did the participants perceive the process as successful (Capote and Roubaud 2008) but also, externally, the dance work received great applause from the contemporary dance entourage and even won the specialist critics award in 2008 (Lucas and Roubaud 2008). Through dance, an approach between distinctive social circuits and cultural worlds emerged. Trying to encounter a path between street and pop dance, traditional African social dances and contemporary dance procedures, this choreography seemed to have generated a very unique “third body” in which the negotiation threads that seconded it remained underlying (Roubaud 2012a). In fact, the creative process reenacted a microcosm of other social struggles ongoing in the broader Portuguese community: stigmas associated with ethnic origins, the in-group and out-group misunderstandings and the expectations as regards cultural belonging produced through skin color (Pinto 2008; Capote and Roubaud 2008).

My last example addresses another strand in these recent set of approaches. Within the scope of Alkantara and more recent Portuguese Ministry of Culture protocols with Mozambique and Angola, Portuguese choreographers such as Miguel Pereira (b. 1963) and Rui Lopes Graça (b.1964), born in the ex-colonies, became interested in returning to their own African roots. Despite their different dance
approaches, research has shown that this is to some extent an equivalent phenomenon to the “literature of the return”, as the issue of a certain nostalgia arose as an inner motif that endorsed the creative work (Roubaud 2012a; 2016).

Pereira revisited his transfigured childhood memories of Mozambique. The confrontation between return and evocations was presented as a physical and kinesthetic experience; while recalling social or traditional Mozambican dances, we lose clear perceptions about just who might be the legitimate holder of a certain legacy (Roubaud 2008b; 2012a).

In 2011, Lopes Graça worked with Mozambique’s Companhia Nacional de Canto e Dança (National Company of Song and Dance), a state company founded following the country’s independence (1975). At that time, the company’s goal was to rescue the ideal of a pre-colonial expressive culture designed to serve the socialist ideology and root the construction of Mozambique’s new identity. Our ethnographic inquiry revealed a company that had arrived at crossroads: caught between both the fall of the socialist project and the exposure to global culture and market economy, and between the need to express and deal with new identity dynamics and neo-colonial fears (Roubaud 2011; Roubaud and Soromenho 2012b). Two years later, Lopes-Graça worked with the Companhia de Dança Contemporânea de Angola (Angolan Contemporary Dance Company), the only (independent) contemporary dance company in the country, founded by the white-Angolan choreographer Ana Clara Guerra Marques in 1991 in the midst of the bloody civil war (1975 – 2002). As the company is committed to developing “Angolan contemporary dance”, and to reveal another dimension – “an educated side” - of Africa, the piece was largely inspired on the Portuguese-born and later naturalized Angolan anthropologist, poet and film director
Ruy Duarte de Carvalho’s (1941-2010) work on the Kuvale of Namibe (southeastern region of Angola) (Roubaud 2007; 2008a; 2013).

The present article does not extend to addressing how, despite the goal of rescuing ethnic expressive cultures (or an idealized pre-colonial authenticity), these companies implicitly pursue western dance company models. Nevertheless, I have discussed elsewhere how globalization does not in itself seem to explain this (Roubaud 2008a).

The negotiations triggered within these distinct creative processes seek out new artistic itineraries through redefining post-colonial Lusophone cultural encounters and reveal how contemporary dance – between misperceptions and good intentions – embody, within the scope of current north-south cooperation, a collective healing process between the ex-colonizer and the ex-colonized; and how affective memories, nostalgic Mystifications of the past, may intertwine with the upsurge in recent colonial traumas or neo-colonial fears. Therefore, these “dance texts” become paradigmatic as emic post-colonial discourses.

**Discussion**

The immigration flows subsequent to decolonization that followed April 1974 revolution reversed what had been their predominant historical direction. This demographic movement instilled social practices and popular culture, particularly influencing Portuguese society and its cultural physiognomy. However, while such influences experienced a growing impact on social dance, they were very timidly felt within the scope of contemporary performative arts. The perception of these distinct paces represents the starting point of this reflection.

My purpose here was neither to present an extended ethnography on African social dance nor to delve deeply into those above mentioned theatre dance pieces but
rather to resume some of the main lines on how social and theatre dance trends are mirroring the post-colonial reconfigurations of the country in these times of globalization.

As regards theater dance, addressing the delay in the post-revolution dance vanguards in approaching the African subject, and the motives for its recent increase, proves worthwhile. The Pavlovian rejection mechanisms of the educated elites towards the previous fascist idealization of the Portuguese empire does not provide a satisfactory explanation. As we identified, the links between Portugal and Africa date back centuries, and remain fundamental given the country’s current circumstances. Does the denial represent the processing of fascist and colonial traumas or guilt? Probably, yes. However, deeper investigation would remind us of the fact that belonging to Europe’s poor periphery transformed Portuguese colonialism into a subaltern colonialism; and this unconsciously merged the relationships between (ex)colonizer and (ex)colonized into ambivalence, a mixture of affinity and rejection (Santos 2002).

I have furthermore suggested that there might also be connections between this recent “turning back to Africa” and disenchantment with the European dream brought about by the social and economic crisis and recession that has afflicted Portugal – and southern Europe – since the beginning of the new millennium (Roubaud 2016). This need to redefine a national identity would partially explain the recent collective craze for social African dances. However, this proves insufficient to explaining the different paces that marked the entrance of the African dimension into social and theater dance contexts. As seen, returnees and the subsequent immigration reflected across Portuguese society: through kinship, behaviors, verbal and body expressions, music or food habits, tending to be more quickly absorbed by broader social ranges, and especially by the lower classes and in urban peripheries.
Following Bourdieu’s formulation (1987), individuals, regardless of their political beliefs or demands over new democratic social orders, tend to incorporate unacknowledged social structures. The hegemonic classes are inclined to detach from subaltern cultural patterns and bodily expressiveness, seen as otherness (with attraction/repulsion, disgust, contempt or desire), when facing the civilizing process they symbolically represent. As allusive and mostly non-verbal, dance tends to be easily subtracted from critical examination; contemporary dance creators, regardless of their drive to deploy dance as a means for cultural questioning and critique, may subconsciously embody their “educated class” status, (involuntarily) perpetuating this dissociation; in addition, after five decades of dictatorship and cultural isolation, for this generation catching up with the more fashionable canons of Euro-American contemporary dance certainly constituted a greater appeal as a creative subject. This predisposition, however, would not be linearly shared across all artistic fields; and even less so by Portuguese society “as a whole”.

Curiously, despite the heated discussions around the ethnic belongings of kizomba, it is furthermore worth noting that whenever African social dance teachers collaborate with western professional dance companies, they usually report this as a plus and an advantages to their skills as “African” dance teachers.

The “subaltern colonialism” theory may also help us gaze deeper into the drivers of the success of African social dances in Portugal. Portuguese colonization predominantly stemmed from the lower classes. Colonizers brought couple dances to Africa and made them part of social gatherings of the local bourgeoisies; and differently to the cases of Anglophone or Francophone colonialism, the social status of the Portuguese colonizer allowed for interracial exchanges. This eased the miscegenation of expressive cultures that, in turn, resulted in Creole music and couple dance forms,
which were (and still are) quite unique in the formerly colonized Africa. Through sharing and embodying dance movements, race and social distinctions were temporarily negotiated or erased.

Despite racial distinction - and even violence -, the Portuguese colonial regime tried to retain its legitimacy before the international community through idealizing a “natural Portuguese predisposition” for interracial and cultural mixing: the concept of lusotropicalism coined by Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre in the 1930s (Freire 1957) was appropriated by the regime to this end: after the Second World War and the decline of European colonial empires, this idea became instrumental in the late phase of the Portuguese colonial regime in order to validate Portuguese sovereignty overseas. The post-revolution, democratic and European new Portugal, tried to bleach the colonial past by replacing the lusotropicalist self-image with that of Lusophony: instead of the former essentialist interracial narrative, “Lusofonia” identified and stressed a cultural connection of Portugueseness in the African (and Brazilian) experience in relation to history, language, food and music, mirroring the European compromise against racism (Fikes 2009). Ultimately, Lusophony has acquired a political value as a marketable cultural brand (Cidra 2011). With last year’s incredible tourism boom in Portugal, African heritage has not only become fashionable but has also joined the recent upsurge in African nostalgia within Portuguese society.

These aspects certainly interrelate with Portugal becoming the point from where African social dances spread internationally alongside the growing debates around the origins and nationality of kizomba, even prior to the phenomenon getting perceived and appropriated by the Angolan government as a cultural policy concern. They also open up perspectives both on the specific collective cultural processes that frame the
hesitations of Portuguese contemporary dance towards these post-colonial African legacies, and on the recently increased interest on the subject.

It would seem as if between the dancefloors and theater stages, the dancing bodies were telling us of the intricate and invisible narratives underlying the post-colonial paths of the “Boxed Empire”.

Notes:

1 The word *kizomba* means “party” in Kimbundu, one of the three main African languages of Angola (Moorman 2008), spoken in northwestern regions such as Luanda, Catete and Malanje.

2 Translated from the original Portuguese into English by the author. Available on line at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPi-HVR1gjQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPi-HVR1gjQ) (Kizomba Nation 2013)

3 *Alkantara* is a performative arts NGO, founded in Lisbon in 1993. "Alkantara" in Arabic means "bridge". The Association’s aim is to promote new forms of north-south cooperation between artists and cultural agents in the fields of dance and performance, in Europe, Africa and Latin America.

4 Curiously, the African facets to Lisbon’s atmosphere were one of the most highlighted aspects by the “foreign gaze” of Pina Bausch’s *Mazurka Fogo* (1998), the dance piece she created during an artistic residency in the Portuguese capital.

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Melding an Ensemble at Memory’s Limits: William Forsythe’s *Whole in the Head*  
Freya Vass-Rhee

Abstract: Vass-Rhee turns towards William Forsythe’s reengagement in the 2011 work *Whole in the Head* with the phrase known as “Tuna,” which had served in 1986 as a foundation upon which to explore the affordances of improvising with set choreography. Applying Dynamical Systems Theory, Vass-Rhee shows how the resulting work repurposed the memory of “Tuna” to both produce new choreography and scaffold expertise amongst expert improvisers.

