

# Proceedings

10th International NOFOD Conference  
January 27-30, Odense 2011  
University of Southern Denmark

Spacing Dance(s)  
Dancing Space(s)





Nordisk Forum for Danseforskning  
Nordic Forum for Dance Research  
[www.nofod.org](http://www.nofod.org)

Photos on cover: From *'Rankefod'* – A performance by Kitt Johnson X-act.  
Photographer: Per Morten Abrahamsen

Spacing Dance(s) - Dancing Space(s)  
Proceedings, 10th NOFOD Conference  
Odense, Denmark, January 27-30 2011



The Conference was held in cooperation with the research unit Movement,  
Sport and Society, Institute of Sports Science and Clinical Biomechanics,  
University of Southern Denmark.

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## Preface

Nordic Forum for Dance Research, NOFOD, held its 10<sup>th</sup> conference in Odense in January 2011. The biannual international conference is the main activity of NOFOD and much of the NOFOD board's work is invested in planning and carrying out these conferences.

The theme of the 10<sup>th</sup> international NOFOD conference ***'Spacing Dance(s) – Dancing Space(s)'*** was introduced in the following way: "The notion of space relates both to the very concrete physical and technological settings of dance and to the implicit contexts created through movement. In both senses dance takes place in many kinds of spaces. Recently the venues have appeared to grow in number and diversity: New arenas and old ones revived offer places to enjoy the social atmosphere when dancing salsa, tango or Nordic folkdances, diverse rural and urban outdoor locations host engaging events with dance performances and workshops almost throughout the year; a plethora of film clips on diverse forms of dance circulate in the internet, for example. However, at the same time movement also constructs and sets space. Moving generates an embodied and shared spatiality."

The conference was arranged in close collaboration with the Institute of Sports Science and Clinical Biomechanics at the University of Southern Denmark, Odense. The university campus in Odense was also the conference venue. The four day conference took place between Thursday the 27<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> of January. On Thursday evening there was a reception party, a site-specific performance by performer Kitt Johnson as well as a performance by sports-dancers, Martino Zanibellato and Michelle Abildtrup ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the world in Latin. In between these events and in a shared setting the keynote speakers addressed the theme of the conference. Friday morning the leader of the Institute of Sports Science and Clinical Biomechanics, Jørgen Povlsen, opened the conference officially together with NOFOD Chair Leena Rouhiainen.

Interestingly the conference consisted evenly of different presentations: research papers, lecture demonstrations, roundtables and workshops. Each day was started with a keynote lecture, as it has been the tradition at the recent NOFOD conferences. On Sunday morning the program had to be changed as keynote speaker Egil Bakka was sick and had to cancel his participation in the last minute. Instead, the conference organizers arranged for a panel discussion between the other three keynote speakers, Lena Hammergren, Doreen Massey and Sarah Rubidge. The panel discussion was held in the gym-hall and a lecture demonstration opened the discussion. On Saturday the participants gathered together at an evening party.

We are proud to publish nearly all the presentations held and give warm thanks to all those who contributed to the conference and this volume. The papers are pub-

lished as they were received from the authors, with the exception that the layout has been adjusted to a standard format.

The conference was supported by '*Det Frie Forskningsråd*' and '*Nordisk Kulturfond.*'

Leena Rouhiainen  
NOFOD Chair 2008 - 2011

Susanne Ravn  
Conference coordinator  
NOFOD Chair 2011 -

## Biographies Keynote Speakers

**Egil Bakka** is Professor and Program Chair of Dance Studies, Department of Music, at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim. Egil Bakka received his Magister degree in Ethnology at the University of Oslo in 1973 with a dissertation on traditional Norwegian dance. He was then immediately engaged to build a new institution, which is at present the Norwegian Centre for Traditional Music and Dance located at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. In 1989 he was called to become an adjunct professor at the Department of Music at this university. He built up a program of Dance studies where he is now professor and program chair. Website: <http://ntnu-no.academia.edu/EgilBakka>.

**Lena Hammergren** is Professor at the Department for Musicology and Performance Studies, Stockholm University, and the University of Dance and Circus, Stockholm. Her research focus on dance in Scandinavia, and her list of publications in English include chapters in e.g. *Choreographing History* (1995), *Corporealities* (1996), *Europe Dancing: Perspectives on Theatre Dance and Cultural Identity* (2000), *Rethinking Dance History* (2004), *Worlding Dance* (2009). Since 2007, she is a board member of the Society of Dance History Scholars.

**Doreen Massey** is Emeritus Professor of Geography at the Open University. She has worked for many years on issues of space and place, linking problems of conceptualisation to questions of politics. See *For Space* (Sage, 2005). Some previous articles are collected in *Space, place and gender* (Polity Press), and her most recent book is *World City* (Polity Press, 2010). She is currently working on: *Landscape and the moving image* with Patrick Keiller and Patrick Wright. Website: [http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/staff/people-profile.php?name=Doreen\\_Massey](http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/staff/people-profile.php?name=Doreen_Massey).

**Sarah Rubidge** is Professor of Choreography and New Media at the University of Chichester. A practitioner-scholar and collaborative artist, she develops large scale choreographic installations that focus on the use of the somatic as the primary medium of communication. Additionally, many of the installations initiate formal and informal group improvisations that become integral choreographic elements of the work. Much of her writing addresses the inherent interplay of philosophical concepts in her artistic work and the implications of recent developments in neuroscientific research to somatic understanding and has been published internationally. Her artistic work has been presented in the Europe, the USA and Australia. Website: [www.sensedigital.co.uk](http://www.sensedigital.co.uk).

## Biographies Presenters

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case study" in the journal, *Body, Movement and dance in Psycho-therapy* (2008), *The Dance of the Now—Poetics of Everyday Human Movement* is FQS' Performative Social Science special issue, May, 2008. and Engel et al. (2006) *Bevægelsens Poetik* (poetics of movement) Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanums Forlag. E-mail: [lengel@ifi.ku.dk](mailto:lengel@ifi.ku.dk)

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## Keynote Speakers

### Everybody's Dance: Democracy and Dancing in Nordic Spaces

Lena Hammergren

This presentation can be described as a “Case Study” of dance and democracy in a region called Norden, and it is part of an ongoing larger research project called Dance in Nordic Spaces: The Formation of Corporeal Identities that I carry out together with 6 other dance scholars from different parts of the region.

Thus, my focus is on Norden, but since the theme of the conference is the notion of *space*, I would like to emphasize that Norden should perhaps best be perceived as an “imagined space” (I am alluding to the well-known concept “imagined community”, coined by Benedict Anderson), rather than a fixed geography. Political, national, international and regional strategies have defined and continue to define where the borders should be drawn. However, I will not concentrate on geographical space in my presentation, but rather use the concept space as in “spaces of encounter”, articulating how Norden has become a meeting point for multiple ethnicities as well as for ideas about these real or imagined encounters.

The central question I will address is: How can we understand some of the ways in which democracy has been articulated in dance – whilst seen from a “Nordic” viewpoint?

Let me answer this question by way of first addressing a more personal perspective. I have been brought up, I live and work in Sweden, a country whose politics during the 20th century have been thoroughly marked by a social-democratic ideology and practice that included a range of reform programmes and strategies for promoting and securing social welfare and social equality (in some circles, these practices are also known as either the Nordic or Swedish model). In addition, my personal life history includes a mother born in Finland, who suffered two wars between Finland and former Soviet Union, and whose father disappeared after having moved to Soviet in order to support the early communist regime. Thus, when my mother, forced by the lack of work opportunities in Finland, immigrated to Sweden during the 1940s she brought with her a particular notion of tensions between communism, socialism and democracy. She was of course not alone in experiencing this pressure. Sweden and its neighbouring countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway, have acted as a kind of mediating space between ideological forces emanating from the USA on one side and the former Soviet Union, and today Russia, on the other. So, the tension between “East” and “West” has been

active in forming the Nordic societies and politics during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, during the second half of that century and in our contemporary time, it has become increasingly visible that the region experiences also tensions between a “North – South” perspective.

All these aspects have affected my research on dance cultures in the Nordic region, and in particular, in trying to make sense of a fairly progressive political climate and its problematic, often discursively hidden shortcomings. I have needed other analytic tools than those provided by e.g. the deconstructions of Imperialism, Colonialism, or Orientalism. I have needed tools that could be used to expose the many intricate folds of a North-European-based democracy.

In 2004, Robert J.C. Young’s *White Mythologies* was published in a second edition – 14 years after its first release (Young, 2004). The later edition includes a new foreword by Homi K. Bhabha that I use as a framework for my presentation. In his text I have found a critical standpoint that has helped me address the oscillating movement between democracy and inequalities - between inclusions and exclusions - that I have discovered in my analyses of dances performed in Norden. In *White Mythologies*, Young writes about Hegel, Marx, Sartre, Foucault, among others, and his analyses reveal the contradictions behind each author’s political virtue. As Bhabha emphasizes, Young contests: “the Eurocentrism of those writers famously affiliated with the materialist projects of independence and emancipation” (Bhabha in Young, 2004: x).

Since my own scholarly position includes writing from within what I conceive of as a fairly progressive culture, but also within a whole set of Eurocentric traditions and mindscapes, I feel targeted by Young’s and Bhabha’s critique, and therefore I will try to take up on Bhabha’s challenge that a contemporary scholar should engage in moving between, what he calls the “‘yes-but’ movement of dialectical thought” (ibid). Yes, these famous authors have written eloquently about emancipation, but they are still deeply affected by a eurocentrism. Translated into my methodology: yes I live in a fairly progressive part of the world, but there are still some socio-cultural practices, including dancing, that are affected by what has been labelled a “whiteness-perspective”, thus promoting an oppressive ideology, seldom explicitly stated, but more commonly existing in a hidden or unconscious manner.

For this presentation, I have chosen 3 sets of dance practices taking place in Norden. I consider them key events in this context, because they offer particular problems in addressing questions of equality and thus democracy, and not because they are part of a main stream Nordic dance history. These questions of equality and democracy have been summarized, in the title of my presentation, as “Everybody’s Dance”. The set of examples include

1) The creation of a national cultural policy – in which art is defined as a tool for improving self-understanding and for understanding how democracy works;

2) The creation of a national canon of art works – in which art is used for securing a social cohesion around a national identity;

3) The “Open Source Movement” - performances opposing artistic authority and ownership, and thus forming a certain kind of critique of how democracy can be defined from an aesthetic and socio-political viewpoint. I must add here that the title Open Source Movement is not used by a particular group. It is an analytical label that I apply for this particular occasion.

In addition, the three examples move in time, from the 1970s till contemporary time, and they articulate the move from ideologies of class, through ideologies of ethnicities to something I will (at least for the time being) call the ideologies of political immanence.

### ***Social democracy and cultural policies – equal rights to dance?***

During the 1960s Swedish authorities experienced a need to rethink its views on culture, much as a reaction to changes in both the national and international social climates. In some parts of Norden, different groups protested against the Vietnam War, against the space programmes in the USA and the Soviet Union, against environmental destruction, and the exploitation of the “Third” worlds. This wave of protest also extended to questioning the condition of the foundations of democracy inside Norden. In Sweden, people realized that the nation was composed of various national and ethnic minorities instead of a homogenous population. At that time migration to Sweden came mainly from different European countries e.g. Spain, Yugoslavia, and Greece because of their political situations, and from countries in Latin America, again depending on the political contexts. This situation was initially a consequence of labour immigration after the World War II, but from the 1960s also a result of Sweden’s quite liberal programmes for refugees.

Hence, it was during the 1960s that the nation’s cultural life began to be regarded as a state concern that demanded the formulation of a unified national cultural policy. In 1963, the responsibility for culture was moved from the Ministry of Commerce to the Ministry of Education, and one of the effects was the beginning of a system of central government subsidies. In 1969, a commission gathered to create the foundations for a new social-democratic cultural policy, and an infrastructure for culture, and this was finally established in 1974.

The major part of the policy-making was inspired by the English Cultural Studies scholar Raymond Williams and his broad definition of the concept “culture”. In the Swedish version, it emphasized collaboration between state, county and municipality, and

was dedicated to dispersing culture throughout the country, counteracting the effects of commercialism and making culture available to previously marginalized groups, particularly children, youths, the differently-abled and the working class. Equal Rights to culture, became the central concept of the new cultural perspective. In this listing of marginalized groups we cannot find any mentioning of ethnic identities in the policy documents from 1974, and it is remarkable given the social context of the time with its large number of immigrants, and programs for refugees, and I will return to this problem below.

Art and culture in the broadest sense were now believed to be excellent tools for addressing marginalised groups, and improve their sense of self-understanding and comprehension of a democratic and equal society. This view demanded that target groups needed to be defined and described. People were classified according to e.g. low income, short education, single mothers, isolated families, disabled children etc. These descriptions seldom took notice of the individuals' lived experience, and the image of passive and victimized groups became increasingly stronger. So called "experts" started to develop ideas of how certain artistic forms could be used to solve the minority groups' social discrimination and thus enable them to participate more fully in the "democratic" society (Pripp, 2007).

Concerning the arts, one of the more important factors to develop during this period was the organization of independent, non-institutionalized artists into national centres. The Dance Centre was formed in 1971 in the capital Stockholm, and its aim was to coordinate the administration of performances by independent dancers and choreographers, and to deepen the public's interest in dance in various ways. In addition, members of the organization became involved in the outreach programs to different minority groups, sponsored by the state. In this way they used their dancing in tandem with the cultural policy's emphasis on art as a tool for self-improvement – art as a method for achieving everybody's participation in forming a democratic society.

The dance company "Kari and Karin" was among the very first independent groups to work in this manner. The company was formed in the mid 1970s by the dancers Kari Sylwan and Karin Thulin. They had earlier dance experience from the Swedish Royal Opera Ballet and from the Cullberg Ballet. Some of their performances and movement workshops, e.g. *Where have you hidden your body?* (*Var har du gömt din kropp?*), were toured all over Sweden, and they became part of the early feminist movement. They also created dances for television, with titles such as *Jump and Turn* (*Hopp och snurr*), *Kick and Split* (*Spark och spagat*), and *In the Ninth Month* (*I nionde månaden*). The latter is dance on being pregnant.

What kind of statement did their dances offer the audiences, in view of democracy and equality? The overall intention of the company was helping audiences to better

understand their own bodies, and thus being able to connect to the society (as well as to the professional dancer) via a common bodily experience – creating a strong link between audience, artist and society. What happened is, I argue, that the performers downplayed the effects of the dancers' physical skills and virtuosity, and they disregarded the fact that their choice of dance techniques, i.e. European ballet and modern dance, articulated particular Western aesthetics, not necessarily shared by everyone in their potential audiences. In a desire to connect stronger to their viewers and create a common understanding of embodied experiences, they risked revealing a universal assumption on the values that were supposed to be shared between the dancers and the audiences.

This vision of wanting audiences to be able to connect strongly to different art or cultural forms and to relate their experience to the practice of living in a democracy was also expressed in another objective within the national cultural policy from 1974.

### ***Amateur-oriented organizations***

The policy wanted to support the individual's right to participate in her/his own creation of culture, and one of the results was a strengthening of different amateur-oriented organizations. However, during the decade that followed, this goal became problematic. In the mid-1980s people involved in folk music and folk dancing started lobbying for a more fair treatment of these activities in the Swedish society, including the demand for higher state subsidies. The background was that at the same time as the theatrical dancing had developed a stronger status as an art form, the folk dance organizations and folklore dance companies had become excluded from state support on the grounds of not working with experiment, innovation and new productions – the national criteria for state funding.

When both folk musicians and folk dancers started to work with the aim of changing the cultural policy, one of their central arguments was a reference to the growing concern for the multicultural dimensions of the society. But, the organizations stressed that the local Swedish culture was unique, and that by preserving these forms of dance and music, Sweden would contribute to the global cultural multiplicity. This is how it would be achieved, and I quote from a manifesto written in 1985, by one of the leaders of the national organization for folk dance and folk music:

“The people who deepen their knowledge of folk music and folk dance will make comparisons to music and dance from other countries. They will also acquire insights in how other social classes' and nations' cultures have affected the culture of the lower classes/.../ Participating in folk music and folk dancing can therefore create understanding and respect for other cultures /my transl./” (Farago, 1985).

To begin with, one can notice a belief in a seemingly natural causality between “learning and practicing” the folkdances and “appreciating and understanding” other cultures. It is also characteristic of the time, the emphasis that is put on issues of social class – “the culture of the lower classes” that is mentioned in the citation. It is noticeable in their more fully developed argumentation, that participatory dancing (and music) is believed to cure nationalism, but it is also thought to prevent the abuse of drugs, and it is considered among the less expensive forms of culture that a society can support, and thus, also the economical argument is raised in favour of an increased state support. It is explicitly expressed that it is only Swedish folk dance and music that the lobbying organization seeks to develop and want the state to guarantee the support of (ibid). An explanation to this statement, however not a justification, is the manner in which the ideologies of class are at work here, as I just mentioned in relation to the citation. This ideology stress values that encompass the whole socio-political arena, including justice and equality for all with no particular notice given to individual or group differences. The “many” are seen as one, in order to secure democracy for all.

### ***Fighting against racism - Norway***

The arguments that the Swedish folk organizations developed may seem very dated, but almost the same arguments appeared again during the 1990s in Norway, when people from different interest organisations for folk dance and folk music wrote a strategic plan for how Norwegian folk dance and music should be given a more prominent position in the national cultural policy. One of the goals and arguments was that learning and knowing about “your own” (i.e. Norwegian) dance and musical heritage helped creating a more solid identity and thus, helped fighting against racism (Bakka & Ranheim eds, 1995: 24). The logic was based on a distinction between national values and nationalism, where nationalism was considered being the negative result of a lack of identity that the former (i.e. strong national values) could help to secure.

The Norwegian argumentation mirrors the Swedish statements from the earlier decade, when it explains that: “When you meet other cultures in Norway or in other countries, it is a strength to know your own cultural background /my transl./” (ibid). The problem is of course that the “other” cultures are already Norwegian and Swedish and they are already part of what constitutes these entities. They are not articulations of dance cultures outside of the nation. This is not an innovative analysis, but I argue that it has particular problems in a social democratic environment, because of the presumed ethnic homogeneity and, in particular, the singular focus on social class that has been emblematic of these societies’ political self-image. Moreover, it is an expression of structural discrimination that has been more difficult to handle and deconstruct for



people who work with cultural policy-making on both regional and national levels. Hence, everybody's dancing reveals a practice of exclusion.

### ***The Danish National Canon***

A more recent example of a similar kind of thinking, that involves "exclusionary practices", was the publication in 2006 of The Danish Cultural Canon, initiated by the Danish Ministry of Culture. The overall aim behind the canon, that consisted of different art works (architecture, performances, design, music etc.) was said to "stimulate public dialogue" by giving reference points of what is considered "special about Danes and Denmark" ([www.culturalpolicies.net/web/denmark](http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/denmark)). From the government's point of view, it was considered of major importance "to revitalize Danish cultural heritage and to stimulate and consolidate Danish monoculture as a medium counteracting cultural relativism and multiculturalism" (Council of Europe/ERICarts, 2009, [www.culturalpolicies.net/web/denmark](http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/denmark)). To me, this is a rather provocative statement, and it belies the will to stimulate a critical public dialogue concerning what could be considered special about Danes and Denmark – as was mentioned earlier. Many of the experts who were chosen to select the art works defended the canon by stating that: "We live in a chaotic time, devoid of a sense of history", and we "notice the same tendency in all of us /.../ we experience a need to relate to values that reaches further than the tip of our nose, but at the same time are more open than they have ever been /my transl./" ([www.kum.dk/sw33918.asp](http://www.kum.dk/sw33918.asp)) It is possible that the chaotic time, articulated in the citation, was a reaction stemming from the encounter with multiple ethnicities.

According to the canon criteria, the selected works should display national qualities in a manner that they could not be disregarded "if we want to define what is characteristic and distinctive about Danish culture" (Council of Europe/ERICarts, 2009). At the same time, the "selected works should /.../ illustrate that Danish art and culture have come into being in interplay and interaction with European and international trends." ([www.kum.dk/sw37439.asp](http://www.kum.dk/sw37439.asp))

There are only three dance works included in the performance art-section of the canon, and one additional dance is part of the category of Children's culture. There are no Danish folk dances in the canon. This is interesting since the selection of music to the canon, includes both folk songs and other popular music. The dances selected in the performance art- section are *Sylfiden* created by August Bournonville in 1836 and still danced today; *Etudes* by Harald Lander, choreographed in 1948, and *Enetime*, by Fleming Flindt, created in 1963 and based on Eugene Ionesco's play *The Lesson*.

In the presentational texts that accompany the canon in books, DVD and a website, there are no explicit definitions of Danish-ness in these ballets, as one could suspect. On the contrary, there are more criteria articulated, which seem to be valid for an interna-

tional canon of ballets. The performing arts' committee, selecting the works, has proclaimed that their collection is the result of interactions with performances all over the world. With regard to the choice of dances it is obvious that the world is limited to Europe or perhaps, as one could put it, to a kind of global, trans-national ballet aesthetics.

The fourth dance, included in the category of Children's culture is *The Nutcracker*, in a new version by the Danish hip-hop choreographer Steen Koerner, and created in 2003. It can be considered a mixed-media performance and involves speech, rap as well as street dances, capoeira, and classical ballet. Obviously, this mix articulates the awareness of many dance cultures living side by side, but it is difficult to find a more explicit commentary in the presentational text that seeks to undermine the domination of one culture over the other. Instead, it is remarked in a rather uncritical manner that it is the "magical ballerina" who creates the happy ending, ([www.kulturkanon.kum.dk/boernekultur/noeddeknaekkeren/Begrundelse\\_Noeddeknaekkeren/](http://www.kulturkanon.kum.dk/boernekultur/noeddeknaekkeren/Begrundelse_Noeddeknaekkeren/)), and hence is put in opposition to some of the street dance styles, which are representing the "evil" forces.

Generally speaking, at work in the choice of all four dances is, what I would call, an unresolved tension between what is conceived of as particularly Danish and what is "international", between a mono-culture and a multi-culture, to use the concepts that are part of the government's main objective behind creating the canon. And, repeating my comments from the beginning, I don't argue there is an explicit racist or undemocratic voice here, the eurocentrism is embedded in the inability to perceive a potential domination by "white" European ballet values over dance styles from other parts of the world.

The Danish example of creating a national canon of different art works were hotly debated in other Nordic countries as well, but so far no other country has decided to create one. Some refer to the so called "ethical turn" within education, which means that the awareness of multiplicity and of many cultures existing side by side makes it impossible to think of *one* national canon. I consider both this reaction, and the political argumentation that stands behind the Danish canon, as responses to an "ideology of ethnicity" that slowly has replaced the singular focus on social class that existed in several of the Nordic countries during the period up till about the 1990s. In this context, I understand the ideology of ethnicity to mean a stress on the relative character of a society's values, a standpoint from which one can argue that justice and equality imply having the right to be perceived as different, and embracing potentially different cultural values. The Danish government did not seem to happily embrace this ideology, but in my opinion, they were heavily influenced by it and tried out various strategies in order to counteract its effects.

### ***Open source movement***

My third and last example addresses new trends in choreography-making that are emerging in several parts of Europe since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and that I here label the open source movement. (André Lepecki lists some of the artists I place in the open source movement, and he remarks that there are no proper names attached to their modes of working, although he picks out the “interrogation of choreography’s political ontology” as a theme he will investigate, in Lepecki, 2006: 45.)

One of the first initiatives that can be related to this trend occurred during the so called “MODE05 open-source conference” on education in choreography, dance and performance that took place in Potsdam, Germany, in 2005. The conference became a kind of interactive platform for artists in the performing arts, for theoreticians, and activists who were interested in exploring how “the economy of ownership and distribution” in the worlds of art could be reversed (Cvejic). The concept of “open source principles” is important, and it is said to deal with “questions about the status of work with respect to [the] learning process” (ibid). According to the organizers of the conference, the principle of “open source” involves strategies of

- revisiting earlier dance works
- using sound and images from mass media, like cinema or Youtube, and transpose them into live performances
- publishing dance scores on websites, so they are free for anyone to use
- writing non-evaluative reflections as viewers of dances, and putting them on the web
- creating work aimed at overproduction.

Overproduction is a special kind of method, and it can result in producing by-products to the dance, e.g. video excerpts from discussions, and parties put on Youtube. An example of such a by-product is a dinner party organized by the group “MyChoreography.org”, and put on Internet with the title “MyChoreography.org does Dinner Party”. (The group of choreographers-cum-dancers participated in a two-year MA-program in Choreography, between 2008 and 2009, at the University of Dance and Circus in Stockholm. The members/students came from Iceland, France and Sweden.) Besides photos from the dinner party there are written descriptions of the party:

“Everyone gets to know each other when MyChoreography.org is around. They hosted a shoulder rubbing dinner for the artists-in-residence and staff at the fabrik Potsdam /.../ Conversations about choreography took place within this choreography” (<http://inpex.se/node/241>).

As is evident in the quotation, the collective considers a dinner party a kind of choreography, a by-product of a dance performance or of a dance festival – and as such an intervention into the more conventional ways in which we understand the concept “a

performance". This is in line with the desire, within the whole open source movement, to make "small-scale achievements" rather than addressing major themes or problems with the dance works produced by the artists (Cvejic).

Another strategy mentioned above is called revisiting earlier dance works and "My-Choreography.org" exemplifies the strategy in their version of *The Rite of Spring* to music by Igor Stravinskij, and first danced in 2008 as part of their education (and possible to view at vimeo on the Internet). Their version of the dance does not seem to perform any obvious political or aesthetic argument that could explain why they have chosen to perform a new production of this canonical dance work. Their manner of performing it, rather hints at a notion of treating the dance as an open source, a score that exists and can be visited and danced by all. But, they don't perform only one score, instead it seems to be fragments from all the "Rites" that have ever been made. E.g. in one section a male and a female dancer run heads on and collide breast to breast, and the reference to the French choreographer Maurice Béjart's *The Rite of Spring* and its male and female collectives seems quite obvious. Another reference is made to a solo performance from 2007, when the French choreographer Xavier Le Roy performed his version, in which he used Stravinskij's music recorded by Berliner Philharmoniker and conducted by Sir Simon Rattle. The performance consisted of Le Roy conducting the music from this recording, having initially studied Rattle's interpretation, and playing the music on tape. Hence, to Le Roy the act of conducting was choreography in its own right ([http://www.insituproductions.net/\\_eng/frameset.html](http://www.insituproductions.net/_eng/frameset.html)).

By using movement material from already existing versions of *The Rite of Spring*, and in an improvised manner, the group seems to argue they reverse its methodology, and this can explain the subtitle of the work: "A reversed improvisation". New movements are not created through their improvisation, which is how we usually conceive of the result of improvisation. Instead earlier material by other choreographers is made public again. It is shared, it is accessible and hence made "democratic". Everybody can access the canonical dance works.

It is obvious that the open source movement addresses issues concerning the distribution of copyrighted material without the permission of the copyright holder. It is probably not a coincidence, that Sweden during this same period has experienced a highly publicized lawsuit and trial concerning authorship and copyright. The Pirate Bay was a Swedish website that indexed and tracked BitTorrent files, and it has been known by media to be one of the world's largest facilitators of illegal downloading. The lawsuits against four of its creators and supporters, occurring a few years ago, resulted in founding them guilty of assistance to copyright infringement. The attitude among the "My-Choreography.org" choreographers echoes the Pirate Bay, albeit on a smaller scale. There is no explicit mentioning of copyright issues in their texts, but the choreographers

question the norms of both aesthetics and dance skills, and “who is allowed to perform what and where” ([www.everybodystoolbox.net/?q=node](http://www.everybodystoolbox.net/?q=node)). The attitude is expressed in a different manner in the Open Source Theatre Manifest (sic) published on the website “everybodystoolbox” in 2007, in which the two authors of the manifesto remarks the following under the title Code of Conduct: “We will reuse, reconstruct and recycle ideas, scenes and material from everywhere. But we will always admit and openly say from where we have our material, ideas and methods” ([www.everybodystoolbox.net/?q=node/116](http://www.everybodystoolbox.net/?q=node/116)).

The open source movement is in itself a strong political statement, but it can of course also be considered naïve, as if revealing the material’s origin would suffice as argument in opposition to rules of copyright set up and protected by powerful global corporations. One could also question the agenda with regard to the comparably very short and not well developed history of copyright within the dance field. It is still extremely weak in comparison e.g. to music and literature. Moreover, the attitude within the open source movement is closely linked to how politics and aesthetics are related and defined.

One of the theoretical inspirations to the movement is the French philosopher Jacques Rancière, and his 1982-proposed model of teaching, from his book *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*. These ideas have later been developed also with regard to the relationship between performer and spectator. (As I mentioned above, the open source principles were first addressed in relation to the performing arts in a conference on *education* in choreography, dance and activism in 2005). Rancière argues that teacher and student are equal and the student should accordingly be encouraged to explore his or her own individual qualities – in his words; the student should learn what the teacher doesn’t know. Thus ownership of knowledge becomes insignificant in relation to the execution of power. Since knowledge is not transmitted in continuity between a master and a student, ownership of knowledge does not mean anything, and it has no intrinsic value (Rancière, 2009: 14).

It is an interesting deconstruction of the power played out in education, but it is significant that this line of reasoning lacks identity politics, as is evident e.g. in the following citation: “This is a no to identity politics, it’s no group, it is each and every one of us” (*The Swedish Dance History*, 2009: 8). Both the ideology of class and the ideology of ethnicity being so present in my earlier examples have disappeared. In fact, the open source movement explicitly resists categories such as race, gender, ethnicity, and class as the key determinants of our interpretations. They are resisted, not because they are unimportant, they argue, but because “they are categories that do not simply exist externally to the cultural artefacts they are called to explain” (Hewitt & Pristas, 2009: 41). Instead, politics are conceived of as immanent in the aesthetics as praxis, and thus in

dancing as making or doing. By doing something, you perform a political act. Andrew Hewitt, whose book *Social Choreography* has played a role as theoretical support, articulates this in more detail whilst arguing that in both “the practice of choreography and in the critical discourses it generated, such categories were themselves being rehearsed and refined” (Hewitt, 2005: 4). The understanding and use of identity politics, as they have developed within various forms of postcolonial theory, seem to have gone out of fashion in parts of the contemporary European artistic and activist milieu.

### ***Final remarks***

Let me so add some final remarks. Some of the dances I have discussed above have in common a rejection of the unique artist or the unique choreography. Hence, they seem to address issues of anti-hierarchical nature. But there are also differences between them, and I believe these differences are in dialogue with the Nordic region and the political changes this region has undergone since the 1970s.

The dance company “Kari and Karin” worked from within the new social-democratic policy, in which dance and other art forms were considered excellent tools for the citizens’ improved self-understanding. This individual improvement was then believed to help people to collectively engage in the creation of a democratic society. The two dancers’ cum choreographers’ different movement vocabularies (Western ballet and modern dance) were tied together, as if they had an equal foundation based in everyday movement such as e.g. walking, jumping and turning. But, at the same time, this choice excluded other kinds of dancing, and thus revealed a universal assumption about how danced expressions could be shared between artists and audiences. National folk dances were used in a similar manner to invoke the understanding of the “many” as one, and of dancing as a means to create social cohesion and equality among different social classes.

Anxiety about multiculturalism and how Western democratic societies can integrate people with different cultural background has been prevalent in many contexts within the Nordic region. This ideology of ethnicity can be said to have replaced the earlier focus on social class, and reveal the difficulty within politics to keep a truly intersectional approach to questions of identity and citizenship. One of the most explicit social figurations within an ideology of ethnicity appeared in the objectives behind the Danish Cultural Canon published in 2006, when the government wanted to counteract cultural relativism. However, the dances included in the canon were to large extent based in the aesthetics of classical ballet and a particular Danish-ness was not made explicit. On the surface the Danish Cultural Canon seems to reject any notion of universalism, when it speaks about a Danish monoculture. But, the dances included in the canon still adhere to a universal understanding and prioritizing of the Western ballet culture.

*The Rite of Spring* performed by the collective “MyChoreography.org” uses the open source movement, initially created as an alternative to the commercial software industry, in their effort to rethink dance as an art form. Dance skills and fixed movement vocabularies are rejected, although the chosen dance work, *The Rite of Spring*, belongs to the Western canon of dance works. The ideological gap between working with a canonical dance work and then treating it as any ordinary movement and music material accessible on the Internet has an empowering potentiality. Everybody can dance her or his own version of the canonical dances. But on closer investigation, one cannot find any explicit linking to or commentary about the local Nordic and European context in which they are performing, and therefore it could be argued, we find a similar universal assumption underlying their critical strategy, as in the performance by “Kari and Karin”, even though their movement aesthetics and stress on virtuosic skills articulate a different agenda. The notion of politics as immanent in making art and dancing has been productive in questioning the ontology of choreography and performance. But, what happens if the doing of dance always disregards the local context in which it is produced and takes for granted equal accessibility, similar production systems, physical, economical as well as gender equality? Is it really each and every one of us who have access to the cultural worlds and aesthetics articulated by the open source movement? If it is true that both actions and representations are ideological (Hewitt, 2005: 11), one can notice that critical investigations of representations, as they are articulated e.g. through identity politics, have been moved to the periphery and analyses of actions have advanced to the forefront.

In the beginning of my presentation, I referred to Homi K. Bhabha’s imperative to use a “yes-but dialectics” and to critique “the historical and ideological prejudices of Eurocentric values that are concealed in formal, philosophical claims to ‘universal’ Progress and Rationality” (Bhabha in Young, 2004: ix-x). I have tried to investigate some dances and their ideological contexts in search for their concealed Eurocentric values, which, following Bhabha and Robert J.C. Young, does not mean we cannot also discover their positive political potentialities.

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## For Space: Reflections on an Engagement with Dance

Doreen Massey

The invitation to contribute to the Nofod Conference, and to this collection, was extended to me because of my long engagement with issues around the conceptualisation of space. Dancers and choreographers too, as this collection demonstrates, are interested in space – in its making, in its tenor, in the spaces of performance, and in many other ways. The aim was that we might strike up a conversation.

My own engagement with space, however, has been prompted by concerns within the social sciences and within politics: with questions such as regional inequality, the spatial organisation of cities, the geographies of democracy, the power-filled spatialities of globalisation, and so forth. I came to the Conference, therefore, prepared to explain my own position on the conceptualisation of space but also wanting to adapt what I had to say in response to what I learned at the Conference about spatial debates around dance. What follows, therefore, is a product of that engagement, a moment in what might be a productive conversation. From the little I already knew about debates within dance, and as a result of the generosity of Sarah Rubidge in sending me her paper in advance of the Conference, it seemed that we shared at least some propositions about the conceptualisation of space.

The first of these propositions is that space is imbued with temporality. A large part of my intent in thinking about the conceptualisation of space had been simply to bring it alive (see, on all of this, Massey, 2005). That is, to make it an active part of society, in the widest sense of that word, rather than merely being, as it is so often assumed to be, the realm within which society operates. This may, at least now, be obvious for the world of dance, but there is a long history, in philosophy and implicitly in the social sciences, cultural studies and popular discourse, of counterposing space and time. In philosophy that separation can powerfully be traced back to Immanuel Kant. It is, moreover, not merely a separation but a real counterposition, in which time is the dimension of dynamism, and of change, of process, while space is the dimension 'out there', flat, pre-given, static. This is also a counterposition structured by power. In this conceptualisation space is the subordinate term in the dualism, the negative other of time, the dimension 'lacking' temporality.

Such an understanding, more frequently implicit than explicit but no less powerful in its effects for that, by implication reduces the spatial to the status of the result, the outcome, of social processes, and the role of geographers is reduced to being that of the cartographers of the social sciences, mapping the outcomes of the processes studied in

other disciplines. In opposition to this, the argument was that space is *not* just the result of social processes but an integral part of those processes themselves. To put it at its simplest and most general, the geography – the spatial organisation – of society makes a difference to how that society works. In my own case, as well as the philosophical and intellectual impetus behind this argument, it was important also in order to think about a spatial politics – to think space politically.

Nonetheless, we do ‘make’ space, and this would seem to be a second proposition that the book *For space* and the debate within dance hold in common. In the realm of the social, we make space through our activities, our interactions, our relations, and this is true at all levels, from the great sweeps of finance capital around the planet to the negotiated intimacies within the home. Space, we grew accustomed to arguing, is socially produced.

There is, however, an important parenthesis to be inserted here, which is in part a matter of general clarification and in part an observation provoked by a reading of Sarah’s paper (see this Collection). By the term ‘social’ in this formulation the intention is not to invoke the human (as social) as opposed to the non-human. Rather ‘social’ is here meant to mean the multiple rather than the singular. This is implicit in the very notions of relations and interactions: for there to be relations and interactions there must be more than one entity involved. (And this multiplicity, as will be argued later, is part of the very essence of the spatial.) At this point in the argument this definition is important because it brings in the non-human, as well as the human, as active and dynamic. It is, moreover, active and dynamic *in itself* and not merely as a changing response to our moulding of it or through our (human) perception of it.

There may be some intersection here with the debate in dance studies over the distinction between intensive and extensive space. Thus Sarah Rubidge in her paper in this collection refers to understandings of this distinction which counterpose the material and the dynamic. It is a distinction that seems to be bound up with that between the ‘outside world’ and the human, the latter understood as the subjective. There are already elisions and difficulties here, of course, in that the human is itself already very much ‘material’, but the important point here is rather the converse: that the material world itself *is* dynamic. In *For space*, the story is recounted of the rocks which currently form a mountain (Skiddaw) in the English Lake District. Such mountains are often indeed looked upon as recourses for our sometimes apparent need for stability, even for a secure foundation. But in fact the rocks of which this mountain is composed were laid down some 500 million years ago, and in the southern hemisphere, since when during a tumultuous history they have travelled north. And they continue to do so. They too, like me on my visit to this place, are just passing through (which of course raises the whole question of place, and of “what is ‘here’?”). I had always ‘known’ this in an intellectual

way, but on one particular visit it was brought home on a different level. Such apprehensions are about one's appreciation of one's very place on the planet.

Likewise, on the visit to Odense for the Conference, I had visited the excellent Møntergården museum and learned of the way in which humans had only been able to populate this area as the ice retreated and the vegetation and the trees, species by species, invaded and changed it. We must be careful not to envisage a stable external space, subject to change only through our apprehension of it.

However, to return to the main argument: the way in which I have envisaged space as having those two characteristics – being imbued with temporality and being socially constructed – is as a simultaneity of stories-so-far. If time is the dimension of succession then space is the dimension of the simultaneous existence of more-than-one. Space therefore is the dimension not only of the social (the multiple) but of coexisting difference, of the co-eval. (Derrida has named it the dimension of respect.) It is thus also the dimension that poses that ultimate socio-political question: 'how are we going to live together?'

There is a further parenthetical observation to be made here, which again touches on the distinction between intensive and extensive space. I concur entirely with Sarah Rudge's characterisation of a common understanding of space as external to us and having stable contours and as being material. It is this kind of (understanding of) space that is termed extensive. And it is inadequate. There are different ways of addressing this inadequacy, however. One is to proliferate the kinds of space, proposing also an intensive space, and then to explore their relations. My approach has been different. Rather it has been to argue that extensive space is not like this in the first place. Rather, the space that is external to us is the dimension of an infinity of stories other than our own. The aim here, in other words, is to bring 'extensive' space alive, to acknowledge the others, human and non-human, that have their own trajectories contemporaneous with our (my) own. Again, the aim here has been political, to propose a greater outwardlook-iness of stance in relation to the wider world.

This active making of space, then, through relations at all possible scales has a range of implications: that space is an on-going, forever unachieved, dimension, always in process always open to the new; that 'places' are inevitably likewise constitutionally relational, always hybrid and related to the beyond; and that to live in a spatialised imagination is to live in an awareness that one's own trajectory is but one among countless trajectories, simultaneous with one's own. A fuller elaboration of this, along with explorations of some of its social and political implications, can be found in *For space*.

What I want to do in the remainder of this contribution, however, is to put on the table some issues which were provoked by participation in the conference.

### *The issue of power*

The first of these is very simple and can be spelled out quickly: it is this. If we can accept that space is produced through relations, practices, and so forth (movements-in-relation, choreographies...) then what might be at issue is not just the shapes produced but the *qualities* embedded in those relations. This is, or can be, clearly the case in dance also. Indeed, in my experience the kinds of qualities expressed through dance include a much wider and more nuanced range than is usually addressed in my own fields in the social sciences, although it has to be said that even here increasing attention has in recent years been paid to the affective and emotional tenors of relations that may be part and parcel of the construction of a space or place.

However, the aspect of these embedded characteristics of the relations which constitute space that has been most important in my own work is that of power. Again, this may be power of many kinds, and operating through many kinds of social relations. Thus in work in the field of regional equality it is necessary to pay attention to power within the spheres of the economic, the cultural and the political. Symbolic power, too, may be important – expressed perhaps through the emphatic architectures of finance capital, or of the various religions. In other fields one might be interested in emotional power, again expressed in social relations, again essential to the structuring of a space – the spaces within the home perhaps, or the emotional pull intended to be exerted by a public monument. Or again, power may be individualised or collective, structured hierarchically perhaps or more dispersed into a more egalitarian field. The point is that it is embodied and embedded within the relations that structure spatiality. It was in an attempt to recognise this that I proposed the concept of ‘power-geometry’. This is intended to capture the two-sided-ness of the matter: that on the one hand space is always imbued with power and that on the other hand ‘power’ itself always has a geography. So one question might be: how does one dance it?

The question of power in this sense matters in the most general way because it is foundational to the structuring of society, to questions of democracy, and to questions of (in)equality. But it can also matter in ways that might seem more prosaic but which are nonetheless potentially important to challenging hegemonic imaginings. This was true in the (very prosaic) setting in which I first began to work on these issues: that of the inequality between regions in the United Kingdom. The hegemonic imaginary here has many characteristics but two of them are particularly significant. First, this inequality between regions is classically imagined (and politically addressed) in overwhelmingly economic terms. Some regions have lower per capita income than others, have higher unemployment, and so forth. Second, these characteristics are analysed (and politically addressed) as though they were essential characteristics of discrete regions. The deficiencies in this interpretation are, correspondingly, two-fold. On the one hand these

characteristics do not 'belong' to discrete regions. Rather, the characteristics of all regions (just as is any identity, just as is the character of an individual human being) are in part a product of the relations that run between that region and others. Regions in that sense are not simply responsible for their own fate. If we are to address the relative poverty of some regions then policies must be addressed to that wider context. More generally, one cannot tackle poverty without addressing wealth. This is the aspect of power as embedded in relations. On the other hand, what is at issue in regional inequality in the UK is not only economic power; cultural and political power have their own acutely unequal geographies too and these both underpin and exacerbate the economic inequality. More generally, again, one form of power is most often intricately interwoven with others. It is through all this that our world is structured.

### *The issue of stillness*

A second issue arose, for me, out of the opening moments of Kit Johnson's site-specific performance with which the Conference had begun. They were moments of stillness. It was a stillness that evoked two immediate reflections. First there was a recognition of the importance of stillness in this world that seems to be all mobility and flux, rush and flow. And second there was the way in which the contemplation of this stillness, and the way in which one could be drawn into it, was both moving and disturbing as one was driven to interpret it. (What would 'happen' next? Of course it was, as I shall go on to argue, already 'happening'. But we did not know what.)

This initial encounter, however, led into further, more philosophical and political reflections. For one of the recent advances within social sciences, philosophy and cultural studies, has been the adoption of an ontology that insists that everything is always in process. Things are never, in fact, static. Indeed, at the extremes of this position, we are urged not to think in terms of things at all, for things are merely evanescent constellations that will imminently dissolve. Our language therefore should work not with nouns but only with verbs. John Holloway, 2002, is one proponent of this version of the argument, but more generally its lineage might be traced through Alfred North Whitehead, or Henri Bergson, and through Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1988) and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2001; 2004). It is, in general terms, an understanding that coincides well with the conceptualisation of space that is being advocated here – that space is relational and made, its making forever unfinished, that it and the entities co-constituted with it are relationally produced and thus, indeed, always in process.

In the evolution of this lineage of thought, however, some shifts have taken place that are less than helpful. One of these is the translation of the ontological position that all is flow into the specific prioritisation of the *spatial* (place to place) movement of things as a whole. In general this has been characteristic of the political appropriation of

this position. Hardt and Negri are explicit about this, and many in, for instance, the global justice movement have followed its reasoning. In this spatial reading 'thingness' becomes equated with place and territory, while 'process' is equated with flow specifically in the form of the migration of people. It is, of course, no accident that this interpretation has emerged in an era of globalisation in which issues of international migration, and correlatively of the future of the nation-state, are high on the political agenda. This indeed is the basis of Hardt and Negri's reasoning.

Now, one may agree or not with the political line of argument (see below) but what must be remembered is the process of translation that has taken place to arrive at it. The couple stasis: change has been translated into the couple geographical settlement: geographical movement. In other words, Bergson's 'becoming' has been translated into spatial movement. This is a very specific appropriation – a narrowing. For the point of the wider argument is that 'Being *is* Becoming'. (This is indeed the philosophical correlate of 'space is imbued with temporality'.) Even in stillness, which is where this question began, there is becoming.

There are a number of ways in which this argument has contemporary significance, including I think for dance. Perhaps above all there is the significance for politics. The translation of becoming into geographical movement has been one of many currents leading to the establishment of 'the migrant' as the iconic figure, in Western societies, of our time. This, it seems to me, is politically unfortunate in a host of ways. It deprioritises (often it ignores) the political potential of those who struggle but do not move. These may be the existing working class, for instance, in countries that are receiving migration (and this is not necessarily an issue of ethnicity – the 'existing working class' in the United Kingdom, for instance, is already ethnically mixed). Their struggles in and through place and placedness are ignored, as are their transgressions of the boundaries of identity in other ways. There can be an easy romanticism, often bound up with a misinterpretation of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the 'nomad', of those who move. Equally, at the other end, as it were, of the movements of migration, are problems and struggles that are, in this view of the world, deprioritised. There are those who are left behind when the migrants have gone. And there are the effects of out-migration itself (from the receipts of remittances, that result in a private family-based rather than public distribution of resources, to the loss of skilled labour to the global south, currently a massive problem from which rich countries simply benefit). And finally, but by no means least, there is a real danger, which has often been sadly realised, of this prioritisation of political attention on mobility and migration contributing to political opposition between existing residents and new in-migrants. All this from failing to pay sufficient attention to stillness in the sense of remaining in place.

Leena Hammergren, in her keynote contribution to this collection, both sets this in a wider historical context and relates it to different phases in the history of dance. She argues, and I agree, that these foci of political prioritisation shift over time. She also argues that these shifting hegemonic concerns have been articulated and reflected in the history of dance. Thus she presents an engrossing analysis of the period of social democracy, and stresses its focus on the construction of a national society: of that felt need to construct a people, a public. Hammergren's focus is on an analysis of the Nordic countries, but it is arguable that these characteristics were geographically more generalised. (Certainly what she writes resonates also with the period of social democracy in the United Kingdom.) This connection between social democracy and nation-building resulted in the recognition of some differences 'within' the nation but not of others. Class was acknowledged but ethnic differences were not. The emphasis was on unity and the construction of a nation-state. Hammergren points to a subsequent historical shift in concern away from class and towards ethnicity, and an impulse to recognise the multiplicity of ethnicities potentially present in, and contributing to the culture of, any one nation (indeed, to generalise, any one place). What I was arguing above was that this subsequent period, still hegemonic within the United Kingdom at least, runs an equal risk of ignoring different differences, and that this brings in its train political consequences.

It might be appropriate here to say a few words about two associated themes. The first is what I take to be a characteristic ambivalence about referring to, or assuming the existence of, place-specific cultures. The notion of a 'national culture' is the most acute example. To begin with it is worth noting that the reticence about such references applies, or seems to apply, much more to dominant cultures than to minority or subordinate ones. (The hesitancy about talking of 'Swedish culture' seems often lacking in, for instance, references to 'Sami culture'.) Yet *all* cultures are hybrid. Further, it is important to reject any notion of a universalism that, in fact, is actually the assertion of hegemony by one local variant. Perhaps most of all, however, it is important to recognise that national cultures do not just exist (or not), they are not already-existing things to be excavated (or not). Rather, they are a focus of contest; they are there to be struggled over.

The second theme takes us back to Leena Hammergren's paper. Her third study is concerned with the ideology of political immanence and with the, related, development within dance of the Open Source Movement. At first sight this might seem to resonate beautifully with the conceptualisation of space as a multiplicity of trajectories. It might also seem to be the essence of democracy; everyone free to do their own thing. What it raises, in the form of a doubt, is the question of power. This was addressed above in a section that ended with a question: how does one dance it? Hammergren points out how this question has been addressed in some approaches to dance. In the Open Source Movement, however, as she says, the very question seems to be problematic. One re-

sponse might be that the power in question here is that constituent power that is essential to being. This accords with the philosophy of immanence. But what it disregards is the fact that power is also relational. It exists not only within us but between us, and it is this latter which it is important to address.

I have recently been involved in a research project called 'The future of landscape and the moving image', with the film maker Patrick Keiller, and the cultural critic Patrick Wright (see, under references, Arts and Humanities Research Council). It has involved us using both film and the written word in an investigation of the concept of landscape, on the one hand, and the political interpretation of landscape, on the other. There are moments in the film that relate closely to the arguments here, moments when the camera, itself still, lingers on a flower – a teasel, a cowslip, a white foxglove. Sometimes these lingerings last a few minutes. I have found them really important. First, although the camera is not moving these are not 'stills'. The flowers are going about their business, interacting with butterflies and bees for instance. They are 'becoming'. Second, this is the non-human world, and it is changing, getting on with things, just as much as humans do and (though we affect them deeply and often disastrously) without regard for us. Third, these long moment of contemplation are a way of giving this 'other' its due, or an attempt to do so, to engage our attention in its implacable difference: independent of yet interdependent with us.

### *The issues of 'things', and of taking a stand*

The first set of issues, then, concerned power, the second involved a recognition of stillness, and we have already seen that they can be intertwined the one with the other. The third and final bundle of issues is likewise related. It was argued right at the beginning of this paper that there seemed to be an emerging shared recognition of the need to imbue space with temporality. Likewise there is an increasingly general acceptance of the need to understand the processual nature of the world. It has also already been remarked that this emphasis on the processual has led some to urge an abandonment of thinking in terms of things altogether. Things, entities, identities, 'are merely evanescent constellations that will imminently dissolve'. At the earlier moment in our argument the point drawn out of this was the problematic way in which this general ontology has been, in some works of politics and political philosophy, narrowed down to a set of specifically spatial propositions. Here, however, the aim is to challenge, or perhaps clarify, the meaning of the ontology itself. We have seen that Holloway urges an address to the world in terms not of nouns but of verbs. Not dissimilarly, Deleuze and Guattari, although they constantly stress the perpetual movement between deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, do leave us with the impression that it is the former (deterritorialisation) that is to be in some sense preferred. Likewise, in some of the discussion of



dance I detected a similar predisposition, to emphasise the transience and fluidity of everything.

It is, however, very important to be clear about the status of these propositions in philosophy, and also about their potential political implications. In no way should they be taken necessarily to imply that there are no entities, things, or identities. 'Things' may be in process, subject to change, relationally and fluidly constructed, but this does not mean that they do not exist. Yes all is process, but this does not mean that there is no stability, no territories, no 'things'. In my own field, nation-states, or the US imperium, are certainly transient in the sense that they are not eternal, but they do exist. And they do persist. Similarly, and closer to the field of dance, we know that 'the body' is in a constant state of flux, that not a molecule of our childhood bodies remains in our adult bodies, that our bodies are in a constant process of decay and being made, and of exchange with the world outside them. But none of this means that they do not exist. The talk of transience and momentariness, increasingly found in our literatures, is inadequate, therefore, unless it is carefully specified in relation to particular entities and particular timeframes.

The importance of the philosophical emphasis on process concerns the *reconceptualisation* of things (empires, bodies, nation-states) not a refusal to recognise their (very evident) existence. It is the reconceptualisation of things as processually constituted, not the refusal to acknowledge their existence, that is significant politically.

In a late session of the conference this discussion came up again, as the delight of flow and movement (and the attractions of some elements of a particular reading of parts of Deleuze and Guattari) came to the fore. There was talk of the importance of 'going with the flow', of the refusal of long-term aims (the latter interpreted as stability, hence of rigidity), of a certain malleability and responsiveness to the immediate. This recalled something of what Leena Hammergren had talked about (and criticised) in relation to the Open Source Movement.

Again, this has political implications. On the one hand these can be positive and progressive. It is a position that might imply a greater responsiveness to the particularity of political situations and a willingness to listen to relevant political constituencies (to go with *their* flow somewhat, perhaps). On the other hand, the political implications might be quite dubious. This emphasis on flow and fluidity can endorse short-termism – and of course it was short-termism that was such an important element in the structure of behaviour of the financial sector that resulted in the current crisis and austerity so resolutely being taken advantage of now by the political Right. It is also a stance that could mean going with the flow in the sense of simply submitting to the dominant ethos (just carry on shopping). Why not? Well, in order for it not to mean these things some stabilisation will have to be introduced. Some longer-term principles (indeed ironically the

very commitment to flow, if persisted with, is itself a stabilisation). Sometimes it is necessary *not* to 'flow' in this sense. Sometimes it is necessary to stabilise some principles. It will be provisional, certainly – situations change and we can learn and adapt. Nonetheless, for the time being, it is necessary to *stand* (still) for something.

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# On Choreographic Space

Sarah Rubidge

The concept of choreographic space is open-ended. In terms of practice, the notion of choreographic space often refers simply to the spaces within which choreography takes place (theatre spaces, urban, or even domestic spaces, the 'natural' space of rural landscape). It can also reference the dynamic spatiotemporal space that is generated by the activity of dancers as they perform a choreographic work, the interplay between performers actively shaping the space in which they move by creating a dynamic network of interweaving vectors, tensions and transient forms which is perceived by both performers and audiences. Although other spatial phenomena could be called on in an exploration of choreographic space, in the interests of clarity this paper will focus on these two forms of choreographic space.

Choreographers have been interrogating the notion of choreographic space through their practice since the 1950s, when Cunningham first began to decentralise theatrical space through his reconfiguration of the stage space. Abandoning the frontal focus of theatrical space in his stage performances, he also left the theatre to use public spaces for performances in his 'events'. Later, in works such as Lucinda Childs' *Street Dance* (1964) and Trisha Brown's *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* (1970) and *Roof Pieces* (1971), choreographers from Judson Church Dance Theater, implicitly following the principles propounded by the Situationists<sup>i</sup>, mounted an even greater challenge to the primacy of the theatrical space in choreographic practice. These challenges continued throughout the 1980s and '90s, and into the twenty-first century, with choreographers who specialise in site-specific dance taking their choreographic practices out into public, or at the very least non-theatre, spaces<sup>ii</sup>.

Further challenges to the notion of choreographic space have been advanced by videodance works, which continued Maya Deren's early experiments with choreography and film and extended the location of choreographic space to include the 'virtual' space of the television screen<sup>iii</sup>. Similarly, installation artists who worked with digital media, video and film created installation works using single and multiple projection screens. These, often inadvertently, generated potentially choreographic environments through the interplay between the content that was displayed on the screens, the spatiotemporal interconnections between the screens and the interplay between the motion of performers or spectators as they interacted with the works<sup>iv</sup>. When dance artists embarked on this last pathway in the mid-1990s, particularly those who used interactive

technologies<sup>v</sup>, the choreographic nature of the environments were no longer inadvertent, but deliberate. Many of these digitally augmented audiovisual installation spaces, particularly *Passing Phases* (1994-99), *trajets* (2007) and *Sensuous Geographies* (2003), all multiuser installations, became choreographic spaces in their own right, for they not only established a three-dimensional 'felt' sense of space that drew attention to the embodied experience of the participant (Birringer 1998), but also created the conditions for the generation of informal choreographic events from those who engaged with the installations, and thus a specifically choreographic space.

As a result of these practices, I would suggest that the notion of choreographic space is ripe for debate. Although to some extent analysed formally in the mid-twentieth century (Laban, 1966, Preston Dunlop 1981<sup>vi</sup>), the implications of the notion of space as being choreographic, with all that that implies, was not theorised in depth in dance studies until the beginning of the twenty-first century, when dance scholars such as Valerie Briginshaw (2001) and André Lepecki (2006) grasped this somewhat neglected nettle. The depth of their analyses, which were permeated with a strong political sensibility, was made possible by the work of the theorists and philosophers (and before them scientists) who had been engaged in a re-visioning of the concept of space for several decades. They were followed later by geographers such as Doreen Massey (2005) and Nigel Thrift (2004), who drew on the discussions on space that had been initiated by thinkers such as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987), Michel de Certeau (1984) and Henri Lefebvre (1991). These understandings of space have proved to be very productive in the exploration undertaken in this paper.

Theoretically, the notion of choreographic space incorporates a number of the understandings space that have been developing across disciplines since the beginning of the twentieth century. However, common-sense understandings of space conceive of it as being external to us and having stable contours. We implicitly consider it to be something that surrounds us, something that is fixed, measurable. Crucially there is a tendency to take the position that we perceive space optically, its extent determined by the constraints of our visual perception. It is this that has been challenged by the writers and thinkers above. However, common-sense notions of space such as these have been challenged through the development of the concept of space-time in physics, of Riemannian geometry and topological space in mathematics, the introduction of notions of smooth/striated space and intensive and extensive space by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), and by new understandings concerning the multi-modal nature of all modes of perception, from the visual to the haptic.

Common-sense understandings of space identify what is increasingly termed as 'extensive' space<sup>vii</sup>, and is this notion of space that has held sway for millennia. The con-

ceptions of space developed in mathematics, science and philosophy during the twentieth century, however, have opened the way to a new understanding of space, one that conceives of space as transient, dynamic, fluid, its contours malleable, its presence felt (Manning 2007). This space is in flux, in process. It is a relational space, characterised not by consistency and stability, but by the interplay between a multiplicity of vectors, directions, elements and shifting volumes and textures. Multidimensional rather than metrical, topological rather than topographical, this kind of space is referred to in this paper as ‘intensive’, or dynamic space. Experienced haptically<sup>viii</sup>, kinaesthetically, proprioceptively rather than optically, in contrast to extensive space it does not operate through visual points of reference, but through the shifting qualities and potentials, or zones of intensity, that emerge as one moves, acts, experiences<sup>ix</sup>. These new notions of space are particularly valuable in developing an understanding of choreographic space that extends beyond the material spaces in which we dance into the ‘virtual’ spaces generated by choreographic events that are woven into those spaces in any movement event (formal or informal).

It is notable that what might be called ‘choreographic’ events are not always generated by choreographers and dancers. They can also be generated unintentionally by the collective motion of people in a street, by the patterns of motion generated by entities such as trains as they roll into and out of railway stations, aeroplanes or birds flying in formation, or soldiers marching in the parade ground<sup>x</sup>. These collective behaviours unwittingly create ‘choreographic’ events. Indeed, the term ‘choreography’ has been appropriated by writers and thinkers from a number of disciplines from geography to science<sup>xi</sup>. As choreographic events however, the examples given by geographers and scientists are more about the unintentional collective spatiotemporal configuration of individual entities moving within an environment than they are about the deliberate composition and organisation of movements and/or movement images which is conventionally understood as ‘choreography’ in dance<sup>xii</sup>. Thus the movement that takes place within social spaces such as railway termini, piazzas, football stadia can be seen as generating informal choreographies. In terms of the new conceptions of space these choreographies change the spaces. As such, new spaces are *produced* by the activity for, as de Certeau (1984:112) argues, “space is composed of intersections of mobile elements...actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it” and only “exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities and line variables”. The latter, along with the assemblage of movements that are generated by the intersections between individuals and movements, imbue the space with a qualitative, and thus affective, dimension.

Lefebvre both echoes and extends this notion by drawing attention to the social character of the activity that generates, or is generated by, the particularity of public spaces. He argues that “every social process is the outcome of a process with many aspects and contributing currents, signifying and non-signifying, perceived and directly experienced, practical and theoretical” (Lefebvre 1991:p110). This simultaneously produces intensive spaces and generates variable perceptions of extensive spaces, perceptions that, by virtue of the play of vectors and spatiotemporal tensions, are permeated with affect. Thus the space that is produced by this movement is not the materiality of the space (although the perceived and experienced relations between material features may seem to alter as a result of the affective dimensions of the experience) but the tenor of the space. Crucially, this kind of affective space is produced by *all* types of movement taking place within the material space. The tenor of the space as experienced, thus might change at different times of day (as the light changes with the movement of the sun), or times of the year, or in accord to the amount, type, kind or purpose of the activity taking place within the space<sup>xiii</sup>. This is coupled with the individual experiences of the space that is generated by personal histories, prior experience, memories, associations and socio-cultural perspectives to create a (temporary) but a highly personalised affective space (Massey, 2005). However, this generated space, as Massey and Leena Haamegren note in their papers, is not only personal, but also has far-reaching political implications, which underlie all choreographic activity<sup>xiv</sup>.

However, if, as Lefebvre and de Certeau suggest, the everyday flows of movement in a space generate a very particular relational, dynamic space then we are also moving towards a notion of choreographic space that embodies the thinking of such writers as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987), Brian Massumi (2002) and Manuel de Landa (2005). Indeed, these theorists contribute substantially to the understanding of the nature of choreographic space that is explored in this paper.

In the choreographic spaces produced by the interactive installation works mentioned above the spatiotemporal interplay between participants, and between participants and the elements that comprised the installation environments, echo the social and spatial interplay that takes place in public spaces. That interplay creates spatiotemporal vectors of energy and tensions between participants and between participants and the material features and dimensions of the space within which they move. However, what is of even more interest to me in the context of this paper is that these installations can simultaneously be experienced intensively and extensively<sup>xv</sup>. Lefebvre (1991:94) notes that human beings in general, in any space, do not relate to space as a picture, rather “they know that they *have* a space, and that they *are* in this space ....”. That is, in public spaces, domestic space, work spaces, we situate ourselves in a space as *active* participants,

rather than simply contemplate the space as something to be viewed. This is equally true of participants in immersive installations and audience members in site-specific works. Nevertheless, even when active participants, and experiencing the space intensively, we are simultaneously aware of space as something outside of ourselves.

On the other hand, even when watching a dance work on a stage, as we perceive the streams of energy that are generated by the motion of its inhabitants, with their interrelations and their changing spatiotemporal rhythms and velocities flowing this way and that, the experienced texture (the intensivity) of the space changes. As we perceive, if neuroscientist Vittorio Gallese (2005) is correct, we may vicariously experience the sensations of the rhythms and velocities as they “in all their multiplicity interpenetrate one another...forever crossing and recrossing, superimposing themselves on each other” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 205). These interweaving rhythms and velocities create an experiential dynamic, choreographic space, and with it a new dynamics of the ‘fixed’ material space. The newly perceived material space that results from choreographic activity does not, indeed could not, exist prior to that activity, for material space presents “a pulsed array of possibilities to be pursued” (Gins & Arakawa 2002:42), an array that the choreographers grasp and transform into a newly formed experiential, or intensive, space. Susanne Langer’s descriptions of space, formulated directly in relation to choreographic events (Langer 1953) are illuminating in this context, introducing new dimensions to, yet resonating with those forwarded by Lefebvre and de Certeau in their discussions of everyday space, and Deleuze and Guattari’s discussions of intensive space. Langer acknowledges the vectorial nature of choreographic space, but identifies that space as a space of virtual powers or forces, that is as an intensive space. She argues explicitly that

the relations between the [dancers] is more than a spatial one, it is a relation of forces; the forces that they exercise, that seem to be as physical as those which orient the compass needle toward its pole, really do not exist physically. (Langer 1953:175/6)

Dancers, she suggests, do not merely create physical movements, they create virtual gestures, which extend beyond the materiality of their bodies. The virtual gestures become an extended actualisation of the intricate interplay of the trajectories and tensions that permeate the interrelations between dancers and the space within and through which they dance<sup>xvi</sup>. Indeed, she suggests, this virtual movement permeates one’s perception of the activity of a dancing group or ensemble “...one does not see people running around; one sees the dance driving this way, drawn that way, gathering there – fleeing, resting, rising and so forth...” (Langer 1953:175). She goes on to argue that the

prototype of the 'forces' that generate this dynamic choreographic space is not the 'field of forces' associated with physics, but "the *subjective experience* of volition and free agency" (Langer 1953:175 *my emphasis*). Specifically she argues that

the sense of vital power, even of the power to receive impressions, apprehend the environment and meet its changes, is our most immediate self-consciousness...the play of felt energies as different from any system of physical forces as psychological time is from the space of geometry." (Langer 1953:176).

In immersive installation works and choreographic works that take place in public spaces, because the 'viewers' are enveloped by both the material and the choreographic space, they find themselves both viewing the material space, and experiencing the space of active forces of which Langer speaks. This dual experience of space was particularly evident in *Sensuous Geographies*, in which both those actively engaging with the interactive interface of the installation, and those who were standing around the active space looking in, were embedded within the choreographic space. As both viewers and participants (each of these roles could be assumed at different times in this installation) they were part of the visual environment, and immersed in the dynamics and sonic trajectories of the soundworld created by the active participants. The *participants*, because their sight was obscured, were encouraged to experience the space kinaesthetically, or haptically. When *viewing*, however, the environment was experienced both intensively and extensively, the latter not merely in terms of the perceiving the structure of the digital/material environment but also in terms of the perceived spatiotemporal interplays between environment and participants, and participant and participant. In *trajets* as the participants moved the screens that made up the environment turned in response, thus creating a relational space between participants and material elements of the installation by materially altering (indeed choreographing) the shape of the installation environment itself. The participants thus both perceived visually and experienced kinaesthetically the space that they were creating.

It is this interlacing of the material and dynamic, of the bounded and vectorial, the intensive and extensive in a choreographic space that is of interest to me in this paper. Over the last two decades the oppositions implied by the formulation of binary distinctions between material and dynamic, bounded and vectorial, intensive and extensive space have been challenged. Rather than being considered mutually exclusive, it is acknowledged that they overlap, interweave, co-exist. For example, Lefebvre, in the quotation above notes that space is both "perceived and directly experienced". Deleuze and Guattari (1987) noted that intensive, or smooth space is always interrupted by tem-



porary crystallisations of the flows of intensive forces that create the relations between its multiple lines of direction, and between its qualitative textures<sup>xvii</sup>. Correspondingly, as we know when viewing a dance performance, even when experienced optically, the material space in which the dance takes place is imbued by the movement of the dance with inherently variable qualitative dimensions and textures that can undermine its apparently stable identity. Indeed, if, as Paul Rodaway (1994:55) argues, space is mapped haptically as well as visually, it is of necessity in/extensive, that is, simultaneously intensive and extensive.

Manuel de Landa (2005) approaches this merging of the intensive and extensive from a different, more radical direction, suggesting that the qualitative dimension of intensive space is implicated in the very *production* of extensive space, for it is “in this processual zone [that we] can witness the birth of extensity and its identity forming frontiers” (de Landa 2005: 83). Perhaps, then, the two concepts (extensive space and intensive space), rather than being seen as different in kind, should be seen as implying different modes of perceiving (or experiencing) space<sup>xviii</sup>.

Yet, even Elizabeth Grosz (2001), renowned for her formulation of the notion of the ‘space of the in between’, identifies intensive and extensive space two oppositional forms of experience. She suggests that to perceive, and evaluate, from the outside is to deny the experiential. In doing so she implies a binary distinction between intensive and extensive space. This is particularly evident when she argues that, on the one hand that one can never fully occupy the outside, extensive space, “for it is always other, different, at a distance from where one is” (Grosz 2001:xv), and on the other that to inhabit intensive space is to be at the mercy of “the immediacy of immersion that affords no distance” (Grosz 2001:xv), unable to distance oneself from the ‘sensation’ of space. I would argue that being immersed in a space does not necessarily entail being unaware of the material space one occupies, nor that to perceive extensive space necessarily denies the experiential, inasmuch as, as post-Gibsonian theories of perception argue (Nöe 2004, Thompson 2008), any perception, even visual perception, constitutes a composite of several perceptual modes, including the haptic. Thus the optical perception of extensive space can be simultaneously somatic, experiential, particularly when what is perceived entails motion, actual or virtual.

Nevertheless, Grosz (of course) acknowledges the difficulties inherent in making a distinction between the two modes of experiencing space, and takes steps to resolve the conundrum of the apparent gap between being immersed in a space (and thus in a subjective *state*) and being an ‘objective’ observer of a space/event. She does this by positing a further space, one that is neither inside nor outside, neither intensive nor extensive, one that lies between the two. This she calls the ‘space of the in-between’. The

‘space of the in between’, she argues, is ‘space of open-ness and of undoing’ (Grosz 2001: 93). It is a space that ‘disrupts the operations’ of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ (Grosz 2001: 93). Rather than being a space of fixed identities, the space of the in between is a space of becoming, a space of transformation. This notwithstanding, the space of the in between constitutes a *third* space, albeit one with unstable, permeable margins (and thus not margins at all).

Massumi (2002) avoids the dilemma confronted by Grosz by resolving the conundrum in different way. Rather than positing another space, he argues that the different forms of space, the vectorial/bounded, intensive/extensive, smooth/striated are *coextensive*. Thus Euclidean and non-Euclidean space, material space and dynamic space co-exist, interweave, are present in the same experience of a space. The built space within which movement takes place does not, as Doreen Massey notes in her paper, change its shape or dimensions physically (or if it does not in a way that is perceptually discernible). However, it does change in terms of the form it takes in our perceptual experience<sup>xix</sup>. As viewers, even though viewing optically from ‘outside’, we *experience* the ebb and flow, the expansion and contraction of the dynamic space created by the performers/participants as they move. Further, by virtue of the dynamic spaces that are being generated within the material space, the perceived spatial characteristics of the environment are modulated perceptually. Thus, as the solo dancer, trio, duet or ensemble of dancers moves this way and that in the space of the performance, or extends and contracts as the spatial relations between dancers change. The spatiotemporal vectors that characterised the dynamics of the material space before the movement began dissolve and are re-formed, as first one then another feature of the material space is linked now with one feature then with another, or gets closer or further away by virtue of the motion of the perceiver, or is foregrounded then backgrounded as the relations between the mobile and ‘static’ features of the space change<sup>xx</sup>. This alters the perceived dimensions of the space, giving rise to a different experience of the environment that the perceiver is occupying.

Conversely, even when immersing oneself in a space, one is always aware at some level, of the environment in which one is immersed. As participants/performers, even whilst immersed in the haptic/kinaesthetic experience of the intensive space we generate in and through our movement/activity, we are simultaneously able to discern (albeit not always consciously) the boundaries of the space in which we move and its material features, which include other participants/performers and the audience. In this way, we are able “apprehend the environment and *meet its changes* [in] our most immediate self-consciousness” (Langer (1953:176) *my emphasis*). All this, I suggest, can give rise in the audience to a vicarious *experience* of the intensive space generated by the perform-

ers. Thus, as performers and participants in installation environments and in choreographic works that take place in urban or natural spaces, we experience the installation space and/or the space in which the performance takes place coextensively.

During my research for this paper I have found it interesting to note the difference in tenor of the descriptions of dynamic space offered by Langer in 1953, and those of Lefebvre and de Certeau some twenty to thirty years later. Although writing from the perspective of the viewer, Langer writes as if from the 'inside'<sup>xxi</sup>. Lefebvre and de Certeau, conversely, although clearly sympathetic to the intensities and dynamics generated in the everyday spaces they describe, and make an attempt to immerse themselves within them, write of those intensities as if experiencing them extensively. Langer's perspective is perhaps of significance when considering the possibility that even the audience, which is the position that Langer writes from, can feel the difference in qualities in the zones of intensity that are generated by a particular choreographic space, even one that they are not immersed in intensively<sup>xxii</sup>. This implies that we can experience the sensation of actions vicariously through generating an embodied simulation in our neuronal systems from an optical experience of the movement of others. Neuroscientists emphasise that the greater our prior experience of and/or familiarity with the observed actions, the deeper the strength of the embodied simulation. I would suggest that as dancers, indeed even as non-dancers, when taking the role of audience, we are able to embody to a great or lesser degree, the intensities of the interplay of forces that we perceive on the stage, particularly those experienced when engaging in ensemble or group activity<sup>xxiii</sup>.

The psychophysical, or intensive, facets of the movement of individuals (either alone or as part of an ensemble) are central to the generation of choreographic space. It is this that generates what we might call a 'felt' space, the space of being and of feeling, and of becoming. As such it becomes implicated in the extensive (material) space in which any choreographic event, formal or informal, takes place. Nevertheless, as Doreen Massey notes in her paper, these spaces, although malleable in certain senses, they do have stability and substance<sup>xxiv</sup>. Further, as Mehaffy (2010) and Salingaros (2010) argue, the design of the material spaces that we engage with can affect the detail of *how* we see (and/or feel) when we see what we see, *and* our behaviour within the space. It is the interplay between the mutual influences of movement and the material environment on the generation of a choreographic space that gives support to the notion that choreographic space is an in/extensive space, one that incorporates both the dynamic and the stable, but shifts the perceived contours and textures of the material space through the activity that constitutes the dynamic space.

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<sup>i</sup> The Situationists formulated the principles of the '*dérive*', which entailed "drop[ping] their usual motives for movement and action...and let[ting] themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there..." (Knabb(1995). Judson Church choreographers adopted this strategy in their site-specific work.

<sup>ii</sup> For example, Rosemary Butcher's *North East Passage* 1976 and *D1, D2, 3D* 1989-90; Rosemary Lee's *Moments Shorelines* 1987, *Haughmond Dances* 1990 and *The Banquet Dances* 1999; La Ribot's *Dip me in Water* 1997 and *Piezas Distinguidas* 2000; Stephan Koplowitz's *Kohler Korper [Coal Bodies]* 1999 and *A Walk between Two Worlds* 2005; Siobhan Davies's *13 Different Keys* 1999; Seven Sisters' *Salome* 1999 and *DoubleTake* 2000; Willi Dorner's *Bodies in Urban Spaces* 2007.

<sup>iii</sup> For example, Liz Aggiss *Motion Control*, 2000, *Anarchic Variations*, 2002; Rosemary Butcher, *Undercurrent*, 2001, *The Return*, 2005; David Hinton, *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* [with DV8] (1989), *Birds* (with Yolande Snaith, 2000;

<sup>iv</sup> Bill Viola *Catherine's Room* (2001); Julian Isaacs *Ten Thousand Waves* (2010); Sam Taylor Wood, *Killing Time* (1994)

<sup>v</sup> [Kozel/Woolford (Contours 1999), Igloo (Winterspace 2001), my own Passing Phases (1994-99) and Sensuous Geographies (2003<sup>v</sup>), Sandiland (Remote Dancing 2004), Woolford (Will o' the Wisp 2005), Kozel/Schiller (trajets 2007), Ole Kristensen (Body Navigation 2008)]

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<sup>vi</sup> Preston-Dunlop(1981) Nature of the embodiment of choreutic units in contemporary choreography unpublished PhD, Laban Centre.

<sup>vii</sup> Often referred to as Euclidean space.

<sup>viii</sup> JJ Gibson (1966) argues that haptic perception entails somatosensory and proprioception, Paul Rodaway (1994:55), suggests that "each space and place discerned, or mapped, haptically is in this sense our space and because of the reciprocal nature of touch we come to belong to that space."

<sup>ix</sup> For Manuel DeLanda (2005:50) zones of intensity that characterise intensive space are "marked by critical points of temperature, pressure, gravity, density, tension, connectivity points defining abrupt transitions in the state of the creatures inhabiting those zones."

<sup>x</sup> The video work *Guards* (2004) by Frances Alijs and the screendance work *Tattoo* (2001) by Miranda Pennell exploit the choreographic potential of the activity of massed groups of soldiers.

<sup>xi</sup> For example, A. Pred (1977) wrote a paper entitled "The Choreography of Existence: some comments on Hägerstrand's time-geography and its effectiveness" (*Economic Geography* 53: 207-21), an editorial in the Guardian (9th August 2010) entitled "Environmental research: Nature's choreography talks of "the intricate dance performed by earth, air, fire and water in the service of life", a paper entitled "Chromosome Choreography: The Meiotic Ballet" (2003), written by scientists Scott Page and R. Scott Hawley, argues that the action of homologs which "pair with each other, recombine, and then segregate from each other ... [and] orient to a single pole at metaphase" results in an "elegant chromosome dance" (p. 785).

<sup>xii</sup> This includes realtime composition (improvisation) in dance

<sup>xiii</sup> For example, the activities in the football stadia of Rwanda during the genocide produced very different spaces to those football stadia before the Rwandan civil war.

<sup>xiv</sup> Although these are inevitably implicated in the choreographic space discussed here, they take a back seat in this paper. It is worth noting that the Situationists (Debord, 1955), and theorists such as Michael Mehaffy (2010) and Nikos Salingaros (2010) argue that the form of constructed spaces, that is material or built space, is ideologically and politically driven, and leads to the generation of particular forms of intensive space, which are imbued with ideological positions, and that these subtly direct human behaviour within a public space. "[C]ities have a psychogeographical relief, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes which strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones" (Knabb, 1995)

<sup>xv</sup> This was experienced vicariously by those who were viewing the activity of those engaging with the installations, in part because, even though at that moment observing the activity of those in the 'interactive' space, they were part of the community that the installation had generated.

<sup>xvi</sup> This was addressed by Valerie Preston Dunlop in the development of what she calls CHUMM analysis, (Choreutic Units and their Manner of Materialisation) in which both the actual and virtual spatial forms of choreography are addressed. Preston Dunlop (1981) *The Nature of the Embodiment of Choreutic Units in Choreography*, unpublished PhD Thesis, U.M.I. 1981.

<sup>xvii</sup> The notion of 'temporary' can encompass many temporal scales, as Doreen Massey points out in her paper, even mountains continue the movement that was started during the geological events that led to their creation, albeit moving *extremely* slowly.

<sup>xviii</sup> See Gibson's distinction between exteroceptive and interoceptive (or distanced and intimate) senses and the incorporation of the haptic sense, in which he include the somatosensory and proprioception into the notion of perception. Gibson, J.J. (1966).

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<sup>xix</sup> It is the latter that site-specific choreography seeks to change by generating within a material space, a dynamic choreographic space that redirects attention and thus perception of the extensive space.

<sup>xx</sup> Such a 'performance' can be formal or informal, intentional or unwitting

<sup>xxi</sup> "It is the feeling of power, and the play of such felt energies..." (Langer 1953: 176)

"...a realm of "powers", wherein purely imaginary beings from whom the vital force emanates shape a whole world of dynamic forms ..." (Langer 1953:184)

<sup>xxii</sup> That this is possible is evidenced in the work of neuroscientists such as Patrick Haggard (University College London) and his colleagues, who have been investigating the activity of Mirror Neuron systems specifically in relation to dance (Calvo-Merino et al. 2005).

<sup>xxiii</sup> Neuroscientists have observed that although the strength of the experience of embodiment differs as it is affected by familiarity with the patterns of movement being perceived, there is a neuronal response even amongst those with less experience.

<sup>xxiv</sup> I am indebted to Doreen Massey for the many insights I gained from my conversations and discussions with her during the course of the conference.

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## Paper Presentations

### Shifting Locations in Opiyo Okach's Shift...centre

Christy Adair

Contemporary Dance in East Africa is an art form which is emerging in complex contexts with limited resources. Some of the work has, however, made an impact both locally and internationally. In this paper I will discuss *Shift ...centre* created by Kenyan choreographer Opiyo Okach which was performed at The Place, London, October, 2009. Okach questions western hegemonic dance practice and his perspectives are particularly relevant at a time when dance is being re-considered in a global context. His work is driven by a desire to de-centre the performing space in order to articulate his multiplicity of experiences in relation to travel, landscape, language, material resources and technology which are part of his everyday reality as he moves between Nairobi, his village and Paris. Opiyo Okach has to negotiate the tension between the need for western financial and artistic support and marginalisation by the western canon. His choreographic projects, commitment to dance training and audience development are an important example of work which resists marginalisation and endorses multiple viewpoints.

#### Opiyo Okach – choreographic profile

Okach has been an important catalyst for contemporary work in East Africa for more than ten years. Together with Faustin Linyekula from Congo and Afrah Tenambergen from Germany/Ethiopia he formed La Compagnie Gàara in 1996. Their performance of *Cleansing* described as 'a piece in which the mundane gestures of everyday cleansing evoke sometimes violent purification' (Okach, 2009e) won an award at Rencontres Chorégraphiques Africaines in 1998 and brought them invitations to festivals in France and to tour in Africa. The Company gained the support of Ballet Atlantique-Régine Chopinot (BARC) a choreographic centre which Chopinot directs in La Rochelle, France.

Prior to this success Okach had established an interest in contemporary dance work whilst studying at the Desmond Jones Mime School in London on a British Council scholarship (1993-94) following his literature studies at the University of Nairobi (1985-88) which included a theatre module. Whilst in London he participated in a range of dance workshops including one with choreographer Russell Maliphant. He was significantly influenced by the released based style which continues to inform his work today (Okach, 2009c).



When Okach began making work in Nairobi, on his return from London the context was, as he describes it, something of a vacuum (Okach, 2009c). Traditional African dance forms had always been part of the context but contemporary creation did not exist in Kenya. The African Choreographic Encounters Biannual Festival began in 1995. Luanda, Angola and from such opportunities contemporary choreography began to develop in East Africa. Most of the dancers who have worked with Okach have their own companies and are choreographers in their own right.

*Shift...centre*, emerged from a choreographic draft performed at the Ramoma Art Gallery, Nairobi, Kenya, 2003 by Lailah Masiga, James Mweu and Okach Okach described the work as

an instant composition piece with possibilities for a variable number and configuration of performers: dancers, musicians, video artists etc. Space is approached as a fragmented multi-directional entity; without a central focal point (Okach, 2009e).

Here I will discuss aspects of *Shift...centre - series 10* performed in London in relation to earlier versions of the work, Opiyo Okach's choreographic concerns and the wider context of contemporary dance practice in East Africa.

### **Opiyo Okach's choreographic concerns**

In *Shift...centre*, as in previous work, I'm interested in the fabric of cross-cultural space as a conceptual framework for choreographic enquiry; the unique ways of being and notions of identity shaped by conflict and contradiction, the wealth and diversity of viewpoints intrinsic to such spaces (Okach, 2009a).

A number of Okach's choreographies have been solos. He stated that one of the reasons for making solos is the lack of resources for developing group work within East Africa. *Shift...centre* is an important development of his choreographic concerns as it offers the opportunity to collaborate with a range of artists and at the same time to continue to work with the choreographic form as a training device for participating artists. His tours of these works in Africa have attracted African audiences many of whom are unfamiliar with contemporary dance as well as those from expatriate communities (Okach, 2009e). Attracting an audience for a contemporary dance is, however, an ongoing issue which was debated at the Pre-Arts Summit Meeting For Contemporary Dancers and Choreographers in East Africa at the GoDown Arts Centre, Nairobi in 2006.

One of the attractions of Okach's work for audiences is his research into cultural traditions in Kenya which is an important source for his choreographic work. For example, he noted that certain churches mix traditions and that street processions often include traditional dance steps which are rarely seen in the villages today (Okach, 2009c). He describes his working process saying,

When I'm in Kenya I start each afternoon by working on traditional music and dance. Then I move onto improvisation. I try to find a movement that doesn't exist but that suddenly appears. This movement is born out of traditional dance but moves onto somewhere else. I try to find a whole truth for myself. I was born in Kenya, I have lived here but my experience is not restricted to this country. It is far wider... How do I artistically create an identity that corresponds to this reality? This guides the relationship between my work and the Kenyan heritage (Okach in Mensah, 2003, [www.africultures.com](http://www.africultures.com)).

In addition to drawing on traditions as stimulus for his work, Okach is also fascinated with space. One of his inspirations comes from architect Zaha Hadid's comment '*...why limit ourselves to one [position] when there are 360° possible*'. Clearly, this concept is fundamental to *Shift...centre*. Okach also says that

the centre of the world is not just in one place. The centre is not just where we are. The centre is fragmented... We have to take into account that there are different fragments of reality and that reality is shifting all the time (Okach, 2009e).