Throughout his 31-year tenure in Frankfurt, choreographer William Forsythe’s working methods offered his dancers increasing co-creative autonomy. He intended The Forsythe Company, established in 2005, to be a collaborative “workshop,” stressing the dialogic process through which he preferred to make works with the dancer-choreographer members of his ensemble. As with the earlier Ballett Frankfurt (1984-2004), new Forsythe company members, especially those coming from more traditionally hierarchical companies, were required to quickly adjust to both Forsythe’s movement approach and to this collaborative mode of working. Though Forsythe’s CD-ROM *Improvisational Technologies*, originally created in 1993-94 as a learning aid when when the company was intensively researching the idea of choreography as geometric inscription in space, Forsythe’s later, more perceptually oriented choreographic methods made other means of educating new dancers necessary. When the 2010-11 Forsythe Company season saw an unusually high turnover in the 18-member ensemble, Forsythe used the occasion of the November 2010 premiere of a short piece, which came to be titled *Whole in the Head*,\(^1\) to develop what he termed a “Schulwerk” or “Lehrstück” (literally “teaching piece”) – a work, and a working process, intended to offer speedy insight into his approach (Discussion with the ensemble, Dresden, April 23 2013). A student piece called *Hinderhold*, which Forsythe created in 2007 while Co-Director of the Dance Apprenticeship Network aCross Europe (D.A.N.C.E), had served a similar purpose in that context (Rehearsal notes, October 16 2007).
The devising process of this “Schulwerk” served not only to produce a dance performance and to expand the already-expert dance skills of the ensemble’s new members. The working process also served as an opportunity for new dancers to further develop their improvisatory skills, as well as to scaffold complicity, in the sense developed by cultural theorist Gesa Ziemer in her work on collaboration in performance (2014). In turn, Forsythe folded this crucial interpersonal dynamic into a reflective dramaturgical underpinning of the work produced. In following, I explain how Whole in the Head’s devising practice not only yielding teaching and learning opportunities to all its members, melding new members into the ensemble, it also took them to the limits of memory and scaffolded their ability to work at and beyond them.

Both institutional and real-time memory were central factors in the dance research that was Whole in the Head’s development and performance, as well as the work’s process ethos and implicit danced dramaturgy. After describing the choreographic process in brief, I’ll offer a fine-grained analysis of the workings of two of the work’s sections, drawing on Pil Hansen’s perspective on Performance Generating Systems, which seeks to explain, in her words, “rule- and task-based dramaturgies that systematically set in motion a self-organizing process of dance or theatre creation.” (2015, 124). In closing I draw in the theoretical paradigm of conceptual space developed variously since the 1970s by researchers including Eleanor Rosch, George Lakoff and Peter Gärdenfors, to offer a comparison between the two scenes studied and illustrate the issues faced in their analysis.

Forsythe’s 2010 premiere piece, conceived as the middle work of a three-part mixed bill, was created over 24 working days, with key alterations following the premiere. Casting the new piece with dancers not involved in either of the two other works on the bill (Woolfphrase (2002) and N.N.N.N. (2000)) rendered a constellation of three new ensemble
members for whom the work would be their first Forsythe creation, two ensemble veterans of nearly 20 years’ experience,\(^2\) and one with 4 years of Forsythe Company experience.

The initial choreographic task set by Forsythe involved a set movement phrase known as “Tuna,” which had been created for a 1986 work and used as the improvisational basis for several later works that Gerald Siegmund has termed “the Robert Scott complex” (2011, 21). Following a detailed review of the Tuna phrase, the dancers were asked to create “negative Tuna” versions by composing a new movement phrase around the body space of a dancer moving through the original combination. Standing in as corporeal aids for each other, the dancers assisted their memory processes until the new versions were moulded around the absent moving form of the original Tuna sequence. Some of the dancers went on to produce additional “second negative generations” of Tuna, along with two reversed versions at Forsythe’s request. Eventually 11 different versions were produced among the five rehearsing dancers.\(^3\)

Throughout the rehearsal phase, while Forsythe also “workshopped” with the dancers, focussing on exploring and honing particular aspects of movement practice, he enlisted veteran cast member Jone San Martin’s assistance as a mentor for the new dancers, due to her longtime familiarity with the Tuna choreography and his movement style. In this way, Jone’s deeply embodied memory served as an exemplary reference for the new dancers, who were then tasked with learning others’ negative Tunas. As each dancer taught others their own sequence, each was similarly established and made responsible as an authority over their own material, enabling them both to lead others and to deeply analyse the potentials of their phrases’ details. Material was also elaborated further in typical Forsythe fashion, through suggested “operations,” for example, reducing it to a stamped rhythm, reversing the combination, or blending original Tuna material into the negative phrases. Ultimately, over 65 different variations, modalities, and options were rehearsed.
Experimentation and development of new modes continued through the final days before the premiere, when a running order of 10 scene-like sections was established. Due to an illness in the cast on the premiere day, two ensemble veterans were recruited into the first performances and other dancers shifted among roles to minimize change. With the full cast back in form for the fifth performance, Forsythe set two new opening scenes – three mens’ consecutive negative Tuna solos, followed by the new group scene I discuss in following, along with the work’s penultimate scene – and slightly reordered and retooled a few other scenes, retaining veteran David Kern in the cast. Deemed an improvement, this version was retained throughout the remaining run and the two that followed. The work was performed 25 times in total.

Forsythe had discovered during final rehearsals that the dancers’ familiarity with each others’ negative Tuna phrases made them able to perform their separate versions in synchrony. The unperformed original Tuna — the “whole” that exists only in the performers’ heads — served as a temporal, spatial, formal and dynamic referent. For the work’s new second scene, Forsythe tasked first San Martin and then later new dancer Josh Johnson with leading the second scene’s joint execution of negative Tuna phrases; however, the leader functions as a “soft clock” (Piecemaker documentation, October 25 2010),
unexpectedly varying their phrase’s tempo, scale dynamics and orientation so that the other dancers must attend closely in order to synchronize and recalibrate the execution of their own phrases. This scene, which typically lasted for 1½ to 2 minutes and was performed without music, not only honed the performers’ attention to each other — a crucial factor that Forsythe had highlighted throughout the rehearsal process – it also offered new ensemble member Josh Johnson experience in generating and sustaining the attentional dynamic and energy behind this and similar structured improvisations.
Viewed as a performance generating system, *Whole in the Head*'s “soft clock” scene involves a small set of guiding parameters (Thelen & Smith 1996, 55): each dancer performs their own first-generation Tuna phrase according to the designated “clock” dancer’s timing, scale dynamics, orientation and spatial choices, attempting to maintain a state of synchrony across the negative Tuna versions. If synchrony is lost, the dancer can recover it either by speeding up or skipping forward in their NT sequence. The designated “clock” dancer is the system’s *energy* element (Thelen & Smith 1996, 53), motivating the system’s action by seeking less to outsmart the others than to optimize attention by generating conditions in which multiple choices must be made and carried out. These include not only how to perform the Tuna phrases through space relative to the “clock” dancer and how to translate the “clock’s” dynamic shifts onto their own material, but also how to negotiate between the choreography of their negative Tuna phrases and the attentional focus required for synchrony and uptake of the clock’s movement choices. Given that these can also be read by looking at others in the system, the dancers need not watch the “clock” dancer exclusively but can in effect “daisy-chain” their attention to the “clock” by watching others, as the dancers clearly learned over time. The performers can also opt to second-guess the system and dis-attend others for brief periods, predicting stability or trends within the system based on the “clock’s” actions. For example, if the “clock” had recently begun moving rapidly following a stop, a period of continued rapid movement might be anticipated. The sound of footfall offered the dancers additional non-visual information in this regard.

*Variability* (Thelen & Smith 1996, 55) occurs in the system through four factors beyond the “clock’s” alteration of tempo, direction or dynamics. Firstly, memory glitches can result in slowing, sequence errors, or corrections by any of the performers. Secondly, not only do the trajectories of the negative Tuna phrases require the dancers to “bend” the choreography in space, so to speak, in order to keep from running into each other, Forsythe
and the dancers also found that the “clock” system tended to collapse spatially into its own center. The system thus also requires “spatializing” decisions about trajectory to keep it from doing so. These can be at odds with both negative Tuna choreography and with choices of orientation to the “clock” dancer, who can also change their phrase’s orientation at any time. Thirdly and in a related vein, variability can occur if dancers find themselves off balance, unable to sustain a position, in other physically untenable situations, or moving in error before the “clock’s” restarts after stops. In these situations, the dancers perform unplanned and sometimes unscored movements that are typically shaped into intentional-appearing movement. Fourth and finally, variability manifests through desynchronizations that occur across the system’s shifting daisy-chains of attention, or through incorrect second-guessing during inattentive periods. If for example, dancer A is dis-attending the system and becomes late, and dancer B is watching dancer A, dancer B will at least in theory be late as well. When A discovers his or her lateness and catches up to the “clock,” either by speeding up of by cutting forward to the synchronous point in his phrase, B – if indeed he or she can still see A and is watching A – will also seek to catch up to the system.

All such instances of variability can, in the parlance of performance generating systems, potentially constitute control parameters in that they can briefly come to dominate the system’s action at a local or more global level, depending on the chains of attention. The system’s phase shifts, or the emergence of new states within the system, are in turn kept in periodic check by the rule-based dominance of the “clock’s” choices, which in turn are themselves predicated on the “clock” dancer’s assessment of the system’s performance and judgment of best strategies for optimizing attentional level – and with it, audience interest. Full stops dictated by the “clock” serve not only to heighten suspense onstage and off but also to allow the system to stabilize temporarily, and the scene’s choreography in fact includes a set “restart” in which the “clock” reaches a specific point in their negative Tuna,
stops, walks to a new position onstage, and recommences their negative Tuna phrase, usually with tempo and dynamic variations to their first run-through of the phrase.

Though variation emerges in the “clock” scene, its execution is constrained by its limited conceptual space, which for each dancer is comprised of its global parameters and the individual phrase they are performing. By contrast, in Whole in the Head’s penultimate scene, called “Supernova” but briefly also nicknamed “Big Map,” the five dancers plus David Kern are no longer limited to their individual negative Tuna material but can include any of the 11 negative Tuna versions, the original Tuna phrase and the 65+ modalities. The task parameter is also different: in what amounts to an exploded universe of the experimentation that led to the piece, the dancers are tasked with “sustaining (the work’s) community” (Forsythe, Piecemaker documentation, November 15 2010), offering opinions in movement by watching others and formulating responses that comment on what they saw rather than only reflecting it through imitation. For example, a dancer seeing another at a particular point in their negative Tuna sequence might offer the initial movements of that sequence, the sequence’s reversal, a congruent moment in their own sequence, or factor in a variation or modality associated with that sequence or another related one. Rather than only react synchronously or immediately afterward, the dancers can also anticipate movement of others – the option listed as “lying in wait.” Equal care was given to spatialization in “Supernova” as with the “clock” scene, as “Supernova” also tended to collapse inward; however, as the dancers were no longer bound to their set phrases, spatializing options developed and emphasized in rehearsal included “transporting” movement to a new location, “taking yourself out” to observe the system momentarily, or “stealing someone out” by leading them physically of the system.