Okach's concern with de-centring is understandable in the context of living and working in a political structure which is very centralised. In an edition of the *Journal of East African Studies*, Ghai notes,

Kenya is one of the most centralised states in the world. It also has an executive with one of the greatest concentrations of power. Both these features are a legacy of colonialism (2008:225).

Another legacy is the migration of Kenyans to other countries in order to escape the impact of such centralisation. These migrants then experience what Stuart Hall analyses as 'dis-location, dis-placement and hybridity' and the continual movement 'between centre and periphery' (in Morley and Chen ed. 1996: 14).

Okach attempts to draw his audience's attention to some of the impacts of western imperial power and the reinforcement of a singular viewpoint in his programme

notes. For example, in *Shift...centre – Series 10* programme notes, he offers the infamous comment of former US President George W. Bush, 'you are either with us or the enemy' (Okach, 2009a). In interview Okach talked about wanting to share his concerns with his audience not only through choreographic works but also through programme notes, talks and workshops. It was clear from observing Okach's work in the studio that fluidity of viewpoints is central to his choreographic approaches

*Shift...centre* insists on a spectatorship of multiple viewpoints. The audience share with the performers the experience of being present within the peripatetic performance, following the flows of movement of specific performers or between performers as their interest indicates. Spectators can choose where in the space they watch the performers and can move as and when they wish to change their perspective. The 2003 performance was located at the top of an eighteen story building as part of the visual art exhibition *Mysterious Abstraction*.

Artist Mary Collis made the Plexiglas folded hangings suspended from the gallery ceiling seen in the 2003 work which inspired the transparent screens used in later versions of *Shift...centre*. Photographer James Muriuki, currently curator at the Ramoma Art Gallery, noted that as the performers danced among the audience, the spectators became conscious of their own use of space. As the audience shared the gallery space with the performers they became part of the performance space. Okach has designed the choreographic space so that the spectator is aware of their physical experience in relation to the performance.

From this choreographic draft Okach developed a work which has toured widely to France, Germany, Brazil and South Africa. Audiences at the Place, London had the opportunity to experience *Shift...centre – Series 10* when it was performed in October 2009 as part of the Dance Umbrella African Crossroads season produced by Eckhard Thiemann. The choreographic draft of *Shift...centre* in 2003 developed into *Shift...centre – Series 1* which was premiered at the GoDown Arts Centre, Nairobi in 2005. The choreography signals a challenge to western audiences who as Margaret Drewal argues, 'tend to homogenize African ritual and performance (in Edmondson, 2007:9).

As Okach explains he,

draws on rituals, customs, media images and current issues... His work is multi-dimensional and he is open to ever-changing possibilities within his work (Mensah, 2003, [www.africultures.com](http://www.africultures.com)).

*Shift... centre* was performed in London three times with six Kenyan dancers including Okach. All of the dancers have danced in earlier versions. The dancers worked for a week at the Place rehearsal studios with five UK-based dancers.

During the rehearsal week the Kenyan dancers had the opportunity to re-orientate themselves to the work and each other as they all have their own companies and artistic projects which often entail being away from Kenya for significant periods. For the UK dancers the week was an intensive submersion in Okach's choreographic approaches, learning through a series of improvisation tasks which he offered as tools for the performance. In interview Okach discussed the importance of improvisation in his work as a means of de-centring space, fragmentation and multiplicity of experiences (Okach, 2009c).

### **Critical engagement**

As I was watching dance work and interviewing artists I was aware of my own role and background as a white British researcher. I write from a position which attempts not to take on the role of critical coloniser and to place dancers and choreographers as 'other'. I also write from a position which considers that 'Writing itself is a political issue and a political practice for many contemporary feminists' (Gatens, in Adair, 2007:4). My interest in Opyio Okach's work has developed from regular visits to Nairobi and East Africa from 2007. My approach draws on my previous research which locates contemporary dance within a critical discourse which engages with issues of both ethnicity and gender<sup>1</sup>. Whilst women have had significant roles in traditional African dance forms in East Africa, there are a number of restrictions which affect their participation in contemporary performance. As Kenyan activist Wangari Maathi (2007) points out, within Kenyan society traditionally more value has been placed on boys than on girls. Boys are expected to achieve more than girls and often have more access to education. The roles females are expected to play in the family in relation to caring for children; sick parents and carrying out household chores do not combine well with the requirements of dance training and performance. In such a context it is not surprising, therefore, to find that females are in the minority in this art form.

Lailah Masiga and Juliette Omolo, who both dance with Okach in *Shift...centre* and choreograph their own work, are resisting a context in which it is assumed that men will dance rather than women. The opportunity to interview Masiga, Omolo and other artists informed my perceptions of the work as did experiencing the conditions in which they make work. Whilst the GoDown Centre, Nairobi is an important resource for artists providing space for them to work and sometimes offering financial support the conditions are less than ideal by western standards. The Centre is in an industrial part of the

city and artists have to contend with noise, strong fumes and an old wooden floor. I was aware of the contrast to the beautifully finished floor, light and quiet of the studios at the Place London where the dancers rehearsed for Dance Umbrella.

### **Rehearsal and performance at The Place, London**

In rehearsal I observed dancers working in trios, duets, solos as travelling clusters which kept changing as they moved across the space, occasionally there was some contact work but the key was to keep the work fluid and moving.

Okach explained,

In my choreographic writing, I readily use two tools of spontaneous composition – 'surface painting' and 'shifting centre'. The first sees the body as a paintbrush that draws paintings in space. The second consists in displacing the centre in space. This creates certain poetry of movement, a fluidity that is also a change in perception. There is not a single centre, but rather many centres, multiple points of view. This is also a political vision. I am fighting against a singular conception of space, of dance, of what a show should be (Okach in Mensah, 2003, [www.africultures.com](http://www.africultures.com)).

The following section is from my notes after watching a performance of *Shift...centre: Series 10*

The dancers are moving in and through the spaces as the audience begin to enter. Duets emerge and dissolve accompanied by an urban soundscape including dogs barking in the distance and machines humming.

A corridor of light emerges along the length of one side of the space and dancers begin to move along it and in between each other, sometimes interacting with audience members, creating little cameos of both movement and stillness.

Dancer Moturi sits next to singer Anastasia Akumu, shortly after she begins to move into the space singing. Sometimes she moves with one of the dancers, kneeling, turning, leaning. As she moves and sings she creates an incredible energy force. Some of the dancers sing fragments with her and traces of traditional dance ricochet through the dancers. As she leaves the space her absence is felt, gradually duets begin to form accompanied by the soundscape.

Another energetic shift occurs in the performance when Moturi knocks each screen in turn, creating a flow of movement through the space as the screens gently sway back and forth. A further dimension to the set is the projection of words which fill

one of the marked spaces but also fall on bodies as they move through the light and fade into the audience. From scrolling texts some of the dancers' comments, in a variety of languages, responses to the project, drift into the space, offering multiple viewpoints through which the dancers bring their own experiences to the piece. Okach offers an open frame which the dancers fill with their realities (see photo gallery, [www.Gàaraprojects.com](http://www.Gàaraprojects.com)).

### **East African contexts**

When asked to reflect on the dance scene in Africa, Okach commented that there has been a remarkable development in the last fifteen years with many new choreographers beginning to find their own voices and new identities emerging. There are now opportunities for exchanges with festivals and dance institutions for example in Burkina Faso, Mali and South Africa and such networks allow artists' work to circulate and develop. Okach also discussed the images of Africa and discourses around notions of identity and authenticity. He emphasised that the reality of Africa, in contrast to popular stereotypical images, is a multiple place in which people live many realities everyday. For example, it is normal in Africa to speak four languages and to experience tradition, Christianity, Islam, MTV side by side (Okach, 2009b). Such frameworks make one-dimensional readings of identity, place and culture inappropriate.

In one of Okach's solos, *Border Border Express*, he draws on the 2007/8 post election violence between different ethnic groups in Kenya, some images of which are projected as part of the performance. The scenes and experiences of that time had severe consequences for the Kenyan people and many artists responded to unthinkable scenes with which they were confronted (for example see *Kenya Burning*, 2008 catalogue of photography exhibition). In an edition of the *Journal of East African Studies* devoted to examining the reasons for the conflict and the aftermath Ghai noted that the centralised state with power concentrated in the executive was not an appropriate structure for the diversity of people in Kenya and led to a neglect of communities, social tensions and retarded economic development. The extreme deprivation that many people experience in Kenya contributed to the tensions which erupted in violence in 2008 as did the rivalry between specific groups.

The dancers and choreographers who work with Okach are committed to working with local communities and bringing diverse groups together to create artistic projects. For example, Choreographer Kebaya Moturi was surprised at the large number of young people who were keen to dance and participate in the workshops he offered in one of the Nairobi slums.

A popular mis-conception of art practices in the African continent is the equation with such work with rural living. Currently, more Africans live in urban contexts than rural ones and many only know an urban landscape as a number of artists, including Okach (Okach, 2009d) and Germaine Acogny (Acogny, 1992), have articulated. Such contexts give rise to engagement with modernity and the global framework and artists are frequently influenced by world-wide media and artistic practices as are European and American artists.

## Conclusion

Opiyo Okach's contemporary artistic practice is an important example of choreography which uses cross-cultural spaces and resists fixed categories. The notion of exchange is a crucial part of Okach's artistic thinking. 'I am concerned with the moment, a state of being...and wanting to share that with the audience' (Okach, 2009b).

The embodied experiences of his work and the flowing images created are significant challenges to narrow stereotypes and limiting viewpoints of work which evolve from the present day multiple realities of the East African continent.

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### Interviews and Conversations

Kebaya Moturi, 19 January, 2009, 28 July, 2009, 19 November 2009, Nairobi. James Mweu, 28 October, 2007, November 16, 19 2009, Nairobi, 29 October, York.

James Muriuki, 18 November, 2008, Nairobi.

Opiyo Okach, 7 June, 2009c, 23 October, 2009f, London.

Juliette Omolu, 23 October, 2009, London, 19 November, 2009 Nairobi.

Matthew Spierling, 22 October, 2009, London.

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<sup>i</sup> Adair, C. (2007) *Dancing the Black Question: The Phoenix Dance Company Phenomenon* (Alton: Dance Books), Adair, C. (1992) *Women and Dance: sylphs and sirens* (Basingstoke: Macmillan)



## **Dancing in open spaces: A teaching-learning project using e-tools**

Maria João Alves

At Technical University of Lisbon, Faculty of Human Kinetics, we have a curricular unit, Dance Laboratory II, where we tried to convert classroom training into blended activities using some e-tools. In this course, dance students take face-to-face dance classes with improvisation and composition purposes in conventional sites (dance studio and theatre) as well as in open spaces, like museums, gardens, and terraces.

In agreement with an interdisciplinary concept, they are also invited to design, learn and perform a dance work, and then present it to a general public audience. Aiming the integration of one of the choreographic group projects, we use site-specific exercises, improvisation in open spaces, composition of choreographic excerpts or/and adaptation of a previously created choreographic work.

According to MacBean, “site-specific dance, which is often defined as dance that occurs outside of the conventional theatre space, challenges choreographers to look at, listen to, feel, and think about the space in which the dance is performed” (2004: 97).

By using site-specific exercises in our dance composition classes we intend to offer our students the opportunity to reflect on their own culture and contribute to raising awareness on the importance of establishing inter-connectivity between the triad of audience, dance and choreographer.

### **Public spaces vs. intimate sphere**

Dance is the art that has the most characteristics to play with space, constantly inventing new architectures not only on stage but also through the body and gaze.

Choreographers are investing in public spaces (squares, gardens, heritage buildings...) or exploring the intimate sphere (apartments, room for one viewer...) to continually renew the viewer's experience. Thus, we ask if this shift induces a different process of artistic creation.

And, in formal education how do people learn through the act of composing?

### **How people learn through the act of composing**

Creative reciprocity between choreographer and dancers is an essential component of composition.

Fournier (2004) defends that the relationship between choreographers and dancers

represents a model of learning through creative work and gives us important information about the perceptual aspects of thinking and problem solving in dance. This creative system attempts to articulate and realize an aesthetic intention using a metaphoric vocabulary.

Choreographers are primarily responsible for the design function within the composition system. They must allow for an executive view of the dance as a whole, projecting their minds forward and backward over rehearsals in order to shape and develop movement material into a unified composition. Dancers implement changes that in this creative system are primarily evolutionary, they adapt locally. "Choreographers (...) conduct executive activity: making choices about the options that will be explored, planning a path of action, evaluating the results. (...) Dancers (...) adapt locally to direction from outside" (Fournier 2004: 202).

### **Collaborative choreographic process**

According to Paul Mason, choreography "involves the ongoing negotiation of perceptions, meanings and symbols as they are discovered, explored and cultivated in the dance studio and the performance stage" (2009: 29). To this author, dance researchers studying the process of choreography have the opportunity to track the selection of alternatives over a discrete time-frame, one of the operations included in the evolutionary processes at the cultural level. Mason and Dalman (2009) explore the idea of similarity between dance choreography and a creative system integrating the evolutionary characteristics of a social system. Mason and Dalman identify five characteristic processes in an interactive group of people in a collaborative choreography: variation, selection, complexity, organization and memorisation.

In our dance laboratory, students try to develop and implement the two functions of choreographer and performer to create a group work centred in this process of negotiation between the movements proposed by the group of performers, the way that dancers interact socially and share perceptions, and the intents of the group of choreographers before the site-specific space.

Jo Breslin and Jill Cowley (2010) point out the reasons for using collaborative choreography in higher education: it constitutes a very practical solution to deal with large numbers, and enhances the interdependency that creative autonomy gives us.

### **E-tools**

The aim of the blended approach is to provide students with a range of learning activities that also refine technological and online communication skills. Strategies such as using in-class and online discussions complemented with readings assist students in

developing their thinking around issues related to perceptual aspects of thinking and problem solving in dance.

<b>Used Tools</b>	<b>Type of tool (Littlejohn &amp; Pegler, 2007)</b>
Video platform (to view) (Viddler)	Assimilative
Wiki page (LMS)	Information handling
Forums (LMS) video platform (to comment) (Viddler) & Publishing platform (blog) (Wordpress)	Communicative
Electronic learning environment (LMS – Moodle)	Productive

Figure 1. Type of electronic tools used in Dance Laboratory Unit.

The e-tool selected to complement and implement the distance related communication was the creation of an electronic portfolio in the form of a personal blog, video viewing and commenting, a wiki page and a discussion forum in a Learning Management System (LMS<sup>1</sup>). According to the Littlejohn and Pegler's systematization (2007), the e-tools that we use are mainly communicative.

A variety of activities – ranging from tasks wherein students assimilate information by viewing and listening, or handle information by improvising and appreciating, to tasks where students gather and structure information through operational activities such as experience composition and choreographic creation – are listed in the unit plan matrix (figure 2).

<b>Time</b>	<b>Mode</b>	<b>Student activities</b>	<b>Online tool</b>	<b>Feedback &amp; Assessment</b>
Week 1	Online	E-portfolio. Blog creation	Publishing platform (Wordpress)	
Week 2-7	classroom based/online	E-portfolio. Improvisation and composition lessons at studio and open spaces	Publishing platform (Wordpress) Video platform (Viddler)	Student provides comments to all practical classes
Week 8-9	Online	Screenplay of the choreography	Wiki page (LMS)	Student and teacher provide comments

Week 8-13	classroom based	Compositional work in group	Online repository or forums (LMS)	Student and teacher provide comments
Week 11	online	Video appreciation	Video platform (Viddler)	Student provides comments

Figure 2. Matrix of the Plan of Dance Laboratory Unit.

Each activity type is then supported by more than one tool. And we can say that, for us, technology works as the experience of social space.

### Conclusion

The use of alternative spaces in teaching choreography in a collaborative way, often going on in higher education, challenges us, dance composition teachers, to develop learning strategies, in this case strategies to complement the teaching-learning process by the use of e-tools. Curiously, one of the aims of the dance laboratory unit is to work with *open* spaces and, simultaneously and additionally, to use electronic tools that represent a bounded area or an *enclosed* space.

The performance commitment to a specific site along with the potential stimulation of different processes of artistic creation over diverse spaces are questions that we intend to raise. Through our perception of the process we conclude that teachers who develop blended learning strategies also benefit from the process; teachers and students construct their learning by what students bring to the subject (collaborative choreographic process); teachers have the advantage of reusing the materials published online in latter sessions, or for different groups of students; students have additional options for assessment. The success of this viewpoint leads us to continue to invest in the blended approach in teaching dance.

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<sup>i</sup> LMS - Learning Management System is a free web application that educators can use to create effective online learning sites.

## The Danish Connection to Ballet in Iceland

Ingibjörg Björnsdóttir



Stefanía Guðmundsdóttir as a young actress.



Ásta Norðmann 1922

When examining the beginning of stage dance in Iceland, one of the first things that come to the mind is how an interest in this artform, classical ballet, could arise in a situation as was in Iceland in the early years of the 20th century. As is generally known Iceland did not have a strong folkdance tradition, much the opposite, and although some theatrical activities could occasionally be seen, mostly light Danish plays performed by the students of the Latin school or small culturally minded groups, no proper theater was available and of course no theatrical training. Another point of interest is the influence of foreign ballet teachers on the training of the first generations of dancers in Iceland. As Iceland was part of Denmark until 1944 it does not come as a surprise to find that the Danish influence is the greatest.

In the year 1897 a house with a stage and space for an audience was built and the newly formed Reykjavík Theater Society moved in to start more or less regular performances, all, of course, on a non professional basis. This house was called Iðnó, and was the home of the Reykjavík Theater for decades. A young woman, Stefanía Guðmundsdóttir, was fast becoming the star of what could be called a theater company. She realised that without proper training of the actors and actresses no improvement in the standard of the performances were to be expected. Although married with several children she sailed to Copenhagen 1904 and spent nearly a year there taking private

lessons with Peter Jerndorff and sitting in on rehearsals in the “Folketeater”. From letters she sent home we can see that she also saw a great deal of the performances offered in Copenhagen, not only plays but also ballet performances. She was obviously fascinated with the ballet, and probably she took some lessons. Her teacher could have been Georg Berthelsen as Stefanía tried hard to get the theater company at home to employ him at least for few weeks to teach “plastik” and dance.<sup>1</sup>

This finally happened in the summer of 1907 and Berthelsen spent some time in Iceland teaching. Among other things he choreographed two dances for the play *The New Year's Night* that the theater company had planned as it's Christmas play that year. One of the dances was a folkdance but the other seems to have been a “ballet”, a dance of the northern lights. When the premier got nearer it was clear that the northern lights dance was not going to work at all. Another actress of the company, Guðrún Indriðadóttir, then rechoreographed this dance to new music, in addition to choreographing yet another folkdance. The dance scenes were so successful that people were urged to go and see the play, even only to see the wonderful dances and beautiful scenery.<sup>2</sup> Guðrún had also spent some time in Copenhagen with the same teacher as Stefanía, Peter Jerndorff. No evidence can be found regarding any dance training but one could assume that Guðrún had taken some dance classes.

These two actresses, Stefanía and Guðrún opened a dance school in Reykjavík in 1915, teaching social or ballroom dances. Later Stefanía spent some months in Copenhagen studying, both in 1914 and 1918. The last time (1918) was entirely devoted to dance studies with Emilie Walbom.<sup>3</sup>

Stefanía had a little book, her dancebook, and from it we can see how seriously she took her dance studies. She wrote down classes in classical ballet, using the French terminology with explanations on how to do some of the steps. There are also many dance descriptions some written down from memory. Dances by Walbom for example from *En Nat i Ægypten*, (A Night in Egypt). Also a dance from *Fjærnt fra Danmark*, (Far from Denmark) and the children's dance from *Elverhøj* (Fairy Hill). There is a dance of Spring, The Roses, Winter and Skating dances. Some are perhaps her own choreography which she might have added to the book when she was back home, as they are in a blend of Icelandic and Danish and the French balletnames.

Although the new dance school in Reykjavík was mostly a social dance school the two actresses must have given some ballet training and perhaps “plastik” as was the custom to teach in many danceschools at this time. The advertisement they put in the newspapers do not mention the subjects taught.. Stefanía staged some charity shows, with dance, poetry, music and short acted scenes, but also pure dance performances, for example she danced the tango in 1914, with her son as her partner. Other dances

seem to have been ballet dances danced by her pupils. Among those was Ásta Norðmann, (born 1904) who, a few years later, in the winter of 1921-1922, was in Leipzig studying dance in a private school. When Ásta came back she gave a solo dance performance in Iðnó. The dances on her program were character dances and some sort of “modern” dances on bare feet and one dance on point. All this she probably learned in Leipzig or used what she saw and learned there to choreograph herself.

Margrethe Brock-Nielsen, the Danish Royal Ballet solodancer, came to Iceland in the summer of 1928 and performed, not only on the stage of Iðnó in Reykjavík, but in other towns as well. As a result of this visit, Ásta spent the next winter in Copenhagen taking privat lesson with Margrethe Brock-Nielsen. Back home she opened a ballet school, a separate school from the social dance shool she had opened on arriving home from Leipzig. Ásta took over the role of choreographer of the Reykjavík Theater Company, the role both Stefanía and Guðrún had fulfilled earlier.<sup>4</sup>

Another direct link to Copenhagen were three sisters, Ruth, Rigmor and Ása Hanson. Having a Danish mother and an Icelandic father they all trained both in gymnastics and ballet in Copenhagen, and later all taught in Reykjavík. Of those Rigmor Hanson (born 1913) had the deepest impact as she ran her school for over thirty years, teaching both ballet and ballroom dancing. She had been trained in Elna Jørgen-Jensen’s private school. Elna, like Margrethe Brock-Nielsen, was a soloist with the Royal Danish Ballet. Rigmor also spent some time in London for further studies in dance.

Around 1930 the background of the ballet teaching in Iceland came almost entirely from few Danish dancers that were principal dancers or otherwise connected to the Royal Danish Ballet, with some slight influences from Germany and England. But what could the girls, that were studying ballet in Reykjavík actually have seen of dance performances? One could think that a live performance would be needed to make people interested in this artform. Ásta Norðmann and Margrethe Brock- Nielsen both danced on the Iðnó stage which probably limited their choise of dances because of its small size. Both of them performed character dances, a Hungarian dance, a Spanish and an Oriental dance. Margrethe Brock-Nielsen also danced a solodanse from *Sylvia* and some dances from the Bournonville ballets were also on her program. The very limited space made dances with a lot of moving out of the question.

This was all the dancestudents had seen on stage, no male dancing, no beautiful formations in group dances, no large flowing, sweeping movements, no large jumps, things we associate with the magic of dance. Besides that, there were dance scenes in plays, performed mostly by untrained actors. Was that enough to kindle a fire in girls that trained in Ásta Norðmann’s and the sisters Hanson’s schools? Ásta Norðmann gave a school performance once, in the spring of 1930, but Rigmor did so for many years but



ballroom dances were dominating on her program. This, of course, helped to keep up the interest. Not one boy can be found among the ballet students.

Margrethe Brock-Nielsen came back two years later and this time gave performances only in Iðnó. She invited two young students of Ásta to study with her in Copenhagen the following winter. Only one of them accepted, Helene Jónsson, who spent the next two years there. It has not been possible to see if she ever took classes with Margrethe but in 1933 she came back after studying in Carlsens Institute in Copenhagen and opened a school in Reykjavík. Helene came back together with a young man, Eigild Carlsen, the brother of Carl Carlsen the founder and owner of Carlsens Institute. They gave performances in Reykjavík, dancing the latest ballroom dances and Helene danced classical ballet solos. They danced on all sorts of occasions during the next two years. Their school was very popular and all the most promising ballet girls studied with them during the next two years. Then Helene married a Danish man and moved to Aarhus.

A pupil of Ásta Norðmann and later Helene and Eigild was Ellý Þorláksson (born 1920). When she was 16 years old she managed to get her parents to allow her to go to Copenhagen to study dance, ballroom and ballet. She was an only child and her mother came with her and they stayed in Copenhagen the winter of 1936-1937. Her choice of teacher was Johnna Beitzel, who was then one of the soloists of The Royal Ballet. Ellý came back and following tradition, she opened a school and performed at various functions. Ellý taught on and off for a number of years but spent most of her life in the U.S.A.

A new element entered the Icelandic stagedance scene in 1937. A professional dancer from Germany, Ellen Kid, married an Icelandic artist and came to live in Reykjavík. She had been a student in Mary Wigman's school in Dresden and had also trained in classical ballet in Berlin. She had danced in many European countries and in films for over 10 years. Ellen Kid opened a school and advertised classes in Dance Gymnastic, which could have been Wigman's Tanze Gymnastics, but also classes in tap and ballet. It seems that Dance Gymnastics were not in great demand so the next year she offered classes in "plastik", Maybe she changed the name to connect more to what was familiar to the people of Reykjavík. Ellen Kid gave two solo performances in 1939. From the name of the dances, the music, newspaper writings and some photos we can assume that many of the dances were from Mary Wigman's repertory. Among those was the *Witch dance* and *Pastoral*. Ellen Kid died in 1941 after a long illness.

Sif Þórs (born 1924) had studied both with Ruth Hanson and Ásta Norðmann when she was very young and later with Eigild and Helene Jonsson. She entered the Royal Theater's Ballet School in Copenhagen and was a classmate of Fredbjörn

Björnsson and Inge Sand. Her mother was with her the two years she spent in the school 1936-1938. They went back home in the summer of 1938, to save up for more studies as the plan was to continue the training later, but World War II put a stop to those plans. After teaching and dancing in Reykjavík for a few year where she was highly praised for her dancing, Sif went to London in 1943 to the Sadler's Wells School of Ballet to study for a year but went back to Copenhagen in 1946 to study with Ulla Poulsen and Carl Carlsen. She started her own school in 1944 and it became so popular she decided to find a teacher in Denmark that could help her out the next year. The teacher she found was Kaj Smith, former balletmaster of the Royal Ballet in Copenhagen. He taught and staged various shows during his one year in Iceland and greatly enriched the dance- and theaterlife in Reykjavík during that time.<sup>5</sup>

Sigríður Ármann (born 1928) was a pupil of many of the above mentioned teachers in Reykjavík. After studying in New York, during the war, she went to Copenhagen to Fredbjörn Björnsson private school in 1947-1948. Sigríður opened her own school in 1952 and it is still going strong now under the direction of her daughter. Sigríður, together with Sif, were the principal choreographers during the years up to 1952, working with their own pupils and the actors in the Reykjavík Theater.<sup>6</sup> Besides that little was to be seen of dancing on stage. An exception from this was a visit in 1947 by three dancers from the Royal Ballet in Copenhagen. Fredbjörn Björnsson had a grandfather living in the Vestmanna Islands, of the south coast of Iceland, and he had promised to come and dance for him one day. With him were Inge Sand and Stanley Williams. In the audience was a lady that so much loved the performance that she went home during the interval and got her five year old son up from bed so he could see the rest of the performance. The little boy was so impressed that he has not stopped dancing since. His name is Helgi Tómasson, now the artistic director of the San Francisco Ballet. The three Danish dancers also performed in Reykjavík. A small number of girls went to Copenhagen after the war and studied with Hans Brenaa, Johnna Beitzel and in the Carlsens Institute. What guided their choice of teachers was probably the experience of their forerunners or perhaps just pure coincidence.<sup>7</sup>

In 1950 the National Theater in Reykjavík was opened and then for the first time a large stage was available for dancing. It made a big difference, all of a sudden the dancers could move properly, travel and use space. A ballet school was established 1952 in the theater and a Dane was employed as ballet master of the theater. This was Erik Bidsted who stayed from 1952 to 1960, most of the time together with his then wife, the dancer Lisa Kæregaard. They had both studied with Johnna Beitzel but also with Sven Åge Larsen and in Paris with Egorova and Preobrajenska

From the very beginning in 1907 to 1960 the ballet training in Iceland had almost entirely its roots in the training and traditions of the Royal Danish Ballet and its school in Copenhagen, coming to us via just a few teachers. This could bring up the question of some Bournonville influence, which is to large a subject to discuss here. After 1960 the scene changes as mostly English persons were employed as ballet masters and mistresses of The National Theater and the Danish trained teachers in the private ballet schools stop teaching. The strong Danish connection died out except for what remained in the bodies of those already trained and perhaps was carried on to their students. It is also worth noticing that classical ballet and a hint of modern dance came almost hand in hand to Iceland.

Turning back to the motivation of the children that started ballet training in a place that hardly had seen any stagedance. Firstly one could think of films, and maybe pictures in foreign magazines. Danish magazines such as *Familie Journalen* and *Hjemmet* were immensely popular in the first half of the 20th century. Looking into *Familie Journalen* from 1904 to 1950 there is not much about Danish dance to be found. The inspiration does not lie there. Later on there were pictures for example in *Det Bedste* and some women magazines that might have helped. Of films there were some German and American song and dance films, but most teachers agreed that the showing of the film *The Red Shoes* did not increase the number of ballet students.



Ásta Norðmann's school show 1930



Dancing on the Iðnó stage 1946

When asking six former dancers and dance teachers in Reykjavík what had inspired them to start ballet training, the answers were that one had seen a short children's dance when she was about four years old, most likely 1930 or 31. Soon after that she joined the Hansen sisters school. Another one was the daughter of an actor and was invited to take part in a childrens' play in Iðnó. Ásta Norðmann, who was the choreographer, invited the little girl to train in her ballet school. Two of the women were sent to ballroom dance lessons with Rigmor Hanson and she then asked them to

join in the ballet lessons. One of the them had seen the play *Elverhøj* where Ásta Norðmann had choreographed the dances and did not stop begging until her parents allowed her to take ballet lessons, and the last one asked could not remember at all why she started.<sup>8</sup> None of them mentioned films or a series of girl books, *The Dóra Books*, the first one published in 1945, that told the story of Dóra, a young girl in Reykjavík who loves to dance. Later she goes to Copenhagen for training and joins the balletgroup in the Pantomime theater in Tivoli. It seems that seeing dance performed alive, even very little of it, was the best inspiration and fueled the urge to dance which most likely was already strong in these young children.

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<sup>4</sup> Several newspaper and radio interviews with Ásta Norðmann.

<sup>5</sup> Interviews with Sif Þórs from 2002 until 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Interviews with Sigríður Ármann from 2002 until 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Vedel, Karen (2008) *En anden dans*. København. Forlaget Multivers ApS. Most of the information of the Danish dancers and teacher comes from this book.

<sup>8</sup> Interviews with Sigrún Ólafsdóttir, Björg Bjarnadóttir, Lilja Hallgrímsdóttir, Irmy Toft and Kristín Kristinsdóttir in Januar 2011. Also with Bryndís Schram in September 2009.

# **I've always been jumping around.**

## **Videographic participation among and audiovisual presentation of contemporary circus students**

Stine Degerbøl

**Keywords:** contemporary circus, the embodied professional, narratives, videographic participation, filmic ethnography, visual anthropology, Performative Social Science.

### **Abstract**

How to approach contemporary circus as performing art and as a movement educational setting through a narrative practice-based study? The previous question is my point of departure for my PhD project: "The poetics of contemporary circus. A bodyphenomenological analysis of contemporary circus as cultural practice." In the following I'll put forward some implications using videographic participation, and presenting data inspired by Performative Social Science. My empirical work so far connects to the movement educational setting at the Circus Performer Department at The Academy of Untamed Creativity in Copenhagen (DK) where youngsters do daily training to become contemporary circus artists.

### **Empirical frame**

The empirical frame consists of three periods of 2 weeks doing videographic participation Monday to Friday at 9 – 4 pm focusing at 6 Danish speaking students; a male and a female at the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year with whom I additionally do individual interviews 1 hour each person each period. Getting in contact with the students I were concerned that they do different disciplines which resulted in a diversity consisting of slack line, swinging trapeze, chinese pole, handstand, double trapeze and robe. I did the first empirical period in August 2010 when the courses begun, and do plan the next to be conducted in February 2011, and the last one in July 2010 at the end of the school year being able to reflect on learning processes.

Doing the first period I attended the movement pedagogical practice widely. During the interviews my aim was to make the students reflect on what is it like to be a part of this context and how it affects them – bodily and emotionally. For the interviews I created a guide and during the session I did asked further into topics brought forward by the student (Kvale 2002). I went back home to my office with 6 hours of video recordings and the first 6 interviews. This empirical material forms the basis of my first 10 minutes video presentation being a panorama of the movement

pedagogical practice 'told' by the 6 students. The research questions according to this part of my investigation are: What kind of embodied learning is occurring during a year of daily training of contemporary circus skills? How can this knowledge of embodied learning develop and challenge the way we regard and relate to the body – culturally and thereby reflected educationally?

### **Theoretical frame**

The PhD is metatheoretically based on body phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty 1945/2006) being reflected in my choices concerning fieldwork and analysis. Research on contemporary circus is developing - mostly based in Arts and Cultural Studies (Tait 1996, 2005. Damkjær 2003. Damkjær 2008. Eigtved 2001, 2003). I do contribute to the research area with an embodied focus with attention to the psychology of movement regarding movement as personal, social and cultural - especially *the embodied professional* (Winther 2009) has interesting connotations in relation to the contemporary circus artist – as a student as well as a performing artist. The reason for doing videographic participation and interviews is based on the idea of narratology dealing with narratives all the way from collecting to presenting the data (Bochner 2000, 2001. Ellis 2000, Halling 2002, Kraus 2000, Sparkes 2002, Van Manen 1990).

### **Videographic participation & filmic ethnography**

I place my shoes outside the training space –as we all have to do. I got my video recorder in my right hand ready to follow Johannes while being introduced to the robe with his fellow students at the first year. I'm getting used to push the bottoms being present and alert at the same time, moving around to get close without disturbing (-too much). Beforehand I've got written commitments allowing me to do video recording, and stating in which conditions the recordings may be used.

Being on location I do phenomenological inspired videographic participation – an evolvment of using video for observation stating the importance of being bodily involved (Svendler Nielsen 2008). As a consequence I've conducted the recordings myself using a handheld camera allowing with 'permission' to turn my attention (and thereby the camera) to situations and moments which raised some kind of bodily//embodied resonance. To avoid 'getting lost' in a room with 45 persons and at least three activities going on at the same time, I set up a rule: stick to one activity at a time from the beginning of the lesson to the end focusing at one of the selected 6 students. A three hours lesson very often turned out to last approximately ½ hour taped.

Johannes is getting more confident climbing the robe, and I'm getting confident with my new tool and role. Doing the recordings I furthermore intended to

fulfill some simple practical guidelines making the recordings usable for editing to be used as audiovisual presentations: Shoot & move, action – reaction, the start and the end - and in between, record at min. 8 sec., move close (avoid zoom) and vary framing: total, ½total, close, super close. Aiming to do audiovisual presentations my way of working might be similar to how to do filmic ethnography characterized by its potential during the process heading for a filmic product as secondary (Møhl 1993, 1995, 2003).

### **Performative Social Science**

During the editing I challenged myself to make the 6 hours recordings turn into an audiovisual presentation consisting of 1 minute with each student representing a phenomenon derived from the analysis. During my stay, along the interviews and watching the recordings I recognized some recurrent issues regarding the movement pedagogical context: Independency, trust, discovery, joy, celebration, willing(ness). All the way through the real sound can be heard along a piece of music looping, and then I've placed quotes derived from the interviews.

My way of working with the recordings is inspired by Performative Social Science synthesizing research and art by dealing with producing, processing and (re)presenting research data in artistic research works (Jones et al. 2008, Gergen & Jones 2008). Contemporary circus is innovative in its form, and so I do aim to be innovative according to topic and methodically.

Next step will be to reflect on nuances according the embodied professional focusing on the students' embodied learning, bodily knowledge and personal identity in relation to cultural bodies and cultural identities.

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# **The kinaesthetic, visual, and imaginary and a contemporary dancer experience**

Shantel Ehrenberg

The following paper outlines part of my current PhD research, a project which examines a small group (15) of UK-based contemporary, ballet, and hip hop/street dancers' described dancing experiences. The aim of the research is an opening out and questioning of what *some* dancing experience is like and investigating ways dance practices impact on individuals working in Western theatre dance contexts. In this essay I provide an overview of three key terms – the kinaesthetic, visual, and imaginary – and share how they intertwine and disrupt according to one contemporary dancer's described experiences.

## **Theoretical framework**

Recent dance scholarship has begun to consider how dancers' lived experiences might be socially, historically, and culturally situated, extending previous phenomenological accounts of dance (Rouhiainen, 2003; Antilla, 2007; Kozel, 2007; Potter, 2008; Ravn, 2009). Similarly, scholarship foregrounding dance practice (Rubidge, 2004; Jackson, 2005; Gough and Shepherd, 2009) has subsequently brought the often silent dancer voices into the discourse (Green and Stinson, 1999). Dancers' relationship to the visual has received renewed focus, particularly following postmodern dance and scrutiny of the concept of the male gaze (Thomas, 1996; Bleeker, 2002) and re-conception of dancing experience as multi-sensorial (Legrand and Ravn, 2009).

## **Key terms**

As introduced, the kinaesthetic, visual, and imaginary are three terms related to dancer experience which I am working with to explore aspects of some dancers' descriptions about dancing. Please note these definitions are not conceived as fixed and continually being reconsidered as the research progresses.

### ***Kinaesthetic***

The kinaesthetic for this research refers to the dancers' kinaesthetic experience of movement. In other words, first-person awareness of one's own movement in a dynamic environment in terms of physiological modalities of the muscles, joints, skin, ears, eyes, and vestibular system (Foster, 2010). Kinaesthesia is often related to proprioception as part of the central and peripheral nervous systems. This research mainly addresses reflective aspects of kinaesthetic experience that dancers verbalise *after* danc-

ing, though there is cross-over with kinaesthetic experience in-the-moment of dancing. Dorothée Legrand (2007; Ravn, 2008) argues that expert dancers often attend to pre-reflective consciousness. She distinguishes this as a third body consciousness, the pre-reflective performative body, which helps specify that dancers' attend to movement in a different way than non-dancers (from which previous conceptions of bodily self-awareness are mostly derived).

### ***Visual***

The visual for this research refers to the visually-related performative aspects of dancers' experiences. The visual tends to open the gap between binary concepts such as internal/external, subject/object, self/other. The visual includes the dancer's visual perceptual field when dancing, such as seeing visible body parts (e.g. arms), and the image projected of the dancer's dancing body. The latter can be represented on video, usually signified as a third-person perspective.

### ***Imaginary***

The imaginary for this research refers to what the dancer anticipates and projects related to kinaesthetic sensations and visual perceptions. The imaginary includes reflection about what movement will feel/felt like and/or look/looked like from both an internal or external perspective. The imaginary can include what Foster (1997) describes as the 'ideal body', which specifies size, shape and proportion as well as expertise at executing specific movements. Memory is important here because what the dancer imagines is directly correlated with what s/he has learned over many years (Bourdieu, 1980). However, there is also capacity for new uses of the body because dancers can imagine dance movements never done before (Reynolds, 2007).

## **Method**

Interview material was devised utilising a phenomenological and ethnographic approach. The research was designed to explore dancers' dancing experiences as they describe them verbally (Creswell, 2007). Following Novack (1990), each dance style was considered a type of culture. The main mode of inquiry was via semi-structured interviews, though participant observation was also a part (Mason, 2002). Interviews included doing a movement phrase chosen by the dancer, talking about it, videoing the movement and watching it back. Multiple interviews across several weeks were conducted.

### **Case study**

The contemporary dancer experience shared below was with a dancer in her mid 20's, of American nationality, who was working in a touring professional company in the UK.

The dancer had 5 years professional dance experience. She received general information about the project, especially for informed consent purposes, but great care was also taken to allow the dancer to discuss what is meaningful to her 'rather than simply responding to what the researcher feels is important' (Green and Stinson, 1999: 102).

### **Intertwining**

The dancer indicated that the kinaesthetic, visual and imaginary can seem inseparable, where each continually affects the other in a dynamic interaction. Meaning, there were a number of ways that the kinaesthetic fed the visual, imaginary the kinaesthetic, and visual the imaginary. Some particularly poignant points in the interview suggested this interpretation:

1) The dancer said she could imagine what the movement looked like on her body from watching five other dancers do the movement; she indicated she re-interpreted how the movement looked on the other dancers' bodies to imagine how it might look on her body; so there was a translating of visual information into her kinaesthetic experience, which then informed her imagined idea of what the movement might look like from the outside. She also said that although there were not mirrors in the studio, occasional reflection from windows helped build up an idea of what she looked like doing the phrase.

2) The dancer said she was trying to get the movement to *feel* the same way as the way the choreographer *looked* doing it; similar to above, she said she took visual information and translated that into her kinaesthetic experience. However, this example was distinctly different because it came up when the dancer watched herself do the phrase on video during the interview. For example, in one section of the phrase she specifically said she was going for an image of 'where my leg goes out and then my head snakes away' and she said the video image matched that kinaesthetic-visual intention she experienced while doing the phrase; she said that the movement on the video looked as it was 'supposed to' according to her past experience.

3) After watching the video and doing the movement again, the dancer indicated that the video image previously watched folded into her next kinaesthetic experience. For instance, she said that in one part of the video she saw her hips were not moving in a certain way that she wanted them to, so, the next time she danced the phrase, she intentionally directed her kinaesthetic attention to correct an imagined video image re-playing in her memory.

The continued interrelationship of the kinaesthetic, visual, and imaginary the dancer indicates invokes the image of the Möbius strip and dancing experiences as a spiralling which merges inward and outward, a twisting of the inside and outside which

renders them indistinct (Grosz, 1994; Ravn, 2009). Jaana Parviainen (1998) describes intertwining in perception of the body, from the perspective of Merleau-Ponty, as a total configuration; my gaze, touch, all my senses are integrated in my perceptions of my own movement (p 39). I found the dancer echoes one of Rouhiainen's (2003) descriptions of Finnish dance artist perceptions of the choreographic process, 'Dancers imagine possible movement sequences, focus upon their body to perceive how the body could accomplish them, and while the body does so they identify their projections in their bodily performance' (p 249).

### **Disrupture**

However, as much as there were indications of intertwining, there were also moments when the kinaesthetic, visual, and imaginary disrupted according to the dancer's descriptions, particularly in relation to video; the three elements did not collapse into each other. Sometimes disruptions brought the dancer to question the reliability of her perceptions. A few points in the interview indicated disruption in particular:

- 1) The dancer talked about a time in ballet class where she caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror and she was surprised by what she saw; she said in that moment she thought 'really, is that what my posture looks like?' indicating a disconnect between what she felt, imagined, and what she saw in the mirror.
- 2) While watching the phrase on video, the dancer said she had not kinaesthetically felt some movements seen. For instance, she saw her feet 'fuddling about' on the video but said she was not necessarily feeling this as she was doing the movement because she was trying to anticipate the next move; thus the video presented a new angle and re-imagining of the phrase back to her.
- 3) Similarly, at another point in the interview, while watching the video, the dancer talked about one section of the phrase looking *better* than the movement *felt*; indicating she imagined the movement did not look good based on the kinaesthetic feeling, she said: 'The end it feels really awkward to me because it's not made from my body [it's another dancer's movement]... it feels kind of like I'm hauling my [butt] over back to where I need to be...[laughs]...but it looks ok, so that's good.'

Merleau-Ponty's (1968) discussion of chiasm related to reversibility is evident here. He argues that as much as there is reciprocity between seeing/seen or self/other, there is also a chiasm, or a gap, between the two. Parviainen (1998) writes that at the heart of the space between seeing and seen, for the dancer watching herself on video, she is always on the same side of her body, movements can never be seen by her in a way which is removed from her lived experience. Confronting oneself as a performer can throw up

gaps between perception and projection, and dancers in Western theatre forms seem to confront this gap in different contexts, such as when aiming to improve technically or to make a choreographer's vision visible.

One might say that disruptures simply happen because video is an object – a screen – which only shows a two-dimensional representation of one's dancing from an external perspective. However, considering theory which argues for intersubjectivity of spectator and screen (Marks, 2000; Kozel, 2007) the simple 'objectness' of the video image is put into question. More importantly though, the focus is dancer experience, thus the problem is when the dancer *interprets* video as a projection of reality and experiences the video as disruptive to what she feels and imagines.

The dancer's disruptures seemed to shift over time as well, which correlated with repetition. Bourdieu's (1980) concept of habitus, and the way that movements repeated over and over can become incorporated, were at issue here. The dancer supported the argument that becoming a professional dancer in a Western theatre style can include an incorporation of a way of thinking, being, and moving (Aalten, 2004). This was particularly apparent when the dancer and I met for a third interview several weeks later and the dancer talked about feeling more kinaesthetically connected with the movement and closer to dancing the phrase as she imagined. The dancer indicated that, as she repeated movements over and over in rehearsal, she began to embody a certain way of moving which reconfigured (or possibly eliminated) the previously felt gaps between the kinaesthetic, visual and imaginary.

Being expert in Western theatre dance practices includes, to an extent, an incorporation of the external eye; an incorporation which is complex, multi-layered and unique to dance practices, and also complicated by the fact that many contemporary dancers train in multiple dance styles today, what Foster (1997) has called the 'multi-talented dancer'. The next phase of the research is investigating further how incorporating ways of moving might or might not impact on the dancers' descriptions of their kinaesthetic experience using the lens of Bourdieu's habitus and Foucault's 'techniques of the self'.

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# The energy of dance

## - Cultural swing in the space of movement

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**Keywords:** Dance history, dancing mania, Tarantism, movement culture, critique of functionalism

### Abstract

Dance research has hitherto mainly focused on two fields of activity: either scene dance (ballet, modern dance) or social dance (folk dance, court dance, waltz, modern pop dance). There is, however, a third field, which deserves attention – dance crazes, dancing manias.

This article takes its starting point from a revivalist dance movement in the twentieth century, from the St. John's and St. Veit's dancing manias in the Middle Ages, and from Tarantism in Early Modern Italy. The phenomenology of these dance crazes includes trance, religious revival and eroticism.

Dancing manias raise questions about the significance of the concept of energy. Space and time are insufficient to describe the dynamics of these dances – and this may even be true for scene dance and for trendy social dance.

But what is the energy in human movement culture? The term 'energy' must be discussed in relation to dance, as it has previously been applied to theatre, joint singing and laughter. The energy of dance is, thus, significant not only for the understanding of dance. It also challenges to develop methods for the phenomenology of body culture more generally.

### Case: A revivalist dance movement 1920-21

In May 1920, 25 young people met in Hartenstein/Erzgebirge and began a joint hiking tour. With guitar and violin, bugle horn and blue flag, *die Neue Schar* – the New Flock, as they called themselves – began wandering from town to town. As a dissident group from *Wandervogel*, a German youth movement and counter-culture emerged after 1900, they hiked through Franken and Thüringen. But what was of particular note was that they "occupied" each town by town by dance. Beginning with children in the market place, they attracted larger and larger numbers of townspeople to their circles of folk dance. In some towns, churches were opened for the sermons of Friedrich Muck-

Lamberty, the charismatic leader of *Neue Schar* – and then the group would continue their tour. In Erfurt, more than 10.000 inhabitants were engaged in dancing.

Insofar as this phenomenon found attention, the focus was on its ideological contents (Ritzhaupt 1921, Linse 1983). The speeches of Muck-Lamberty expressed a radical cultural criticism against the "old world" and some vague ideas about a coming new "people's community" (*Volksgemeinschaft*). The young people talked about a spiritual revival of the youth, about a revolution of the soul, and free love. These ideas were an echo of Hermann Hesse, Mazdaznan, Buddha, Laotse, Rabindranath Tagore, Schopenhauer, Fichte, Jesus, and Nietzsche.

The movement had religious undertones, but its religious contents were far from clear. The *Neue Schar* was allowed to use the protestant churches of Weimar and Erfurt, but their Maria-song had a catholic intonation. There were also relations to German neo-paganism. All in all one could think of them in terms of a new-religious syncretism.

Politically, the dance movement was controversial for both the Right and Left. The group criticized the right-wing "German-National" youth for their alcohol consumption, and it was itself distrusted by the right-wingers as being "communist". While left-wingers denounced the dance movement as a distraction from class struggle.

On a broader canvass, one could place the phenomenon among the so-called *Inflationsheiligen*, the saints of inflation. Several strange prophets and gurus appeared after the German revolution 1918/19 and around the inflation of 1922/23 propagating for a healthy and "natural" life (Linse 1983).

All these historical descriptions and contexts remained, however, on the level of ideas – political, religious, para-religious. What arouses interest when seen from the perspective of dance research and body culture is, however, the practice and atmosphere of this movement.

At the centre of the New flock was dance. It was folk dance in minor or larger circles, explicitly contrasting with bourgeois social dance. The new folk dance had elements of "drunkenness" and ecstasy, creating an atmosphere of spiritual revivalism. In its social practice, the young people tried a sort of "communist" life in togetherness. And there were strong undertones of eroticism. "Something is swinging" – that is how Muck-Lamberty expressed the new practice. But what is "swing"? Was it just a metaphor? Anyway, contemporaries saw this dance as a revival, opening for a new culture.

However, the dance movement did not exist for a long time. By 1921, it had broken down when, driven by jealousy, it was disclosed that Muck-Lamberty had had sexual relations with three girls of the group at the same time. The disclosure of Muck's "harem" was destructive for the romantic idealization of the youth and for the charismatic leadership of the "Messiah of Thüringen". What had been a mass movement before,

was now reduced to a small sectarian group of Muck's personal followers. Nevertheless, comparisons with contemporary phenomena of dance and body culture (Wedemeyer-Kolwe 2004) can shed light on the broader significance of this particular dance movement.

### **Comparisons with contemporary dance cultures**

For a whole generation of German socialists, the "spirit of Weimar" became a keyword (Schult 1956). It referred to an event in August 1920 when the youth organisation of the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialistische Arbeiterjugend*, SAJ) held its meeting in Weimar. But in contrast to other political meetings of this type, the Weimar meeting did not just present speeches and political declarations. The young socialists were also singing, dancing in green spaces, and showing amateur theatre. Many of them wore the reform dress of the *Wandervogel* youth movement. Whether there was a direct connection with the New Flock, which had danced in Weimar some days before, is not documented. Irrespective of their potential connections, the young socialists danced some of the same folk dances as the Muck-Lamberty movement. And "the spirit of Weimar" became a similar utopian vision of a new culture of socialist youth. It became a quasi-esoteric byword for a spirit, a movement that could not be captured in words. Rather, it expressed a generational experience, and one which, moreover, had consequences. The Danish socialist Julius Bomholt (1935: 116-17) described the German socialists' Weimar experience in enthusiastic terms:

"What a storming feeling of infinity! What a faith in unlimited possibilities! The streets of Goethe's town sounded of songs and guitar music, on the marketplaces and the greens at the river, they danced folk dances, and in the historical theatre, the poet Karl Bröger talked about the coming culture growing forth from a community of experience...

Romanticism – this is what it could be called. And it cannot be denied that there were romantic elements in the new "style": walking in moonshine to the sound of flute and lute, enthusiastic declamation of Goethe's verses...

But there was also something really proletarian about the simple clothing (without hat or collar, with bare legs in the shoes), and the happy joint hiking in the free nature showed that youth after the war in spite of all was healthy to the marrow."

For another comparison, one can turn to a quite different world: fashionable social dance. Up to 1900, couple dances like the waltz and the polka had dominated one cen-

tury of bourgeois dance culture. After 1900, these were replaced by new forms, some of which came from America: the 'Boston' and 'two-step', '*Schieber*' or 'one-step', later followed by 'Quickstep' and 'Foxtrot'. From Afro-America came the 'cakewalk', 'jazz', 'shimmy', 'Charleston', and 'black bottom'. From Latin America, the Argentinian 'Tango' spread to Europe.

These fashions represented the world of "alienating" social dance, which the folk dance revivalism of the New Flock was directed against. And yet, when this new social dance in the 1930s evoked a youth culture under the title of "Swing culture", people used the same term that Muck-Lamberty had used to characterize the innovation of his youth movement. Indeed, it was a new swing that distinguished the new social dances from the established bourgeois dances of the nineteenth century – whatever the meaning of "swing" may be.

For a third comparison, one can turn to the contemporary scene dance. The 1920s brought new forms of *Ausdruckstanz*, which were a bodily equivalent to expressionism in the art of painting and literature. This was seen as a "revolution" of scene dance. Represented by Isadora Duncan, Rudolf von Laban and Mary Wigman, it generated what later became known as Modern Dance. With the Muck-Lamberty dance movement, this new scene dance shared the revolt against established bourgeois forms (here: the classical and romantic ballet), the worship of rage and ecstasy, bare feet, and the understanding of dance as identity work – not following established forms, but dancing "one-self".

### **Challenges to traditional dance research**

The comparison of these different fields of dance reveals some larger connections in dance history of the 1920s. In spite of conflicting tendencies, one discovers synchronous cultural innovations, which started in the years after 1900. They had common traits of "awakening" and mobilization of new feelings, bringing new dynamics of movement which were called "swing". What does this mean for our understanding of change, cultural connection and contradiction?

This question challenges the traditional dance research. Dance research has hitherto mainly focused on two fields of activity: either *scene dance* (ballet, modern dance) or *social dance* (folk dance, court dance, waltz, ballroom dance and modern pop dance). Side by side with this sectorialization there is, however, a third field, which deserves attention – dance crazes, *dancing manias*. These have normally been marginalized or excluded, and indeed, they demand different methods of analysis.

In the sociology of dance, for instance, one has tried to define certain "functions" of dance? (Rust 1969). We can identify pattern maintenance and tension management,

adaption to societal goals, integration and socialization as the dominant structural-functional properties of dance. Outside this "functional" normality of dance, however, some quite different dance cultures had to be recognized, but these were characterized as "psycho-pathological" forms. Among these, one has placed the so-called "pathogenic dances in primitive societies". These included on one hand convulsive and ecstatic dances in Siberian, Asian and African cultures like shamanic drum-dance and dervish whirling dance. And on the other hand, the "pathological" element was seen in the ecstatic dancing manias in Medieval Europe (Rust 1969).

The examples discussed above from the beginning of the 1920s contradict this binary ethnocentric construction – functional versus pathological. Dancing manias were not at all restricted to medieval times or to exotic people.

### **Medieval dancing manias**

In medieval times, some regions of Europe experienced ecstatic dancing phenomena, which in German were called *Tanzwut* and for which the medical scholar Paracelsus coined the term *Choreomania*. The most famous dancing manias were the German and Dutch dances of St. John's or St. Vitus, and the Italian Tarantism. (For sources of the following see Hecker 1832, Eichberg 1987, and Bartholomew 2000).

Early phenomena of collective dance epidemics were documented from the German and Dutch towns of Kölbigk 1021, from Erfurt 1237, and from Utrecht 1278, where a crowd of dancers made the Mosel bridge break apart. The most famous St. John's dance, however, erupted in Aachen, western Germany, in 1374. Suddenly, masses of people – young and old, men and women, from lower and higher class – began to dance in ecstasy. The dancing mania was transferred by what was called "sympathy", like a contamination, and it persisted until the dancers fell down unconscious. The obsessed danced from town to town, thus spreading the mania in the west of Germany, in the Netherlands and Lorraine. From Metz (Lorraine), 1100 dancers in the streets were reported. Some of the dancers died of stroke, heart attack or exhaustion.

According to contemporary descriptions, the dances were accompanied by tremor and fainting, by laughter, tears and obscene gestures. People were squealing like animals, running naked or rolling in the dirt. It was also reported that the dancers reacted against the color red and against certain dress fashions. The dance was accompanied by visions and hallucinations. From Cologne, a song of the dancers from 1499 is delivered:

"Herre sent Johan – so, so – vrisch ind fro – herre sent Johan"  
(Holy Lord John – so, so – fresh and glad – Holy Lord John)

The dances were connected to Saint John the Baptist. This saint's name was given to several phenomena of folk paganism, shamanism and health cures in order to Christianize them. Among these were the midsummer bonfires of St. John, practiced all over Europe from Scandinavia to Spain (Kjær 1987). As early as in the seventh century, the French bishop St. Eligius warned the Flemish people, whom he Christianized:

“No Christian on the feast of St. John or the solemnity of any other saint performs solisticia or dancing or leaping or diabolic chants.”

The authorities were seriously concerned about the mass dancing movements, which threatened to slip out of public control. They feared a new heretic movement. In order to control the ecstatic masses, churches were opened for the dancers, and priests held holy messes to heal their mania.

A new wave of dancing mania erupted in Strasbourg in 1518. A woman began dancing and “contaminated” during the following weeks around 400 dancers. Here, the authorities hired musicians to lead the dancers to churches of St. Vitus in order to calm them down. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the manias seem to have come to an end.

A special paradox of the dancing manias was that musicians were hired to help warding off the mania by accompanying the dancers to the churches. However, this tactic sometimes backfired by encouraging even more people to join the craze.

Later on, the name of St. Vitus dance was transferred to individual diseases manifesting themselves by manic movements.

A similar mass craze developed at the same time in South Italy, the so-called “Tarantism”. In fifteenth century, people in Apulia began dancing together, leaping, screaming, and shaking for hours. Music appeared to be a means of curing these convulsions. While lively, shrill tunes played on trumpets or pipes excited the dancers, soft, calm harmonies by contrast were regarded as efficacious for the cure. The dancing mania was connected with the myth of the tarantula spider, the Mediterranean black widow. By its bite, this spider was said to cause mental illness, hypersensitivity for music, dance and erotic desire. While the dance of St. John was seen as part of the disease, in Tarantism dancing served together with music as a cure.

From Apulia, Tarantism spread to other parts of Italia. It reached its peak in seventeenth century, but some Tarantist phenomena have been observed up to the twentieth century. Later on, Tarantism was split up into two very different phenomena. On one hand, it was regarded and treated as an individual disease, like epilepsy. And on the

other hand, it became a folk dance with tambourines, Tarantella, giving inspiration to a musical genre of this name (Chopin, Debussy, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Rossini and Schubert).

### **Dancing manias in explanation – and in modernity**

Modern interpretations of the historical dancing manias have so far referred mostly to the medical sides (Hecker 1832, Zinsser 1935) or the religious dimensions of the mania (Backman 1945, Bartholomew 2000).

Medical doctors have discussed certain forms of ergot *poisoning*, caused by a fungus on rye, a cereal grain. The connection between this poisoning and dancing remains, however, vague. And it refers only to some medieval phenomena – just like the folk interpretation of spider poisoning is restricted to the Apulian case. Other medical doctors have seen dancing manias in connection with epidemics of the Middle Ages, like the plague of the Black Death.

In religious and sociological interpretations, the dancing manias were normally seen as a *cult* or a sect. One has postulated some roots going back to bacchanalia of ancient Greece. This remained highly speculative and did not contribute to an understanding of the modern dancing epidemics.

From the side of psychology, other attempts were made to explain the phenomena. One has talked about relief of stress, for instance in connection with the plague, about “collective mental disorder” or “collective hysterical disorder”, about mass madness and *psychic epidemic*. While these interpretations mostly remained metaphorical, concrete psychological approaches have tended to reduce the manias to individual disease of the nervous system, like epilepsy or Sydenhams chorea. A connection between individual disease and the dancing mass movements has, however, not been documented.

These interpretations, thus, tell us more about the researchers than about the phenomena under research. This is especially true for the ethnocentric functionalism talking about “pathological” dances of Middle Ages and of “primitive” people. And when researchers explained dancing manias by maladjusted females acting in a deviant, irrational or mentally disturbed way, gender prejudices became manifest.

What these interpretations often have overseen is that dancing manias and collective convulsions were also known from times of Enlightenment and industrial modernity. 1731, the so-called *convulsionnaires* assembled in a graveyard in Paris, performing collective convulsions. This group of religious pilgrims experienced miracle cures and were said to speak in tongues, bark like dogs, swallow glass or hot coals, and dance until they collapsed. Public and religious authorities distrusted them as being connected with the Jansenist heresy. Driven from the graveyard, the convulsionists later became the sect of *secouristes*.

In the 1730s, collective religious spasms were also experienced on the Shetland islands. In 1760, the so-called "jumpers" transformed Methodist church service in Cornwall into ecstatic events. In 1787, collective convulsions happened in an English spinning manufacture. In 1800, enthusiastic religion spread in Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia, with convulsions, uncontrolled laughing, crying, and shouting. In 1801, women fell collectively into spasms in Charité, the hospital of Berlin. And there were more cases.

The ecstatic and revivalist features of the Muck-Lamberty dancing movement of 1920 were, thus, not isolated. And the functionalist dualism between primitive ecstasy and modern functionality in dance is inappropriate. The modernity of dancing crazes questions many of the suppositions of previous research, which gave the phenomenon an archaic touch.

Furthermore, the focus of research in this field on medical history and on the history of religion is too narrow. Scholarship from the history of music is, for instance, rarely discussed. Here it could be eye-opening (or better: ear-opening!) to include the phenomenon of *hoquetus*. Hocketing was a musical technique that appeared suddenly in the thirteenth century, where two voices shared a melody in a highly rhythmical and expressive way. Hocketing, which was connected with some dance phenomena, was condemned by religious authorities in terms which are reminiscent of the accusations directed against the contemporary dancing manias. *Hoquetus* has also been compared with music forms in Africa and in Indonesian gamelan, and its technique are nowadays continued in rock and funk music.

Last, but not least, comparative dance research is missing from the field. Dancing manias with their elements of trance, religious revival, and eroticism demand a special focus on movement culture.

### **Movement approach and the energy of dance**

An involvement of dance research in this field necessitates a self-critical reflection of dance research. The established focus of dance research on either social dance or scene dance is too narrow. The split-up anchoring of dance research in different disciplines like sports science (side by side with gymnastics), theatre history (mostly ballet), and musicology, does not favor a profound understanding of dance either. What is needed is a comprehensive approach to dance as human *movement*. It is not by accident that Western languages use the term "movement" to describe three different fields of phenomena. Seen from the material of dancing manias: *Bodily movement* included dance, leaping, convulsion and swing. *Emotional movement* can be found in ecstasy and eroticism, in extraordinary feelings, and in what contemporaries experienced as provoking new energy. And there was *social movement* as soon as one could observe mass movement,



awakening or popular revival. These three dimensions – bodily, emotional and social – were connected by swing and energy, but how?

Normally, the configuration of dance is described by the dimensions of *space* (choreography and spatial form of movement), *time* (rhythm, beat, cadence), and *inter-human relations* (figures, contact, forms of connection). From the perspective of dance manias, these three dimensions are neither sufficient to characterize dance nor human movement more generally. What is needed is a special attention to the *energy* of movement, to its atmosphere, mood, feelings, and *Stimmung* (German: sentiment, spirit, tune).

A danger, however, when talking about the energy – or power, tune, spirit, mood – of movement is to remain on the metaphorical level. That is why dance research would be well-advised to look over the fence to other comparable fields of scholarship where the term energy has been used and developed. In the anthropology of theatre and performance, Eugenio Barba (1991) has approached “the actor’s energy”. This was inspired by Eastern body practices where the energy of Chi is central. Studies of shamanism and possession states have contributed to energy studies, too (Lewis 1989). Laughter is a phenomenon of bodily convulsion and energy as well – and likewise is the joint singing of human beings (Eichberg 2010, chaps. 8 and 10). In French epistemology, Gaston Bachelard (1938) has delivered a brilliant “Psychoanalysis of fire”. And in a similar intellectual context, Roger Caillois (1958) has placed *ilinx* (frenzy, ecstasy) central as one of four main forms of play.

Seen in this context, it was more than a metaphorical allusion when Rudolf von Laban (1984) talked about the ‘energy of dance’. This has sometimes been neglected by his followers, who made a system out of the great daring attempts, which Laban had outlined as practitioner and philosopher of the expressionist body – and as contemporary of the Muck-Lamberty dance craze of 1920.

The significance of dancing manias goes, thus, much deeper than just being a sector (in the “psycho-pathological” field). Dance is not just form in space and time, nor is it just artistic expression. Sociologically seen: Dance is not just social-functional integration. Dance is a playing-out of bodily and psychical energy. This is also true for the energy of social dance (like the ‘Tango’) and the energy of scene dance (like expressionist *Ausdruckstanz*). And: Energy is more than a metaphor – but what?

All this is more than pure theory. When rock’n’roll music appeared in the 1950s, new forms of dance and ecstasy erupted among young people, shocking the public. In the media, the screaming and eccentric riots of the young dancers were met by assumptions of “pathological” craze, too – but this term did not contribute to deeper under-

standing. And in the 1980s, rave dancing spread with new convulsions and trance experiences. These phenomena demand new ways of description and analysis (Gaule 2005).

And: The energy of dance is important not only for the understanding of dance, casting light from the “third” – dancing manias – on the established, accepted and “functional” practices of social dance and scene dance. The reflection on the energy of dance challenges also towards methods for the phenomenology of body culture more generally, where dance meets with drunkenness, singing, shamanism, ilinx games, and laughter.

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# How to construct a space perception of a dance gesture through an AFCMD intervention

Biliana Fouilhoux

## Introduction: What is AFCMD?

« AFCMD stands in French for Functional Analysis of the Body in Danced Movement. It is an approach that helps dancers understand movements in their poetic dimension. Movement is always expressive as well as an experience. AFCMD seeks to make that experience tangible and create the awareness that movement is action. Through the movement we act upon the world. And by using its poetic dimension we convey a certain world view. » (Odile Rouquet, interview 2009) <sup>i</sup>

The purpose of this study is to explore how AFCMD, as a singular philosophy of knowing, using notions of phenomenological enquiry, can inform and shape teaching and learning processes of constructing the spatial perception of a gesture in the dance classroom and other movement educational contexts. Our starting point is an empirical research using qualitative data related to dance education in France and a detailed literature review on the conceptual framework of the AFCMD approach combined with ethnographic methodology, participation observation technique, embodied practice and interviews with AFCMD researchers and teachers.

The initial focus of the study has been to review the nature of AFCMD experiences into dance education as a distinct and humanising education. Central to this approach is the development of the individual through increased « self awareness » whereby opportunities are offered by AFCMD for the enhancement of reasoning processes with increasing perceptual and conceptual range in an atmosphere of exploration. The discussion proceeds with an exploration of AFCMD teaching and learning involved with phenomenologically orientated cognitive science exploring perceiving space in relation to the dancing body.

## Part 1 : The Dancing Child.

AFCMD assumption is that the child's multidimensional plasticity constructs his self and spatial perception:

« There is no neutral body. There is no neutral gesture or neutral attitude because theoretically I already have a particular manner to be in this world, I belong to a culture, with the weight of a language which already orients my sensory mode. »

(Godard 2001 : 89)

The first stage of constructing the child's dancing body for a AFCMD teacher is to let himself be touched by the child's dance without trying to « help » him. All teachers are supposed to respect a child's dance but the situation is subtler : how to know if the child has succeeded in managing his steps, to negotiate the space? How can the teacher be sure there is still a dialogue, the space necessary for exchange? When constructing the child's dancing body and spatial perception it's less a question of analysing the movement in a cognitive way but more one of giving him the time of an echo:

« I would like to make a point on the idea that what one sees is a potential. The definition of an attitude is a field of potential. If I have such a physical attitude, I'll have a whole range of possible and impossible gestures. Each child's posture represents a potential of gestures. (...) It's for that reason I wanted to insist upon time of ambiguity or ambivalence, of disconnecting from what's cognitive because I need to perceive this potential. And I cannot perceive it by analysing. There is a time of pure esthesy. » (Godard 2001 : 91)

This echo should be given the time to develop fully, to the spatial perception can emerge at this point. It's an event of empathy for AFCMD as opposed to sympathy or fusion:

« Empathy is not the imitation of a gesture some else did, this wouldn't work. It's what I call the tonus function, which is to say a particular relationship to the weight, the orientation, the construction of space. This implies « une remise en question », an obligation to « vaciller » on my supports. This phenomena exists only in the field of dance. I don't see another kind of education which obliges the teacher to « vaciller » as dance education. (...) It's so much easier to keep the same body, the same construction of space and than go to teach. » (Godard 2001 : 87)

Nathalie Schulmann, an AFCMD teacher, refers to the work of Agnès Szanto-Feder, a psychologist who developed a series of microanalysis of the motor development of young children. Observing and analysing the stages of the psycho-motor development of the child has become an important part of AFCMD, Nathalie Shulmann evokes « frottements moments », moments of rubbing when child confronts his or her body to physical laws<sup>ii</sup>:

« The physical laws are the universal laws linked to the general forces and to the moments of rubbing and to the gravity force action in particular. They are closely related to other processes such as perception, emotion... in the construction of the body and the child's personality. » (Schumann 2005 : 1)

Thus the notion of space in AFCMD acquires a concrete and an abstract meaning. It contains the concrete supports (ground, *barre*...), the supports in space and the

symbolic supports linked to the imaginary genesis, which bring into play all the origins of sensing and perceiving. The influence of the cultural environnement on the acquisition of basic coordinations is of great importance: the physical constraints on the motor development, the emergence of motor style.

## **Part 2. The Founding Gestures.**

At a certain point, the founding gestures defined by Hubert Godard, a key figure in AFCMD genesis, develop more or less according to each person, in a way that everyone of us develops a manner of being in the world, with a sphere of possible relationships with each of these gestures in a definite situation : push away, point out...

« Very simple things like a child's gesture of pushing away, when he uses for the first time this physiological function has immediately an energy with respect to the momentary situation. How does he classify this gesture of « pushing away »? What feedback the people around him provide? We notice from a technical point of view that certain muscles play the part of a pivot (such as the serratus anterior muscle ) which allow to make this gesture of pushing away, a child's gesture which appears at the same time when he denies, when he says no. So there is a very strong relation between the capacity to say no and the construction of my shoulder. » (Godard 2001 : 66)

These gestures are of extreme importance in the process of constructing the dancing body because they are the matrix for the body expression:

« For some people, the gesture of pointing out is weaker or almost unavailable, for others the gesture of pushing away does not exist or it exists but it's the personne who, in certain directions of the spece, is pushing himself away, backwards. If I speak technically, it's either the grand pectoral which does the pushing, or it's the serratus anterior muscle, which gives that gesture two different qualities, diamaterally opposed. It's obvious that it's through the entourage a situation is classified as a gesture, it's by the exteroception feedback the body unifies, the body image is constructed as defined by Lacan. We can say that what belongs to the physiology and the « schéma corporel » is constructed by proprioception, by the development of the interior, but at a certain point I'll unify myself by the gestures I make. So we can no longer talk about a « body » but about «corporeité» as Michel Bernard does or of a gestosphere with its symbolic dimension. These founding gestures such as the movements to go towards, to push away, to point out are not only cinematic gestures but gestures which carry a meaning with respect to the entourage. » (Godard 2001 : 66)

Godard adopts the phemonemological idea according to which a person is constructed by the events of his life. He asserts that a person is constructed by these first gestures : throw, point out, push, go towards, cut. Dancers have difficulties with

certain gestures. For most of them to throw is to push, to throw does not exist:

« There isn't a nervous, muscular accident, it's simply the sphere of to throw has never been constructed. If to throw does not exist all the dance steps « jeté », « saut-jeté » will be difficult.

Instead of conceiving the body as a function I conceive it as a symbolic universe of gestures. It's this symbolic universe which explains and forces the anatomy and not the other way round. »

(Godard 2001 : 77)

When constructing the dancing body AFCMD teacher is in quest of the missing gesture thus dance education explores the dancer's original gestosphere. The adult who has recognised the child's singularity has actually recognized his particular style of dancing making it legitimate. The child who has never taken dance classes has already a his or her own style of dancing and use of space: « It's not only the body which is in play but rather his manner to construct the space as a painter: how does he choose and include perspectives in space : is he an impressionnist, a deconstructivist...? » (Godard 2004 : 82) Each dancer constructs space – he uses dynamics, sends vectors, accelerates or slows down. This particular way of constructing space reflects through the perception a particular motricity : « Fortunately or unfortunately this space is full of fantsoms (ghosts), of histories, of the subject's story. » (Godard 2004 : 85) Constructing the dancing body is to play around all these muscular and emotional zones which make the memory.

### **Conclusion : Reconstructing the Missing Gesture**

Thus AFCMD like technologies of the dancer's spatial perception means a dancer exploring a spatial memory which can be called « acquired automatisms » or « particular kinesphere » which resists meeting a new space where a new gesture could emerge. In ordre to resolve this problem AFCMD tries to understand how these automatisms got inscribed into the subject's ontology and what strategies could be employed, at a certain moment, to help evolution, not to repeat eternally the same perception of an object itself ever changing.

Thus embodied knowledge begins with the centrality of perception in experience for Merleau-Ponty as well as embodied knowledge in dance begins with the centrality of perception in movement experience for Hubert Godard and Odile Rouquet. Merleau-Ponty (1968) sought to convey the distinctive meaning of perceptual experience. He proposed that knowledge takes place within the spaces opened up by perception. Constructing the dancing body through AFCMD means confronting a continuous work on perception , classifying a new situation or a phenomena on the

base of informations coming both from the body and the environment. The emergence of a new gesture can be obstructed by a repetitive sensibility or perception, a phenomenon called by Godard « gesture neurosis ». The gesture are not identified according to the morphologies or the biomechanical data. AFCMD's attempt is to approach a gesture like the spatial organisation of body segments through the notion of dynamics, the variety of forces which engender a posture, an attitude as well as all kinds of intersensoriality so well described by Merleau-Ponty.

Reading the gesture sphere means also spotting inhibitions, unfinished gestures, frozen body parts. On that level Godard uses the notion of « gesture image » instead of « body image ». The dancing body is constructing by possible gestures, forbidden gestures and missing gestures. The whole of these founding gestures is inscribed in the subject's ontology. The dance as well as certain medical education strategy would be first to question, to reinforce the acquired gestures and from there to slide on another gesture. The question is how to conceive a dance education based on this kind of movement reading?

« The difficulty, regarding a missing gesture, is first a missing perception, a hole in the external space of the body. The body, through perception, extends into space, sometimes there is space which does not exist. It could be the space towards the sky, the earth support...The first task is to create the possibility of a coherent gravitational organisation which allows a certain freedom in relationship with the horizontal axis. In that way we work with the eternal elements of all movement techniques : the supports, the relationship to weight and the elevation. » (Godard 2001: 18)

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i All interviews were conducted in French and have been translated into English. Odile Roquet is an AFCMD teacher and one of the founders of that dance éducation approach.

ii A certain number of static fundamental positions or postures are describes which allow to classify the children's movements. They correspond to surfaces of support or semi-fixed parts which stabilises the body in its globality and allow the child to act upon the world. They structure different parts of the body in space which makes easier the coordination establishment. The initial positions are starting points of the understanding of the movements choices : they give information on the gesture to come, on the state of the child's body. They are considered as anatomic positions of benchmark from which the amplitudes and the synergies development could be analysed. They have an immediate application in the reading of dance movements because of their diversity.

The state of the body observed in Pikler children is called « relaxo-tonic » or a state of body availability. The body availability can be defined as a position of the body in space which allows the execution of any motor action. The AFCMD hypothesis is the the free morticity is a form of initiative, perservearance, awareness of the self...it's the exploration of all forms of freedom in the child's movement, the « congruence » of the joint capacity and the realisation of a harmonious movement.

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## Historiography's impact on the understanding of staged dancing

Lotta Harryson

*Stora Teatern* in Gothenburg has been reported to have had a ballet-company ever since 1920, for more than two decades the only ballet company in the country outside the Stockholm Opera. In my study of the dance in this Swedish lyrical theatre during a fifty year period following 1920, it has been surprisingly difficult to find data about its actual dance. It is important to stress here, that a lyrical theatre meant a musical theatre with music, singing, dancing, and acting; there were no spoken dramas, just spoken parts within the musical comedies. Rather soon the tradicted ballet company showed not to have existed until fifteen years later, the dancers were part of the hierarchic system of soloists and ensemble rather than singers, actors or dancers.

When looking through protocols of the theatre board meetings, I found very little about the dance, yet there was much dancing on stage, mostly seven nights a week during eight months of the year. Dancing would have had a doxic quality, in the sence that Pierre Bourdieu pointed out; it was important and inevitable to the genre, to such an extent that it seemed never to be accurately mentioned. *Where* could I find anything about this peculiar dance, *what* was danced – and not the least, *who* was dancing?

The first texts where I searched information, was historiographers' reports, but all this dancing was not mentioned there. Then I realised that the dancing had been performed mostly in operettas or musical comedies. The interest of historiographers had been ballet performancies, either in its classical or modern forms, often enough with modernist claims. From the names of the dances in the operettas, since no scripts are to be found of such dancing, I realised that much of it was based on social dances. What was important in my study, was that there was not social dancing performed; it was staged dancing with strong referencies to the social field. 20<sup>th</sup> century historiography on dance concerns two fields, ballet-dancing and folk's dancing, other kinds of dancing were often considered decadent. On the lyrical stage that I examine, it was neither the social dancing that modernist dance outspokenly rejected, nor was it the folk-dancing that classical ballet embraised and re-shaped, this was a dance dwelling in between. It did have connections to the area, though, in the sence that in both cases the audience saw dances of popular origine that were adapted for stage-perpose in a theatrical environment.

So, social dancing or social dances was the crucial point. It appeared to be conciously chosen for the stagings, since it was the basic language of dance that was

connected to the music performed in the genre. The main genre was operettas, and operettas are foremost concerned with social behaviour, social questions and social connections and liaisons. This was a theatre about social groups of people, about classes that changed their social frames, about common understanding and meetings across social borders. This was not a theatre about one chosen person and her faith, her psychological needs or personal offerings. Social dances on stage – do they really tell us anything, or are they merely a means to show off handsome people, luxurious clothes and glamour?

When it comes to historiography's need to omit social dancing from the artistic aesthetic field, one has to consider some values that necessarily surround the actual dancing. There have been different specificities to take into account during each period of time, when historiography was written. During the middle nineteenth century, that ballerina who impersonated non-human existence, or rurality, was high-lightened – probably because she embodied a significance of a life far from the ball-rooms' claim for official behaviour. Social dancing was extremely frequent at the time, but it was also strictly regulated in terms of structures according to class, genre, and origine. The ballerina's non-worldly appearance brought a relief to an audience who had an experience of dance as a predicting matter of marketplace evaluation on a personal level. The idea of the dances in the operettas of the era, though, as the german scholar Volker Klotz (Klotz 1980) has pointed out, were frenzy, energetic and filled with lust. Those dances were executed by the chorus, signifying collectivity and were to be seen as the voice of the masses. Operetta was an urban form of theatre, those collectivity dances could therefore be understood as one of very few rooms in the public, that was corresponding to the huge number of industrial workers who moved into the cities for employment.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, there was not any new form of dancing that occurred, which could match the vital ball-room habits of the era. Ballerinas with developing skill in executing technical specialties made advantage of the possibilities that followed the excursions of railways' and steam-boats in order to tour great parts of the world, to perform and make their living. For modernist historians of dance, the result was that they showed off their skills to stunned audiences who had no earlier experience of the art. Such execution is unlikely to have heightened the aesthetic value of their work. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the dance-operettas emerged where the featuring couple would present the most fashionable dances, meaning that they popularized new dances that were spread throughout the Western world by performancies of the operetta. They often enough also had a folk-dance in it, representing nostalgia, as well as enjoyable collectivity dances vividly executed by the chorus

in manners that were outspokenly void of the regulations on body behaviour that had grown so strong during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the decades around 1900, surrealists formulated the need of a dance that transcended the human body, the very body that was as disturbing a human baggage then as it is today, although the circumstances were others. Modernism's claim for the Absolutely New, as Fredric Jameson (Jameson 2002) tells us, meant that social dancing's strong connection to everyday life and average people had to exclude it from the artistic stage. Although social dances changed style, form and ways of execution often enough to be considered new every now and then, it nevertheless did not bear modernism's need of an individual artist's experiences. On the contrary, its coherence with a group or class of people, made it seem impossible to assign a performance to an individual creator. In that sense, social dances and dancing seemed intrinsically a field for mere glamour, entertainment or showing off somebody's skill. In a study on German and Swedish literature of the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Ursula Naeve Bucher (Naeve Bucher 2005) reports that dance was often used as a mediator for women's emancipation in her material. This was the decades of the jazz era, when 'go out dancing' spelled 'go jazzing' in Gothenburg. The fashion of social dance in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the dances of a couple, as a break from the quadrilles and contra-dances of the centuries before. In the literature of the jazz era, though, the heroines went out on the dance-floor on their own or took the male's roll of leading the couple's dance. That is just what was performed by the heroines in some plots on the lyrical stage, in the musical comedies of the 1920s and -30s. At the same time, the chorus got a less significant roll in the operettas, their dance began to lose its connections to the social life. The operetta-dance did get more influenced by ballet aesthetics, and a special group of professionals were asked for: the ensemble was divided into a choir of singers and a chorus of dancers. These chorus dancers were trained ballet dancers and by the time they did no longer need a knowledge of social dancing. The lyrical stage opened up for ballet as an art form, but its stage was outspokenly a space for integrated expressions and not for the autonomous art forms.

When classical ballet turned up a new face in the first half of the twentieth century by the *Ballets Russes*, it was embraced by historiographers and it bore all the significant that were asked for: an individual creator, an undisputable break with the dance one had previously seen, movements and execution that was filled with meaning and a stunning professionalism. The communicating qualities were obvious for an audience, the performer's skill was necessary for the communication, not for mere exhibition.

The dance-field lacks instrumentalia for the study of these forms of dance. Marion Linhardt (Linhardt 1999) has set up a list of questions that scholars should take

into account when studying the field of operettas. Among them, there are a few that concern the dance, and I strongly agree, because there is an ignorance and predictment about the field of comedy and entertainment. This is a field in between, that ought to be recognized in its own right, because it tells us about doxic hierarchies, in a sometimes topsy-turvy way with dance as a mediator. Historiography has shown to be a strong predictor of what dance is identifiable, and what dance is not even worth a try. Had I not stumbled over the genre I am studying, I would never have noticed that there was a dance with values that are still not recognized, because it has been treated with neglectance in historiography. This black hole in dance calls for new ways for examination. There is a need for instrumentalia that distinguish differentiations of social, class, gender, and origine, matters that create both power and resistance in the sence of who is speaking. In this case the questions would be: why was who dancing what, where, and when? There might be some answers to such questions about this seemingly efemeral dance form, that has not given any information or answer to the 20<sup>th</sup> century historiographers' question: was there anyone dancing the autonomous ballet that could be recognized as art? The main task for historiographers of the early 20th century was to identify a dance that would be recognized as art. Today's task would be to enlarge our research for the rich qualities there are in a wide dance-field, and use the tools that are needed for whatever dance is object of the investigation.

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## **Breathing the now when the past is forgotten**

### **– Movement and dance among people living with memory loss**

Kirsi Heimonen

The presentation illuminates encounters between a dance artist and residents living with memory loss in a nursing home called Sanerva in Helsinki. Some questions have emerged: What kind of space do the encounters create? How does the dance artist's vulnerability to the residents and the artist's long-term commitment influence her work?

I shall provide a short background to my work. I have worked part-time as a dance artist in the social and health field for ten years. My employer, the Helsinki Deaconess Institute, is a 143-year-old public utility foundation that provides social and healthcare services. The original question concerning the artist's work was this: what can art in itself offer the various people who need the social and health services?

I have been visiting the residents for three years. I have performed before them, and danced with them in movement improvisation workshops. The work has opened itself up in proximity to the residents, and various activities have emerged from our encounters. So, for example, tending vegetable gardens, planting tulips or visiting art museums have been means to communicate with them and to bring something else into their lives as well into the staff members' lives.

The ways in which the residents exist in the world are particular ways, because the residents lack conventional habits in their existence, owing to memory loss and other diseases like brain damage, mental diseases and behavioural disorders. The manners they learned are now absent, and they have a kind of phenomenological attitude toward the world: everything seems new and strange, and they wonder how things are. They are open to the things that are different from everyday life in the nursing home. The bond between us is alive: most of the residents remember me and the things we have done together. I do not think there is any problem with them. I do not heal, nurse or give them therapy. Instead we tune in to the atmosphere, to the others and to the senses.

#### **The now**

These residents have opened up other realities to me; visiting them means diving into an unknown place where everything can be otherwise at any moment. The only thing

we have is the moment at hand. And this moment, the experience of the now, escapes as soon as it is mentioned.