Given the vast array of choreographic options provided by the combined negative Tunas, their variations, modalities, and other options, along with the fact that the energy for the scene is a distributed function of whoever is being attended and reacted to by any other
performer, it’s understandable that “Supernova” is highly characterized by variability. If the system is illustrated as a conceptual space, or geometric mapping of mental representations, the conceptual combinatorics of negative Tunas and modalities, together with the available number of other options, make definitive recognition of others’ material difficult, a factor that injects chance and additional variability into the system, while unfortunately also making detailed study of the scene virtually impossible.

Further, the presence of David Kern adds a distinctly unintegrated source of energy to the system. Having limited familiarity with the materials and modes rehearsed by the others but vast general experience with Forsythe’s movement processes, Kern commented that in Supernova he sought to read and reflect the scene’s energy rather than its specific movements. Kern, who passes anomalously through other scenes in Whole in the Head emitting yodelling cries to summon dancers and interrupting a focused duet with a broad flouncing crossover, also notes “Supernova’s” fragility as performance material, commenting that

(. . .) Being that it was the least choreographed, Supernova was one of the scenes that could fall apart easiest. Bill had the least direct control over it. He was often dissatisfied with it. Of course it was the scene with the potential to surprise, and therefore satisfy him. That depended of course on those magical connections that can happen. It was our job to make that happen (Email correspondence, October 20 2016).

The less populated conceptual space of the “soft clock” scene and its straightforward one-to-one relation of dancer to material offer ground on which to parse and analyse it as a performance generating system, research which is currently ongoing for Hansen’s larger performance generating system project involving her, Steven Hill, and myself independently studying three pieces by three different choreographers. Clearly, though choreographic research at and beyond the limits of memory offers the development of high-level improvisatory expertise, its study does perhaps pose insurmountable problems. Inroads, however, can be made. Forsythe’s “Schulwerk” Whole in the Head, with its array of choreographic structures ranging from the more linear to the vastly exploded, teaches both its
dancers and the interested researcher in an almost teasing fashion how ideas set into motion can engender complexity that challenges minds and perhaps – and it is still a “perhaps” for me – defies analysis.

1 The new work was not named until November 16, two days prior to the premiere.
2 Jone San Martin was a 19-year Forsythe veteran and David Kern had first worked with Forsythe in 1987. Yasutake Shimaji, a relative newcomer, had joined the ensemble in 2006 but was recognized by Forsythe as highly fluent in the ensemble’s style of improvisatory composition (telephone interview with Forsythe, March 31 2016).
3 Two of the 11 versions were developed late in the rehearsal phase.
4 Forsythe had worked with “soft clock” timing, or the calibration of dancers’ actions to the timing of external events, numerous times throughout his choreographic career.
5 It was in fact a memory glitch in rehearsal that prompted Forsythe to revisit the idea of the “soft clock” (Piecemaker documentation, October 25 2010).
6 This danced dramaturgy is an implicit factor of the work that is not communicated to the audience as a thematic. The program text for Whole in the Head, which like those of all but Forsythe’s early works is minimal, reflects only its linkage to other works through the “Tuna” phrase: “Following a new version of 7 to 10 Passages produced in late 2010, Whole in the Head marks Forsythe’s ninth return to the thematic of Robert Scott’s failed South Pole expedition. With gentle irony, this work taps the quarter-century span of movement and themes from the collected “Scott works,” refiguring fragments into a reflection on choreographic memory that is poignant, daring, and humorous by turns” (The Forsythe Company, 2010).

Works cited


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Entangled Lines of Flight: Self-Becoming Other among the Liangshan Dance Group in Xichang, Sichuan Province

Pegge Vissicaro and Yin Dejin

Abstract: Deleuze and Guattari’s theories frame our ethnographic research of guǎngchǎng wǔ or public square dancing by elderly ethnic Yi and non-Yi members of the Liangshan dance group in Xichang, Sichuan Province, China. Using interviews and participant-observation methods to study meaning-making processes—the rhisomatic system of multiple interactions and connections—we explore how public squares function as sites of possibility for alternative representations of self. Liangshan dancers create visibility and assert their existence through structured movement that produces Yi cultural identity and invokes youthfulness. This community-building practice liberates participants from a static authentic self to experience transient subjectivity—becoming other.

“It is never the beginning or the end which are interesting; the beginning and end are points. What is interesting is the middle” (Deleuze and Parnet 1977, 39). Inspired by Gilles Deleuze’s discussion in Dialogues, which describes the basic tenets of his philosophy and long association with philosopher Félix Guattari, our story unfolds within the second of three field visits to Xichang, Liangshan Prefecture in Sichuan Province, Southwest China.

July 12, 2016: After six hours of driving from Chengdu through the mountains, we quickly check into our hotel and walk to Moon Square as the dance group, led by Peng Rong with the assistance of her grandniece Wu Niu, finishes their evening session. The place and people are familiar—it’s like we’ve slipped back into where we left off nine months ago. (Vissicaro 2016)

Entering this site triggered a memory of the first time my collaborator, Professor Yin Dejin, a faculty member and graduate student at Sichuan University, told me about square dancing in China. Naturally, I compared it to my experience doing Western square dance every year at summer camp. In contrast, Chinese square dance does not involve physical touch with partners to form group configurations but instead refers to the location where it occurs—a public square—found in every city throughout China. Yet both types of square dance are similar in that
they promote social interaction and are recreational. Nationally, there are more than 100 million participants in this type of dancing, which continues to grow in popularity.

By studying dance through the lens of a socially engaged public square, we turn to Deleuze’s intriguing concept of the fold. Deleuze explains: “We are discovering new ways of folding, akin to new envelopments, but we all remain Leibnizian because what always matters is folding, unfolding, refolding” (1993, 158). Leibniz, a 16th century German philosopher and mathematician, helped shift the ontological conversation toward thinking that “each being is a mirror of the entire cosmos” (Luchte 2006, 519-20). The self continually relates to the larger universe as the outside folds in—a dance of exchange. These ideas contribute to Deleuze and Guatarri’s theory of becoming other that frames our inquiry.

At the center of discourse about *guangchang wu*, Chinese for square dancing, is the topic of social production and social construction of public space in China, which leads us to identify visibility as an integrative theme for our ethnographic research. Social production of space focuses on “the social, economic, ideological, and technological forces that produce space and conversely the impact of socially produced space on social action” (Low 2016, 34) while the social construction of space includes the transformations and contestations that occur “through peoples’ social exchanges, memories, images, and daily use of the material setting—into scenes and actions that convey symbolic meaning” (Low 1996, 862). Using Low’s approach to spatializing human experience, we ask how does the visibility of social relations and social practices in *guangchang wu* facilitate becoming other? Our study, while early in its development, has already involved three field site visits to Xichang between 2015 and 2016 with numerous
interactions as well as interviews with six members of the Xichang-based Liangshan Dance Group.

October 10, 2015: We are in Moon Square, seeing the Liangshan Dance Group for the first time. While not wanting to draw attention, Peng Rong forces us to stand by the stage in front of everyone. This raised metal platform provides the most visibility to demonstrate movement for participants to follow. (Yin 2015)

I have known Rong since we were both students at the Dance School of Sichuan. She moved to Xichang in 2002 and married Shama Wate, a Yi composer, musician, and cultural worker. Although she is Han, the largest ethnic group in China, Yi people are the majority in Xichang, a city with a population of over 600,000. One in six people in this capital of Liangshan Prefecture are Yi, the seventh largest group among China’s 56 different ethnicities. As a result of the economic reforms and opening-up policies from the 1970s to the 1990s, many ethnic Yi moved from their traditional mountain villages to cities. Xichang is one economic magnet, motivating Yi rural to urban migration.

At Moon Square, also known as Passion Square, we felt the breath of people surrounding us and thought they must be curious about who we are. I noticed an obvious change in energy when we arrived—like stones that have been dropped in the peaceful water. Our presence as outsiders seemed to heighten their self-awareness, inspiring new relations. This experience embodies an important philosophic component of Deleuze and Guatarri—the rhizome—from the Greek “rhizoma” meaning mass of roots. In their famous 1987 text, A Thousand Plateaus, they explain, “any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order” (7).

The rhizome concept also applies to our study of guangchang wu by the Liangshan Dance Group, which generally does not exist in isolation in Moon Square. We note that with each observation, there are an average of four to six other guangchang wu groups. While the
morning and evening are prime times for people to gather for this practice, *guangchang wu* can happen anytime. Music from each faction blends together, creating a multi-textured soundscape. Heterogeneous bodies move in shared space; often it is difficult to differentiate which group they belong to except by noticing spatial direction and how others nearby are dancing. All lines intersect—a perfect rhizome.

We recognize that the group connection promotes feelings of unity and that “public space…constitutes the origin of local community building” (Wang 2015, 93). Such unanimity is evident by the subtle changes participants make to accommodate the unevenness of group dynamics. It also is obvious when new members join and do not know some part of the more than 70 dances currently in the Liangshan Dance group repertoire. Harmony is visibly present in Moon Square, which provides the space for people with common interests and values to bind, interact, and create a shared emotional connection—a sense of belonging to a place. Movement and verbal cues from Rong and Wu Niu help keep the group together while directional changes allow members to see each other to correct, adjust, and/or confirm that their movements are correct.

From our interview data, we gained several insights about the social production and construction of public space. It is interesting to mention that the interviews were openly conducted in the public space, translated by a young Yi musician-composer named Jason. We learned that the group’s ethnic composition is mostly of Han people along with Yi, Zang, Tu, Hui, Mosuo, and Man. The choreographer, Peng Rong used mostly Yi gestures and movements imitating Yi lifestyle while Shama Wate composed music with traditional Yi melodies, rhythms, and instrumentation. Emphasis on Yi cultural production powerfully claims the public space of Moon Square through *guangchang wu*. 
Because public space is more visible, it is often considered an important place to represent the image of the city and nation. This image is one of pride for the cooperation between Yi people and other ethnic groups. Although 60% of China’s ethnic minorities live in the country’s Southwest area, these groups share a common struggle to survive and thrive in an environment that at one time rendered them invisible. In response to globalization and rapid change today, China’s government, according to Rong and Wate, cares more about minorities because these groups have preserved their traditions—resisting modernity. In our interviews, they explained that the government has a duty to fund them as professional and part-time ethnic minority cultural workers in Xichang. Additionally, the government seeks harmony and cooperation among the people, which secures their positions working with the Liangshan Dance Group, whose mission is to promote dancing together for everybody.