The way in which the residents exist, when words fade away and everyday actions like getting dressed become difficult, opens up another kind of space where movement and artistic actions are welcomed because right or wrong deeds or answers do not exist. There are also similarities between the reality of art and people living with memory loss: unpredictability exists, and to live in the now is crucial.

Memory in the form of clearly stated words or sentences regarding past experiences is almost absent, and, in its place, their past experiences live in the flesh. Georges Bataille writes about non-knowledge, which is a kind of state that he calls the inner experience. The inner experience lays bare what one has known and it is the only authority (Bataille 1988: 52, 7). Thus Bataille stresses the importance of the experience, and this has similarities with the residents' existence, because most of the residents are open to experience; their senses guide the way.

Non-knowledge is alive in the inner experience. With the residents, non-knowledge can be taken as a powerful way of existing in the world, because when the anxiety about not remembering ceases, a human being finds the world and herself or himself anew. Bataille describes how in the situation where *ipse* abandons itself and knowledge with it, anxiety ceases and rapture begins, where one's existence finds sense again (Bataille 1988: 53). The residents do not have that kind of a choice, because the choice has been made partly by the disease. Artistic actions open up a field where one is asked not to remember, just to sense. Movement is alive in their bodies, in their flesh.

The residents do not ask what the use or meaning of dancing is; they are ready to dance. The dimness of their memory helps them to surrender themselves to dancing without asking why. Life without 'why' opens up opportunities for communication where each moment is utterly important. The moment reveals itself by being experienced; it is not harnessed for the aims of usefulness. Bodily communication opens in many directions where the linearity of conduct is absent. This kind of field of communication is a state where things happen, to be in touch with things beyond reason.

Meister Eckhart describes a path of detachment where it is important to loosen the grip over things and to dispossess oneself. When this happens one will receive serenity in exchange, one will be free. A detached person lives in the instant; he dwells in "this present time" (Schürmann 2001:14). By being detached from things and by being sensitive, the residents show me a way in which to breathe the present moment, a way in which to submit to the present moment. And as was mentioned before, it may happen when the anxiety of not remembering has ceased. Detachment

designates a being among things without restraint; the now is not a departure from time but its acceptance, a type of communion with things (Schürmann, 2001: 15).

The illness is not only a harmful thing; the similarities between the residents' existence and the path of detachment show alternative ways of existing in the world that could offer something to people who are, for example, tired of endless economic development and growth.

### **Movement improvisation workshop**

In the movement improvisation workshops I give some verbal instructions and move at the same time. In addition, physical touch often connects the dancing pairs, and dancing leads the way. When words have lost their importance, the participants follow my instructions freely. Anyway, dancing takes place, dancing that opens a space for touching, for connecting with the nursing staff, with the other residents, with the floor and with me in another way.

For many years my ethical guide among people with memory loss has been that the other always remains as the other that cannot be grasped or possessed. This has its origin in the ethics by Emmanuel Levinas, where the other always remains foreign, and the face of the other resists possession (Levinas 2005: 194, 197). The ultimate respect for him or her exists, and that gives space me to breathe. I do not think that I would know what is wrong with her or him, the disease is part of the human being, and that is how it is.

When the residents touch the ankle or shoulder of the person who takes care of them daily, there emerges a crack in the relationship; the nursing staff become vulnerable, open to the other. Through their education and their work, members of the nursing staff tend to take hold of the other. The aim of the care easily leads to possession of the other. Dancing that is strange fractures the routines of everyday life and pushes the members of staff to react, to resist, to be amazed – and to see the residents differently. Holes appear in the fixed and known landscape of the nursing culture.

Sensitivity toward the other is born straight away while I perform or we dance together. Levinas has described how ethics is lived through within the sensibility of embodied exposure to the other (Critchley 2002: 21). This asks or requires vulnerability toward the other.

Levinas writes how vulnerability toward the other happens 'on the surface of the skin, at the edges of the nerves', and thus sensibility invites one's subjection (Levinas 2006: 15) I have become more what I am in the presence of these residents; a new sense of oneself is created in moving with them and being with them.



Or maybe it is a loss of oneself. A kind of demand has emerged where the other is before oneself, where the other takes precedence over oneself.

Those people living with memory loss are extremely sensitive and to have a connection with them demands openness where the pronoun “I” plays an unimportant role; only the connection is meaningful. The connection can be felt, for example, in dance performances where the residents sit very close to me; they have joined in the dance, uttered their comments, and the way they are bodily present has directed the course of the dance. No pre-existing steps or choreographed patterns are possible; it is only the moment that shows the way. The communication opens up a space where they are free to show their opinions in manifold ways. – And I dance on the edge of not-knowing, to listen to the body, the participants, the music, and the physical location. Something may happen through me, through a dance that is not only from me but through me.

### **How to exist**

How can one present something to the public that has happened almost in private and mostly without formal language? I have directed a short film about the residents; the title of the film is *How to exist*. It contains sections of a documentary where I am with the residents; I visit some of them in their rooms. The residents also film each other, the cameraman and me. In the film intertwined with the shooting at the Sanerva home there are my solo dances at various locations such as an island, a stairway, a worn-out pavilion in a park. In the solo dances I have fleshed out the speech of some residents that has been taped previously. It was not only the way they spoke or tried to find words but together lived moments were alive in me while I danced at the locations.

Those chosen places are meaningful because I thought of each person while I selected them, and the place influenced the dancing. The place was like a life belt; it rooted me to itself and prevented me from drowning while I had the person under my skin. Each place and each person offered a particular reality. Each location brought something of its past to my movements; to sense the steps taken on the wooden floor or the innumerable leans to the wooden railing in the old pavilion added its quality, because the places bear also visitors and inhabitants from the past.

In the making of the film I danced; I fleshed out the speaking and the existence of the residents, and I was intertwined with the place and its lived layers. That created an odd atmosphere, I dived somewhere, and I dived nowhere. My outlines became blurred; I was nothing, only the movement that carried some sense of the encounters with the residents, their speech and the place. I was exhausted after two days’ shooting. In Bataille’s terms non-knowledge wiped out what I thought I knew, and

a new sense of my dancing was being born. In the situation, I just danced, lived the moment and trusted in the experiences with the residents while I was sensitive to the place and its quality.

While dancing at the locations, in my bones I felt the responsibility for the other, for the resident. Emmanuel Levinas' ethics has echoed in my flesh; one is always answerable before the other, responsible for the other (Levinas 2006: 9–10). One is backed up against oneself, and one is put in the place of another, and these two are inseparable (Lingis 1998: xxix). I add the physical place with reference to the film-making and solo dances; I was also responsible for the place, asking the qualities, sensing the qualities that were possible there.

Residents guided the way in the various stages of film-making, even though they were not physically present, because the happenings experienced together have been rooted in my flesh, in my dancing. According to Bataille (Gemerchak 2009:61, 68, Bataille 1988: 9, 61) experience attains the fusion of object and subject, a fusion that he refers to as intimacy. To locate one's inner experience one must re-enter oneself by withdrawing operations that would diminish its significance by reducing it to another object of knowledge. And this oneself "is not the subject isolating itself from the world, but a place of communication". In the inner experience of communication, the person "as subject, it is thrown outside of itself, beyond itself".

Vulnerability toward the other, sensibility and intimacy tell as words something of the nature of the encounters with the residents. This kind of communication has thrown me into an unknown place, into a no man's land and I do not know where I am. The thoughts of Bataille (Bataille 1992: 20–21) echo in my bones when he describes how communication takes place between people who are exposed to the other and at the risk of losing oneself.

Communication with the residents of the Sanerva home has changed me; I am in an unknown place that contains ethical issues and, above all, it hides from knowledge, it is based on non-knowledge. From that place may works of art emerge.

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# Arcadian Space: Images of Early Twentieth-Century Modern Dance

Hanna Järvinen

This paper discusses representations of “modern” dance at the turn of the twentieth century, with particular emphasis on the space in which the dance is represented as taking place and disparity between the affect associated with this imagery and our view of what modernity signifies. Due to constraints of time, I will first very briefly note the practical considerations that influenced why dancers were photographed the way they were; and focus rather more on the ideological implications visible in these images, particularly the aesthetic choices involved in creating this dance as somehow inherently modern. As a conclusion, I make some suggestions as to how these images can be used as source material for both historiography and pedagogy, how their legacy can help us question the qualia we still use for evaluating (representations of) dance. For practical reasons, I refer to the images used in the presentation only in source notes.

Alpine landscapes, green fields, or classic architecture are not the first images we associate with industrialised and urban European modernity, yet these are the settings of modern dancers in the first decades of the twentieth century (*Scènes* image 3 in Corbin et al. 2006: following 384). In dance research, these kinds of pictures of dancers are usually discussed only through what kind of dancing is represented – or rather, who is the dancer in the picture (here, Rudolf von Laban). Until the 1930s, camera technique necessitated photographs of people in movement to be taken out of doors, preferably in direct sunlight because early twentieth-century shutter speeds and film resolution were too slow for artistic photography of rapid movement, so that the flutter of cloth in wind or the expression of a leaping dancer would end up blurred in the final print (Frizot 1994a).

Another aspect of our images is colour. As seen with the Laban image, colour photography was quite possible already in the 1910s, but it was even slower than regular photography (Frizot 1994b: 411-417). The absence of colour affects how we feel when we look at images of dancers of the period. This is particularly true with Loïe Fuller’s work, which depended on stage lighting effects – and colour – that could not be produced out of doors. However unconsciously this, too, affects how we think of her dancing or that of her peers (*Scènes* image 1 in Corbin et.al 2006: following 384). Wind, moisture and temperature variance also easily ruined out-of-door photographs, so most dancers ended up being photographed in studio settings, posed so as to appear moving or retouched in the print. Retouching was used to give a posed photograph – such as one of a dancer standing in arabesque – the appearance of a leap, of hovering above the

ground. However, as the photographic print fades over time, retouching becomes more apparent: today, we can quite clearly see added shadows and corrected (unbent) slipper tips in images of, for example, Nijinsky of whom few images were taken in actual movement (see e.g. Kahane 2000: 137).

Now, before speaking of what was modern in modern dance of the first decades of the twentieth century, I should mention that what we understand as modern dance was called either “classical dance” – especially if it imitated the Antiquity – or “barefoot” or “free-form dance” if it was anything artistic that was not ballet. The term “modern dance” meant any kind of contemporary dance from ballroom dances to ballet that was somehow fascinating and new. Retrospectively, we can see how free-form dance occupied a particular place in the discourse as a kind of re-evocation of past great civilizations, especially Ancient Greece. Draperies – flowing or not – and tunics, sometimes statuary or pieces of classical architecture accompanied these “classical” dancers (see e.g. Caffin & Caffin 1912: 297). And here we come to the discrepancy: this lure of the Arcadian – the particular setting of the dancers, who were always beautiful young bodies semi-naked or even nude – would not be so incongruous if it weren’t for the professed modernity of the same dancers shown in these pictures (Isadora Duncan in *Scènes* image 2 in Corbin et.al 2006, following 384; Allan [1908], following 72).

So, what could explain this apparent discrepancy between what we understand as modernity in these dancers’ autobiographies and other writings and the representation of their allegedly modern dance in these kinds of images? I propose that we should explain the aesthetic through the concept “nostalgia”. Now, this word requires a bit of a detour to what we understand as nostalgia. We tend to think that nostalgia is a sentimental longing for things past, a gilding memories receive in the unerring light of hindsight. But originally, nostalgia was a specific form of melancholia, which, in humoral pathology, was the cold and dry temperament dominated by black bile and associated with the spleen. In a melancholic person, nostalgia was a disease caused by prolonged absence from one’s home – what came to be called home-sickness. It is only by mid-nineteenth century that nostalgia came to mean regretful or wistful remembrance of a past time that often acquired idealised qualities. As Tamara S. Wagner (s.a.) wrote,

the Victorians tried to contain or domesticate the subversive aspects of nostalgia by depriving it from much of its emotional poignancy and its association with a dissatisfaction with the status quo by turning it into a form of sentimentality, the affected counterpart of sensibility. The suspicious attitude towards nostalgia and also its association with sentimentality and even domesticity can be seen as a Victorian legacy. Yet, even today, nostalgia connotes both temporally and spatially. That is, thinking of

the Early Modern significance of the term, it occurred to me that it is possible to think of nostalgia as a longing for a (utopian) place that exists in the personal past the individual remembers – not as much a *recherche du temps perdu* as a memory of a past place that time has gilded.

In his excellent article, Peter Fritzsche (2001) has also noted that “Nostalgia not only cherishes the past for the distinctive qualities that are no longer present but also acknowledges the permanence of their absence. It thus configures periods of the past as bounded in time and place and as inaccessible”. As such, Fritzsche argues, nostalgia is bound to an understanding of history as change that only emerged in the nineteenth century. He claims that during late nineteenth century, nostalgic historiography could be used to criticise present practices, namely the kind of teleological historiography that culminated in the Enlightenment; a history that represented the past as a progress towards the present, a continuous development from simple and primitive to complex and modern.

From my perspective, there is an added significance to this. If exile and alienation are, as Raymond Williams (1989) has argued, essential conditions of industrialised modernity, then nostalgia can epitomise (positive) dissatisfaction with this condition: the example of the past lost home and of belonging becomes a criticism of present circumstance of not-home, not-belonging. As such, nostalgia functions as the counterpoint to alienation in modernism rather than as its direct opposite. Importantly, although this nostalgia for a lost, irretrievable past seems conservative and even escapist today, at the turn of the twentieth century it essentially aimed for change rather than conservation of the status quo. What tends to confuse us is that we understand “modernity” as what, in this turn-of-the-century chain of thought, was the status quo: the hectic present of the late-nineteenth-century metropolis. The escape to a less hurried, more “harmonious” and “graceful”, utopian past was a means to criticise the present and present ideas about progress as a solely positive phenomenon. As such, the various “returns” to some kind of utopian past in early twentieth-century dance – be it a specific past historical period (as it was in the Russian Ballet), the Antiquity (see Dunham 1918: 100-101), or the primitive past of all humankind (in expressionism) – were nostalgic in the positive, political sense of using the past to revitalise contemporary modernity.

For example, J.E. Crawford Flitch (1912: 103-104), an immensely influential author, claimed in his *Modern Dancing and Dancers* that:

the modern world has lost the old graceful motions natural to man in a less artificial state. The characteristic of natural movement is undulation. Waters,

winds, trees, all living forms, obey a sovereign law of rhythm. Nature moves in curves and graduations rather than by leaps and bounds. [- -] The dependence upon easy means of locomotion, the resort to labour-saving appliances, the endless dull circulation through the rigid streets, the long periods of inaction interrupted by sudden spells of haste, have quenched the old buoyant and even rhythms. Human motion nowadays tends to be not flowing but angular, jerky, abrupt, disjointed, full of gestures not flowing imperceptibly one into another, but broken off midway.

Contemporary urban life is unnatural, ugly, unhealthy, and dangerous. The city, characterised by easy living, creates bad habits and encourages physical inactivity interspersed with spurts of action that result in nervous tensions and disease. Dance is the contrast to all this. It embodies the natural rhythms of a pastoral past; a slower style of life following the turning of the seasons; physical labour that creates gracefully moving healthy bodies – *mens sana in corpore sano*.

This quote epitomises the ideology of what, for the lack of a better term, might be called turn-of-the-century body culture (e.g. Eichberg 1990 on the Olympics movement; *S'entraîner* images 1-2 in Corbin et.al 2006: following 160). In this new body culture, the physical body was the locus of all that was unruly, sensational, and primitive. It had to be disciplined to become a productive member of society, although it always had the potential to tap into these “primitive” resources, for better (disciplined art) or worse (thrill-seeking entertainment).

Dance and body culture more generally looked to the past to change the present much in the manner that contemporary social sciences did. The characteristics that Flitch in the above quotation gave to the city might as well be from Max Nordau's 1892 book *Entartung (Degeneration)*, which argued products of culture attested to detrimental biological changes in the individual and the race: the Impressionist painter's painting became proof of a deformation of the eye, for example (Nordau 1993: esp. 26-29). Degeneration theories, eugenics, and social evolutionism all stipulated that modernization (the process of becoming modern) was the ultimate cause of attested decline both in contemporary civilized world and past cultures alike: modern city life was filled with nervous excitement and shocks, influences that, in the long run, caused perversions, insanity and cultural degeneration. Statistical methods and new discourses of medicine seemed to prove that criminality, insanity, sexual perversions and political anarchy, especially socialism, were all on the rise, and all these heralded the end for Western cultures unless something was done and done soon. For the Empire to stand,

for the race to triumph, the body of the unruly individual had to be disciplined, and dance was at the focal point of this search for a cure to modernization (e.g. Britan 1904: 51; Caffin & Caffin 1912: 229). Some proponents of dance even argued it could directly benefit eugenics by showing the physical fitness of the individual to her and his potential partners. (Robinson 1914; similarly, Ellis 1933: 58-60; and Jaques-Dalcroze 1930: v.)

Of course, the recourse to utopias of an un-degenerated and vital past, the dream that life had once been healthier, bodies more attuned to nature, social and gender roles fixed and stable, resulted in condemnation of particular kinds of bodies and movements as unhealthy and dangerous. In dance, although virtually none of the books on modern dance published in the decades prior to the First World War distinguish between forms of social dance and theatrical dance, all distinguish between healthy dancing that is graceful and harmonious and unhealthy dancing that is feverish and decidedly urban, epitomized by the syncopated rhythms of ragtime (Buckland 2003: 19-20, 23-24, 33n72 on attacks on ragtime.)

As a conclusion of sorts, I want to briefly address the consequences of the propensity for nostalgia in early twentieth-century sources for dance as an art form. Although we should, of course, remember that discourses are never uniform or stable, we should eschew the manner in which dance research represents free-form dance as a dramatic movement for women's liberation, which is then used to make feminist arguments about the role of dance in women's emancipation movement. That is, our histories tend to link dance with progressive social forces, its movement with the (inevitable) historical momentum towards our present ideals of political equality. Yet, suffragettes were generally not advocates of dress reform movement precisely because the dress reformists argued for conservative gender roles and were mostly against women's emancipation (Steele 2001: 59-85). Nostalgia forges a link between these conservatives and dance, turns our attention to the propensity for degeneration rhetoric in dance literature.

Yet, to give a balanced view, we should also ask how much this conservative position was a defensive one, resulting from the specific audience of people of the leisure classes to whom the dance literature was written – because much of the dance literature was written for patrons of the art form, not professionals. Thus, the purposeful exclusion of certain forms of theatrical dancing as inartistic mass entertainment undeserving the label “art” relates to a larger issue of cultural ownership and definitions of “high” and “low” culture (Levine 1988). To me, it seems that the degree of escapism and evocation of the past evident in dance literature was a reaction against the emergence of new and popular social dances, particularly ragtime and the tango, that originated from the social Other: the music of slaves and the dances of dock-



workers and criminals.

But there also seems to have been a need to differentiate art dance from dance as variety stage entertainment, both the explicitly sexual display of acrobatic high kickers and the chorus line of Tiller Girls and the popular spectacles of ballet, like the oeuvre of Luigi Manzotti, the Italian master of grands ballets. Trading-card illustrations of Manzotti's ballet *Sport* (1897), manufactured in Antwerp for Liebig's Extract of Meat Company 1897 (in Levy & Ward 2005: 331), illustrate this problematic. Like early staged "free-form" dance forms like skirt dancing – the first of Loïe Fuller's successes – the immensely popular ballets of Manzotti *celebrated* modernization: electricity, science, urban entertainment – and meat extract. Yet, these forms have been edited out of dance history and the canon of the art form. It is striking that precisely the forms that were celebrating progress and contemporary urban experience are nowadays represented as examples of the art form in its worst *decline*. This reveals how early-twentieth-century evaluations about the value of particular dance styles has affected which dance makers are canonised and researched and which are not. Certainly, much of the American hegemony in research on dance at the turn of the century – the focus on "the Great American Pioneers" – rests on their canonisation in early twentieth-century books on modern dance, particularly Anglo-American books. Yet, *their* popularity is written off as success due to great art, with references to (Orientalist) "ethnographic" research, examples from the Antiquity and the Renaissance, etc. Have the great dancers become alter-egos for the researchers?

Because of the conflation of modernism with the early twentieth-century pioneers of what was then called free-form dance, the anti-modernization of this cultural moment and its problematic relationship to modernism in other art forms has passed almost unobserved in dance research. Yet, understanding how both nostalgia and eugenics were projects aiming for the improvement of humankind and its future is imperative for any explanation of the unholy union of modern dance and movements for racial hygiene that were well on their way prior to the First World War although they only culminated in the mass spectacles and extermination camps of the Third Reich. In the discourse of healthy and unhealthy bodies – of individuals, societies and races – the health of a body was evaluated with aesthetic criteria such as grace, symmetry and harmony identical to evaluations of contemporary dance (see e.g. Montague 1994: esp. 101 on the serpentine curve; Malnig 1999). This makes contemporary dance discourse particularly evocative of the period and our methods of dance research quite well suited for discussing turn-of-the-century culture more generally than previously thought.

So, what of pedagogy? Teaching professionals of the art form, I have great concern for how dance history is taught and *why*. I try to stress that the past is as

complex and variable, as filled with paradoxes and contradictions as is our present culture. I find most histories of the early twentieth century inaccurate or difficult to place within the larger cultural history of the period in a manner that would make them meaningful in the present – for today’s professionals-in-training. Discussing what can and cannot be seen in photographs is a good starting point, particularly when these old source materials are contrasted with what the students know well. Images are concrete examples of differences in what meant to be beautiful or thin or fit in a culture where women were taught dance *instead of* sports, and they also illustrate aesthetic restraints placed on “proper” dance in the context of this earlier discourse on dance (e.g. Rath 1916: following 16). That is, they directly connect with how dance is still ontologically defined as graceful, flowing movement, as André Lepecki (2006: 1-18) has discussed, showing just how much we still owe to the early-twentieth-century rhetoric.

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# Queer sexuality as spatial orientation in Essi Henriksson's novel *Revelation*

Anu Laukkanen

The transnational world of the Egyptian style of belly dancing includes an affective and kinesthetic orientation toward the 'Orient', which is an orientation with a colonial history. (Laukkanen 2010; see Ahmed 2006: 109–120.) This history includes various fantasies concerning female (hetero)sexuality and Oriental woman as the exotic Other, and as many dance scholars have shown, there is an ambivalent relationship to these representations among belly dancers in the West (Högström 2010; Shay & Sellers-Young 2005). The ambivalence of publicly performing female belly dancer is not restricted to West, as professional belly dancing is for example in Egypt not regarded as an honourable profession for a woman. (van Nieuwkerk 1996; Roushdy 2009.)

One representation which has its roots is the era of Orientalism and European male travelers' written and visual texts shows sexualized and exoticized Oriental dancer performing for the male gaze (Karayanni 2004). The other representation is connected with the image of the New Woman and Western feminist movement and suggest an image of a dancer creating or representing positive sexuality as life energy or 'spiritual femininity' and belly dancing as a form of inner search of authentic femininity (Dox 2005). Discourses of belly dancing as art, entertainment or healthy exercise mix with these representations (Laukkanen 2003). These fantasies and representations offer always already known spaces for sexual orientation, spaces that exclude queer sexualities. One form of exclusion is the way belly dancing men of the Middle East have not been included in the popular history of this dance form (Shay 2010; Karayanni 2010). However, the figure of belly dancing male is not the point, from where I orientate around or towards queer sexualities, but I want to discuss the even more invisible articulation of lesbian desire and belly dancing.

Even though many belly dancers in West enjoy the all-female space for exploring their moving bodies, lesbian desire is not discussed in the context of belly dancing (see also Dox 2005: 334). The invisibility of same-sex desire between women in belly dance is not surprising when we consider it in relation to the invisibility of lesbian desire in Western dance cultures and in the Western fantasies of the Orient.

In this paper, I will explore possibilities for a queer reading of embodied orientation to space and objects. What kind of queer spaces could be created, if we got lost from the straight line of reading belly dancing? In this paper, the relationship of female

belly dancer and her female lover, their movements, encounters with surrounding objects and spatial orientations in Essi Henriksson's novel 'Revelation' will work as a possible example of queer orientation. However, the 'queerness' does not reside in the protagonists' identities, or in the way they encounter each other as lesbians. Rather, queer reading is about making interpretations how heterosexuality gets read as normalcy and non-normative sexualities as deviations from the straight norm (see Desmond 2001: 11). I am interested in how non-normative sexuality gets interpreted in the context of the representation of belly dancing in the novel under discussion. This presentation is related to dance but rather than being strictly about dance it involves reading of everyday movements and orientations in space (see Bollen 2001: 288).

### **Revelation**

In 2007, a Finnish writer Essi Henriksson published a novel 'Ilmestys' (Revelation), which has two female protagonists engaging in an intimate relationship with each other. The other protagonist is a Finnish belly dancer and dance teacher Sanja with a stage name Zayna, the other is a literature student, Johanna, who is estranged from her body and emotions. The story is told through alternating Sanja's and Johanna's views, and their thoughts, emotions and embodied reactions are materialized with intensive language use. Dialogue is seldom used, rather the reader is offered glimpses of the protagonists' subjective world. Johanna sees Sanja as a sensuous, revelation-like goddess and worships her in an addictive manner. Her gazing of dancing Sanja resembles an Orientalist gaze, which fetishizes the dancer into a fantasy image. She ponders on why did she see Sanja as a revelation. It was not about insufficient knowledge understood as rational intentional orientation, but rather about insufficient feeling, or ability to acknowledge her feelings and emotions. Rational thinking seems to lead her astray – to a moment of disorientation.

Sanja's view on belly dancing is a Western one and she seeks to leave for Cairo to dance professionally. The contradictory status of belly dancer in Egypt is not part of her Cairo of dreams: rather she views it as a place where her dance is appreciated in a right way. Sanja's god and religion is dance, even though her instrument of worship, her body lets her down with a knee injury. Sanja and Johanna are poor, and Sanja – when she is not able to work as a dancer or teacher – decides to enter prostitution to get money for the knee operation. At the end of the novel, two protagonists find their ways out from their tendency to disconnect body and mind, emotion and reason, and the Cartesian mind-body dualism is deconstructed. The novel is very rich in its description of the protagonists' subjective world, their emotional, carnal and sexual feelings including movements, contacts and spatial orientations.

### **Sexuality as spatial formation**

Sara Ahmed provides in her book *'Queer Phenomenology. Orientations, Object, Others'* a view on 'how bodies take shape through tending toward objects that are reachable, that are available within the bodily horizon' (Ahmed 2006: 2). Queer phenomenology 'might offer an approach to sexual orientation by rethinking how the bodily direction 'toward' objects shapes the surfaces of bodily and social space' (Ahmed 2006: 68). Ahmed seeks to rethink sexual orientation both as an effect and lived experience. She combines ideas from phenomenology, psychoanalysis, Marxism and feminist and post-colonial thinkers when arguing that sexual orientation is at once about encounters, where subjects orientate and direct their desires in the paths already taken. Sexual orientation – especially, straight orientation seems as a natural way of inhabiting world, as it would always have been like that. The naturalness of this orientation hides the work that has been done for this orientation to seem so natural. Straight orientation is not even easily noticed as an orientation unless some-one deviates from the straight path earlier generations assumedly have taken. The moment of disorientation – or getting lost – might bring forth the labor and earlier encounters that have taken place. (Ahmed 2006.)

The Butlerian ideas of performativity and repetition are important in the view of sexuality as spatial formation: it is only through constant repetition of earlier acts, gestures and movements that straight sexuality is made seem as natural and essential identity. Thus, it is only through labor and repetition that one becomes straight. Becoming denotes here the idea, that sexuality is not about essential identities, about being, but rather about becoming. Performativity calls also for the idea of change and disruption: queer orientations may open new paths for others to follow. (Ahmed 2006.)

The sexual orientation of the protagonists is not a central theme of the novel, it is not a coming out story or they do not question their desire for another woman. However, the heteronormativity of the surrounding culture and society is discussed. There are moments of disorientation for example when Sanja and Johanna go for a dinner after a dance performance, where they are not seen as a female couple but as friends. In the end, even if Johanna protests as first, they do not come out to Sanja's dance colleagues. In the exotic interior of Oriental restaurant, where they gather around one table, they are supposed to orientate along parallel lines, not encountering on an intimate level and as lovers. Their bodies shrink in the space as they hold hands outside the restaurant, but let their hands part when they enter the Orientalist space of the restaurant and the company of the other dancers. This shows vividly how queer subjects get disoriented when they are not able to extend to the space as a heterosexual couple would more easily do.

## **Skin and history**

Orientation is important also in Ahmed's earlier work (2004) on the role of emotions in shaping bodies and how they are moved 'toward' or 'away' from other subjects. The relevance of past histories is present in these affective encounters. (See Ahmed 2006: 2.)

The skin seems to contain the body and separate the subject from its surroundings. According to Ahmed it could be useful to think skin as a border that feels, and 'where the atmosphere creates an impression' (Ahmed 2006: 9). The skin carries the previous encounters and impressions with it, and as such it carries also the past with it.

In the novel, Johanna comments on the temporality of her narrative of the love story through the idea of skin:

'The skin is backwards over. However, I don't use past tense, because nothing is past for the body. The skin does not forget.' (p. 17)<sup>i</sup>

In this excerpt, the skin and the body carry the history with them as presence, as embodied history. If we read the historicity of the body and skin in relation to sexuality as spatial formation, we may argue that Sanja and Johanna carry with them the experiences of shrinking the way they extend into the space in heteronormative surroundings. They become queer by orientating in space – and in the moments of disorientation. Their bodies are familiar with the feeling when the orientation does not follow the straight lines.

## **The sticky floor as a queer object**

The sticky floor of the dance studio is a space for different sorts of orientations in the novel. It is a space for learning, training and teaching belly dancing, where the dancers move and mold their bodies according to the aesthetic and technical ideals of the dance form. The stickiness of the floor is perceived only through touch, through the impression it has on the skin. The floor as an object becomes alive when Sanja dances on it, stomps her feet and makes her spatial patterns while dancing. The floor has its history: hundreds of feet and other body parts have felt its support.

The sticky floor gives space also for Sanja's and Johanna's physical and emotional encounter of having sex.

'On that sticky floor, years ago, we still grab on each others' flesh, breasts and buttocks, we touch the neck, we forget to be gentle with our teeth. It is wonderful

bruising and taste of the sticky floor. The mirrors copy our making love for each wall and celebrate this happening.’ (P. 65.)

In contrast to the episode in the restaurant, where they decided not to come out to the group of belly dancers and where the heteronormative space made them shrink in their bodies, the dance floor surrounded by mirrors provides a celebratory space for their intimate encounter. Their extensions into space and into each other and the contact with the floor get doubled on each mirrored wall and make their orientation visible through repetition. However, they get interrupted by an Egyptian male dance teacher, who teaches Finland. Johanna thinks that it is her destiny ‘to reply each touch and shade of lust with a shame’. However, the male teachers’ amused, surprised and staring gaze does not condemn them.

‘It is strange, that this memory is safe to return (---). The flexible carpet of the dance studio is safe. It has received frames, it has given birth to a refrain, which we perform to each other, when we need to strengthen our feelings.’ (P. 65)

The dance floor can be viewed as a queer object, which according to Sara Ahmed “support proximity between those who are supposed to live on parallel lines, as points that should not meet. A queer object hence makes the contact possible” (Ahmed 2006: 169). Their moving bodies with their past histories give new meanings to the dance floor. The floor supports their sexual orientation, which during the dance classes is invisible. By queering the dance floor, I do not want to argue that dance floors and dancing would be essentially more open spaces for subversion and non-normative desires than any others. On the contrary, the dance floors where belly dancing is performed and practiced, the non-normative sexualities do not get easily articulated. (See Bollen 2001: 287).

The safety that the memory recalls in the novel is not related only to the safe space of the dance studio and to the moment of ‘only two of us’, but it involves the interruption by the dance teacher. The interruption is not violent, but it is potentially harmful to Sanja and Johanna not only because they get caught from having sex, but because they are two women having sex in a straight space. I argue that Sanja and Johanna become queer when their own experience of sharing and connecting through making love is connected to the appearance of the approving witness. In the moments of disorientation, they are able to strengthen their feelings towards each other by repeating and performing this memory like a refrain.



By queer reading of the dancing bodies and their orientation in spaces, we might be able to show how spaces get sexualized, and how sexual orientation is a process of aligning along parallel lines with some objects and others. Sometimes it might be useful to think, through what kind of histories and past actions dance floors, where belly dancing is practiced and experienced, became floors for straight orientation. By articulating the connection with non-normative sexuality and dance floor in the novel *Revelation*, I wish I have shown how spaces and objects might get a queer twist.

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<sup>i</sup> All translations are mine.

## One through the other –

### Spaces of dance historiography reflected in a reversed mirror

Katarina Lion

I would like to present a text that emphasises on how Western dance historiography in the twentieth century has used Asian-ness in a modern and a post-modern context as a method of deconstruction in order to create the aesthetics for modern and post-modern art dance. My paper lecture is based on my published report *Det ena genom det andra*.

By using Claude Levi Strauss concept of false dichotomies I've found the possibility to recognise and understand dance and dance history in a new way by shifting space and perspectives towards new meanings.

#### Background

As a researcher and teacher in Hanoi, Vietnam, I have worked with dancers from the Opera ballet and students from the Hanoi University of dance and Army school of Vietnam. From 2003 to 2007 I have applied the method of a reversed mirror image when giving lectures in dance theory and dance history. I will present elements of the view on Asian-ness that is fundamental in post-modern aesthetics. At the same time I will also stress the common view on Vietnamese dance art as a copy of Western dance.

The dance history writing of Vietnam is, so far, not an attractive alternative for Western researchers. Dance is a part of the political agenda in Vietnam and requires a nationalistic context. At the same time the styles and genres of Vietnamese dance are formulated with concepts picked up from the Western canon. You could talk about a false dichotomy. There is a respect for the Western tradition, but at the same time resentment to submit to Western aesthetic criteria.

As a Swedish dance researcher I learned that Swedish dance is international and not domestic. Professor Lena Hammergren writes in *Ballerinor och Barfotadansöser* that it would be impossible to formulate a Swedish dance canon since international, or rather Western, dance has influenced the dance of Sweden through cross productions and guest performances. To draw up a national dance history of Sweden would be futile, stresses Hammergren, since Swedish dance is a part of the Western dance heritage. Occasional assertions that there is a national dance tradition in Sweden just reflect a desire to clearly place Sweden on international dance map (Hammergren 2002).<sup>i</sup> In Sweden, Western dance is regarded as a part of "we" and eastern dance as "them".

Apart from a geographical division of dance, Western dance historians tend to separate art dance from cultural expressions. Dance outside West is often regarded as cultural expressions while ballet and modern dance are looked on as art. According to Hammergren, dance philosophers have stressed that there's a difference between a culture that expresses a self-image through dancing, as an art essentially for participants, and a culture that regards dance as professional, aesthetic art (Hammergren 2002).<sup>ii</sup>

As one can see, dance history writing in West has created a division between different expressions. Today Western modern and post-modern dances are the foundation of art dance, but for a long time ballet was regarded as the highest form of dance. It is a consequence of dance history being written in a way that maintains that as early as in the fourteenth century dance was deconstructed and reconstructed according to style and genre. Art dance, in West, can therefore be defined as something that has been refined to a system for aesthetic expression.

Furthermore the dance history writing in West is rectilinear and evolutionary, containing antitheses and innovations. In Western history writing you can not exclude an evolutionary stage or an ism. Every paradigm presupposes knowledge of the previous. At the same time contemporary aesthetics is very much about breaks and contradictions. Dance that is immutable handed down is not regarded as art dance.

Higher educational dance history teaching in Sweden always categorises dance as either Western or Non-western – and Non-western dance is defined from what *it is not* rather than what *it is*. It does not only concern styles and genres, but also where the dance is performed and who's performing it. For example the common view is that Western ballet is art, while ballet in Hanoi is plagiarism, copying or imitation. The question that should be raised is how far away from the original source you can work geographically and still be considered as part of the concept *dance art*.

Today we know that the history of dance and the historiography of dance are two different things. The written word seldom provides the full picture of an historical event except those who got the mandate to interpret or orchestrate the reading. The history of dance could occur as something marginally and less interesting in a larger context, especially when it comes to domination or oppression, but contemporary dance history writing in West is still a part of a neo-colonialism that promotes exclusion and racism and uses aesthetics to define *the other*.

### **Dance history in Vietnam**

Vietnam consists of fifty-four different ethnic groups. Kinh represents eighty-five per cent of the population. During the French colonisation of Vietnam the national ethnic

dances was banned and the people could no longer practise traditional cultural expressions. An opera house was built in Hanoi and it has since then been the leading scene for Western dance (ballet) and domestic dance (traditional, modern and post-modern). Especially the Kinh people were deprived of their art and culture during the colonization. Since they populated the urban areas their culture was more exposed to French oppression. That could partly explain the aim to preserve the characteristics of all the groups when creating, with Chinese assistance, a Vietnamese dance canon during the 1950s.

China assisted Vietnam with methods to create a manageable amount of dances, about 20, that in different ways was inspired from stories and tales of the different groups. The dances don't include a fixed choreography or a typical style; instead they are structured around the epic mythological material that was collected and can be recognised from attributes that relates to a certain ethnic group. The dances are always conducted within the context of stage performance.

Today the dances that were created through this reconstruction of history are defined as traditional, modern or post-modern. The traditional dances are seldom re-created as they originally were. Instead the choreographers try to keep them updated so that the audience can identify with the performance. It's the same tendency for modern and post-modern dance. Like the traditional dance they relate to the about twenty stories and tales that were set as a Vietnamese heritage during the 1950s. Few choreographers tend to break with this tradition, but there are some. There seems to be very little interest in creating modern and post-modern choreography inspired by Western dance. The Vietnamese government has formulated a distinct assignment. The art of dance in Vietnam has been given a political and social task to be the expression of a free and independent nation.

Vietnamese art dance also includes Western ballet. In the middle of the 1950s the economic and political ties to both China and the USSR was strong. A country with the ambitions to be a part of global communism should have a national ballet during this era. The USSR therefore created what you could call a branch to the Kirov Ballet in Hanoi. Instructors, pedagogues and choreographers in Vietnam were initially Russians. The style of Vaganova is established in Hanoi today and there's a boarding school for children in the city teaching Vaganova.

In Vietnam they tend to treat dance genres in a different way than in the West. The concept of national dance includes dance that is derived from a Chinese tradition. Inside this concept you could fit both traditional and modern dance. Western dances included in the Vietnamese repertoire are mainly ballets, and they should not be mixed with domestic dance styles but preferably be created by a foreign choreographer. There's also a lot of modern Western dance from the time after the fall of the USSR,

when the co-operation between the two countries ceased. Modern dance from West has up till today been an important part of cultural assistance from West in Vietnam. Many has been reluctant to projects of this kind since it lacks a natural foundation among the Vietnamese people and is based on different aesthetic principles than the domestic modern and post-modern dance. But Western co-operative partners have persisted in introducing modern genres in Vietnam since they have regarded it as more artistically motivated. Western actors have taken upon themselves the assignment of “teaching” contemporary art dance in order to contribute to a higher artistically level in Vietnamese dance. I would like to add that there’s a great interest in other contemporary dance from the West, like jazz and hip-hop. These are styles that aren’t introduced through cultural aid.

The Vietnamese view on categorisations has interested me during the period that I have been working in the country. The use of Western categorisations could be seen as protest since the use is a concession to the West. At the same time the shift of concepts more clearly shows the problems of hierarchical structures in Western dance art.

There are divisions in Vietnamese dance that includes “we” and “them”, but there seems to be no hierarchies when it comes to styles and genres. Still there is a problem since they chose to regard modern dance as a genre that has nothing to do with the Western concept and the aesthetics that it includes. There’s also an uncertainty about quality and artistic ability in Vietnamese dance that has to do with language barriers and a history as a colonized people. Vietnamese researchers haven’t had the opportunity to write down their own dance history yet. So far it has been a history that’s been preserved and passed down orally and physically. The history of Vietnam includes booth colonisation and several wars, which emphasises the need to create something consisting that expresses national identity. At the same time communist alliances provided the tradition of ballet as a way to manifest a position in cultural hierarchy. The Soviet ballet isn’t just an imported form of art. It’s also a way to express the ideological affinity of the nation. In that respect the relationship to the origins of the ballet in Vietnam recalls the French impact on the Swedish cultural institutions during the eighteen-century.

But today the hierarchies have shifted and entail a need to define the art dance of Vietnam. It has to be strengthened in its identity or be a part of global dance at large. By looking at various developments projects carried out in the country in recent years one can spot two directions in the dance area. One is the research that deals with sources from Asian cultures. Here the work emphasises on finding authentic roots that provide the foundation for the constructed dance heritage that was created in China in

the 1950s. This research is neglected and lacks foundations to be implemented in a larger scale. It proves that there's a need to strengthen the national identity in Vietnam by providing research from domestic sources. Foreign partners are of course not interested in contributing to this.

The other direction shows a tendency to adapt to styles and genres of Western dance. There are elements of self-contempt towards the potential of Vietnamese dance that can be traced to the Western view of the Vietnamese relationship to their own dance. It's a view that originates in an old perception that the Vietnamese dancers don't express the dance with the same understanding as in the West. There's a conception of an inner subjective expression versus mechanical learning based on West's own historical division between the inner and the outer.

Furthermore there's a dispersed view on Asia as a undeveloped "other" where art dance lack the qualities that are needed in order to define art as innovative in it self.

Throughout my work I was struck by the insight that all literature divides west from east. In more recent literature Eastern dance is represented but in principle always in contrast to Western dance or as an example of cultural dance expressions. In traditional dance history writing, however, Asia is represented in a more integrated way than in modern anthropological dance history writing.

Western dance's need for mirror images to define it self is nothing new. In the romantic ballet you will find stereotypes of Non-western cultures as an exotic element. The Russian Ballet, for instance, created ballets in the early twenty-century based on their conception of "primitive peoples" traditions and customs. The history of the ballet in the West flooded with representations of "the other" as something alien and exotic but at the same time recognisable as it represented our wish for sexuality and freedom.

The pioneers of the modern American dance transferred the stereotypes to the body, representing an inner landscape where "the other" reflected profound and primitive feelings.

Martha Graham created a technique based on a common body language with ideas from Asian cultures where intense concentration and profound creation was important elements in the expression of her art. The Influence of non-Western forms and movement philosophies, was also present from the beginning of the post-modern dance, writes Sally Banes in her book *Terpsichore in Sneakers – Post Modern dance*. Merce Cunningham co-operated with John Cage, whose major inspiration came from Asia by interests in, for example, Zenbuddhism ( Banes 1987).<sup>iii</sup>

In the 1960s the opposition against the Vietnam War grew with the result that many innovative choreographers once again turned to Asia in order to get inspired. The Vietnam War resulted in, among other things, several American choreographies, which through metaphors and abstract qualities of motion became a part of the opposition against the war and Western imperialism.

The American dance researcher Sally Banes formulated a definition of post-modern dance in the 1980s. A part of the aesthetics was defined by the political dance of 1970s that was created as a part of the protest against the warfare in Vietnam.

My intention has been to demonstrate how modern and post-modern dance in the West used representations of “the other” to create the aesthetics, styles and categorisations that determine how dance is perceived globally. By decentring the perspectives to other spaces I have shown that it is possible to re-write dance history and by using the concept of false dichotomies show that what we call inspiration in west is nothing else than what we call imitation in East.

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<sup>i</sup> Lena Hammergren *Ballerinnor och barfotadansöser* ( Stockholm: Carlsons förlag, 2002)

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid

<sup>iii</sup> Sally Banes, *Terpsicore in Sneakers – Postmodern dance* ( Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1987)



## **Making the Periphery the Centre**

### **– Re-narrating the history of western theatre dance in order to make women's contribution to the field visible**

Sesselja G. Magnúsdóttir

History is a powerful way of forming identity. Different values are reflected in history, thus it is important that the reader's experience are presented and discussed in the text and that the perspectives on life and the knowledge that is presented is in relation to the reality the reader's experience. (Young 2003, Chakrabarty 2010). This paper presents my speculations on how to narrate a history of western theatre dance in Icelandic for Icelandic readers. My intent is to reflect in my writing the dance world my intended readers are familiar with within Iceland in terms of gender, geography and genre.

At the Nofod conference in Tampere in 2008 I presented my first thoughts about the subject, claiming that women needed to be written into the overview dance history. (Magnusdottir 2009) There I commented on that while the dance world I lived in was the world of women the dance history I was teaching was the history of men. My argumentation was based on my survey of the book *Ballet and Modern dance* by Susan Au, (2002) where 62% of the individuals who got mentioned are men. I suspect that Au's book is not out extraordinary in this respect and corresponds to history writing in general, where men and male perspectives usually dominate the narrative.

In the following paper I want to take a step further and suggest options for how to write women into dance history. I will also discuss how to write the Icelandic dance world into the overview dance history to make the narrative more accessible for my readers but those two goals are related. My main argument deals with how to move the focus from what has been assumed as the centre of dance history to what has been considered to be peripheral. Based on my analysis of the Icelandic case I suggest that women's contribution to the dance world can be found: by writing about the education of dance artists as well as their artistic careers; by broadening up the geographical view of the narrative and including dissemination and newness of theatre dance as well as its high points and by broadening up the view on genre by e.g. disturbing the dualism between high and low art that has informed conventional categorization of dance. In doing this I am inspired by various dance history scholars who have contributed to the broadening of dance history in terms of gender, genre and geography (e.g. Vedel 2008, Adair 1992, Banes 1998, Hammergren 1998), drawing on their work for the purposes of overview history.

### **Making the periphery the centre**

The Indian historian Dipesh Chakrabarty discusses in his article “Provincializing Europe: Postcoloniality and the critique of History” how in academic discourse on history “‘Europe’ remains the sovereign, theoretical subject of all histories, including the ones we call ‘Indian’, ‘Chinese’, ‘Kenyan’, etc.” (Chakrabarty 2010: 55) He criticises how the underlying theories, the categories chosen and the concepts used when writing the history of Non-Europe countries like India derives from a ‘European’ discourse. This results in that instead of writing about India on its own premise the narrative is forged into models that do not suit the subject of the writings and leads to a history of lack and incompleteness instead of richness and fulfilment. (Chakrabarty 2010: 55-58)

My objective is not to provincialize Europe, because I’m writing the history of western dance. But I will argue that I need to provincialize men to make it possible to write women into dance history in a way that reflects the percentage of their participation in the dance world. The discursive place of the subaltern in the postcolonial context can be compared to the situation of women within the dance world. Women are in majority within the field, but that majority is not reflected in positions of authority and power. They are for example in majority as dance students but do not proportionally get the same chances as their male fellow students as half of the positions are already earmarked for male dancers. (Magnusdóttir 2009: 120 and 122) The problem of narrating the dance history women is comparable to the situation of the subaltern in Chakrabarty’s example. The history of western theatre dance is written within a male dominated discourse and women’s contributions to the field are not accepted as a worthy subject, neither their knowledge nor their works are respected. Women perceive the ideal dance world in the mirror of dance history, but it does not reflect their reality. (Young 2003, Brown 1994) A post-colonial approach, which aim is to make subaltern knowledge visible and respected, not at least by the subalterns themselves, can therefore be translated to my attempts to write women into the dance history on their own premise.

### **Searching for women’s contribution to the dance world**

However, if women are the majority within the dance world but do not “make it” in the sense of their names appearing in history textbooks what is then their contribution to the field? If the Icelandic case is taken as example, teaching has predominantly been in the hands of women. The same can be said about pioneering, campaigning and voluntary work done within the dance world to keep the art form alive, professional and strong. Almost all the pioneers who introduced western theatre dance – ballet, modern

dance, contemporary dance, dance theatre, jazz, dance films etc. – to Iceland have been women. After receiving dance education, usually abroad, they came back and started performing and teaching. All the independent theatre dance schools in the country have been owned and managed by women. The Icelandic Ballet School was also formed through the initiative and struggle of female pioneers. (See further Magnúsdóttir 2009)

Most of the people who are named and discussed in Susan Au's book are choreographers. Dancers get some attention, mostly those who are associated with the great classical roles and leaders of big companies like Diaghilev and pioneers like Duncan get their space. Because Au focuses on what happens on stage, artists and musicians connected to the dance get their name in the text but for example dance teachers like Vaganova who worked off stage are not mentioned and become invisible. (Magnusdottir 2009: 122) Dance teachers are therefore an example of a group that is excluded in the text. Their occupation is linked with lack and incompleteness and is in that sense marked for those who were not talented enough, too unattractive or too old to become dancers or choreographers.

According to this, two changes in perspective and categorization of what is worth writing about could help to write women into dance history. First, if teaching and training were included in the historical presentation as well as choreographing, women would become more visible. Secondly, by examining the dissemination of theatre dance as well as its "high points" in history new individuals, many of them female, would appear on the scene.

The history of western theatre dance has until recently been the history of ballet. Even after modern and contemporary dance became accepted as theatre dance, ballet was the protagonist in the history writing. The ballet world was and still is male dominated. Not because there are so many men within ballet but because they are powerful. This is reflected in historical writing on the subject. (Magnusdottir 2009: 120) When modern dance was accepted as worth writing about the number of females mentioned in the dance history increased because women had much stronger position within modern and contemporary dance than in ballet. (Vedel 2008) This shift in focus did therefore in itself make a change in the direction I'm aiming at. I will therefore suggest that the third way of writing women into the dance history is by moving the focus from ballet to other genres as well.

The idea of high and low art is very clear in the choice of components for the history of theatre dance and mirrors the attitude towards different dance styles within the dance world. For example, though modern and contemporary dance have now received some space in history, it is still within the framework of white, middle and upper class participants who "made it" to become choreographers or dancers. Dance

emerging from non-white cultures, such as Jazz and Butoh, receives less attention, even though the genres have had widespread success within the “white” dance world. Distinction has for example been made between black dancers developing their artistic form of dance, called Negro dances, and the white dancers developing what has been called modern dance. This indicates that even though the black dancers were creating modernized work they were not included in the group of modern dancers nor categorised as such. (Manning 2001) In Au’s book the black modern dancer Kathrine Dunham is referred to but not as a modern dance artist but for her anthropological research on African dances.

In the beginning of the century ballet and European modern dance came to Iceland from Germany and Denmark. Modern dance did not receive much attention but the ballet gained foothold and became the predominant style. In the sixties Jazz dance was imported and those two styles have run side by side for more than half a century. But their position within the dance world differed greatly. Ballet was seen as high art but jazz as popular culture. Ballet received economical subsidies from the government and cultural acceptance at the same time as jazz was part of the commercial art world. This situation is not special for the Icelandic case - the situation is identical to many other western countries. For example Doolittle and Flynn describe a similar situation in their writings about “dancing in the Canadian wasteland.” (Doolittle and Flynn 2000) So, if the focus is only on the high art component of Icelandic dance history, large and important parts of the Icelandic dance world would be excluded.

### **Diaspora**

Diaspora is a key concept in postcolonial studies. It is used to explore cultural transference, and has thus relevance for the exploration of the development of western theatre dance. When an individual moves from one place to another s/he also transfers the cultural capabilities that s/he has developed. Dance knowledge is one of such capabilities, stored in the individual’s body, ready for use when opportunities arise in different cultural contexts. (Young 2003, Doolittle and Flynn 2000, Hall 1994)

Choreographers, dancers and teachers have through history travelled from one community to another to work. (Wulff 1998) Many of them ended up moving from their homeland willingly or unwillingly and settle down in new places. In their new homes they often either promoted development of western theatre dance or at least had enormous influences on what existed beforehand in their new homes. (Doolittle and Flynn, 2000) This constant relocation of dance professionals and thereby the dance knowledge inherent in their bodies have greatly influenced the development of western theatre dance.

The history of Ballet Russes is perhaps the best known example. If mapping the professional life of the Ballet Russes dancers it is interesting to note how strong influences they have had on the development of ballet, especially in America but also in Europe, South-America and Australia. They had substantial influence where they settled through teaching, performing and by conveying older ballets to new generations and new places. The traditional history of Ballet Russes tells usually the story of the big choreographers, almost all of them being men. But if we look at the influences the former dancers, many of them women, had as teachers and pioneers, a different story emerges. George Balanchine and Alexandra Danilova worked side by side most of their lives. In Au's book Balanchine gets much attention as a choreographer for Ballet Russes and director of New York City Ballet. Danilova on the other hand is just mentioned by name but does not get any coverage. If looking at the dissemination of the ballet tradition through performing and teaching Danilova is no less important. Hers was also one of the bodies who carried the knowledge of the big classical roles (and the roles that were created for her) and was ready to pass it on to new generation.

### **Broadening of geographical approach**

The overview history of western theatre dance is built around geographical spaces. The history of ballet, focuses on France (Paris) and Russia (St. Peterburg) and then on America and Britain after many of the Ballet Russes dancers immigrated to these countries. This is despite the fact that much of the newness which was developing within the genre emerged from outside these centres. Through my teaching I have noticed how important the periphery is for the development of newness. Often the dominant trend has been too engaged by itself to give space for alternatives and explorations. Noverre, for example, developed his ideas outside the Paris Opera before he got a post there and Fokine left Maryinsky for Ballet Russes to be able to develop his new ideas. Modern dance started also in places where ballet was rather weak.

A change in geographical approach, not just looking at central places but also examining what was happening in between, makes it possible to incorporate places that are at the margins, like Iceland, in the overview theatre dance history. This is not just a question of adding developments in Iceland to a discussion of dance in France, Russia, America and Germany but also to involve other countries like Denmark, Sweden, England, Holland, Belgium and Australia.

The history of modern dance unfolds in two threads. One originated in U.S.A, the other in central Europe, especially Germany. According to the overview dance history it was the American thread that was the dominant one spreading the world over. The European modern dance on the other hand vanished from history not at least

because it was associated with the conquered nations of the Second World War. (Kant 2004, Nicholas 2004) But if looking in between these main threads of development the European modern dance had much more influence than the overview history allows for, e.g. in the Scandinavian countries and northern Europe.

## **Conclusion**

In the above I have discussed how western dance history could be narrated in a way that is more reflective of the phenomenon it describes. My goal is to write women into this history as well as incorporating the Icelandic case into it. I have suggested two plausible ways of achieving this. One way to do this is by broadening the focus of the history writing with more emphasis on other genres than ballet, giving more space for modern and contemporary dance and also paying heed to other more “commercialised” genres of dance. The breaking down of the distinction between high and low art not only opens up for greater recognition of women but also reflects more realistically the reality of theatre dancers’ lives and experiences.

Another way of re-narrating the dance history, I suggest, is to make the geographical transfer a central theme. Instead of focusing on the places where theatre dance is said to be strongest, the centre of dance in each period, it is interesting to explore how theatre dance moves from one place to another, usually by way of bodies of individual dancers. Focusing on the dissemination is also likely to give more weight to the work of women because they are in many cases the carriers of dance between countries. This focus on dissemination also helps to write Icelandic theatre dance history into the general story. By broadening the geographical view of the narrative, including spaces that have usually not received attention or have had a peripheral position in the overviews, Iceland and e.g. the other Nordic countries and the Netherlands, where many Icelandic dance artists have been educated, can logically be included in the narrative.

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# How Dance Students Feel Space? A Case Study

Elisabete Monteiro

## Introduction

Our study entitled “How dance students feel space?” is a case study we developed within the Fundamentals of Expression and Communication course taught during the first-year Dance degree at Faculty of Human Kinetics – Technical University of Lisbon, in April 2010.

From the title you can surmise the experiential level we want students to live concerning space, apprehending it with their senses so as “to develop an experiential understanding of space in use” (Sara and Sara 2006: 97). We will, thus, share our ideas on dance and, particularly, the potential and the significance of “space” (or spaces).

“What makes space so important?” you may ask. As we all know, we need space to breathe, move, relate to each other, give meaning to words, and to communicate. But it is essentially a pedagogical concern about the creative use of space in improvisation and composition tasks we wish to share with you. And we wanted students to explore a familiar space, in particular their dance studio, by stimulating each one of them to “see and feel it” in new ways, preferably as individual persons, but also as members of a class, a group.

As we mentioned earlier, this case study reflects an approach on SPACE built on relief concepts, like “extension”, “place”, “distance”, “interval” (between something or someone); “inside”, “outside”, “through”, “above”, “around”, “under”, but also on concepts such as “empty” or “blank area”, or even something close to the concept of TIME (interesting, isn’t it?) as “duration”, “quantity”, and so on...

And the research questions we raised were the following:

- How can space influence people?
- How are these people influenced by space?

Our points of departure, supported by literature, were initially from the inside of the body and, then, from the outside – what is away from one, between – and the concept of distance.

The particular questions students had to think about during this experience were, namely:

- Do you feel space in a different manner and why?
- What previous concepts did you hold and how is it different after experiencing this and share it with others?
- How can someone manipulate space, and how does it interfere with every one?



- What kind of perception are we talking about? An individual perception or a collective one?
- Do we own “spaces”? How? What does it mean?

And finally the last question we wanted them to reflect about:

- How does each one of you comprehend the experiential qualities of space?

## **Methodology**

The aim of our study has been to explore a variety of spaces by the whole body, searching through subjectivity and shared gestures, for themselves and in the dance studio as a laboratory, a space to explore. Our sample consisted of 20 dance students, from the above-mentioned first-year dance course, aged 18-40 years old. The experience took two sessions of 1h30 each, in April 2010.

We video-recorded moments of the different proposed tasks. All situations had our collaboration and mentoring.

What happened in each task?

At the very beginning students had to experiment space in a multi-sensorial way and, then, reflect – thinking and writing – upon those situations.

Hence, at the first session:

1. The teacher proposes students to think about their concept of space and the question was: “When you think about space what is the first word that comes to mind? What if it were a feeling or emotion, what if it was a colour?” They had to write it down. We encouraged them not to think too much, but to trust their senses, emptying their minds and just feeling;
2. Then they had to note down how it was for them and how they felt in a large as in a small space. This would give us a clue of what their concepts were, particularly in terms of comfort, safety, connections, and how they perceived its dimension;
3. They were asked to write down what it was for them the concept of ideal space, and the reason why;
4. After having chosen a place in the studio – closed eyes– they had to feel, explore and expand it in different sensorial modalities. At a second moment, they had to explore space, open eyes, integrating the previously experimented ways, turning into a sort of “space explorers” creating their own kind of biography of space;
5. Finally, they had to choose the most comfortable path for them and whether it was somehow related – or not – to the ideal space. Each one had to write and reflect about it. Towards the end of the first session, they were invited to analyse the impact of their

personal experience by comparing the beginning and the end of it, that is, their awareness of the space's emotional characteristics.

During the second, and last, session they were invited to collaborate and work together, as a group.

Particularly, students had to modify the mood of the dance studio space by means of relations, distance; imagining lines, tensions, "bridges"/connections, volumes etc., increasing the odds of space development concepts along with feelings. The teacher provided some clues and space metaphors to facilitate the formation of abstract ideas and conceptualisation.

The French philosopher Paul Valery, quoted by Whittock (1992), revealed a beautiful, true, way to "talk" about a metaphor: "a metaphor is a kind of pirouette performed by an idea" (242), and if we considered a thought as a physical act, as Michael Klein declares, we would realise the relevance of this perspective, wouldn't we? Actually, metaphors are a tool for students to understand, interact and transform movement in a pertinent way, and a tool for teachers too.

We will proceed to develop the second session a little more. Students, in small groups, had to join with classmates who had picked the same place they were in the preceding session in the dance studio. And then they had to create a movement – a motif – relating to their concept of space.

First, very close to each other, touching, if they wanted to, and with eye contact, trying to create a sense of spatiality, a living space, strengthening spatial characteristics. Teachers went on to observe how this affected their behaviour and how students interacted among them when moving from group to group.

In brief, we can say that we regarded this study as a research strategy, a descriptive study to help understand, in this particular case, the practical knowledge involved.

We used a semi-structured questionnaire and field notes containing the observation we had carried out (video-recorded tasks) as tools for data collection material.

## **Results**

Let us take look at the most relevant results, by showing first a multi-sensorial experience wherein students wrote about their concepts of space, every one contributing to the establishment of their own "biography" of space.

If we glance at choices made by students in the following table, we will likely get the impression that they feel space as something large and pleasant, given that it is something positive for the majority of students. Some shared their sense of belonging and the feeling of owning such a large space. It is an interesting thing to grasp, we think.

Table1 – Concept of space

#	WORD	FEELING/EMOTION	COLOUR
1	Vast	Melancholy	White
2	Large	Mystery	Blue
3	Circumscribed	Something mine	Blue
4	Empty	Dream	Blue
5	Mine	Freedom	White
6	Project	Concretisation	White
7	Square	Create/Travel	Red
8	Universe	Big	Blue
9	Lost	Lost	Blue
10	Vast	Nice	Black
11	Place	Freedom	White
12	Mine	Big or Small	Light Blue
13	Freedom	Empathy	Blue
14	Vast	Warm/Intensity	Red
15	Freedom	Happiness	Blue
16	Square	Freedom	Brown
17	Dimension	Harmony	Green Sea
18	Comfort	Intimacy/Mine	White
19	Large	Joy/Peace	Green
20	Limit	Discover	Light

You can see that, for them, it is “blue” and “white” that best represent space, “freedom”, “vast”, “dimension” and “large” being their major options.

Although they perceive space, if large, as a good thing, the majority, when in large spaces, would feel: “alone”, “lost” or “with fear” and “anxiety”.

In small spaces, most of the students talked about being “claustrophobic”, “sick”, “alone”, “uncomfortable”, “with a feeling of darkness or restriction.”

It is interesting to note the sense of freedom and the creative thought as positive things in large spaces. Also, comfort is a good thing in small spaces for some, whereas others impart the same positive feeling of comfort in large spaces. You can check this facet in the Table 2, below.

It would be pertinent to learn about each student's background regarding, for example, dance experience.

Table 2 - How do you feel in...

	<b>... large spaces</b>	<b>... small spaces</b>
1	Our insignificance. A drop in the Ocean	Breathe control. Movement limits. Prison
2	Little like an ant	Tight
3	Feel OK if empty, and bad if they are full	Cosy but in an lift - claustrophobic
4	Lonely	More comfort. Cosy
5	Fear and curiosity	Cosy
6	Freedom	Cosy
7	Freedom/Solitude	Comfort/Anxiety
8	Freedom to move. I like	Cannot do anything
9	Peace	People too close
10	Comfort and monstrosity	Restriction. Comfort and near people
11	Freedom	Support
12	Little at the beginning, then, big and relax	Good at the beginning, then, I could feel sick
13	Alone, lost. In peace and harmony. Free	Tight. Claustrophobic. Airless. Power- less
14	Fresh air. Freshness. Creative though	Darkness. Alone. Soundless
15	Lost	Comfortable
16	Anxiety. Expose to people	Tight and unease. Airless
17	Calm. Harmony. Solitude	Uncomfortable. Makes me think about me
18	Smaller. Some fear. Lost and tight if full	Uncomfortable but cosy too. Confuses me
19	Power. Grandiosity. Some solitude	Cosy. Comfortable
20	Lost	Uncomfortable

As to the ideal space, half of the students relate it to a particular place, the other half identifying it in whatever place, as long as they are with someone, or wherever they feel good:

Table 3 - The ideal space is...

1	... a place in nature. By the sea. Serenity
2	... a fun, light and warm space
3	... a small space within a large space. Space to breath and walk. Inside a bubble to protect me
4	... a small and cosy space with an intermediate light, not too bright nor too dark
5	... none and anywhere. Because what makes it special are the people
6	... the one that allows multiple chances and opportunities. Somewhere that makes us feel good
7	... a warm and pleasant island. Night at the beach. My bed
8	... the beach
9	... where I can make what I want to
10	... an open and vast space
11	... somewhere you can be what you are and feel comfortable
12	... somewhere I can behave myself as I am
13	... to be with whom I love and feel loved. To be with true friends. At the beach listened the sea, feeling the waves, the sand and the sun on my body...it is to be with you
14	... that fulfils with someone I love
15	... somewhere I feel happy being with the ones I like
16	... vast and abandoned. Where I am alone
17	... somewhere I can be far from me and allow the ones I love to come to me. Somewhere I can be by myself, joining others
18	... where we feel comfortable. Where we can find stability; feeling emotional space allows us to be with the ones we want. Relax ,balance and true
19	... a place that can have a lot of people inside
20	... it's my home

What about the path they prefer? Is there a connection (or not) with their ideal space? Let us see the following table (Table 4), where it is obvious that 60 per cent of the students establish a connection between the two.

Table 4 – Paths and connection (Yes –**Y**; or Not - **N**) with the ideal space

1	I like waves. Sea. Jumps could be fishes	<b>Y</b>
2	A simple path. The way we walk on the street	<b>N</b>
3	Near the windows. Far from the centre. I wanted it to be just mine, just for me	<b>Y</b>
4	Near the mirror and the bars. I feel more protected. I do not want to call attention	<b>Y</b>
5	I want to be everywhere. Know all places. I like the centre and to take part in everything that's happening	<b>Y</b>
6	A comfortable path. At the centre I feel more power and I have more room to the left and right	<b>N</b>
7	Looking for the sun passing through the windows	<b>Y</b>
8	More pleasant. A big space. More freedom	<b>Y</b>
9	Because I can run. I have a large space. I can use it all	<b>Y</b>
10	It is comfortable. I draw lines and I finish at the same place	<b>N</b>
11	Pass through the centre crossing the floor and I finish where I'd started: in relation to this particular room	<b>N</b>
12	Comfortable and near the windows	<b>N</b>
13	Comfortable, simple and direct. Like the sea, a simple, ideal, place. Calm, feeling loved without constraints or complications	<b>Y</b>
14	Small, constant and repetitive to let mind free: no relation to the ideal space, except that both are pleasant and allow mind to rest	<b>N</b>
15	More comfortable because I prefer the corners and near walls, since I feel free from people. I love to walk in straight lines and curves. No relation because there is no people with me	<b>N</b>
16	It starts in a vast way and finishes at the centre alone	<b>Y</b>
17	It starts in a corner that I like. It has different lines, somehow showing some revolt because of the distance	<b>Y</b>
18	More comfortable because always near the walls and bars. Passing through the mirrors allows us to see ourselves and the room. The windows we see outside	<b>Y</b>
19	A simple path allowing me to think whatever I want, and to see and know all corners of the room	<b>Y</b>
20	The same way and path when I go to classes. And it's the same I take when I go home, from the front door to my room, in a mirror way	<b>Y</b>

We can see that some are reflecting on a real path (undulating, straight, or the path to go home, for example), while others are thinking about a place or an area, instead of a path. And the question here could be: "Isn't it possible to develop a study of space and movement possibilities, a site-specific representation, after having these space explorations, for example? This perspective could be one of the many ways to generate real dance experiences.

"What about movement? Where does it go in this experience?" You may ask. We can say that it profits from each student getting contaminated when in a group, interacting, reacting and searching for different ways to act as if they were drawing, a sort of writing, and making inscriptions, and disruptions, in space. From a new perspective, and by feeling movement, inside and in space, we believe, students gained a more holistic understanding of space.

Why is this study important? Although we do not intend to generalise, since it is a case study, we may derive its value from a descriptive perspective.

We believe this will bring students strength and experience in creative movement development. "Places can serve as contexts and constraints, but also as creative possibilities in relation to human practice and its imagination" (Crouch 2001: 63).

### **Final remark**

In our view, the ways we see, feel and create space help us define our subjectivity. In connection with this, Briginshaw says: "Seeing things from a particular perspective or viewpoint locates the viewer, affecting their sense of subjectivity" (2001: 184). He perceives dance as a spatial experience, a visual continuum, opening new ways to see and feel, expanding our sense of subjectivity. And we do agree.

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# Space(s) in Portuguese Folk Dances

Margarida Moura

## Introduction

Folk dances represent and are part and parcel of the culture of the community groups who practice them (culture is herein understood as the knowledge, patterns of behaviour, values and symbol systems that are acquired, sustained, and transmitted by a group of people, and that can be embodied in art works). Their technical, formal, character becomes manifest as activities that use the body by combining and connecting physicality with spontaneous and expressive movements as well as corporeality, that is to say, by generating movements with the purpose of communicating (Fernandes 2000).

The choreographic dimension of traditional dances regarding the acquisition, reproduction and interpretation assumes an ethnochoreographic approach on gestures, rhythms, posture, types of contact, relationships, ethnochoreographic genres and styles happening in a very specific performative space.

The traditional choreography – an operational unit of reproduction and interpretation of the traditional model, which integrates and supports the relationship among symbols, signs, and meanings of the traditional dances and those taking part (Fernandes 1991; Fernandes 2000; Moura 2007a) – occurs, and is developed, in a experiential context where it explores the elements of dance, namely, time, energy, relationships and space (Laban 1974; Kassing and Jay 2003). Time meaning the duration – the movement's length (medium, short, long, pause), and the movement's tempo – and the movement's speed (moderate, slow, quick). Energy (force) representing the effort, weight and time of the movement, which allow several types of movement: sustained (slow), percussive (sharp with sound), abrupt (fast and sharp without sound), swinging (pendulum), suspended (defying gravity), collapsing (sinking), vibratory (shaking) or explosive movement. Relationships are the relations among the dancers' body parts, with other dancers, other body parts, the floor, the audience, the stage, the props, and the space (Kassing and Jay 2003). By space we mean the triad – the physical, personal, and shareable space with particular components such as level, size, range, place, focus, direction and pathways (patterns created in the air or on the floor by the body or body parts as a dancer moves in and through space).

The idea of space – area in and through which the individual moves (Fleming 1976), the very first place the body occupies and where movements develop via the perceptive activity (Le Boulch 1964) – refers to the existence of an objective, physical and geographic space, along with a subjective space of the moving body, experienced

and sensed in an emotional way (Bertrand and Dumot 1976; Colin 1989). In dance, these two spaces merge as the objective space allows itself to get contaminated by the body's space, which evolves in the near or distant space, at the same time as space becomes a tangible part, traversed (cross, ran, jumped, used, etc.) by the body (Choan 1986).

The key motivation of this investigation is to systematize and classify the spatial dimension of Portuguese folkdances – considered as practices, representations, expressions, symbolic rituals, traditional culture specific to a community, including a variety of forms and cultural values. Additionally, we intend to reflect on the existence of a distinct spatial model in the Portuguese traditional and choreographic heritage. In order to do this, we have examined a sample of 117 Portuguese traditional dances, which were performed by different folk dancing groups, representative of the whole country.

### **The space in Portuguese folkdances**

In traditional dance, space is outlined as a playful game of lines, vivid and significant forms of the moving body. It represents the frequency of its components' interrelationships, which follow an organised and defined order. Laban (1974) and Robinson (1981) characterise space according to its elements: direction, levels, plans, trajectory, courses/progresses, dimension and focus. Bertrand and Dumont (1976) portray space from a creative perspective, conceiving there are as many spaces as the shapes and stages that space might take on, be they underground, aerial, rectilinear, round, plane, or some other. Piaget (1977) and Le Boulch (1964) point up space along the lines of various spatial relationships. Roudet (1986) analyses space in relation to its key element, that is to say, the body inhabiting and characterising that very space, the body's shift direction, the body's shift trajectory, and the level of the body's shift in relation to the ground.

We are adopting here Kassing and Jay's definition of space (2003): an area occupied by the dancer during non-locomotors and axial movements (movement in which the body remains anchored to one spot by a body part, e.g., bending, twisting) and locomotors' movements (movement wherein the body travels across space, e.g., running, rolling).

The authors emphasise both general space – space in the overall dance area, a dance space where dancers are moving – and personal space – area in which the dancer moves, the kinesphere around the body, extending as far as the body and body parts can reach. In Portuguese folkdance we can define space as an area where dancers move in a certain order, following some organization, in which the interrelationships with him(her)self (personal space), with the partner, another partner, and with the group (shareable space), the audience and the shifts (physical space) take place on a regular basis (Moura 2007b).

The Portuguese dances' space is characterised by particular spatial components and categories, which underline:

- The spatial shapes: solo (one couple only), trio (three dancers), single or double circle (one or two circles); single rows and columns (only male dancers or female dancers in the same line); single square (one dancer in each corner of the square); couple rows, columns and square (couples are in the same line or corner of the square); mixed rows and columns (male dancers and female dancers in the same line but they aren't couples).
- Dancer's spatial position: lateral, facial, concentric, eccentric, in line, back to back with the partner, the audience or the centre (dance in circle).
- Spatial progression: clockwise, counter clockwise, in place, into the circle's centre, towards the outside of the circle.
- Direction: right, left, forward, backward, forward and backward diagonals.
- Trajectory: straight, curved, circular, zigzag, serpentine.
- Relationships – with him(her)self, the partner, with another partner, the group, the audience, with the physical, personal and shareable space.

As to the Portuguese folkdances' spatial shapes, we have found different kinds of shapes of the moving body. Dancers can be positioned in solos, trios, circles, rows, columns or in the shape of a square.

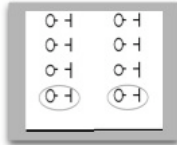
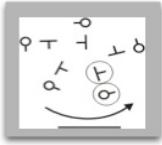

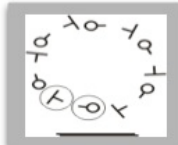
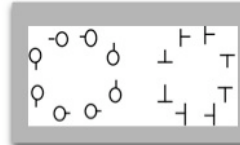
Regarding the circle's<sup>1</sup> shape we have also encountered several options, dispersed in either single circles (dancers define only one circle) or double circles (dancers define two circles, one inside and the other on the outside), such as:

- Single circle, *lateral – eccentric (SCL-E)*, the couple is side by side and backward to the centre of the circle;
- Single circle, *lateral – concentric (SCL-C)*, the couple is side by side and facing the centre of the circle;
- Single circle, *in line – lateral (SCinL-L)*, the couple is in line behind each other, and lateral to the centre of the circle;
- Single circle, *facial – lateral (SCF-L)*, the couple is face-to-face, and lateral to the centre of the circle;
- Double circle, *lateral – lateral (DCL-L)*, the couple is side by side and sideways to the centre of the circle;
- Double circle, *facial – concentric and eccentric (DCF-C/E)*, the couple is face-to-face, and some dancers are facing the centre of the circle while others are facing backward.

When it comes to solos, rows, columns and square shapes, some possibilities have been observed too:

- Single rows (SR) – only male dancers or female dancers in the same row (dancers in line, side by side);
- Couple rows - couples in the same row;
- Single columns – only male dancers or female dancers in the same column (dancers in line, behind each other);
- Couple column (CC) - couples in the same column;
- Single square (SS) - dancers define a square, with an element in every corner of the square;
- Couple square - dancers define a square, with a couple in every corner of the square;
- Solo – only a couple in the performative space.

Table 1 - The Spatial Shapes: same examples

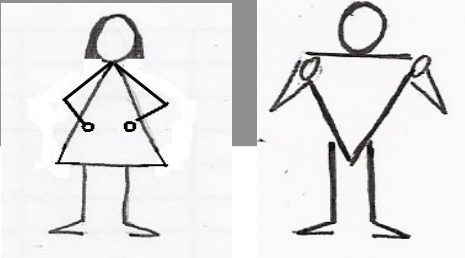
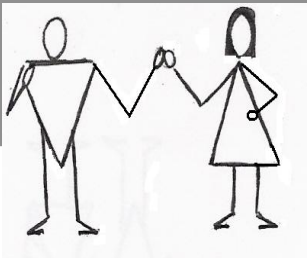
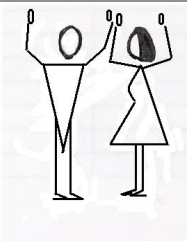
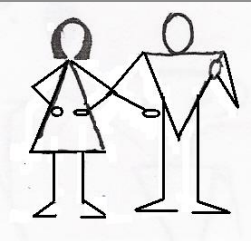
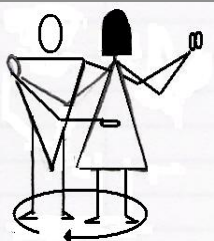

SR or CC	DCL-L	SS	SCF-L	SCinL-L
				

In Portuguese folkdance, space comes down to the relationships, that is, to the social interaction and group communication that arise among actors and other elements, such as the dancer and him(her)self, the partner, another partner, the group, the audience, and the centre of the circle. The quality of these relationships encourages multiple potentialities among dancers, between the dancers and the group, between the dancers and the audience, as well as between the dancers and the threefold space – personal, physical and shareable. In this respect, it is worth noting:

a) different forms of contact (no contact, holding hands, arm in arm); b) postures and the postural adjustment (right, tilt, swing, oscillatory, pendulous); c) expressiveness (discrete and unintentional; intentional and assumed); d) mime (mime synchronized with the lyrics, improvisation and composition); e) nonverbal communication (visual, tactile, lead and to be led) and f) socio-relational, affective and expressive interaction (specific to choreographic gender).

The illustrations below exhibit some of the recurring kinds of contact and arm positions: basic position; hold hands – arms in W; hold hands in line at shoulder level;

hold hands in line at low level; high level; arm in arm; close position; interlaced behind the back.

Table 2 – Arm Positions (drawings by Maria Jesus Caeiro)			
Basic position		Hold hands - arms in W	
			
			
High level	Arm in arm	Waltz / close position	Interlac

### Choreographic spatial model in Portuguese folkdances

With regard to the existence of a specific spatial model for the Portuguese traditional dances, we herein present our research main results. The sample comprises 117 Portuguese folkdances, 37 folk dancing groups from 12 different regions, representative of Portugal.

The most frequent results were: Dances performed in circles were the most recurrent occurrences, particularly: single circle, facial – lateral (the couple is face-to-face and lateral to the centre of the circle); double circle facial – concentric/eccentric (the couple is face-to-face and some dancers are facing the centre of the circle, while others are facing backwards) and double circle, lateral – lateral (the couple is side-by-side and sideways to the centre of the circle) with four different forms of contact be-

tween the couple, such as high level, close position, interlaced position, and arm in arm position. These Portuguese dances are performed following technical skills, such as “*vi-ra*” step, “*malhão*” step, walk step, jump step and run step in moderate and quick tempo with the torso in the vertical position.

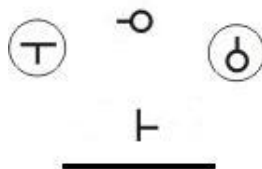
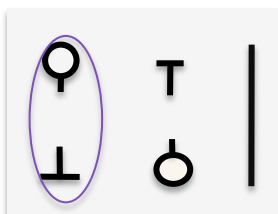
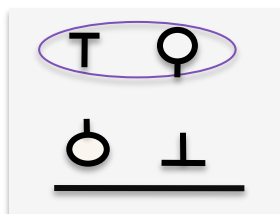
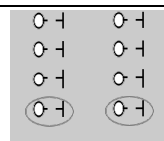
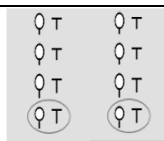
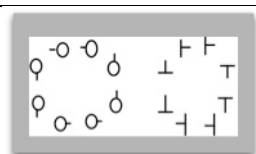
Some kind of circles, columns, rows, and squares are not so frequent, like:

- 1) Dances performed in a single circle, in line – lateral with three different forms of contact between couples, high level, holding hands in line in shoulder level, and holding hands in line in low level.

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Table 3 – Circle, Square, Column and Row shapes

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- 2) Dances performed in single rows, facial – lateral (the couple is face-to-face, and lateral to the audience) or single columns lateral – facial (the couple is side by side and facing the audience) or couple columns facial – lateral (the couple is face-to-face, and lateral to the audience) with two different forms of contact between dancers, high level and turning or spinning high level.

- 3) Dances performed in single square, lateral – facial and backward to the audience (the couple is side by side, and some dancers are facing the audience while others are facing backward) or in single square, facial – lateral (the couple is face-to-face, and lateral to the audience), or even single cross square, lateral – facial and backward to the audience (the couple is side by side, and some dancers are facing backward, or lateral to the audience), with two different forms of contact between dancers, high level and turning or spinning high level.

## Conclusion

In the present research, we attempted to lay emphasis on the most important features and characteristics distinguishing the Portuguese folkdances' spatial model.

To sum up, dances are performed in circles, rows, columns, squares and solos, favouring spatial and social relationships between the dancer and his/her partner; another partner; the whole group; and the audience.

Portuguese dances are performed following defined step patterns, such as: "vira" step; "malhão" step; walk step; jump step and run step in moderate and quick tempo. The torso is vertical. Nevertheless, torso twist and torso with lateral oscillations may come about too. Finally, the arms are placed in high level without contact. It is possible to find three more arm positions: close position, arm in arm, and holding hands.

In Portuguese folkdances, space is a living, inhabited, one that lives with and through distinct – physical, private, social, cultural and shareable – spaces.

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<sup>1</sup> |- (symbol for a male dancer); 0- (symbol for a female dancer). The short (-) symbolizes the nose

\_\_\_\_\_ (symbol for the audience position).



## Place and Space at 'The Place'

Larraine Nicholas

The discourse of socially produced space has made the terms *place* and *space* current across the disciplines of geography, history, sociology and architecture, which intersect with our own discipline of dance. Outside of the discipline of dance, the distinction between *place* and *space* has seemed to be problematic, sometimes the terms used interchangeably or conflated. From the perspective of my own dance background, which includes Laban-based movement theory, distinctions between *place* and *space* are much clearer. *Place* is here, where I am—and here—and here. The axis through my body to the earth provides a core to my spatial and corporeal identity which I can then take to my social encounters. *Space*, on the other hand, is wonderfully inventive. Spatial patterns are created by the body in *space*, with all its possible elaboration or simplicity—of sculptural designing of bodies moving and still; of the lattice of virtual trace-forms which are the living actuality of dancing; and of the pathways or journeys through the three-dimensional environment, making invisible space visible.

It was with this distinction in mind that I approached my case study. 'The Place' in London, is a building housing the London Contemporary Dance School, the Robin Howard Dance Theatre, the Richard Alston Dance Company and other dance projects. Its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 2010 became the stimulus for examining space and place as dance, geography and history. Over the period of its 40 years, 'The Place' has been a special object of my consciousness, where I experienced life affirming performances and attended classes in Graham based technique at evening and intensive vacation courses. To begin this discussion, I offer a generic memory of place/space in one of these technique classes.

First I have to find a *place* on the floor, to establish my own place. To occupy a place on the floor is to establish a home territory and begin to centre myself. As the class progresses, from place on the floor I expand in spatial directions, vertically and horizontally. Sitting, lying, kneeling and finally standing, I become gradually more mobile. This small 'home place' is a travelling personal identity. Wherever I move, I can occupy a new 'home place'. Of necessity becoming more social, I must both make my own *space* and be aware of the space of others. Making my own place, I have to understand the place-ness of others.

The dance combinations make *space* visible, in directions, pathways, body designs, trace forms and kinespheres that expand and contract. Finally, 'across the floor', encompasses the diagonals or dimensions of the space, travelling in bigger and ever

bigger trajectories. Navigating in this space is like negotiating a city street: avoiding, accompanying, copying, competing with other dancers; forming small groups with almost non-verbal understanding. The class ends with a return to self and place, warming-down, and a reminder of the 'home-place' on the floor where I started.

In my imaginative reconstruction of a dance class, space and place merge yet remain distinct, space functioning more like a verb (Doel, 2000:125) and place like a noun. In *space* we 'do' and in *place* we 'are'. Both are manifest through embodiment as agreed by theoreticians of place/space (e.g. Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, Yi-Fu Tuan) although these iconic figures do not understand space choreologically.

Returning to my case study, I need to look further into this notion of place, which is given much more support from non-dance literature than is space. The characteristics of place are: location on the surface of the globe, physical materiality and human meaningfulness (a sense of place) (Cresswell, 2004: 7). These three factors also seem to characterise the experience of my dancing body in the studio but in order to explain 'The Place', I must also move into bigger structures of the building and beyond. This sense of place as globally located, physically manifest and humanly meaningful moves the debate into geography and history, built environment and memory.