The Chinese government has actively promoted guangchang wu for its public health potential that aligns with a national fitness program, which statistics show save on medical care costs; the plan itself creates great potential for foreign investment with plans to create more fitness facilities and infrastructure (Liddle, 2016). Further, the commercial sector is capitalizing on guangchang wu training and healing as a business enterprise. Industries that produce music and clothing for guangchang wu competitions and contests also generate tremendous revenue (Wang 2015).

Generally, marketing is geared toward aging adults, specifically women, known as damas who participate in guangchang wu for quality of life benefits. In Wang Yifan’s 2015 thesis, she explains: “this seemingly new and overwhelmingly women-dominated public dance emerges from a series of long existing activities, the embedded gender politics of which articulates China’s recent and ongoing revision of policies and laws regarding birth control and the
retirement age. Moreover, it is precisely against the backdrop of such social discourse that the
practice and persistence of individual dancing groups becomes meaningful: through an effective
organizational structure, these elderly women made their existence visible, audible, and their
stories irreducible” (v).

Our observations and interviews confirm that the Liangshan Dance Group women,
consisting of 60% of the total membership, experience empowerment and happiness through
dancing. Guangchang wu also evokes positive memories of being young, common among
participants in our field site where 25% of the participants are over 60 and 35% are between 50
and 60. Additionally, members share a sense of pride promoting Yi customs, whether or not they
are ethnic Yi. It is interesting to know that non-Yi feel special wearing traditional Yi clothing
and doing culturally specific movements to Yi inspired music. By studying these three factors
together—gender, age, and ethnicity—we recognize that the public square makes visible the
singularity of each individual within the socially inclusive fold of “dancing together for
everybody.” In public space no one stands alone.

This de-centered, non-hierarchical environment allows the subject to exercise critical
freedom, capable of expressing oneself passionately in order “to bring something to life, to free
life from where it’s trapped, to trace lines of flight” (Deleuze, 1995, 41). Liangshan Dance
Group participants feel a sense of liberation in the dynamic continuum of movement—no longer
bound to one particular identity but rather to the collective assemblage. For guangchang wu, the
rhizome embodied, “(M)ovement is the principle of connection and contact. This perspective
thus accepts randomness, and an open-ended view of connection, or indeed disconnection.
Movement is inherent and what makes possible a politics of becoming” (Probyn 2004, 217).

October 14, 2016: It is our third visit to Xichang and the affect of an 11-hour train ride
from Chengdu alters our sensate bodies. After spending the day with Jason and other Yi
artists visiting a museum dedicated to Yi culture, eating traditional Yi food, and playing music in their studio, we go to Moon Square for the evening guangchang wu. We see our Liangshan Dance family gathering in the space. Wu Niu greets Pegge by saying, “My mom; I love you.” As she and Rong take their place on the stage, familiar sounds fill the air. Jason, the Yi musician who has been a language bridge connecting us to the dance group, arrives. He senses our excitement and interest as we ask questions about our experiences that day. (Yin 2016)

Unexpectedly, Jason told us that he self-references as Yi only to Han and foreigners, explaining that ethnic Yi call themselves Nosuo. He encouraged us to use this term to describe him and his people. We both looked at each other in shock. Is this becoming other? Are we shifting from a static authentic sense of self to a transient subjectivity?

As Deleuze and Guatarri explain, “people do not become other without a fascination for the pack, for multiplicity” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 240), for the entangled lines of flight. This does not mean becoming THE other, but becoming other in which the inside is a fold, which connects with the outside, mirroring the macrocosm. “The subject is never an isolated independent individual but is the most versatile component of the whole complex system” (Semetsky 2006, 14). We suggest that guangchang wu by the Liangshan Dance Group makes visible the social relations and social practices, exemplifying the rhizome, which “has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, inter-being, intermezzo” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 25).

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“Authentic as opposed to what?” The Role of the Interpreter in Producing Belief
Angélique Willkie

Abstract: In her 1996 article, Sarah Rubidge suggests, “the site of authentic performances is the performer.” What are the ingredients of a performer’s authenticity? How does it travel between cultures, continents, contexts? In the author’s experience, the creating and performing body is always negotiating varying perceptions of identity, race, ethnicity, gender, and perhaps only afterwards, authenticity. Based on extensive personal experience in Europe and North America, this presentation will examine how the performer must confront the *subjective authenticities* imposed by choreographers and audiences, in both creative research and performance representation. *Negotiated authenticity* becomes crucial to a performer’s success.

I step forward on the stage of the National Theatre of Belgrade in Serbia. The old Soviet-style theatre is packed to its absolute limits - people sitting on the steps, in the corridors, standing in the balconies… I am quite nervous. I open my mouth to speak and in that split-second, I commit. I commit to being fully present, in my own body and I dive into those words I am speaking, in Slovenian – words that I know the audience will understand, even if I do not. An unending three minutes later, thunderous applause. The comments at the reception after the performance: the black woman from America must have lived in Ljubljana!

I am not American; I do not speak Slovenian; I have never lived in Ljubljana.

On another occasion, we were performing in Lisbon. One of the key texts had not been translated into Portuguese. I proposed to perform the text in Spanish – a language in which I am fluent – since the speakers of those two languages can essentially understand each other. However, my accent is clearly from Spain, which was seen to be politically provocative and, as a result, inappropriate. Instead of being seen to be a native Spaniard, the alternative was that I speak in English, with a couple of Portuguese words wherever pertinent.

Performing in Sarajevo, where more than half the population is Muslim, my semi-nudity was justified in some press articles by the fact that I *was* part African – at one point in the
performance I was bare-breasted with a cloth wrapped around my lower body, singing a song in Swahili.

I am not a native Spaniard; I am not African; neither do I speak Swahili.

I am a performer, *une interprète* as we say in French – an interpreter; a kind of chameleon that has managed to take on, and live in, the various skins that my performing career has offered, insofar as possible, with conviction and integrity.

The performance in question was *Rien de Rien*, the first major work of the Belgian choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, who was at the time still under the wing of Les Ballets C. de la B., the dance company of Alain Platel in Ghent, Belgium. Through the prism of these performances, I will share some of my experiences of being believable on stage, and explore what I call *negotiated authenticity*: that is, authenticity that is informed by the subjectivities of my own identity, of the contexts in which I have lived and performed, and of the audiences who have, albeit not deliberately, participated in my subjective experience.

In the visual arts, the idea of authenticity relates essentially to the origins of a piece of artwork. There is no subjective interpretation of its point of creation. In the performing arts, notions of authenticity speak more to the original intentions of the creators of the work, than to the origins of any physical object. In the absence of that physical object – which would then provide concrete criteria for evaluating its authenticity – the simple recognition of a performance’s (or a performer’s!) authenticity is problematic. It relies exclusively on the subjective assessment of the observer. In Patrick Campbell’s *Analyzing Performance*, Sarah Rubidge remarks that:

The criteria upon which we make that judgment are significantly affected by the times and culture in which it is made and are inextricably linked to the work’s history, which is formed and informed by its previous performances (1996, 219).
In the kind of devised choreographic projects in which I have participated, those performances are forcibly influenced as much by the performers themselves, as by the performance-maker. In Rubidge’s words, “the site of authentic performances is the performer” (1996, 224).

The etymology of the word authentic is ultimately Greek: *authentikos*, meaning "original, genuine, principal," and *authentes*, which means "one acting on one's own authority (*autos* meaning “self” + *hentes* meaning “doer, being”)" (Harper, 2016). So the word authenticity brings with it a notion of authorship. Authorship not only of oneself in the world, but of one’s contributions to a creative process, and most certainly of one’s presence on a stage.

The initial ideas for *Rien de Rien* came from Larbi. He knew he wanted to look at issues of identity and belonging; to work with three, twenty year old men and three generations of women (myself, a young fifteen year old girl, and a fifty-nine year old former principal ballerina – both Belgian); to use a variety of musical and dance styles; to situate it all in a mosque. Three months later, all six performers had dug into our own personal stories and movement to generate the material that became *Rien de Rien*. We stepped on stage as versions of ourselves. That was the essence of the working method, and it was the essence of the performance.

Again, to borrow from Rubidge, a multiplicity of intentions – other than those of the author – are involved in any creation. These intentions include those of the designers, directors, composers, as well as, of course, the performers. The work has a multiplicity of histories manifested in its productions. These are simply part of what the dance is – literally embodied in the performers’ movement (1996, 225-228).

Anchored in this multiplicity of intentions and histories, the creative process of *Rien de Rien* – as in virtually all creative processes – was one of appropriation: “acts of possession and
dispossession” according to Marcus Boon (2007) – of ideas, of movement material, of personal stories, of language, of myself. My first entrance of the performance had me telling the true story of my arrival in a nomadic camp in Mali years earlier and a goat being killed in my honor. The choreographer had filmed me in conversation and, with my fellow performer, fifteen year-old Laura, we re-learned every detail of my telling from the video. We performed the text simultaneously, two women, two ages, two ethnicities, each owning it as she could, finding her own authenticity, her own truth, in the telling. To a certain extent, I also needed to allow myself to become dispossessed of those personal experiences and reflections in order for them to become material for someone else to perform.

This first phase of what I call creative appropriation – creative possession and dispossession – was about finding the material that would ultimately define the common language of the performance, and the ways in which we would give it form. Once this new hybrid alphabet was learned, each performer had to find her way to create her figurative words, and to own her poetic pathway. (The word ‘her’ is used as the possessive pronoun for all the performers.)

In his contribution to The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics, art philosopher Denis Dutton quotes Peter Kivy, who speaks of authenticity in musical performance as “faithfulness to the performer’s own self, original, not derivative or aping of someone else’s way of playing” (Dutton 2003, 267). He sees authenticity as committed, personal expression, being true to one’s artistic self. Again, an allusion to authorship can be understood in Kivy’s words, insofar as we are authors of our performances – which I believe to be the case.

What is it that might have allowed audiences to feel that my own performances were authentic? That I had been somehow true to myself in my actions and my presence on stage?
In Rubidge’s article, she mentions Gary S. Tomlinson’s concept of “authentic meaning”. He argues that “authentic meaning” is neither fixed nor permanent, but is constructed by the interpreter, temporarily defined through a dialectic between the work’s “text”, its culture and his or her own personal and cultural context (Rubidge 1996, 224).

Perhaps most important in the context of this paper, Tomlinson contends that “authentic meaning” is the territory of the interpreter rather than of the maker. One interpretation of its being constructed by the performer might be that it is ultimately part of her skill set and performance method. “Authentic meaning” is perhaps the result of the particular configuration generated by the interpreter’s skill; her interests and background; the particular performance thematic and material; and the contexts within which both the creation and the witnessing are taking place.

If we accept Tomlinson’s argument, then by definition, my authentic meaning changes with every creation, and perhaps even with each performance of that creation. This notion of authentic (and therefore) impermanent meaning, suggests that there are, in fact, potentially several negotiated authenticities to which a performer has access – multiple, fluid, chameleon-like. This is ultimately the material that is available to me onstage: negotiated complexes of perceptions that meet in places we consider sincere or believable – meeting places to which, as Rubidge points out, we ascribe the value judgment of authenticity. (1996, 219)

How do these negotiated authenticities relate to my sense of who I am – as artist and as individual?

As I explore and navigate my different selves in performance, I am aware of having an authentic relationship with every aspect of my onstage experience. It is those relationships that allow the performer in me to glide back and forth between my personal reflections, reactions and
sensibilities, and to use them to inform the specific situation or aesthetic of the performance. My performance and personal identities, though clearly not the same, are inextricably anchored one in the other. It is this back and forth journey that allows me to own my performance selves and to feel that they are as true to who I am as a person, as they are to the performance. Actively sharing this back and forth journey with the audience, and building on that exchange while onstage is part of my performance authorship. It is a way of seeking to remove the distance between myself as performer, the work, and the audience and, in so doing, facilitate that meeting place of perceptions that we can perhaps recognize as “authentic meaning.”

In an interview in 1974, East German writer Christa Wolf used the term “subjective authenticity” to describe what she believes should be the methodology and the goal of contemporary prose writers:

…the intense involvement of the author’s self in the work, along with an absolutely straightforward presentation of reality, as much as this is possible – given the unavoidable subjectivity of the author. Such an approach to writing prohibits the establishment of distance between the author and the work, the reading public, and society as a whole. (Rollyson 2010)

Wolf could have been speaking of the “authentic meaning” that I both discover and create in performance. Her notion of “subjective authenticity” emerges, as I described, at that meeting place of perceptions – her own, those related to her work, the immediate public, and wider society – with as little distance between those elements as possible. In the case of Rien de Rien, the quality and believability of my performances was informed by my personal reflections on Larbi’s thematic propositions, the place that was given to my personal experiences throughout the creative process and in the final performance form, as well as my desire to treat the thematic in ways that would be personally, socially and politically pertinent – notwithstanding their entertainment value.
I chose to dig into stories and experiences that confronted different aspects of my eclectic identities with each other, with other performers, with the audiences, with where I lived. Seeming incongruity was an essential prism for the creation and exploration of my role. I took full advantage of the fact that in the European context, I would be seen and heard to be an African American. Wearing a Tina Turner wig on my bald head, a skimpy short dress and platforms, my story of discomfort and outrage at the sight of little boys playing football with the head of the goat that had just been slaughtered in my then-vegetarian honor, allowed me to knowingly play with the sensibilities of the audience, as well as my own. My appearance was that of an empty-headed, trivial Western woman – not to imply that Tina Turner was in any way empty-headed or trivial! But in contrast with my appearance, the content of my text was ultimately critical of my own reactions as a Westerner, to the realities of child’s play in a Tuareg encampment. I like to think that by publicly questioning my own values during the performance, I allowed the audience to do the same, without any accusation or provocation.

My performance authenticity is an ever-changing beast. Not only because of my own questioning and evolution, or because of the specific thematic of a performance, but also, very significantly, because of the intimate relationship that emerges with those who witness the performance. In Volatile Bodies, feminist philosopher Elizabeth Grosz paraphrases the work of French philosopher Merleau-Ponty in The Phenomenology of Perception:

Both seer and the seen are of the same matter, “flesh”. Anything I see is “a mirror of my visibility”… The subject and the object are inherently open to each other, for they are constituted in the one stroke dividing the flesh into its various modalities. They are interlaced one with the other, not externally but through their reversibility and exchangeability, their similarity-in-difference and difference-in-similarity…. Perception is the flesh’s reversibility, the flesh touching, seeing, perceiving itself, one fold ( provisionally) catching the other in its own self-embrace. (1994, 102-103)

In the context of performance, I am personally intrigued by the idea that the reversibility
and exchangeability between performer and audience – as the same flesh – actually contribute to the authenticity of the performance experience.

What is the role of the seer, the witness in the creation of authentic performance? Denis Dutton makes the comment that: “Too often, discussions of authenticity ignore the role of the audience in establishing a context for creative or performing art” (Dutton 2003, 268). Openly subjective socioeconomic, ethno-cultural, political and artistic sensibilities govern the way an audience relates to a performance and certainly to a performer. My capacity to make contact with those sensibilities – sometimes via sharing my own – allows me to deepen the intimacy of my relationship with those who are witnesses to my performance. In the examples I cited at the beginning of the paper, various elements of the audience’s experience and perspectives served as fuel for my own performance fires.

The performances in Belgrade took place in the week following 9/11 – in fact the Slovenian dancer with whom I should have performed the text in Slovenian was stuck in New York, unable to travel to the festival. The political air in Belgrade – especially after the role of the US in the Bosnian war – was charged; prevailing anti-US sentiment felt vindicated by the 9/11 events. Even though the production was Belgian, we were all extremely aware that my being perceived as American might be problematic. That atmosphere, accompanied by the fact that Juri would not be with me on stage, only confirmed the necessity for me not only to perform the text in Slovenian, but to try to be as Slovenian as possible as I spoke the text.

Perhaps the fact that I really was not an American made it easier for me to simply concentrate on the depth of my performance, and on my ability to step into the skin that was somehow appropriate for that context. The “authentic meaning” that I was able to construct for that performance, to use Tomlinson’s imagery, was certainly not the same as that which emerged
before the audiences of Paris or London where, as a black, Western, female performer, whether or not I was truly trying to impersonate Tina Turner was of greater significance than being Slovenian.

*Rien de Rien* was situated in a mosque. The calligraphy that occupied the entire back wall of the stage read: the forbidden ignites desire. The presence of women, nudity, seduction and sensuality in such a space was already a weighted statement, and it contributed to the emotional and political charge experienced by some audiences and, consequently, by myself. I was dressed scantily, provocatively at the beginning of the piece, indulging in the impression of frivolity that I provoked. Eventually, later on in the performance, I stood center stage, completely naked – clearly stripped of all artifice and completely desexualized. There was no further provocation and no drama. I simply exposed the flesh of a forty year-old black woman in a non-sexual, non-sensual way and gave the audience the time to look at it – comfortably or uncomfortably; knowing that for the vast majority, they had never seen a naked black woman before, and even less so in the flesh, on a stage. Only by being fully present in my own body, anchored in myself and in my authorship, could I allow myself to fully be the Other, for the eyes of the audience. Sudeep Dasgupta begins his article “Alterity and Identities: The Paradoxes of Authenticity” (2010) with a quote from Homi Bhabha: “To exist is to be called into being in relation to an Otherness” (1994). Assuming my place of alterity in the eyes of the audience, allowing myself to become their Other, required that I be even more my own self – as opposed to anyone else’s projection of me. My Otherness provided me, every time, with an opportunity to assert my selfhood, my authorship, my identity. Fundamentally, my authenticity and my identity are both relational phenomena and, by consequence, can only exist and be defined in the context of a system of witnessing. They are both profoundly subjective.
My success as a performer is certainly defined in part by my ability to access the *negotiated authenticities* that are my performance *selves*. But how much of that is in fact my skill as a performing artist? Sarah Rubidge quotes William Crutchfield who, writing in the context of musical performance, states that the performer’s knowledge of grammar and syntax and history of the piece of music “is merely the base from which performers can produce authoritative, authentic performances.” The skill lies in the performer’s ability to use the training, the discipline, the language to access what Crutchfield calls “the Ausstrahlung of the performer. It joins hands with the genius of the composer and in the greatest performances seems to merge so that we feel music and musician are one” (Rubidge 1996, 224). This “Ausstrahlung” – charisma, radiance, aura, presence – is for him, authenticity.

The complex of perceptions that meet fluidly in my person – in who I am both as individual and artist – and that inform my authentic meanings, are the result of a long process of appropriation – of languages, of cultures, of values, of aesthetics. To borrow from Marcus Boon, I am a product of, and live “…in a world constituted by acts and events of appropriation” (2007). These acts of possession and dispossession have ultimately informed my *subjective identities* and it is in this fluid place that my *negotiated authenticities* are anchored.

I am standing at the bottom of the stairway next to the calligraphy, listening to the first notes of the cello begin to play Sam Brown’s STOP… As I open my mouth to sing, I look out at the audience, there is acceptance…and perhaps belief. In the words of Denis Dutton: “*Authentic, as opposed to what?*” (2003, 259).

**Works cited:**


http://marcusboon.com/on-appropriation/


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Biography:

A multidisciplinary artist, Angélique spent over 25 years in Europe performing with, among others, Alain Platel, Jan Lauwers/Needcompany, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, and as a singer with Belgian world-music group Zap Mama. Professor of contemporary dance at Concordia University, Angélique also works as a dramaturge for contemporary dance and circus productions.

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Consider It All Joy: The Embodiment of Struggle in American Evangelical Dance
Emily Wright

Abstract: Dance and Christianity have had a tenuous relationship throughout the history of Western civilization. Yet, despite, or perhaps as a result of this tension, dance has persisted inside and outside organized Christian religion. Beginning in the 1960s, a new paradigm of American spirituality began to emerge from the confluence of social and cultural factors that resulted in a kind of Christian practice characterized by a deeply personal and experiential relationship with God. At the same time, small groups of dancing Christians began to re-envision the place of the body in Christian practice and to reevaluate the ways in which the practices of dance and religion could develop in mutually supportive ways. These dancing Christians faced an uphill battle on two fronts—on the one hand, they faced a traditional religion that was either neutral or downright hostile to the dancing body; on the other hand, they faced a professional community that was perceived as hostile to the notion of religiously-based dance as a legitimate form of concert dance. This paper explores the experiences of one such Christian dance company to examine the ways in which the rhetoric of struggle to dance Christianly has become a fundamental part of the experience of dancing Christians.