In 1969 the building now known as 'The Place' was acquired for the Contemporary Dance (initially Contemporary Ballet) Trust which then included the very new London School of Contemporary Dance and its incipient dance company the London Contemporary Dance Theatre which went on to popularise and epitomise contemporary dance for the next two decades under the leadership of Robert Cohan (previously of the Martha Graham Dance Company). LCDT was disbanded in 1994 amidst bitterness against funding bodies and regret from loyal audiences, while the School survives to this day in a different aesthetic environment and 'The Place' signifies different things now for a new generation of students and dancers.

Recognising 'The Place' as a geographical location and physical entity brings challenges. Where are the boundaries of a place: surely not the simple facts of walls and doors? In geography now, boundaries are often seen as porous, opening into other intersecting places of perceived identity. The entrance on Duke's Street is within a little enclave of early 19<sup>th</sup> century shops, often used in film locations, quiet in spite of being moments from the raging traffic of Euston Road. There is a wide pavement, a quiet street and a high curb to sit on. Now there are café tables and chairs but ever since dance came here, there was a tendency to spill out, to take the air here and so 'The Place' has always escaped its walls and performed on the street. Dancers have been hanging out here in practice clothes with their cigarettes long before they were hanging out here with their mobile phones.

When testing my own memories of 'The Place', I realised that it is always either the goal of a journey or an object along a journey. And then I have to recognise that the journeys for students and performers extend over continents. 'The Place' as *place* does indeed appear to have porous boundaries and to be situated within a transnational sense of belonging. Doreen Massey, amongst others, argues that "a global sense of place" pervades the local (1997: 240). Place itself can seem to be dispersed into many places—a 'multi-locality'. The sociologist Anthony Giddens writes: "locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them" (1991: 19).

I see a connection between the moving, personal body identity meant by the Laban term place, with the notion that place, in terms of location, travels more than its name might suggest, and in my own relationship with 'The Place', I see that I have experienced its pull both nationally and internationally, where I have encountered its people. I am aware from my own reminiscences that 'The Place' was not just a locale that I visited but also one imagined and remembered and re-experienced through social relationships that extended to distant locations.

This personal meaningfulness is also historical. A sense of place may be used to evoke historical narrativity, "to reflect the interweaving of the relationships among those people, objects and messages, which produce place" (Berdoulay, 1989: 34). Famously from the work of Pierre Nora, place is also memorialised as *lieu de mémoire*, a physical quintessence of national or local significance, most often shot through with a sense of loss—war memorials are typical. But Paul Connerton draws a distinction between *memorial* in Nora's sense of a place of memory when forgetting is too easy, and *locus*, where historical encounters are an everyday experience (2009:34).

At 'The Place', the building's history suggests many layers of geographical extension as well as memory. This was a drill hall built in 1889 for the 20<sup>th</sup> Middlesex Artists Rifles Volunteer Corps, a part-time force originally for painters, sculptors and like artists. Drill halls became a feature of large and small settlements, strongly imbued with national patriotism, local pride, not to mention imperialism. A necessary architectural feature was a front entrance wide enough for two men marching abreast, in or out, actually continued at 'The Place' in the wide staircase ascending to the drill hall itself. So, from its beginning, this was a structure for military performance that was also public performance on the surrounding streets and then further into theatres of war.

Memory is also re-enacted in the spaces of the drill hall that became a dance centre. Drill halls by definition had to include a very large, rectangular open space for practical soldierly drilling and another large space for gun firing practice. The drill hall is now the Robin Howard Dance Theatre (memorialising the man who instigated and fi-

nanced the inception of the organisation) and the firing range incorporated into some of the studio spaces.

What version, then, of its identity would 'The Place' project in its anniversary year? The celebrations for 'The Place at 40' were presented under the headline 'What dance can do'. The building was open for an intensive weekend of 'Something Happening' in May 2010. Studios were set up for performances or open rehearsals and there were screenings of films made about 'The Place' since the 1970s. Landings, staircases and corridors also became performance sites, a continuous showcase for everything 'The Place' does—students of the School, classes for children and young people, the evening school for adults, resident choreographers, 'home grown' artists, and visitors from abroad who are part of the cosmopolitan theatre culture that is typical of 'The Place'.

Performers from Dog Kennel Hill Project guided visitors through a winding promenade performance of stairs, corridors and small offices on their *People Working Project*. As we were directed to observe 'workers' involved in various seemingly pointless or monotonous activities, at various moments we were startled, or impeded by a group of brown-clad dancers with a drummer, led by Susan Sentler (formerly of the Martha Graham School, New York, now on the dance faculty of Trinity Laban). She cajoling them to 'keep up' or deepen their contractions —always those contractions and the hard, hard work of the Graham class. If there was a subversive point here, about the loss of the Graham inheritance, it was denied. Perhaps at least there was a crafty point about how artists themselves can be an awkward fit in large institutions, even artistic ones. Dog Kennel Hill's stated website aims for this project are to investigate: "the successes and failings of the work ethic" including "the working role of choreographer looking at the art of persuasion, drills, lists". Work, of course, is activity and therefore spatial—acts of space within a place. In this and other events place was expanded to include outside the walls. Looking out from windows and doorways we saw the performance happening outside, and this again confirms the wider sense of place that goes beyond the building.

H2dance presented another promenade performance, *Choir Project: Attention!* with singing, marching two abreast along corridors and stairways, and a mock battle using violent exhalations rather than bullets, making direct reference to the first users of the building.

In the following week, an evening production called *This is the Place: A new dance show 40 years in the making* brought together a collage of pieces, extracts and audio introductions that recited a history and a continuing role for 'The Place' in dance teaching, performance and artist development. A continuous thread was that of 'passing on' iconic dances from the past repertory to young and recent dancers: Tom Jobe's *Rite*

*Electrik* (1984), Siobhan Davies's *Sphinx* (1977), Cohan's *Forest* (1977), Jane Dudley's *Preludes* (1993). In the finale this theme was summated in *Dancing to Music* (1988) by Victoria Marks, a re-staging on three current leaders and former students of 'The Place' — Richard Alston (Artistic Director), Kenneth Tharp (Chief Executive), Eddie Nixon (Theatre Director) — with a student currently at the School.

The afternoon before the final performance was billed as a public 'In Conversation' with Robert Cohan and it became a day of return for company members of London Contemporary Dance Theatre. Origins were celebrated and records of memories were archived all afternoon. While some participants described 'The Place' as home and family, there is no doubt that loss, heartache, rupture and despair have also characterised the relationships developed here.

So how did 'The Place' celebrate its place identity? Did 'The Place at 40' present itself as located, and humanly meaningful in a way that chimes with notions of place that emerge from current discourse? In its everyday function and its anniversary representation 'The Place' showed itself able to expand beyond its wall-boundaries to take part in a bigger locality and to make evident its multi-local and transnational connections and a many-sided identity rooted in both past and present. In positioning the celebration between the past and present, between history and memory and its current central role in British dance, the emphasis appeared to be more on the present. Most of all it was the final afternoon and the evening performances when history and memory were enacted. In the performances, history was never allowed to overshadow the present and future for dance at 'The Place'. I have questions remaining as to whether this celebration of *lieu de mémoire* masked a more customary inclination to avoid investing too much thought in the past.

But what of *space*? The active, social spacing that I have attempted to describe in a dance class at 'The Place' could also stand for all the spatial flows through corridors around the building, the spacing behaviour by audience in the auditorium and how dancers use the theatre and studio spaces in many different ways. It could also stand in for space as it is characterised by any social activity, any pathway or journey across the city or globe where the embodied self is in movement. However there is something missing. We need a third term between space and place. While place conveys identity and space is the movement that makes invisible space visible, what do we call the empty potential of the open area — the studio, the drill hall, the football field (McCormick, 2008: 1833) — before bodies produce social space within? Back in 1969 this old drill hall was chosen for its internal spaces, able to furnish the geometry, the abstract space of potential movement that dancers need. Not the same as place and not the same as space, it takes features of both.

While I remain satisfied that, with the aid of some choreological theory, *space* and *place* emerge from this case study as valid and distinct categories, I feel the need for a third term that could be illustrated by return to my studio analogy. Spatial awareness must refer to a volume that is fixed by architectural and/or environmental features. This is *the space of potential*.

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## **“It was just as if you were naked!”**

### **- The artistic-educational space in primary school classes as a pedagogical challenge related to embodiment and vulnerability**

Charlotte Svendler Nielsen

This paper seeks to cast light on *how embodiment and vulnerability have significance in the artistic-educational space of primary school teaching and learning*. It takes point of departure in narratives produced from an interview with the Danish and music teacher of a second grade class that has had a dance project with a dance educator during half a year, and from observations of dance and Danish lessons. Two narratives will be presented and the Dutch pedagogue Max van Manen will be used to go in depth with analyses and discussions of themes related to embodiment and vulnerability in the artistic-educational space. Van Manen's (1990, 2002) writings are useful for this purpose because the scientific approach of this research is phenomenologically inspired and he is one of the few pedagogues who are also writing within a phenomenological tradition.

#### **Significant moments – concrete stories**

In his book *Researching lived experience* from 1990, van Manen writes that phenomenological research always begins “in the lifeworld” (van Manen 1990:7), and has as its aim to create deeper understandings of the meaning of experienced phenomena. The essence of a phenomenon can be “described through a study of the structure that governs the instances or particular manifestations of the essence of that phenomenon” (ibid.:10). He also mentions that descriptions of “significant moments” are central when we want to understand human experience and lived meanings (ibid.:163). Those moments can come forth in “(...) concrete stories that present moments of teaching” and “may provide opportunities for reflecting pedagogically on actions, situations, and relations of teaching” (van Manen 2002:54). In the following I will present a significant moment in the form of a narrative.

#### **The teacher's narrative**

During an interview with the Danish and music teacher of the second grade class we are talking about what it takes to teach in the artistic-educational space in primary school classes. She says:

“If you don't dare yourself you cannot make the children do it. It is the same in drama and music. I remember an experience I had in a music lesson once. I sang a song for the

children. I sang without playing the piano or anything. When I finished there was complete silence quiet in the room for some seconds, but then the children suddenly started to laugh and laugh and laugh. I asked: "But, what are you laughing at?" and they continued to laugh and laugh and laugh, but finally a boy raised his hand and said: "It is not because it sounds awful, it actually sounds very, very good, but *it was just as if you were naked!*" The teacher continues: "I think it was such a fine way of expressing their experience. They thought I had exposed myself so much by standing there singing to them without anything to hide behind. They were touched, but their reaction was – we need to laugh, we need to do something and spontaneously they just started to laugh, because they were touched and didn't know what to do. The teacher says that she also thinks that this is central in dance teaching: "As the teacher and the adult you need to dare being a step ahead of them all the time. You need to dare being on the floor and act 'strangely'. If not you will not be able to teach in that subject. Of course you can teach a subject without being an expert, you don't need to be an author to teach Danish, but in the artistic subjects you need to *dare* and to *want* to do it."

### **Pedagogical themes in relation to being in and creating an artistic-educational space**

The teacher's reaction when the children start laughing is one of wonder, but she also shows an open curiosity to what the children have experienced. To the uniqueness of the situation. She accepts their reaction and shows respect to them in her way of dealing with what to her must be a very vulnerable situation. This is an example of what van Manen (2002:8) would call a "tactful educator" and of "pedagogical thoughtfulness." "Tactful educators" are educators who have developed a caring attentiveness to the unique: The uniqueness of children, the uniqueness of every situation, and the uniqueness of individual lives whereas "pedagogical thoughtfulness" is "sustained by a certain kind of seeing, of listening, of responding to a particular child or children in this and that situation. Out of this basis of thoughtfulness, tact in our relationship with children may grow", he says (ibid.:10).

Van Manen (2002:25) states that "the theoretical language of child "science" so easily makes us look past each child's uniqueness toward common characteristics." How do we learn to *see* the children in an open and curious way? For example by practicing to see differences instead of communalities? As underlined by van Manen (2002:49) "(...) pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact are not simply a set of external skills to be acquired in a workshop. A living knowledge of teaching is not just head stuff requiring intellectual work. It requires an attentive attunement of one's whole being to the child's experience of the world." In this way the concepts of "tactful educators" and "pedagogical thoughtfulness" become linked to *vulnerability* which through a "wholistic



reading" (van Manen 1990:93) I find to be a central phenomenon in this part of the interview.

### **Characteristics of the artistic-educational space**

Later during the interview the teacher tells:

"When they run around like airplanes, I see that they use the space in a different way. I see how wonderful they feel using the space, how great it is to throw ones body around – look at this one! We cannot help being happy. Nobody looks angry when they move around like airplanes. That is simply not possible. So this happiness – you feel that they are having a great time, right? However, in the beginning it was difficult. There was resistance. But now they enter the space with 'the palms up' – if I can express it with a metaphor – there is opened up now. And that is why they are also vulnerable. Like Bea who was crying this morning. Perhaps she had had a hard morning and then when they enter this space something happens, they use their bodies and that brings the feelings forth. You can also see how the boys sit and hug each other, how they just need to touch one another."

In this narrative it appears that characteristics of an artistic-educational space can be that it is a space which is used in a way that influences the mood/ the atmosphere. It is also a space that gives room for a broad variety of feelings, a space with a very caring physical contact and it is a space that nurtures new relationships. Van Manen (2002:54) states that "(...) spaces also have their atmospheric, sensual, and felt aspects" and that "many teachers intuitively understand that the daily activities of teaching and learning are conditioned by such ineffable factors as the atmosphere of the school and classroom, the relational qualities that pertain amongst students and teachers, and the complex and subtle dimensions of temporality and lived space of the school (...). It is sensed or felt, rather than thought or reasoned" (ibid.:53). Here the *embodied* dimensions of teaching and learning in dance become closely linked to the vulnerability of the children.

### **What is needed of the teacher in the artistic-educational space?**

Van Manen (2002:71) emphasizes that: "A teacher has to learn to become sensitive to the ways children experience the complexity of elements that contribute to the atmosphere of the school and classroom". This might be especially important in artistic-educational spaces as both the teacher and the children become vulnerable when they engage in expressive activities. To make some first conclusions regarding how embodiment and vulnerability have significance in the artistic-educational space of primary

school teaching and learning based on the analysis of the material presented here, I think it has become visible that a teacher in an artistic-educational space needs to be “tactful”, attentive to differences, able to handle situations where the children feel vulnerable, to see the unique in every child and situation and to have a well developed “kinaesthetic empathy” (Parviainen 2002) rooted in the ability to bodily distinguish different dynamic qualities.

How can we develop and practice thoughtfulness and tact? Learn to dare teaching in areas where we can feel vulnerable? And become good teachers in artistic-educational spaces? First of all we need to highlight the embodied dimension as van Manen (2002:46) does when he writes that “(...) through the senses we are connected as seeing, hearing, and touching beings with our children.” One example of this given by him is a teacher watching a student skipping and how he understands how the child feels by seeing the dynamic differences in her tense way of skipping and the relaxed skipping of the others (van Manen 2002:24). As it also comes forth in the narratives presented in this paper “significant moments” (van Manen 1990:163) are ‘seen’ with the whole body, not only with the eyes. The embodied dimensions of teaching dance can be practiced through exercises that focus on paying attention and being bodily aware. Working with the movement theory of Rudolph Laban (1963) in practice can also help developing abilities to see and feel subtle differences in dynamic qualities.

### **Concluding remarks**

The artistic-educational space has a significance for how the children develop their understandings of themselves and each other. In the creative processes there is room for involvement in the unique situation and through the involvement the children’s imagination is opened and widened. Through this they experience themselves and others in different ways. They practice their sensitive involvement and widen their consciousness about and abilities to understand other ways of being and expressing. Kinaesthetic empathic skills are developed through choreographic processes and in the analysis of the empirical material of this project it showed to be central that kinaesthetic and social empathy are closely connected when the children in the work with movement and bodily sensations open their attentiveness towards others.

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## **Flamenco Dance as Transformation in Liminal Space: *compás, ritual and duende***

Diane Oatley

The aim of this conference stipulates, among other things, in connection with dance and space, that moving generates an embodied and shared spatiality. My focus today will be on exploring some of the features of such spatiality, specifically in terms of the embodied transformation that occurs in Flamenco dance within the establishment of liminal space. The timeframe allotted here does not permit a presentation of Flamenco's history in any depth: In brief then, the art form of Flamenco is the result of a process of transculturation, the merger of the musical culture of the Roma population that immigrated to Andalusia around 1425, with the musical and folk traditions of that region (Leblon 2003:47)<sup>i</sup>. Written evidence exists of *gitano baile* ("gypsy dance") from as early as the 1700s (Navarro and Pablo 2005), but it was in the course of what is referred to as the *edad de oro* ("the golden age") in the period 1869-1910 that Flamenco acquired the form that we recognize today (ibid). Beyond this, I would mention that in the course of the almost six years that I have been doing periods of fieldwork in Jerez de la Frontera, I have on a number of occasions asked professionals to define Flamenco, and ultimately, the response has been that Flamenco is not an art form, it is a way of life, a way of being in the world.

### **Flamenco: a way of being in the world**

It is this "way of being in the world" that I will be addressing here, specifically in terms of how through Flamenco dance as both performance and ritualized practice, a particular habitus is reiterated and established that is lived and believed at the level of the body. This is of importance with regard to an understanding of the potential that I feel lies in dance in general for the expression of alterity, and as I will attempt to show is the case for Flamenco, the establishment of such alterity as embodied subjectivity.

My proposal is that Flamenco as a dance form presents, develops and transmits a specific manner of being in the world through the reiteration and expression of a lived Flamenco culture that is passed on today as an ontological state. This has been made possible in part through Flamenco dance's capacity to embody and invoke a particular difference as habitus<sup>ii</sup>, or "those embodied rituals of everydayness by which a given culture produces and sustains belief in its own 'obviousness'" (Butler 1997:152). It is my contention that one of the means by which this habitus functions in Flamenco

traditionally speaking is through the dance as a means of reasserting, reconstructing and reclaiming itself, its “obviousness” in the face of particular life crises or rites of passage. One key aspect of such habitus in terms of Flamenco is that of *reciprocity*. To cite feminist philosopher Judith Butler: “In this sense the habitus is formed, but it is also formative; it is in this sense that the bodily habitus constitutes a tacit form of performativity, a citational chain lived and believed at the level of the body” (Butler 1997:155). What Butler is saying here is that a habitus emerges through a form of reciprocity, reciprocal in the context of Flamenco in the sense that it is both *formed* by the dancing subject and is *formative* for that same dancing subject.

### **Habitus and compás**

The habitus of Flamenco dance is discernable as a form of embodied presence in both the movement itself and in the tradition as a whole. With respect to this embodied presence, the concept of *compás*, meaning literally compass, but in terms of music and dance, rhythm, is a key and defining feature. Having “compás” in Flamenco implies being able at any given time to navigate the rhythmic landscape of Flamenco music. In practice then, *compás* means a profoundly embodied understanding of the music and of Flamenco as a tradition and art form. The competency represented by having *compás* is then an example of the *habitus* of Flamenco: it entails sedimented knowledge in the body, which is fundamental. It is a matter of dancing a particularly embodied subjectivity where the focus is on the movement in and for itself – within the confines of a strictly defined movement language. A movement quality is produced creating a specific experiential horizon. The *compás* as habitus represents in my mind one of the means by which Flamenco, however much it has also evolved into dance for the stage, remains securely grounded in its evolution as a folk tradition, where dance functions as a part of individual and collective ritual, and with a thematic focus on *key life crises, or thresholds*: birth, death, unrequited love, poverty, suffering, etc.

As a means of illustrating some of these points I will use examples from a Flamenco dance performance of the branch of Flamenco *soleá* performed by “Farruquito” (Juan Manuel Fernández Montoya). Farruquito is from the Farruco dynasty of Sevilla, one of the more well-known and indeed significant Flamenco families. It could be said that he and his family, in particular his now deceased grandfather Farruco, represent Flamenco *puro*, or traditional Flamenco. The *soleá* piece in question begins with 5 minutes of music alone, during which Farruquito, the dancer, enters and waits, clapping in the *soleá compás*, before beginning to dance. The mood is somber, meditative. The dancer’s initial movements are slow, in keeping with this state, expressive of the emotions which the music itself instills and evokes. The dancer marks

and moves in the rhythm of the soleá, inhabiting and cultivating this landscape for three verses, slowly, pensively, in movement combinations that are introverted and intimate, elegant and strong, expressive of grief. This establishes a visceral plane of being, which in general terms can be said to represent a particular loss – the death of a loved one, unrequited love, etc. Through the course of the soleá, the dancing protagonist will embody this loss, beginning in the state of its mourning, to be gradually resurrected, like a phoenix from the ashes. As such, the soleá stages a transformation.

### **Liminal space**

The thematic focus of transformation brings us to liminality. Anthropologist Victor Turner in *The Anthropology of Performance* defines liminality as “a betwixt-and-between condition often involving seclusion from the everyday scene” (Turner 1988:101). He connects such liminality to rituals associated with passage from one status or life condition to another, either collectively or individually. The soleá danced as the embodiment and surmounting of pain would imply such a passage from one “life condition” to another. A second feature of liminality as defined by Turner is that of the subjunctive mode, which is characterized by a state of wishing, desiring, yearning, rather than about an established statement of fact. Again, the soleá, in that it expresses the pain of bereavement, or existential anguish, the subsequent surmounting of that pain certainly corresponds with this; on the whole, it can be said that the predominant mood of Flamenco in general is that of the subjunctive mode: a profoundly felt yearning.<sup>iii</sup> Particular to this mode in the context of liminality and ritual, is the aspect of reflexivity: the act of an individual or culture reflecting upon itself and/or its existence, as a subject and as a tradition, through what Turner terms metacommunication, “the generation of a new language verbal or nonverbal, which enables them to talk about what they normally talk.” (Turner 1988:103). Dance can certainly be understood as a non-verbal language enabling such metacommunication, offering the possibility for an embodied reflection. Turner expands on this further, stating that metacommunication is a matter of “a man in his wholeness wholly attending” (ibid). The latter would be that which we in the dance world refer to as embodied presence.

### **Liminality in performance**

Is liminality as defined here visible then in the performance in question? The choreography of the soleá gradually evolves into a series of complex zapateado or footwork sequences producing rhythmic climaxes within the otherwise meditative, virtually hypnotic state generated and maintained in the first 5 minutes of the piece, from which the dancer then instigates a break involving a shift in tempo. This change

then builds and intensifies to the end of the piece, through a series of *subidas*, or movement crescendos that climax and subside, like waves advancing and retreating, but with each climax raising the visceral energy to another plane.

An experiential space is created through physical ruptures – the body seems to be twisted and pushed to or even beyond the edges of its physical limitations, as if sensation is being wrung out of it. The dancer appears at this point “in his wholeness wholly attending” or exceedingly present; inhabiting a space that is intimate and private – Farruquito commits repeatedly what in dance is traditionally speaking a clear faux pas: he looks down at the floor, or at his feet, focused, introverted, as if he is dancing for himself alone, something which enunciates the aspect of embodied reflection referred to above. And then he lifts his head, at times he cries out, and returns to us. The embodied subject that emerges again and again, each time with renewed strength, with greater insistence, is both vulnerable and increasingly triumphant and proud, both private and public. The overall atmosphere is one of a subjunctive mode: of desire and a deeply felt yearning. This in itself sets the stage for a transformation.

The transformation that occurs in this particular performance can be seen superficially in the initial removal of his jacket, the subsequent freeing of his shirt-tails, the unbuttoning of that same shirt, until his *pañuela* hangs like a noose around his bare neck, reminiscent of the encounter with death and mourning that informs the atmosphere of this piece. He pares off the inessentials, stripping down to the bare bones of his grief. In the final section we see Farruquito dancing with his brothers. The aspect of ritual is underscored here by the connectedness of the dancers, four brothers, this is a family affair. The dancers are working within a tradition that has been passed down orally for generations. Beyond this it is clear that Farruquito has travelled to another existential plane; when one sees the four of them dancing together, he is clearly running the show, and the sense is of his having blazed a trail through anguish, cleared out a space which they may now enter and take part in upholding: there is a technical virtuosity to all of the dancers, but they are not in any sense transmitting the same thing, Farruquito is inhabiting a space and producing a visceral presence that they are not.

## **Duende**

Fredrico Garcia Lorca, the Andalusian poet and dramatist, might say that Farruquito is channeling *duende* here, or the spirit of evocation that he holds to be a defining characteristic of Flamenco; I introduce the word *duende* here in closing, because it is helpful in explaining this “visceral presence” further, and in connecting some of the dots between the disparate concepts I am trying to unite here and further relating them to

Flamenco. Lorca was the first to develop the aesthetics of this term, and in so doing he connected it to Flamenco as an art form. It must be said that his lecture “Theory and Play of the Duende” does have the effect of further mystifying more than clarifying duende as a cultural metaphor. However, when the essay is read against the concepts I have introduced here, interesting resonances are produced.

Lorca states: “All that has dark sounds has *duende*. And there’s no deeper truth than that. Those dark sounds are the mystery, the roots that cling to the mire that we all know, that we all ignore, but from which comes the very substance of art”(Lorca 1933). Duende is, “A mysterious force that everyone feels and no philosopher has explained”(ibid). One’s initial reaction to the latter statement might be that it is not particularly helpful; reading this through Butler however, allows an interpretation of this as a reference to unarticulated knowledge. “Everyone” feels it, but even philosophers are unable to explain “it”. It is, “the mire that we all know, that we all ignore...” or again, with Butler, the body’s materiality “from which comes the very substance of art. (ibid)”

Further, “The *duende* is not in the throat: the *duende* surges up, inside, from the soles of the feet. Meaning, it’s not a question of skill, but of a style that’s truly alive: meaning, it’s in the veins: meaning, it’s of the most ancient culture of *immediate creation*”(ibid, my emphasis). Duende is something that is produced with an immediacy, implying a collapse of the distance between body as subject and object, in what Turner describes as a “flow” arising in the “play frame of liminality”: “this particular union of primary processes...where action and awareness are one and there is a loss of the sense of the ego.”(Turner 1988:). In the clip in question, Farruquito the dancer has moved through an act of immediate and embodied reflection or metacommunication within the “play frame” of liminal space, to produce such a flow enabling transformation.

And finally, Lorca states “The arrival of the *duende* presupposes a radical change to all the old kinds of form, brings totally unknown and fresh sensations” (ibid). Such a “radical change” would imply a process of transformation, in which the practitioner has to “rob (themselves) of skill and safety”... or move out of the realm of the known, of received notions, so ... “[their] duende might come and deign to struggle with them at close quarters” (ibid). Through the transformation then “totally unknown and fresh sensations” or something new is born, formerly unarticulated knowledge finds expression, which is in effect the performative gesture. Through the improvisational mode which is also a defining feature of traditional Flamenco, the dancer moves out of the realm of the “known”; the struggle Lorca refers to is clearly evident in the agonistic structure of the *soleá*, as the dancer retreats into himself, again and again, to pause, confront his pain, reflect, and then emerge with renewed force and power, to create a virtual storm of movement, and in which each time he emerges, that storm has greater



intensity, greater self-assurance, until the end where he is joined by his brothers and the transition is made from the sadness of the *soleá* to the jubilant celebration of the *bulerías*, the celebratory Flamenco dance for fiesta which ends the piece.

## Conclusion

To summarize then in closing, the invocation of Lorca's *duende* in Flamenco dance can be read as taking place in liminal space as defined here, in seclusion from everyday life. This is a liminal space which is informed by the subjunctive mode and characterized by metacommunication, the definition of which I have paraphrased here in terms of the "non-verbal" language of dance as involving embodied reflection. Flamenco dance, as performance and as ritual, thematically speaking involves then an endeavour to confront and navigate thresholds, whereupon the embodied knowledge of such transformative encounters is reiterated as habitus – a habitus that is articulated, reinforced and further developed through the compás and the dance itself, in a reciprocal act that is both formed and formative, by and for the dancer. It is thus through and within the creation of liminality as an embodied and shared spatiality that otherwise censored bodies become in the case of Flamenco dance, to quote Butler, bodies that matter.

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<sup>i</sup> To say that there is no small amount of controversy regarding who in effect “owns” Flamenco, would be a gross understatement. I will however limit myself here to the theory of Flamenco scholar Bernard Leblon, who says in *Gypsies and Flamenco* that “The initial phase of flamenco’s gestation and development was essentially Gypsy, whereas the second phase, which considerably expanded its repertoire and audience, was primarily *Payo* or Andalusian. The transmission within a number of gypsy families of certain songs, and above all of a particular interpretative style and a way of *living* the flamenco, is incontestable fact, but this must not blind us to the role played by *Payo* artists of genius...” (Leblon, p. 73).

<sup>ii</sup> I employ here Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*, as this is discussed and applied by Butler in *Excitable Speech A Politics of the Performative*. According to Butler “Bourdieu offers a theory of bodily knowingness in his notion of the *habitus*, but he does not relate this discussion of the body to the theory of the performative” (Butler, p. 152), something which Butler on the other hand does.

<sup>iii</sup> The subjunctive mode defined as such and as employed in this model tends to point forward, indicating a linear evolution; also the aspect of transformation as described here cf. Turner implies an epic structure with a beginning, middle, and end. I would emphasize here that this is just one layer of the totality of the soleá. The narrative structure of the cante in Flamenco in general is predominantly not a “story”, but rather a series of isolated reflections; José Maria Castaño specifies in *De Jerez y Sus Cantes* “...one of the most precise definitions of the cante for soleá could be to ‘philosophize out loud’, make public using the voice all of these internal thoughts that mark our existence” (p. 96, my translation). And further, Alfredo Grimaldos in *Historia Social del Flamenco* explains “The *cante* seldom relates complete stories, from beginning to end, like a song. Each verse usually constitutes an isolated reflection or memory (p. 19, my translation). This is indeed the case for the cante of the performance addressed here: the narrative structure resembles more a series of isolated poems than a story. This has implications for the temporal space produced by both the music and the dance but this will of necessity be the subject of another article. As such, my analysis is here just the beginning of a much more comprehensive investigation.

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## En dansekunstners erfaringer med kirkerommet

### – Muligheter og begrensninger

Sidsel Pape

I tiden som kommer vil Den norske kirke bli en “ny” arena for utvikling av dansekunst. I den anledning er det nødvendig å reflektere over implikasjonene ved møtet mellom dansekunst og kirkerommet, mellom forestilling og gudstjeneste, mellom liturgi og dramaturgi. Jeg skal i det følgende problematisere konsekvenser av å bringe eksperimentell kunst inn i kirkerommet, i lys av en danseforestilling jeg lagde i 1997, kalt *Jeg gifter meg*. Det følgende er utdrag fra rapporten til bevilgende myndigheter.

#### Å gifte seg med seg selv

“Det er fredag 13. juni 1997 og ingen andre enn jeg vil giftes denne dagen. Jeg skal innlede et forpliktende forhold til meg selv og jeg vet ikke helt hvem hun der “jeg” er som går langsomt mellom benkeradene. Preludium av Bach ruller fra kirkeorgelet. Den blåndete brudekjolen er leid på Norsk Film. Sløret drar meg i håret. Jeg bærer et langt, hvitt, brennende stearinlys i hver hånd. Alle står oppreist og smiler blekt. Det kjennes som om jeg er tre meter høy. Det jeg vanligvis kaller meg befinner seg på utsiden av huden.

Jeg tar av meg skoene, går fram til alterringen, blir stående å se på en litt gusten Jesus til orgelmusikken tar slutt. Jeg skal brudevalse i trang kjole til sjamantrommer i koret, noe som krever en kondis jeg ikke har. Jeg slår til slutt hjul og har ikke mer pust igjen. Kanskje noen så underbuksa mi. Nå vet de at glidelåsen i kjolen ikke går å trekke helt opp. Håret er ikke lenger der det ble lagt pent på plass. Hun som skal vie meg har fylt vann i døpefonten. Hun har tatt med seg syv forskjellige slags blomster og sier høyt hva hver av dem symboliserer. Jeg gjentar lavt etter henne: Bevisstgjøring, frigjøring, fokus, tilstedeværelse, kjærlighet, kraft og visdom. Samtidig berører hun meg med blomstene. Jeg får hele buketten. Hun gir meg vielsesringen i sølv med ametyst som jeg trer på meg. Så drikker vi vievann fra sølvkoppa jeg fikk i dåpsskål. Jeg lurte på om det smaker sølvpusk.

Organisten spiller Mendelsohns brudemarsj. Jeg tar brudebukett og sko og går lettet ned kirkegangen. Blant alle dem som har reist seg, sier en mann halvhøyt: “Dette kaller jeg monogami!”. “Dette kaller jeg onani!”, lyder svar fra mannen på benken bak. Jeg er så høy at jeg ikke hører. Noen kaster ris der ute. Jeg tenker på fuglene og hilser fraværende, men lystig på hundre mennesker. På avstand ser det akkurat ut som bryllup. Folk på gata stopper opp. Ingen spør etter brudgommen. Det kan være hvem som

helst eller som i dette tilfelle, ingen. Bryllupet handler om bruden. Å gifte seg er en personlig sak. Det ligger i det refleksive verbet.”

### **Dansehistorie i kirkerommet**

*Jeg gifter meg* kan settes inn i en historisk sammenheng av forestillinger i norske kirkerom skissert av Per Roar i delrapporten *Bevegelsens øyeblikk - Dansekunst i en kirkelig kontekst - visjon og virkelighet* (2004). Rapporten var grunnlagsmateriale for kirkens kulturmelding *Kunsten å være kirke: om kirke, kunst og kultur*, en bestilling av Norske kirkeakademier på oppdrag fra Kirkerådet.

Dansekunst i norske kirkerom oppsto på slutten 1960-tallet på initiativ fra koreograf og danser Ragni Kolle. I 1967 fikk komponist Egil Hovland idéen om å bruke dans i en eksperimentgudstjeneste, *Missa Vigilante*. Kolle forteller at det største ankepunktet var at de danset i trikot. Det ble voldsomme skrivelser for og imot dansen i kirkelig presse det følgende året. Motstanden kom først og fremst fra folk som ikke hadde vært til stede under gudstjenesten.

1970-tallet var preget av Ivo Cramérs innholds- og narrativt orientert dansekunst, dog ikke framført i Norge. Først i 1988 ble hans *Bibelske Bilder* med scener fra Kristi liv, bestilt av Den Norske Opera på deres besetning. I følge koreografen ble det ikke gjort mange endringer i fra den originale sceneversjonen til framførelsen i Frogner kirke i Oslo. Koreografen ble engasjert av for å framføre verket i en norsk kirke.

På 1980-tallet virket også Dans Design ved Anne Grete Eriksen og Leif Hernes. Deres helaftens danseverk i kirkerommet var med utgangspunkt i spørsmålet: På hvilken måte kan kirkerommet inspirere kunstnere? Resultatet, *Kroppens Dokument*, ble satt opp i Kirkelandet Kirke i Kristiansund i 2001. Dans Design skriver seg inn i en formorientert dansekunst i, der kroppens bevegelser i rommet står i sentrum.

### **Kontekst og konsept**

Den kontekst- og konseptorienterte dansekunsten er representert ved blant andre Per Roar og meg selv. ”Form, innhold, sted og sammenheng står ideelt sett i et gjensidig avhengighetsforhold til hverandre” i en slik dansekunst (Per Roar 2004). Den er videre gjerne selvbiografisk og stedsspesifikk. Kunstnere generelt og kvinner spesielt har tatt personlige erfaringer opp på scener de siste 30 årene (Svane 1991). Sannsynligvis var *Jeg gifter meg* en av de første gangene at personlige erfaringer ble behandlet kunstnerisk i en danseproduksjon og satt opp i en kirke i Norge.

Forestillingen kan leses som en selvbiografisk iscenesettelse. I slike tilfeller risikerer uttrykket å miste relevans for andre enn det gjeldende subjektet, i følge Moi (2001). Det var flere inviterte som meldte avbud fra hva de mente var et rent egoistisk

foretak. Kanskje var de sikre på at forestillingen ikke ville tale til dem fordi den handlet om meg. Det som er sikkert er at de som deltok, virkelig tok del, noe som sier mye om publikummet. Kanskje sier det også noe om måten jeg brukte mitt personlige materiale på. Følelsene som kom opp hos de innbudte, kan forstås som at forestillingen berørte og kommuniserte.

### **Forflatning**

Det som kjennetegner mange dansekunstnerisk verk laget for kirkerommet, er forholdet til og forhandlinger i spenningsfeltet kunst – kirke. Uttrykksformene forestilling og gudstjeneste er vesensforskjellige i det at de påberoper seg henholdsvis fiksjon og faktisk begivenhet. Dansekunstnerisk dramaturgi skiller seg vesentlig fra kirkelig liturgi. Mens dansekunst fortolker så konstitueres gudstjenesten som forkynnelse og tilbedelse. Dette samtidig som fortolkning er et bærende element også i gudstjenesten. Mens kunst er tvetydig og sanselig, formidles kirkens åndelige budskap ofte på et entydig vis. Hvordan fører man slike dualpar sammen, er det et mål og er det mulig?

Det som forener dansekunst med gudstjenester og andre kirkelige handlinger, er at kunstnere og kirkearbeidere forvalter ikke-kommersielle anliggender. Publikum/menighet forventer å bli berørt uansett om de er medvirkende i relasjonelle handlinger eller bare betraktende til representerende handlinger, det være seg til kunst eller liturgi. Felles nærvær og fordypelse i tilstander er også fellesnevner. Kanskje er det bedre å fokusere på disse likhetene enn alt som skiller kunst og kirke.

Det som har kjennetegnet dansekunst i kirkerommet fra 1960-tallet fram til i dag er at dansekunstnerne enten overidentifiserer eller ikke-identifiserer med kristent budskap (Per Roar 2004). Det første impliserer gjerne en sterk trosforankring, det andre antipatier mot og/eller et oppgjør med kirken/kristent budskap. Slike binære motsetninger og motsatte ståsteder bidrar ofte til en forflatning av det kunstneriske uttrykket. *Jeg gifter meg* kommuniserte både identifisering og ikke-identifisering med det kirkelig innhold. Koreografien var en dekonstruksjon av bryllupsritualet, der delene ble sydd sammen i ny rekkefølge ispedd andre spirituelle tradisjoner som sjamanisme. Sannsynligvis var det gjenbruken av ritualet som både berørte og gjorde folk forbannet. Det førte også med seg at forestillingen balanserte hårfint mellom fiksjon og fakta.

### **Fakta eller fiksjon**

På grunn av den teologiske forståelse av de kirkelige handlingenes faktisitet, så blir ikke dansekunst i kirkerommet automatisk oppfattet som forestilling. Det kan derfor være nødvendig å etablere fiksjonskontrakten langt mer ettertrykkelig i kirkerommet, som tradisjonelt ikke er et scenerom. På den annen side så kan for eksempel kontekst og

konseptorientert dansekunst dra nytte av den mulige doble lesningen av kunst i kirkerommet. Er det som vises fiksjon eller fakta, eller kanskje begge deler? Tilskuer kan da komme til å bli både aktør og betrakter. De får en mellomposisjonen som kan kalles "betraktør" (Hovig 2004). Denne nye publikumsrollen kan videre kan bidra til å oppløse dansekunstens dominerende skille mellom scene og sal.

I *Jeg gifter meg* ble tilskuerens rolle utfordret. De gikk inn i rollen som medvirkende bryllupsgjester. Det potensielt passivt iakttakende publikummet, ble deltakende iakttakende. Kanskje var det fordi jeg tok utgangspunkt i et kjent og kjært ritual hvor alle kunne "replikkene" sine fra før? Publikum tok av seg hatten, reiste seg da bruden kom inn, gikk ut etter bruden og kastet ris. Mange hadde også bryllupsgaver.

Det var ikke entydig for tilskuerne om *Jeg gifter meg* var faktisk- eller teatral hendelse, en usikkerhet jeg som dansekunstner lot dem være i. På den måten satte jeg søkelyset mot forestillingsaspektene ved bryllupet som kirkelig handling. Fiksjonen ved bryllupet ble kvadrert. Ritualet ble gjennom min forestilling tydeliggjort som et stykke levende teater, kanskje det eneste sådanne folk flest noen gang går inn i. Det er et åpent spørsmål hvorvidt *Jeg gifter meg* bidro til å undergrave eller revitalisere kirkelige handlinger gjennom mitt kontekst og konseptorienterte dansekunstneriske uttrykk.

### **Undergravende kunst**

I Judith Butlers termer kan forestillingen tolkes som det hun kaller en subversiv strategi, en samfunnskritisk handling (Butler 1996). Mye kan tyde på at *Jeg gifter meg* undergravde monogamiet, (hetero)seksualitet, ekteskapelige ritualer, kirkelige og andre konvensjoner. Hvor sterkt giftemålet forbindes med (hetero)seksualitet fikk jeg oppleve da noen anonyme gutter ringte og kom med nedrige spørsmål om bryllupsnattens innhold. At prosjektet virket desstabiliserende, kom tydelig fram gjennom forundringen, forvirringen og provokasjonen det vakte, blant annet hos dem som nektet å delta.

Sognepresten og organisten var forbilledlig imøtekommende, det eneste de ikke tillot, var å spise bryllupskake i kirken etter forestillingen. Jeg fikk heller ikke invitere presse eller offentliggjøre i hvilken kirke kunstprosjektet mitt fant sted. Det viste seg å ikke være nødvendig all den tid nyheten spredde seg raskt munn til munn. Da hendelsen kom biskopen for øret, fikk kirkearbeiderne represalier. Snart 15 år senere har denne menigheten sluppet til mange eksperimenterende kunstnere i kirkerommet de disponerer.

Som med all kunst plassert inn i eller passet til kirkerommet, gjelder også følgende spørsmål for dansekunst: Hvor mye kirke tåler kunsten? Hvor mye kunst tåler kirken? Sannsynligvis vil det fremdeles ta årtier å finne fram til en god balanse i så måte.

Forestillingen jeg gjorde i kirkerommet ga meg senere flere muligheter til jobb som danseviter. I 2005 ble Kirkens Kulturmelding *Kunsten å være kirke* publisert. Meldingen anbefalte Kirkemøtet å etablere et senter for skapende og utøvende kunst. To år senere ble kompetansesenteret "KULT – Senter for Kunst, Kultur og Kirke" stiftet, der jeg arbeider med problemstillinger i forholdet mellom kunst - kirke.