Introduction

Throughout its history, dance has occupied a tenuous place within Christianity. Yet, despite, or perhaps as a result of this tension, dance has persisted inside and outside organized Christian religion. Beginning in the 1960s, a new paradigm of American spirituality began to emerge from a confluence of social and cultural factors that resulted in a new kind of Christian practice characterized by a deeply personal and experiential relationship with God. At the same time, small groups of dancing Christians began to re-envision the place of the body in Christian practice and to blend religion and Western concert dance. These dancing Christians recognize themselves as embattled on two fronts—on the one hand, they encounter a religious tradition that is ambivalent to the dancing body; on the other hand, they confront a professional community that they perceive as antagonistic to the notion of religiously-motivated concert dance. This sense of tension manifests itself in the narratives they construct, the embodied actions they practice, and the choreographic products they make. This presentation is part of a larger multi-site
qualitative study in which I explore the ways in which dance and religious practices coalesce to form and perpetuate individual and community identities in American evangelicalism. Although the practices of dancing Christians can be framed in other ways, in this presentation, I highlight the embodiment of struggle in a professional Christian dance company as a means to demonstrate the ways in which guiding narratives are performed in embodied actions and choreographic production.

To show how my participants blend professional concert dance and Christianity, first, I delineate a narrative they develop to conceptualize dancing Christians as servant artists. Then, I demonstrate how this narrative shapes their dance training and performance as embodied acts of dance as sacrifice. Finally, I consider how dancer as servant artist and dance as sacrifice manifest themselves as embodied struggle in choreographic production.

**Dancer as servant artist**

Founded by Houston-native Randall Flinn, Ad Deum Dance Company is a contemporary ballet company with a skill-based hierarchical structure composed of first and second companies and trainees. For Flinn and the members of his company, professional dance is a sacred calling in which the roles of Christian and dancer are inextricably intertwined. Flinn is the Artistic Director, but he is also an ordained minister. He sees himself as a pastor to the members of the company, who are also his congregation. Rather than call themselves professional dancers, company members prefer to refer to themselves as “servant artists.” For Flinn, the concept of servant artist means that the rigorous effort needed to train, create, rehearse, and perform professional-caliber dances are framed as Christ-like acts of service to others. This somewhat antithetical notion of the servant artist is meant to point to the example of Jesus, the ultimate model of humility and self-sacrifice in Christianity.
Company member Tiffany Schrepferman acknowledges that when she first took the job with Ad Deum, she grappled with her position in the company compared to a conventional paradigm for success—that of making it into a prestigious, nationally-recognized dance company. However, by framing herself as a servant artist, Schrepferman began to experience this tension as an opportunity redefine her notion of success. As she describes it:

My time here has been transformative for me as a person... Being a community has always been an abstract concept for me. But to actually realize how that works day to day—my car breaks down and one of the girls lets me use her car for a week. Or the emotional support you receive, someone who will pray for you when you’re sick. (Schrepferman 2015, Interview with author)

For Ad Deum company members like Schrepferman, identifying herself as a servant artist normalizes the experience of struggle and shifts definitions of success to an emphasis on experiences of interdependency and relational closeness among company members. Fighting to hold back tears, Schrepferman says, “I’ve found the thing that’s most valuable... not where I was expecting it. That’s been a treasure.” (Interview with author) In this way, Ad Deum subverts the trope of professional dancer as one who strives for personal accolades, self-fulfillment, or star status throughout his/her career. As servant artists, Ad Deum dancers use professional dance practices as a means to develop deeply-felt communities which afford them opportunities to manifest Christian virtues of love and service.

**Dance as sacrifice**

The guiding narrative of professional dancer as servant artist has direct ramifications for the ways in which Ad Deum implements professional training practices. In keeping with a traditional company model, Ad Deum trains and rehearses four to six days a week. The company begins with a morning gathering in which they sing, pray, read the Bible, and/or listen to an informal sermon delivered by Flinn. Next, they take a ninety-minute ballet or modern class,
which they also open to the larger Houston dance community as a means of cultivating relationships with other local dance professionals. After class, they take a short break for lunch and begin rehearsals, which usually last for several hours. As a means to fulfill their role as a Christian ministry, they perform regularly in churches, community centers, nursing homes, daycare centers, and hospitals. In addition, Ad Deum also performs in venues like The Barn in Houston and in events like Bailando Dance Festival or, most recently, as a prelude for David Parsons Dance (Ad Deum Dance Company 2016). This rigorous training and performing schedule, which amounts to an average of thirty hours per week, probably resonates with those familiar with professional dance practices and is intentionally designed by Flinn to mirror the conventions of the field. Most professional dancers would also agree that a certain amount of sacrifice is inherent in professional dance, especially in terms of the physical demands it places on the body, and the challenges it can present to financial security and relationships with friends and family. However, for Ad Deum dancers, the narrative of dancer as servant artist leads them to frame professional dance as a religious practice of sacrifice, in which the individual’s needs (for rest, for structure, for financial compensation) are often subsumed by the needs of the company who are pursuing rigorous professional training with zealous devotion. In other words, Ad Deum practices professional dance as a form of religious sacrifice.

Narratives of dance as sacrifice have implications for the ways in which dancers experience the hardships of professional dance as well as contributing to the status of the company as a missional organization. Company members emphasize the intense demands of keeping up a rigorous professional training and performing schedule, while working other jobs to pay bills due to lack of regular financial compensation. In fact, most work for the company on a volunteer basis, which means that in addition to classes, rehearsals and performances, Flinn and
his dancers must all have outside jobs to meet their financial commitments. Occasionally, Flinn secures a grant to cover the cost of a project, but the dancers receive nominal compensation. Schrepferman acknowledges: “I was willing to make financial sacrifices to be here, to be a part of [the company], knowing what I was coming into. But because we all believe, and [Flinn] believes, in the work Ad Deum is doing, the work is more important than the finances.”

(Interview with author) This aspect of the company’s financial structure seems to place an unnecessary burden on Flinn’s dancers. In response, Flinn says, “You could call it volunteerism. . . . The dancers know in their hearts, ‘I’m here to serve and I realize that this is the dynamic.’”

(Interview with author) Flinn is careful to point out that this financial situation applies to him as well.

In Seeking the Straight and Narrow: Weight Loss and Sexual Reorientation in Evangelical America, religion scholar Lynn Gerber (2012) notes that despite the outward appearance of discipline or even maltreatment, practices that serve to facilitate the development of religious communities through shared experience and intimacy can be experienced as pleasurable. Ad Deum dancers have a shared struggle (physical demands and financial hardship), a shared strategy for attending to that struggle (community and interdependency), and the shared experiences of regular classes, rehearsals, and performances that engage with that struggle in ways that feel satisfying and concrete.

However, this paradigm for professional dancing Christians seems unsustainable. Although Flinn has been able to maintain the company since 1999 while supporting himself with outside teaching jobs and workshop fees, Ad Deum experiences frequent turn-over in company membership. The majority of Flinn’s dancers are single, young adults without obligations that might prevent them from investing significant hours in unpaid dance training and performance.
Yet, even these young dancers quickly develop exhausted bodies which they re-frame as the natural condition for dancers who are servant artists.

**Dancing intercession**

In my first example, I showed how dancing Christians reimagine professional concert dance as an embodied action of sacrifice. Now, I turn to another example of the embodiment of struggle in dance practice which blends improvisation and Christian prayer. The dancing Christians in my study use prayer as a way to come together to unite their intent, to define their work as an offering of praise and worship, and to invite God to dance with and through them. Members of Ad Deum pray together before classes, rehearsals and, especially, performances. They pray for protection from injury and for a successful performance, but they also pray to ask God to be made manifest in the performance, to invite God to inhabit the work, to request that God provide the energy, the life, the animation, the emotion for the dancing. Theater and performance studies scholar John Fletcher (2013) notes that these kinds of prayers invite God to be a co-performer. In this way, prayer functions as more than a framing device. It becomes a part of embodied dance action as well. In fact, the postures of prayer—heads bowed, eyes closed, kneeling, arms lifted or hands clasped—are recognizable physical gestures and stances that also make their way into choreography.

In recent years, a particular kind of dancing prayer has begun to emerge among the dancing Christian community.¹ This practice, which I refer to as *intercessory prayer dance*, describes dancing, sometimes choreographed, sometimes improvisational, that is intended to act as a weapon in battles of spiritual warfare. Religion scholar Christian Smith notes that American evangelicalism maintains its strength as a cultural force in part because it perceives itself to be embattled by forces (spiritual and worldly) that seem to oppose or threaten it (1998, 19). In
describing spiritual warfare, American evangelicals site scriptures like Ephesians 6:12 [NASV]: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places.”

Although intercessory prayer in general refers to praying on behalf of someone else (to intercede), it can also indicate longer, more intense prayer, especially for special situations in which the person prayed for is believed to be experiencing hardship as a result of spiritual attack. Individuals believed to be “gifted” in prayer are sometimes referred to as “prayer warriors,” further strengthening the notion of battle. In American evangelical circles where women’s leadership continues to be contested, prayer is considered a more acceptable leadership role for women, especially since it often happens in small groups, one-on-one, or in private, as opposed to more visible leadership roles (pastor, teacher, elder) which are typically held by men. Although their roles may be more limited, intercessory prayer affords women opportunities to speak, to recite scriptures, and to deliver exhortations to others within a flexible framework of group prayer. Dancing Christians believe that the physical actions of intercessory prayer dance have real effects on spiritual conditions. Although she may or may not speak, the dancer assumes a leadership role as one who “ministers” through bodily movement imbued with the ability to exhort, encourage, bless, and wage war against spiritual forces assembled against the community of believers.

During their spring intensive in 2015, Ad Deum dancers and workshop attendees gather each morning in a dance studio for a time of communal singing and prayer. The music and singing, led by a trio of company members, is exuberant and energetic. Company members invite the participants to dance as well as sing. Many attendees stand, some swaying to the music, moving their arms in undulating waves or slowly stepping from side-to-side. As the singing
grows in intensity, more dancers stand and some begin to dance across the space with wide, sweeping arm gestures and upward reaching.

One dancer in particular travels with purpose across the room, making her way to a young man, who, with head bowed and body hunched, is singing with inward focus and heartfelt intensity. She begins to dance in front of him, striking the floor with percussive stamps, reaching into the air above his head, as if grasping for negative energy swirling around his body and tossing it away. Although she does not make physical contact with the young man and he does not look up, he seems aware of her gestures towards him. Her movements are authoritative, as if, with strong, sweeping gestures, she can command evil spirits to flee. Her movements become progressively softer, as if transitioning from battle to blessing the young man.

Eventually, she dances away into her own inward-focused expressions of devotion. Throughout this encounter, which was perhaps one or two minutes, neither person spoke or made eye contact with the other. Yet this duet exemplifies a belief in the capacity of dance to act as a potent form of embodied prayer. Intercessory prayer dance enacts American evangelical ideas of struggle against spiritual forces while simultaneously demonstrating the power of dance to unite body with spirit in religious practice.

Choreographies of struggle

In this final section, I demonstrate how narratives and embodied actions coalesce in the choreographies dancing Christians produce. For Ad Deum, narratives and embodied actions of struggle do more than shape the kinds of dances they make. Ad Deum dancers report that enacting struggle in choreography actualizes experiences of struggle and community among the performers during the dance. As they dance together, Ad Deum dancers call upon real experiences of struggle (sometimes brought on by the rigors of their commitments as servant
artists). The choreography becomes a vehicle to express attendant emotions of grief, fear or despair. As the choreography culminates into resolution and celebration, they experience a deep sense of communal love and support, further solidifying their mutuality as a dancing community.

*Joyful Noise* is an ensemble work for eight dancers. The title is an oblique reference to Psalm 100:1 [KJV], “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.” As a contemporary instrumental version of the hymn “All Creatures of Our God and King” begins, three dancers enter upstage left and kneel in a deep diagonal line formation. They bow forward in unison, reaching their arms along the floor in a series of gestures which echo the movements of prayer from their morning gatherings. Although they dance in unison, one dancer distinguishes herself from the others as she infuses her movement with a sense of anguish. Finally, as if her anguish cannot be contained, the soloist disrupts the celebratory movements of the others, pushing past them into the center of the space.

While the others stand back to observe, the soloist dances alone, articulating a vocabulary in striking contrast to the group. She circles her arms, clenching and shaking her fists, then lunges forward, slapping her thighs. In the intimacy of the small theater, I hear her breath coming in snatches and little gasps, almost as if crying. She is drawn back into the trio and the three blend her solo into the group, combining graceful turns and light, quick footwork with syncopated jumps, lunges, and body percussion. Although they move in unison, the soloist maintains the qualities of intensity and anguish that distinguish her movement from the others. In a particularly arresting moment, the trio shift back and forth on flexed feet, torsos contracted, fists clenching the fabric of their skirts. They end in unison, lunging downstage. While her companions stop in the lunge, the soloist repeats it over and over, evoking the image of beating her head against an imaginary wall. Again, her fellows bear witness to her despair.
The soloist is left standing alone downstage center as another group of dancers and her companions join them in forming a vertical line from stage right. The soloist looks up as if startled and walks backward with small, timid steps, smoothing her dress, as if suddenly self-conscious of her public outburst. The music fades. In silence, she joins the line.

As a new instrumental score begins, the choreography shifts to an extricate ensemble work with dancers continually exiting and entering the space and shifting between unison and canon. Movements shift rapidly from graceful suspended circles and sweeping waltz steps to sharp dabs and flicks, quick lunges and big jumps. Although the soloist sometimes submerges herself into the group, the ensemble’s spatial configurations repeatedly highlight her position, usually by centering her in their midst or by the continued contrast between their unreservedly joyful execution and her continued anguish. The juxtaposition of soloist and ensemble, as well as the contrast between the soloist’s exuberant movement and anguished facial expression exemplify the sense of tension Ad Deum dancers express in their struggle to blend concert dance and American evangelicalism as servant artists.

As the dance reaches a crescendo, indicated by a climax in the music as well as the increasing intensity of the dancing, punctuated by big jumps, stomps, playful clapping, and individual exhibitions of skill, the soloist, seemingly unnoticed by her fellows, leaves the stage. As the music softens, the stage lights dim to a single spotlight center stage. The soloist re-enters and steps into the center of this circle of light as the group assembles around her and kneels in unison, lifting their faces to her in expectation. Slowly, the soloist moves her feet and shoulders in small undulations which grow into lunges, turns, and jumps. At the same time, her expression transforms—her mourning gradually replaced by exuberant joy. While the soloist continues her transformation, members of the group leave the circle one by one, until one witness remains. She
stands to join the soloist and for the first time, they share the same joyful expression as they
dance together. The pace and intensity builds again as members of the ensemble join in the
unreservedly joyful dance. This moment often garners a vocal response from the audience. They
whoop, cheer, or clap along. The soloist faces the group and their dance becomes a call-and-
response, culminating in a back-and-forth series of tightly executed jumps. Suddenly, all lunge
together, as if arrested in the midst of joy. As the lights dim and the music fades, they kneel and
repeat the prayer gestures from the beginning of the dance and this time the soloist’s expression
of peace and contentment matches that of the group. In a final gesture, arms reach, palms lifted
in a gesture of reverence.

Conclusion

The message of the dance echoes what company member Tiffany Schrepferman says
about the distinctiveness of Ad Deum as a Christian community. To paraphrase: as dancing
Christians, we will struggle, but we will always have a community of other dancing Christians
around us to lift us up. Dance can be a difficult profession, especially without the benefits of
financial compensation. Ad Deum dancers struggle—with financial stress, with physical injury
or illness, with emotional strain. Some of these struggles are a part of professional concert dance,
others are set up by the circumstances of Ad Deum in particular. Framing dance as a religious
practice of sacrifice and dancers as servant artists in some ways produces the conditions for
struggle which company members then experience.

Gerber notes that practices which ostensibly seem to discipline groups can be
experienced as positive: “Discipline and power can be generative, constructive, and creative. It is
also the force that makes a group cohere, engenders a feeling of knowing and being known, and
fosters a sense of commonality and shared identification” (2012, 151). Schrepferman asserts that
being a member of Ad Deum has been “transformative” for her as a person, because of her experience of the group as a Christian community. Other dancers note that performing *Joyful Noise* in particular contributes to her sense of personal transformation. One dancer described instances when she’s “been heavy, and God brings [her] joy” during the dance. For Ad Deum Dance Company, the narrative of dancer as servant artist, embodied actions of dance training and intercessory prayer, and choreography such as *Joyful Noise*, are significant contributions which enable their dancing community.

Notes

1 Although there may be other iterations of this practice among laypersons in charismatic Christian traditions or in other religions, for the purpose of this project, I confine my discussion to contemporary practices in a Western concert dance milieu.
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Isadora Duncan and the Japanese Performers: Sada Yacco, Hanako and Michio Ito
Emi Yagishita

Abstract: Isadora Duncan, the modern dance pioneer, stated, "I do not like any kind of dancing except, perhaps, the Japanese." During her lifetime, Duncan observed the performances of at least three Japanese dancers: Sada Yacco Kawakami, Hanako (Ota Hisa) and Michio Ito. The Japanese influence on the evolution of Duncan's dance has not been extensively examined in the history of dance and arts. For example, Duncan was inspired by Sada Yacco's performances during the 1900 Paris Universal Exposition. Therefore, my paper will focus on the intersection of Isadora Duncan's ideas and those of Japanese dancers.

Introduction

My paper is on Isadora Duncan and her artistic intersections with the Japanese dancers Sada Yacco, Hanako, and Michio Ito.

Initially, Isadora Duncan's dance style appears to be very European or Western as she always wore a Greek tunic when she performed onstage. According to Ann Daly, Duncan originally cast the natural body as "a product of the great Greek civilization (via her idyllic Californian fantasy. . .)." In a sense, as Daly wrote, "Isadora was effectively constructing the genre of American modern dance as whiteness" (2002, 218-19).

However, Isadora herself made some intriguing statements in her later years. In 1922, Isadora said: "... all my life I have only 'listened to music.' I have never been a dancer; I do not like any kind of dancing except, perhaps, the Japanese" (Duncan and McDougall 1929, 159-60). In actuality, Isadora Duncan was very impressed by the art of Japanese
In the course of my research on Isadora Duncan, I discovered that she had observed the performances of at least three Japanese dancers: Sada Yacco, Hanako, and Michio Ito. Isadora was not only an admirer of these Japanese performers' dancing, but also received inspiration from their artistry. In turn, she provided some inspiration--especially for Michio Ito.

In this paper, I will clarify when Isadora Duncan encountered these Japanese performers, as well as explore the transmission of ideas. For my research, I utilized the published writings of Isadora Duncan, Hanako, Michio Ito, and photographer Arnold Genthe (a friend of both Isadora and Michio Ito), as well as the unpublished writing of Isadora's brother, Raymond Duncan. I also referred to photos of Isadora, Sada Yacco, Hanako, and Michio Ito, and rare film footage of Hanako.

**Isadora Duncan (1877-1927)**

As Isadora Duncan is well known, I will only briefly outline her biography.

Isadora Duncan was born in San Francisco. She performed on the West Coast, in Chicago, and in New York City, but her innovative style of dance was not recognized as an art form in the U.S. Consequently, she decided to move to Europe with her family. First, she danced in London; then she performed in Paris. At the 1900 Paris World Exposition,
Isadora Duncan had the opportunity to see the Japanese performer, Sada Yacco, dance at the Loie Fuller Theatre.

**Sada Yacco Kawakami (1871-1946)**

Sada Yacco was born in Tokyo. Her family's financial difficulties compelled her to become a maiko (an apprentice geisha), and then later a geisha. The fact that her patron was Hirobumi Ito, the prime minister of Japan, indicates that she became a very high-ranking, skillful geisha.

Initially, Sada Yacco did not want to be an actress. However, in 1894, she married Otojiro Kawakami, an actor and the director of the Kawakami troupe. When the Kawakami troupe performed in the U.S., the troupe was lacking an actress; therefore, it was necessary for Sada Yacco to perform. After a successful American tour, they gave a performance in London in front of the royal family at Buckingham Palace. Then the troupe was invited by Loie Fuller to perform at her theatre in Paris. Fuller, an entertainer who is considered one of the founders of modern dance, became their impresario.

It proved to be a rare opportunity for Sada Yacco to display her "Japanese performances" at the Expo. The troupe performed *The Geisha and the Knight*, as well as some other works. As a result of her performances in Paris in 1900, Sada Yacco became a star and her picture appeared on the covers of the magazines *Le Theatre* and *Femina*. 

Moreover, a perfume called "Sada Yacco" was created and a kimono shop was opened in the center of Paris. Many artists, including Otto Muller and Pablo Picasso, loved to depict Sada Yacco in their works. These representations are evidence of Sada Yacco's tremendous popularity at this time; in other words, she was a "phenomenal" figure.

When Isadora Duncan observed Sada Yacco’s performance at Loie Fuller’s theatre, she derived inspiration from the Japanese woman’s dancing. Duncan wrote in her autobiography that "one great impression remained with me of the Exhibition of 1900--the dancing of Sada Yacco, the great tragic dancer of Japan. Night after night Charles Halle and I were thrilled by the wondrous art of this great tragedian" (2013, 54-55).

Isadora Duncan was impressed by Sada Yacco’s free-flowing, continuous movement, typical of Japanese traditional dance. Sada Yacco removed her Japanese sandals, performing barefooted.

When we remember Isadora Duncan, we imagine the American woman dancing barefooted. However, when Duncan performed in London just before she came to Paris, she did not dance in bare feet. Duncan's dance in London had been inspired by Botticelli’s painting, Primavera. In spite of the fact that the spring fairy in Botticelli’s painting is depicted barefooted, Isadora wore sandals to dance. Audience testimony confirms that Duncan "wore golden sandals" (Western Times 1900). Moreover, Isadora wrote, "I
danced in sandals," in her autobiography (2013, 41).

Isadora Duncan performed in London in July 1900. Although the Paris World Exposition began on April 14, 1900, Sada Yacco and the Kawakami troupe started their series of performances in Loie Fuller’s theatre on July 4. Duncan likely witnessed Sada Yacco’s dancing soon after her arrival in Paris. She went many times to see Sada Yacco perform. Before the Exposition ended in November 1900, Isadora Duncan had moved to a studio on Avenue de Villiers in Paris. According to Isadora Duncan: "Autumn approached, and the last days of the Exhibition….We had left the studio in the Rue de la Gaite, and with the remainder of our little savings, we took a large studio in the Avenue de Villiers" (2013, 55).

Isadora's brother Raymond resided with her in Paris at this period. He wrote an important account of Isadora's activities: "But it was when we were finally in our studios on Avenue de Villiers in Paris that Isadora made a profound and deep study of her dance" (Duncan Papers n.d., 14). Following her observation of Sada Yacco's dancing without shoes, Isadora began to search for her own freer movement and unique style. Isadora began to dance barefooted in her studio, and while performing *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. My hypothesis is that Isadora started to perform in bare feet as a result of being inspired by Sada Yacco’s performance.
Hanako (1868-1945)

The next Japanese performer encountered by Isadora Duncan was Hanako. Hanako was less well known in Japan than Sada Yacco. However, a noted scholar, Donald Keene, has researched Hanako’s achievements in the West. Although Hanako performed in the West after Sada Yacco's tour, her background was similar to that of the other Japanese dancer. After her foster family went bankrupt, Hanako (born "Ota Hisa") entered a theatre group, then became a maiko, and eventually a geisha in 1884. When Hanako learned that an impresario was looking for Japanese actresses in 1901, she traveled, at the age of thirty-four, to Copenhagen, Denmark. She then performed in many places in Europe and the U.S.

The relationship between Isadora Duncan and Hanako is more difficult to document. However, in Hanako’s memoir, she recalled her visit to Russia when the founder of the Moscow Art Theatre, Konstantin Stanislavski, invited Hanako to demonstrate her acting. Hanako wrote:

Many newspapers unexpectedly praised the performances, and I could make friends in the Moscow Theatre. . . .Thus, I could show them the expression of death, laughter, and happiness in the Japanese way at the Moscow Art Theatre. One night, I met Isadora Duncan who had established her own dance school near Versailles and was recognized as the best dancer in the world. (1917, 101)

Rare film footage exists that shows Hanako performing her dramatic death scene.
Isadora may have seen a similar death scene during Hanako's Russian performance. According to my research, Hanako remained in Russia from November 27, 1911 to the end of 1913 or the beginning of 1914. In January 1913, Isadora Duncan performed in Russia, accompanied by the pianist Hena Skine. Therefore, I believe that Isadora and Hanako met in Russia in January 1913.

While it is not specifically known how much they influenced each other in their performances, Hanako was recognized for the realistic expressiveness of her death performance. The choreography of Isadora's tragic works: *Funeral March* in 1913 and *Redemption* in 1916, may have been influenced by Hanako's tragic realism. Of course, Duncan's dance development was also affected by her sorrow about the actual loss of her two children during this period.

Isadora Duncan was a longtime friend of Auguste Rodin and Hanako had modeled for Rodin since about 1906. In drawings of Hanako, made by the French artist Auguste Rodin, it is evident that Hanako also danced barefooted, wearing a loose garment. Rodin had been fascinated by the Japanese performer's exotic appearance, creating more than sixty sculptures of her. Isadora was also acquainted with Hanako's impresario, Loie Fuller, so it is likely that Duncan was aware of Hanako even prior to the Russian trip.

*Michio Ito (1892-1961)*
Another Japanese performer with whom Isadora Duncan intersected has been called one of the founders of American modern dance. Michio Ito was born in 1892 in Tokyo where he studied singing and Japanese traditional dance. His dream of becoming an opera singer led him to move to Germany to study. However, in Germany, Ito realized that it would be impossible to succeed as a Western opera singer and his Japanese friend, composer Kosaku Yamada, advised him to pursue a dance career.

Ito watched a performance by Isadora Duncan and wanted to become her apprentice. Ito recalled, "I saw Isadora Duncan in Berlin. I went to see her performance with Kaoru Osanai. While I was watching her dance, I was thinking that if she were male, I would be very jealous of her. She already did what I wanted to do. I thought--she is my only master in the world. . . ." (1940, 230-31). At the stage door, Ito pleaded to be her student; but Isadora Duncan told him that it would be difficult to teach him while she was touring. She recommended that he attend the school managed by her sister Elizabeth.

Since Michio’s dream was to study with Isadora Duncan, he decided not to enroll at her sister’s school. Ito concluded that "the secret of Isadora Duncan’s art is music, and I realized that I needed to study music" (1940, 231). Therefore, he entered Emile-Jaques Dalcroze’s Institute, where he was the only Oriental student. Here he acquired the technique called "Eurythmics."
The outbreak of the First World War prompted Michio Ito to leave Germany and move to England. In London, Michio performed his unique style of dance at salons and garnered praise from the social elite. His performance as the Hawk-like Guardian of the Well in *At the Hawk's Well* won great acclaim and he was invited to the U.S. by an impresario. He resided first in New York, then in Los Angeles.

It is not widely known that Michio Ito had the opportunity to meet his ideal dancer, Isadora Duncan, again, in New York, and that Michio was eventually invited to her private performance. Here is his testimony:

Isadora Duncan changed the academic dance form to a pure art form. . . .I deeply respect her arts from the bottom of my heart. She is an artist who transcended the ages. . . .Isadora came to New York, so I saw her dance at the Metropolitan Opera House and went to her dressing room. She was really pleased by my visit and she said, 'You can come to my studio any time you want.' Because I had no studio at that time, I went to her studio every day and practiced. . . .

Michio Ito continued:

One day, Isadora invited about 100 artists in New York, and held a costume ball. Duncan wore an eighteenth-century-style large skirt, bonnet, and shoes. . . .This was unusual because she always danced wearing loose clothing, and barefooted . . . . After the dinner, she asked me to dance and we danced together. However, her skirt was so large, I had to keep a certain distance while we were dancing. In the course of time, she said, 'I can’t wear this!' and removed her costume. Later, she took off her shoes and danced barefooted. . . .At midnight, the musicians stopped playing and started to leave. There was a union rule in New York that they did not play music after midnight. Isadora became angry. . . .I said, 'What should we do?' She said, 'Let’s go back to your studio and continue.' . . . My studio has a piano and records, so we could dance without musicians. (1940,
In turn, Isadora Duncan attended Ito's New York salon performance. Photographer Arnold Genthe (a friend of both Duncan and Ito) wrote about this experience:

As I wanted something in the way of a novelty, I got Michio Ito, who had just come to New York, to perform an hour of Japanese dances, with two Japanese girls in costume playing the koto and the samisen, and two Japanese boys with the drums. . . . The evening was a great success and Isadora was especially delighted with Ito’s Japanese dances, which were something new to her. (1916, 184)

Genthe's testimony indicates how impressed Isadora Duncan was by Michio Ito’s dancing. It is clear that Isadora Duncan not only appreciated Western dance, but was also interested in Japanese styles. Michio Ito’s most famous dance is Pizzicato, in which both of his feet are motionless, while his upper body moves. Isadora may have acquired a particular concept of stillness from watching him. The author, Joseph L. Anderson, suggests that Duncan "incorporated 'stillness moments' into her dances to isolate parts in ways analogous to the 'halts' (ma) or poses of Japanese dance" (2011, 491). Although Ito sought to emulate Isadora Duncan, I believe that Ito's relationship with the American dancer was more of a two-way artistic exchange between East and West than has been realized.

**Conclusion**
In conclusion, I have explored Isadora Duncan's intersections with three Japanese performers in Europe and the U.S. Watching Sada Yacco's performance, Duncan drew inspiration to dance barefooted and emphasize free-flowing, continuous movements as in Japanese traditional dance. The expressive tragic realism of Hanako may have encouraged Isadora Duncan to depict sorrow and death in her dancing. Michio Ito was inspired by Isadora Duncan's approach to dance, yet Duncan was also influenced by some traditional Japanese elements in Ito's dance. Duncan and Ito not only observed each other's performances, but they also went to each other’s dance studios and practiced dancing together. The Japanese influence on the evolution of Duncan's art has not been extensively examined in the history of dance; however, these cross-cultural transmissions of ideas were an important part of her development.

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Acknowledgements

This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP15H06676. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the descendants of Isadora Duncan—Ligoa Duncan, Michel Duncan, and Dorée Duncan who shared with me the unpublished papers of Raymond Duncan. I also take this opportunity to thank the descendant of Michio Ito—Michele Ito.

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Biography

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