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# Space and Improvisation in Argentinean Tango

Susanne Ravn

The aim of this paper is to explore the ways dancers perceive and move interactively in and through the tango embrace when improvising the dance. The descriptions of tango dancing are intended to work as a case specific focus of how space is created in movement. Philosophically related descriptions will be measured up against descriptions presented in an autobiographical story of how improvisation in tango dancing can take place. Throughout the discussions of this paper, I will use philosopher Erin Manning's (2007; 2009) elaborations on how movement and space are given life interactively in movement and human geographer Doreen Massey's (2005) propositions and discussions concerning space.

## Improvising tango dancing – and autobiographical story

*I began dancing Argentinian tango by accident. I planned a 3 week holiday to visit my sister, when she lived in Buenos Aires for a period and somehow it seemed impossible to visit Buenos Aires as a dancer, and a teacher and researcher in dance without having participated in a few milongas – places where tango is danced. So, despite the fact that I had never really been that interested in this kind of dancing, I tried to get just a bit familiar with the basic steps and the basic rules for improvisation in Argentinean tango some months ahead of the visit.*

*After a few workshops, which I had picked out rather randomly at a Danish Tango festival, I arranged for some private lessons with a local teacher. I learned to place my feet correctly in the basic cross step, to turn around the leader in the 'giro,' and to recognize that the 'boleo' was a bit tricky. According to my own judgment at that time I was doing okay in recognizing the different movement signals for when certain steps were expected from me – when dancing the follower-role. I felt a continuous progress during the private lessons. My posture as well as the way I shared the embrace with the leader became more relaxed. I became still better at taking the role of the follower without ending up trying to predict the steps to come and I discovered that I actually enjoyed to be led in the dance. A bit untrained but not unfamiliar with the steps I went to Buenos Aires.*

*When I arrived, I quickly learned that my sister's neighbor José, around 60, was a 'milonguero'. Happily married he still continued to join different local milongas at least twice a week, while his wife preferred to stay at home and watch a soccer game.*



*Meeting with other old milongeros José introduced me to the milonga rules in Buenos Aires. The 'tandas' were a sequence of three to four dances, and the 'cortinas' signalled the shift in between the tandas and thereby also the time for new inclinations. He showed me how inclinations work through eye contact: the males are placed in one area, sitting front to the ladies in the area opposite, the latter waiting and using the eye contact strategically to be invited for a dance with a preferred leader.*

*So here I was, a bit nervous, in a local milonga. I had survived some dances okay. I could follow the continuous sequence of steps that José and some of his good friends had offered me on the dance floor. I sensed that I could be a bit more relaxed in my body - however, the tension was not bad. It all seemed to work and I enjoyed the challenge and the intimacy of the improvised tango dancing.*

*Then this tall guy invited me 'through eye-contact' to dance. I took a deep breath, nodded a bit, smiled back to him and crossed the floor to meet him. (It was later that I learned that as a female follower in a milonga in Buenos Aires I am supposed to wait for him to come to me.) We established the embrace, and for some reasons I felt my body hesitating...and I began thinking. I felt as if nearly stumbling over my own feet and unable to follow the signals given through his movements. Nothing seemed to work ... Or rather: he walked and I tried to follow and recognize the steps, which I then did my best to follow. I felt the tension raise and my sense of center lifting with this tension. Then he stopped. For at minute I feared he would leave me there on the dance floor without finishing the tanda and that I would have to find my chair alone – humiliated. I got totally confused when he began lifting me slowly and nearly off the ground. I just stood there on the absolute tip of my toe and he just waited ...waited until I relaxed, stopped looking for signals and sequences of steps, and began to be there with his body in the movement.... Gave up the idea of being in control of my body – I guess – accepted and went into the embrace and began dancing from the dynamic as created in the embrace. I don't remember that we did anything else but walk.... that space opened and time left.*

Of course the different contexts and cultural settings – a dance studio in Odense versus the milongas in Buenos Aires – means a lot to the dancing and how I experienced the dancing. In that sense, the story might illustrate how tango is both the same and different as it is danced in cultural settings and we could discuss tango as a practice within a transnational context (Wulff, 2000; Strauss, 2000). One might also read the story as illustrative for what it takes to learn tango on an embodied level. To use a description of Loïc Wacquant, this is also a story of how my trained dancing-body works “as a spontaneous strategist” of contemporary dance techniques and had to learn new strategies of interaction when moving from contemporary dance training to Argentinean tango (2004: 97).

However, I want to focus the discussions on how the story also present descriptions of different ways of making the improvisation work in and from the tango embracement, that is, 'responding to signals' versus 'dancing from the embrace'. Different ways of handling improvisation, which I still find myself shifting in between in the milongas I dance today some years and several dance experiences later.

### **Pre-accelerations and intervals in tango dancing - according to Erin Manning**

Manning is a trained philosopher and performer – and herself a tango dancer (dancing the leader role). In her book '*Relationscapes*' (2009) Manning elaborates on the incipency of movement, by foregrounding sensations of the not-yet of movement as this is felt as part of and in the actual movement. She emphasizes in several ways that her focus is on the act of displacement and not the fact of displacement, and that her work is neither to be misunderstood as a description of pre-articulations nor as an elaboration on some kind of non-verbal authenticity of movement forerunning reflections (ibid: 5-6, 18-19). Rather, her focus is on how movement can be felt in a moment of not-yet before it actualizes, like a *pre-acceleration* forerunning potential movement. Pre-accelerations are, according to Manning's descriptions, given life and can be felt through relational *intervals of movement*, which is expressed in the fluctuating duration in between actual movements (Manning, 2007). The virtual and actual movement is to be understood as part of the same in the sense that the concrete movement must remain potentially virtual, and vice versa. Pre-accelerations take form in the virtual movement and virtual movements can be felt as pre-accelerations (ibid: 19). The continuous change in interactions and interrelations are central to how pre-accelerations come to life. To find movement is thereby about working pre-accelerations (ibid: 21) and to move relationally is, according to Manning's descriptions to create and move an interval together (ibid: 30). The interactive complexity of intervals and pre-accelerations are to be understood as central to processes of creating space in movement. In Manning's word: "I move not you but the interval out of which our movement emerges. We move time relationally as we create space: we move space as we create time" (ibid: 17).

As part of the elaborations and descriptions of the concepts, Manning specifically turns to descriptions of how improvisation takes place in tango dancing. These descriptions exemplify how pre-accelerations and intervals might work. The embracement is, in this sense, not to be thought of as a specific kind of touching but as a continuous plastic repetition of touch and an ongoing process of reconnections (ibid.16?). Manning continues to describe how dancing the leading role is not about deciding but about initiating an opening (ibid: 30) "I am not moving her, nor is she simply responding to me: we are beginning to move relationally, creating an interval that we

move together.” She also emphasizes that the dancers can work the interval more or less successful. As described by Manning: “When the relational movement flows, it is because we surrender to the interval: the interval in-forms our movement. We re-form: we create a collective body” (ibid: 27).

### **The multiplicity of interactive intervals**

I cheer on Manning’s descriptions of how relational complexities are described actively in relation to how movements are given life. However, I am puzzled by the way in which tango-dancing comes to be presented and used for description of pre-accelerations and intervals of relational movement.

As indicated, the experiences described in the story above include at least two ways of handling improvisation in tango: ‘responding to movement signals’ and ‘dancing from the embrace’. Following Manning’s philosophical elaborations of tango dancing, the latter description illustrates how movements flow when the dancers surrender to the interval, while the first description of handling the improvisation appear to be related to the unsuccessful struggle of beginners not capable of ‘surrendering’ to any interval.

Manning’s descriptions of tango dancing appear to twist in and out of her development of the concept of pre-accelerations. In these descriptions the *ideal* of how improvisation in tango dancing should be handled appears as an implicit paradigm of what tango dancing is. Her elaborations thereby come to imply that dancing tango can be described according to whether the pre-acceleration and interval of movement and the continuous process of re-connections are being worked on *more* or *less*. It is this implicit absence of differences and varieties of how pre-accelerations and intervals might take form and might be handled that puzzles me. In the context of this paper, having the perspectives of possible transnational aspects and processes of embodiment in mind, the differences and variability of how improvisation in tango dancing might be handled are not to be reduced to questions concerning whether pre-accelerations and intervals are more or less present in the interaction. Rather, we should also look for how pre-accelerations and intervals can work in different ways and accordingly give life to actual movement differently in any tango dancing event. I therefore suggest that the two different ways of handling the improvisation inherent in tango, as presented in the story, are to be understood as *two different ways* of working pre-accelerations, intervals and the continuous process of re-connections. If Manning’s elaboration of how space is created is to make sense in relation to the differences and variations of how interaction and relations are handled in process, then the ways of shaping and handling pre-

accelerations and intervals should be opened so they can take form in a multiplicity of ways.

I suggest that Manning's descriptions of tango dancing are interpreted in accordance with what philosopher Alva Noë (2001) suggests, which is that art can be used for phenomenological elaborations on perceptual processes. In this sense, the ideal of tango dancing becomes interesting for theoretical purposes as it may "direct our attention to the complexity of our experience, a complexity we easily overlook" (Noë, 2001:123). In this view neither art nor dance offers a theory of interaction. Elaborations of the ideal of tango dancing might highlight what is paradigmatically in the shadow but could be revealed in various ways including considerations of everyday experiences or tango-beginners struggling with improvisation.

In this sense Mannings' descriptions of ideal tango dancing works as a highlighter of how pre-accelerations and intervals work interactively, but following Noë's argumentation, a non-ideal way of dancing tango is just as well to be characterized by pre-accelerations and intervals. When dancing the follower role in tango, based on an experience of recognizing steps and responding to signals, pre-accelerations are worked on differently, and intervals and virtual movements invite different kinds of actual movements when compared to an experience of dancing from the dynamic created and felt from the embrace.

### **Activating multiplicity of spaces – according to Doreen Massey**

Massey's understanding of space can supplement Manning's work in the context of tango. In her book *For Space* (2005), Massey centers her discussion on how it space holds out the possibility of difference and surprise. According to Massey, space gives us simultaneous heterogeneity and it "is the condition of the social in the widest sense and the delight and challenge of that" (ibid: 105). She brings forth three proposition concerning space. Space is 1) to be recognized as the product of interrelations, 2) to be understood as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity/coexisting heterogeneity, and 3) to be recognized as always under construction, and that one might accordingly therefore also imagine space as a simultaneity of stories so far (ibid: 9, 61). Manning's descriptions of how space is created through the dancers' handling of coexisting intervals of virtual movements resonates particularly with the first propositions presented by Massey.

According to Massey the challenge concerning the latter two propositions of space is "to argue not just for a notion of 'becoming', but for the openness of that process of becoming" (ibid: 21). In relation to the critique presented concerning the absence of possible multiplicities in Manning's descriptions of intervals and pre-

accelerations these propositions are therefore of direct relevance to the discussion concerning improvisation in tango dancing.

If tango dancing is defined from an ideal, as Manning seems to do, this ideal also comes to pre-define the structure of how pre-accelerations and intervals are formed. The openness in the creation of spaces is narrowed and becomes restricted. The ideal comes to work as an implicit paradigm of tango dancing, and thus as a fixing of interrelated processes creating space. Space becomes a pacified in relation to how time is activated when describing the interaction. Space ends up as if created in a process running in frozen paths – like discrete multiplicities without durations, dynamics and shifting in overlappings in their interactions.

As is also the case in philosopher Henri Bergson's (1911) description of space in relation to time as durational, there is, according to Massey (ibid: 23-24), a kind of blindness to the durational aspect of space. As emphasized in Massey's propositions, if the processes of becoming are to be opened to differences and surprises, space, like time, is also to be understood as durational. Following Massey's propositions we need to work towards the way in which both the multiplicity and simultaneity of how space is created works dynamically – and, in relation to Manning's descriptions, it means that we need to work towards activating descriptions in which pre-accelerations and intervals comes to life not just simultaneously but also in a multiplicity of ways.

## Conclusions

In practice being a dancer, certainly, ideals counts. Of course we have opinions on what we intend to do, achieve or be part of when dancing. My point in this paper is that, when looking into descriptions of how space is created through interaction and interrelations in dancing, we have to be aware that we do not end up taking ideals as implicit paradigm of the dances, which can then be used to theorize about the dance in general. In philosophical elaborations, ideals, at a certain point, should be placed within multiplicities of how the dance can be danced.

My suggestion in this paper is that Manning's elaborations on pre-acceleration and intervals of tango dancing are understood as highlighting what is paradigmatically in the shadow of any interactive complexity of movement and that descriptions of how space is created in complex processes of interactions should include not just a simultaneity of, but also a multiplicity of ways of giving life to pre-accelerations and intervals.

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# The Event Generation

Gun Román

The event generation deals with how to address a new generation's need for change.

I wanted to develop the education in contemporary dance and I found a group of students that wanted change. My main reason for development or change of dance training and didactics was to create meaning and a stronger relation to the society of today and to the art form. I also wanted the students to take responsibility for the development, be critical and become agents of change within the dance field. We needed to find alternative strategies for learning and I searched for new learning spaces. First, I had to shift the power balance and give the students more power over the education. The project was limited to subject didactics in contemporary dance and emanated from the Course Plan and how the students interpreted the Learning Outcomes. I did observations of what happened in the group when the students were in charge. From these observations themes was crystallized. The study relates to *critical research in dance pedagogy* with focus on how the body is socially constructed and pedagogy concerned with participation, democracy, and questions about power, identity and gender.

## Background

Dance education, especially dance training, has a history of being very authoritarian. Within the genres, classical ballet and contemporary dance, traditional master-apprentice learning has dominated the education. The master usually has been very prominent within his/her genre, but seldom had any teachers training. The master passed on values and ways of acting from his/her own dance education and career, including ideas about the ideal body and a strong authoritarian teacher's role. These ideas have dominated professional dance training. In Sweden it slowly started to change when The Choreographic Institute in 1964 inaugurated a dance pedagogy education. The education was directed towards both amateurs and professionals. From the 1980ties the education has also been directed towards the general school system and from 2011 the University of Dance and Circus have the right to give teacher's exam in dance for upper secondary education (in Sweden called Gymnasium, Estetiska programmet, Dans). Changes within the education have happened continuously through the years. The last ten years we have done big changes concerning organisation, content and division of time, in and between the different head subjects. Course plans and learning outcomes have become more clearly arranged, are easier to compare, and it has become obvious that there is a common core – what the students should learn – in Pedagogy, Science

and Art. The changes have taken place “from above”, from heads of education and teachers, with only marginal involvement from the students. Changes and reduced time does not necessarily mean poorer quality, but demands other teaching methods and clear priorities.

## **Design**

The project started in 2008 with the second year students in contemporary dance. Phase one was a collection phase. To be able to get some answers to my questions, I had to give the student power over the education, both content and method. In the back of my head I had my questions, but during the observations I tried to ignore them. Instead I tried to be open and attentive to all that might occur. The project took place within a course and because of the limited time we had at our disposal, the students and I decided to divide up the Learning Outcomes between us. The students decided which learning outcomes they considered themselves to be able to handle and gave me the Learning outcomes they thought I should be responsible for. The project was concentrated to the Learning outcomes where the students were in charge. The learning outcomes they choose can be collected under three headings: teaching practice, artistic work and theory. Where they were in charge, I was not the teacher. This made my role as researcher more clear/clearer during the observations. The first year of the project I observed the students when working with “their” learning outcomes. I also observed them working with guests that had been invited in relation to “their” learning outcomes. The method was a clear fieldwork, I took part in the students’ activities, observed them, wrote field notes and discussed with them and the guest teachers. From this different themes and concepts appeared. The first phase was a limited experiment, a case study (Yin, 1994; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). I see it as a case study since I took part of the different activities, in the actual context and in the observations I have aimed at giving a picture of what happened that is manifold and alive, a so called “thick description” (Geertz, 1973:14). This way of working, a shared responsibility for learning, also influenced the third year of education. They developed new ways of teaching and the democratic and collaborative way of working influenced a short tour we made and also their exam works. Phase two: Right now I’m interviewing the students. I want their voices, their opinions to be heard. What are their thoughts about the project today? Did it affect them? We had agreed to wait until they had finished their exam since I wanted to be sure that our power relation should be better balanced. Supported by their answers and ideas and a theoretical discussion, I hope to find answers how to develop the education to give room for shared power and responsibility and also to be actively ready for change. I want to find out how they work to reach the learning outcomes, what do they



focus on and how do they collaborate. From the first phase of the project I'm also interested in finding out what they think about different spaces (studios, lecture rooms, cafeteria, and outside/inside) and where they think they learn best. My commitment to change the education and the responsibility of the students indicated at this being action research. The researchers Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart (1992:21) make clear the difference between action research and the ordinary education. They say that action research is not what we do or think every day, but a systematic and collaborative process. The process starts in a wish to change and understand the world, a research into your own work. Learning is situated, internalised, run by the participants, not individualistic. The researcher Shirley Grundy sees participation action research as a democratic activity and a "key feature of critical theory" (Grundy, 1987:142, in Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:301). "It is not merely a form of change theory, but addresses fundamental issues of power and power relationships, for, in according power to participants, action research is seen as an empowering activity" (a.a.). Teachers researching their own practise can also find support in the work about reflective practise of Donald Schön, where he stresses that the competence of the practitioner develops by reflections about and in action (Schön, 2000). The teacher runs the research individually. Kemmis maintain that action research for critical theorists "is a part of a broader agenda of changing education, changing schooling and changing society", while reflective practitioners only want to change on their "home ground" (Kemmis, 1997:177, in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:303). Phase one of the project aimed at changing on my home ground, but I also hope to influence in a broader perspective. My students took part in the project, but the idea and the responsibility for the research outcome was mine. I see it as I'm doing research on them, though I really wanted us to do this together. I see the project as a field study, an ethnographical study of a group of young women studying to become dance teachers. I also see a relation to *somatic research in dance*, especially from the 1990ties and onwards, when dance researchers (Green, 2000; Eddy, 2002; Fortin & Siedentop, 1995) put a stronger focus on the social context and areas like the ideal body and cultural differences in training- and education systems. I see an even stronger link to *critical research in dance pedagogy*, a research that stresses how the body is socially imprinted by dance training, but the research also looks for pedagogy with more participation and democracy (Marques, 1998; Anttila, 2003, 2004). The researcher Sherry Shapiro (1998) has written and also been editor for several books and articles about/on critical and feministic perspectives on dance education. She has written about the necessity to change course plans and pedagogy, and to deal with questions as power, identity, gender and cultural differences.

## Findings and themes for discussion

Out of the field notes, observations, talks and the first interviews I will address a few themes. Within the project it has become very clear that there is a strong commitment in *independent work*. When the students work out their own ideas and material, when they lead others or when they are on stage, the work runs smoothly. Maybe they feel secure because they have done similar work before- or because they are in charge – or because they can work with their own conviction – or because they get so much feedback – or because they are taken seriously – or because the work is for real, it's not a made up situation. They are very engaged in their work when they are given the responsibility. They are also very willing to discuss. From what I can see they worked best in smaller groups, in the bigger group the democratic sharing of responsibility was reduced. The observations, talks, material and interviews has pointed out that the most important theme to discuss in dance education is *tradition and renewal*. Especially when it comes to dance training or dance technique, I see a generation that wants to get away from the tradition or what they consider belong to passed times. They want to be in the present time and several of the students emphasize that they want to feel the relation to what is happening on the dance scene of today. I think they relate to smaller stages and groups that work more like research (investigative). Today there are several dance collectives (groups) that research into important questions of life and society and also are engaged in the cultural debate. Within dance training the students stressed the constant on-going, that the teacher does not always present material in little pieces or cut off that which is going on, and the importance of personal researching. I also think it is about finding a new movement vocabulary. Even if the students want change, they are very interested in their dance history and keen on sharing thoughts, philosophical reasoning, and the development of styles and techniques. How do you make this transition without loosing the knowledge that has been developed the last 100 years? Can you go on without considering the tradition? Shouldn't we be able to balance between tradition and renewal? Haven't we been doing that all the time? I think it's more a question of how we teach and transfer the tradition. I think it's about bringing on/up principles and ideas of the dance. Our problem is that principles and ideas are learned bodily, as a habit. And those habits take time to establish. Can we find new ways of presenting the principles and ideas we consider fundamental and valuable? At first glance tradition and renewal look like two opposite words/concept. To renew you want to throw the tradition away. But at a second glance you realise that you need the tradition to be able to renew. We have to find the way, over and over again.... Another theme that became important was *gender*. The first semester that was part of the project, within the learning outcomes that were my responsibility, the group had worked with expression and

movement analysis. The students worked through improvisation and did very short studies that we analysed. The idea was to make them aware of what was transmitted to the viewer and to train to analyse movement material. I did not explain why we were doing the improvisations beforehand, since I didn't want the students to start intellectualising, but to really improvise. One theme was female-male. With this group of students I got a strong reaction. Some of the students were very provoked; they thought they had to work starting with stereotypes. They did not want to discuss in terms of male-female when it came to movement vocabulary. This was not part of the project, but affected the way the group later discussed the gender question. The last week on the same semester they were in charge trying to work out material how to physically work with gender questions and multiple culture questions in their own teaching. We had a very good theoretical discussion, but they found it very difficult to work physically with gender questions and not take in stereotypes. They needed more practical work. We invited three guests to get new inputs on the theme. I did an observation on a drag-kings workshop they had and in the report from the students I could see what they learned and the working method stimulated them to think about how they could work with gender in dance education. Another theme that slowly became stronger was the question of *power*. The students addressed power in relation to their role, their power in the teaching practise and in their exam works they really made changes both in theory and in practise. They worked with their groups in a more collaborative way and also addressed critical pedagogy. Power is also the theme that has made me think more about my own role as a teacher and a researcher. Where and when did the change actually take place? I'm not sure, but I can see it was important that they were in charge. The *learning space* was mobile; it did not happen in a special place or in a special surrounding. The students brought the learning space along with them to use whenever they were in charge. Some things were of special importance, like different group works and the collaboration with others. I have chosen to call this new generation of students *the event generation*, a generation that value now and events. To me it seems they want direct feedback, and if they don't get it, they turn to a new track. They are in a hurry to change the world.

### **Final words**

I believe that a theoretical discussion on these and other themes can give a stronger inspiration for a conscious development of dance education. Very often dance education is criticized for having an antiquated way of seeing the body or no education concerning gender. The critique is often generalized and includes all dance activities. It's important that when changes are made that we also relate to society. The results will be related

and discussed more thoroughly in an essay I will start to write this spring. First I have a few more interviews to do.

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# **Release Technique: reflections on history, experience and teaching**

Irene Velten Rothmund

Release technique has its roots in the experimental dance scene in USA in the sixties and seventies. In this paper I present parts of my MA thesis focusing on and discussing what release technique is in Norway today and to what extent it has changed status and content since it came to Norway around 1980. What has the change of physical space, from USA to Norway, and a change of time from 1980 till 2010, done with the technique? And how does this relate to ideas on training in contemporary dance? By discussing oppositional terms like outer form/inner content and technique/non-technique, I will look at certain discursive differences which can be seen as different cultural spaces within the field of contemporary dance in Norway.

The research material has been written historical sources and interviews with 6 Norwegian dance teachers, with an age span of 30 years, defining their work as release based. The interviews were individual, semi structured conversations with emphasis on the teachers personal experience (Kvale 2001). The analysis of the interviews were based on a method presented by Rouhiainen, following Perttula. This method is a phenomenological procedure of descriptive reading, condensation of the material and identifying common themes in the material. A method used to better understand meaning in the material staying with the evidence (Rouhiainen 2003). The identified themes I ordered into two main categories: Release as lived experience and discourses in dance training, which were set into dialog with relevant scholarly works. Before going into these themes I will look briefly at release in a dance historical context.

## **Release in a dance historical context**

Dance history is often concentrated on choreographers and choreographies, but training in dance is also an important part of an artistic process. Dance training “creates” the dancers body, it preserves and generates movement ideas, and it can both form and be formed by choreographic intentions (Bales 2008, Dempster 1998, Foster 1986). Several modern choreographers like Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham have developed their own techniques with a codified vocabulary and training program to train strong dancers in their personal style. The radical ideas on choreography in the 60’s often connected to the Judson Dance Theatre, and labelled Post-modern to implicate a distance to modern dance, also had implications on dance training: The dancers did not have to be trained in one choreographers personal style and pedestrian movements replaced a set dance vocabulary and a dancer’s held posture (ibid). This separation between train-

ing and choreography Bales calls a paradigm shift in the Judson era (Bales 2008). Deconstruction and bricolage is seen as common choreographic tools in the period. Dempster means that this also can refer to a view on training, with periods of de-training of a dancers habits and movement patterns, and that the body is available to many discourses, in an eclectic mix of techniques and styles (Dempster 1998). New dance forms like release technique and contact improvisation grew out of this environment.

I have traced the start of release technique to Joan Skinner, working with applying Alexander technique and M. E. Todd's ideas on improving posture by integrating body and thought. In 1966 Skinner introduced her ideas to a group of students in Illinois, using poetical imagery as a tool for letting go of tension and of their programmed training. This first work was the start of different forms of release work spreading out in USA. Mary Fulkerson was one of the students in Illinois developing her own version of release, working with stillness, anatomical images and developmental movements. This work she brought to England in 1973, and she was the first to teach release in Norway: at *Danseloftet* in Oslo in 1979. Central ideas for both Skinner and Fulkerson are release of tension, dynamic alignment and bodily awareness. They work on personal expression and exploration of own movements instead of set exercises. One can see parallels to the postmodern notion of not training a dancer in one persons style, and release of tension and working with developmental movements is connected to the pedestrian, non-dance movement vocabulary of the time, and to the idea of deconstruction (Rothmund 2009).

In the 80's and 90's there was a renewed interest in virtuosity, mixing of styles and re-entering the prosceniums stage. Mackrell calling it second phase postmodern dance, where a traditional dance vocabulary where no longer suspect, and dancers had to master diverse styles like contact improvisation and ballet (Mackrell 1991), in a bricolage of training practices. Release technique in the same period has spread out, other similar forms have emerged, making it difficult to define and name. Discussions in *Movement Research Performance Journal* (1999) show that several dance artists associated with release don't use the name themselves, like Trisha Brown stating that she doesn't know what release technique is. Movement material developed by David Zambrano is also often associated with release technique, but he does not use the term himself. Neither does Susan Klein but she admits that release might be an umbrella term for alternative dance training, focusing on release of tension, including body/mind integration (Klein 1999).

## Release as lived experience

Following a phenomenological idea on research where *the researcher seeks the unique and by the same token what is deeply communal in the singular* (Frykman & Gilje 2003:11), one can say that it is possible to get a common understanding of a phenomena based on individual experiences. By examining the 6 dance teacher's reflections on teaching and experiencing release technique I have tried to get a picture of what release technique can be in Norway today. The two teachers of what I have called the first generation had their first experiences with release in workshops with Mary Fulkerson around 1980. One in a middle generation met Release around 1990 in New York and the 3 younger ones met the work around 2000 in different countries. Common for all 6 teachers is that early meetings with release has been important for their lives in dance, they use words as freedom, relief and mind-blowing. For some it has to do with belonging, for others to get a new view of dance. Talking about what meaning it has in life, freedom is a recurring theme, freedom for own exploration, and freedom from copying steps. Parviainen writes on the dancers traditional role: *Dancers bodies are trained to be disciplined and obedient instruments, skilled at following directions.... working silently to become a vehicle for another persons ideas* (Parviainen1998: 107). As we have seen, the Judson generation as well as Skinner and Fulkerson opposed to the idea of training and disciplining a dancer in a specific style. Seeing the same reactions on today's teachers in Oslo can both signalize that a disciplinary approach to dance is still strong, as well as that release is still working more individual. However Parviainen nuances the notion of dance being either free or restricted, stating that all dancers have individual freedom in some way, and all freedom is situated in time and space (ibid). That means release is not unique in emphasising freedom, it shows only that for these teachers it has been important for their individual choices in life.

Another occurring theme is to belong to a tradition, a common history and to a dance community. A teacher from the first generation says that a lot of those teaching release today have no roots or ideas on what tradition they stand in. Two of the youngest say they prefer to use the term *release-based* technique on own work because they lack knowledge of the roots and experience with the founders. One says that her work is based on the teachers she has had. We can here see the importance of a physical transmission of dance knowledge between generations, and also the importance of historical knowledge. Connected to a common tradition, the teachers also talk about strong divisions within different dance communities in Oslo. In the 80's there were two separate groups, one traditional and one more experimental where the release teachers belonged. One tells they felt looked down upon, they were seen almost like *hair in the soup* (K 5)<sup>i</sup>. Another talks about loneliness in the work, meeting a lot of negativity. One



from the middle generation tells of being criticized of dancing too sloppy when she tried out released movements. But most of the teachers mean that the divisions are not as strong today, they experience more openness and acceptance towards the work.

### **Discourses in dance training**

As we have seen, the Judson era was an important point of change when it comes to training in dance, where established dance techniques were replaced by alternative ideas and forms. But in this shift there has emerged oppositional ideas about training, for instance if one should learn existing vocabulary or focus on the skills themselves (Nettl Fiol 2008). In the historical material and in the interviews one can discern several oppositional questions about training in dance. Is technique about form or content, freedom or discipline, energetic movements or contemplation in stillness? One can say there are different discourses within the different training practices, experimental based or vocabulary based. These discourses shape our ideas and how we see others, they might also be seen in suspicion towards others and create oppositional groups. Saukko refers to deconstruction as a means to reveal discourses, where destabilizing of binaries and searching for dialog between opposites can be goals (Saukko 2003). I will now look at a few of the oppositional terms that have been revealed in the interviews.

### *Releasetechnique or releasework*

Release technique is today an established term in Norway. For the teachers of the first generation it was important not to use the term release *technique* but rather release *work*. One says that release technique is connected to Skinners original work and not to how it has developed. She also means that release work refers to a more fundamental activity, as a pre-technique. Another says that release work is more improvisational while technique points towards a traditional class of set exercises. The younger had a more pragmatic attitude, stating that improvisation and experiential work also is a technique, and it is also about being skilled. Is this difference within the generations due to different definitions of the term technique, or a new understanding of what release is today? Parviainen describes how the term technique has been used traditionally in contemporary dance; it includes a vocabulary, skills, teaching methods and (a choreographers) style. The methods are often mimetic and repetitive with little focus on the performing aspects of dance (Parviainen 2007). And this might be what the oldest teachers are referring to; that release is more open, individual and creative. But in release classes today one can see a higher grade of set vocabulary and this might be what they warn about. Challis proposes a wider definition of technique: as a system of education, forming both the dancers body and learning the conventions, values and concepts of the

form (Challis 1999). With this wider term, one can easier say that release is a technique, working on understanding basic principles, involving and forming the whole dancer.

### *Outer form or inner meaning*

Another central discussion is whether release technique is characterizes through a specific style or outer form, or whether inner meaning and attitude towards movement is more important. All the interviewees agreed on that the important aspect is an understanding of principles, and not form. *I have seen classes that look like release, I have seen people do that form without taking time to feel what is happening in the bodies functionality* (K3). *I experience a lot of copying now it loses its character because it has no connection to the content* (K5). Here we can see a separation between content or inner meaning and a copying of outer form, and that too much focus on form is a loss. This relates to Rouhiainen writing that dance teaching in Finland has a tendency towards emphasizing the body's outer appearance and efficiency, calling it a representational orientation, more than focusing on the experiential dimensions (Rouhiainen 2003). This I mean is important in the discussion on release: It was originally clearly experiential based. The warnings from the teachers against being to form-oriented, and the mentioning of specific movements might signalize that there is a tendency towards a more representative teaching. On the other side, two other of the teachers admit that there are certain form-aspects in release, for instance similarities in the aesthetic in the movements. This is close to Challis extended technique term, that the technique forms the body and the understanding, and that gives a specific style. Working with inner images and expression is also visible on the outside, and might then give a certain aesthetic.

### *Energy or stillness*

Another often mentioned oppositional pair is energy or stillness, whether you have a high energy and activity level or if you use time to listen to the body in a silent contemplation. One says she can understand the use of lying on the floor an hour, but to have a higher intensity, get warm and free is more appealing. One talks a lot about high energy, speed and dynamic as opposed to use too much time on feeling and listening to the body. The teachers talk relatively much about using energy and doing complex, difficult movements. As opposed to Skinner and Fulkerson who focus more on the process of coming from stillness into movement, using release of tension to be one with the dance. This I interpret in two ways: First as a reaction against how release has been seen in Norway - as sloppy, without technique, only rolling about on the floor. The emphasis on the energetic part of the work can be a sort of educational work, to get people to under-

stand what it is about. Another reason can be own experiences with energetic movements as more fun and challenging, and that there is a tendency to bring in more physical challenging and virtuoso movements into the work. Virtuosity had a rebirth in the second phase of postmodern dance in the 80's. In this climate release technique has probably taken up more physical challenging elements, but as the interviewees say, with a risk of losing something on the way.

## Conclusion

Looking at some of the American founders of Release, one can say that it has to do with personal exploration of movement focusing on alignment, bodily awareness and release of tension. The interviewed teachers reveal similar ideas, where freedom for own exploration and creativity has been a linking theme. However, some traits in the interviews points towards changes in the technique today: The older tend to talk about creative process and personal exploration, while the younger talk more about physical, technical principles. All 6 emphasise energetic and difficult movements, but at the same time they warn against losing the basics. I interpret the sum of the discussions to mean that the technique has changed since the start, towards being more energetic, virtuoso and form based, focusing less on deep exploration of own body and movements. Parallel to this release has gotten a bit higher status, it is more common and the dividing lines within the Norwegian dance scene are smaller. This might have several reasons. First, the changes in content might have moved it a bit closer to a traditional technique. Then there is a tendency also in Norway to borrow elements from different techniques in a bricolage of opposites, where the dancer chooses her own way in forming her body. At the same time I wonder if there is also more openness to experientially based work in the Norwegian dance community today. Accepting that the other side has something to offer. To work based on form and outer expression does not need to exclude working with inner impulses and meaning. As one of the teachers say: *Today's contemporary dance artists can pick from one and the other... you can do a lot, use different techniques, there is maybe no need to be in opposition anymore* (K4).

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<sup>i</sup> Quotes from the interviews are translated from Norwegian by me.

# **A Character Analytic Approach to Facilitating the Sensory, Perceptive and Interactive Processes of the Contemporary Dancer**

Leena Rouhiainen

## **Introduction**

In this paper I will introduce my new research project that focuses on the contemporary dancer working in the field of western concert dance and attempts to develop means to facilitate their sensory, perceptual, expressive and performative undertakings. The more focal aim of the project is to practically explore principles from phenomenology and body psychotherapy that enhance self-awareness and flexible interaction in three artistic processes: a solo dance, a student demonstration and finally a collaborative performance process with four professional dance and theatre artists. The project is conducted at the Theatre Academy in Helsinki between years 2010 and 2015 with the first artistic process initiated in the fall of 2011. In the spirit of artistically oriented action-research, the project has periods of practical investigation and moments of reflection upon the experiences gained. I will document the artistic processes, collect feedback from the participants and write about my own experiences in order to further clarify and develop the emergent approach to facilitating the work of contemporary dancers. At the moment I am familiarizing myself with the theoretical framework, constructing the first steps of a practical approach to bodywork as well as clarifying the methodology of the research.

In the following sections I will first discuss the background that motivates the research and is related to the recent aesthetics of European contemporary dance. Then I will introduce some of the aspects of the theoretical framework that informs the practical artistic investigation. This framework deals with Wilhelm Reich's character analytic body psychotherapy as well as Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, the latter I will not address in this paper, however.

## **Shifting Aesthetics of Contemporary Dance**

During the past several decades the performing arts have increasingly dealt with forms of performativity that have induced public bodily acts which constitute instead of depict reality in the actuality of performance. Theatre and performance art theoretician Erika Fisher-Lichte (2008) argues that this has involved a refiguration of the relationship between subject and object, observer and observed and artist and audience in order to create a dynamic and transformative event. There is often no separation between the production and work and experiencing and participating in the performance event are

prioritized over interpretation (Fischer-Lichte 2008). While making closely related claims, theatre theoretician Hans-Thies Lehmann (2009) points out that simultaneous and multidimensional perception has replaced a linear and sequential mode of perceiving in performance. He also argues that instead of the intentional subject the subconscious subject, a body-subject, has increasingly taken the stage over (Lehmann 2009).

Co-relative to the previous views, dance scholar André Lepecki (2006; 2004) argues that European contemporary dance has moved from a theatrical to a performance paradigm in the late twentieth century. The new paradigm emphasizes the moment and process of performance over choreographic planning. It explores discursive, material and affective effects performance acts have on the world. It involves distrust in representation as well as the spectacular and an insistence on the material presence of the dancer's body in its bareness (Lepecki 2006; 2004). Together with dance critic Sally Banes (2007) he opines that performance practices often investigate and create unsuspected sensorial-perceptual realms. Here sensation and perception are considered as culturally informed agents that performance practice activates and represses, reinvents and reproduces as well as rehearses and improvises (Banes and Lepecki 2007). Choreographer and dance researcher Jeroen Fabius (2009) supports their view by arguing that in contemporary dance kinaesthetics is now often the subject matter of performance, a mode of presentation or even a principle of choreographic organization.

These shifts in aesthetics toward a sensorial-perceptual and performative mode of performing have challenged the traditional tasks of the dancer. Consequently, there is progressive interest in exploring first-person comprehension of bodily processes including sensation, perception and kinesthesia and their implications for dance-making. The shifts have also fostered an egalitarian relationship between dancers and choreographers and placed emphasis on interactions between dancers, spectators and the environment in the moment of actual performance. (e.g. Foster 2010; Fabius 2009; Lepecki 2004; 2000; Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg 2002; Pakes 1999)

As examples of the new strategies utilized in choreography Fabius (2009) mentions the following: physical activity of the performers has been minimized in order to rearrange the sensorial and perceptual field in dance. Obstructing vision and mistreating the conventions of theatrical performance have been used to force focus on sensory experience in order to comprehend unforeseen modes of presentation. Immediate forms of choreographing and improvisation in which dancers work on tasks and bodily reactions in real time as a form of thinking-in-movement have likewise been utilized to produce surprising and novel forms of dance (Fabius 2009).

All in all sensorial and perceptual awareness as well as immediate interaction have become underlined as important means for the contemporary dancer to partici-

pate in constructing dances as well as performing them. One area in which this emphasis is observable is in the increased use of so-called somatic practices in the artistic and educational processes of contemporary dance. These are forms of bodywork that generally attend to the body through a first-person perspective, are interested in the tacit-knowledge that it encompasses, and regard the processes of becoming aware of the body as pathways towards change, enhanced bodily functioning, self-understanding and social awareness (Rouhiainen 2008; Green 2007).

I am involved in applying one related approach to dance, namely Reichian character analytic body psychotherapy. I have studied this therapeutic practice for three years and through my experience I believe that it can offer means by which to enhance awareness of sensations and perceptions on the part of the dancer and support their use of these as valuable starting points for interaction in dance-making and performance. As I am not a licensed therapist and psychotherapy has goals that differ from those of art-making, this research project deals with constructing an applied approach that is suitable for the work of dancers.

### **Wilhelm Reich and the Armored Body**

Many of the currently practiced and recently developed forms of body psychotherapy are in some manner or another indebted to Wilhelm Reich (1897–1957), one the most influential precursors in body psychotherapy. Reich was born in Austria and worked as Sigmund Freud's assistant for six years. He continued to live in several countries in Europe and finally settled in the United States. He took Freud's argument that our psychic life is rooted in our bodies seriously, developed a psychoanalytic method that both observed the body's expression and finally endorsed bodywork as a therapeutic tool. However, the merits of his psychoanalytically based conceptions still remain relatively unknown to the general psychotherapeutic field not to speak of the area of the performing arts. Reich's approach has been slow to become accepted owing to the fact that in his late career Reich moved into increasingly controversial explorations in life energy and cosmology. Additionally, his work was swept up in the countercultural project of liberating the body in the 1960's and 1970s where psychotherapeutically oriented bodywork was not always practiced in a sound and healing fashion (Young 2010; Totton 2008; Smith 2000/1985).

What is central to my investigation is Reich's understanding of the body armor and the bodywork that supports loosening the related stiffness. Reich argued that pent up emotions and unreleased psychosexual energy produced unnecessary tension or physical blocks within muscles and organs. It was for this reason that Reich studied the body language of his patients carefully. He became interested in how they expressed

themselves physically in addition to what they said. He looked at their posture, movements, gaze, tone of voice, and muscular tension, for example. He learnt that the physical tension acted as a “body armor” preventing free flow of energy as well as open expression and regulation of one’s impulses and emotions. Developed to regulate the interrelationship between internal impulses and external demands across our lives, these armors are habitual and influence the characteristic style or demeanor of the individual. Therefore, the individual is often quite unaware of their functions (e.g. Totton 2008; Välimäki and Saksa 2006).

The connection between psychic tension and the tone of the musculature that Reich (1966: 43) observed he described as the physiological anchoring of psychic experience. He states:

Psychic tension and alleviation cannot be without a somatic representation, for tension and relaxation are biophysical conditions...But we would be wrong to speak about a “transfer” of physiological concepts to the psychic sphere, for what we have in mind is not an analogy but a real identity: the unity of the psychic and somatic function...Muscular rigidity and psychic rigidity are a unit, the sign of a disturbance of vegetative motility of the biological system as a whole. (Reich 1990/1949: 340–341)

He therefore argued for an intimate relationship with the psychic and physiological functions in the human organism. In his view instincts and drives are deeply rooted in the biological life of the body and that the unconscious was tangible in the form of vegetative impulses, or in other words, stimulus of the autonomic nervous system and bodily sensations (Reich 1966: 12). He argued that a continued warding off of internal impulses and natural instincts resulted in discontent, frustration and a withdrawal from life. This was visible or expressed by the body, often as stiffness, graceless movements, expressionless countenance and voice as well as superficial breathing, for example (Välimäki and Saksa 2006: 55).

As a consequence Reich also opined that the body and comportment contain emotive material. He writes:

. . .*the living organism expresses itself in movements.* . . .The physiological process of plasmatic emotion or expressive movement is inseparably linked to an immediately comprehensible *meaning* which we are wont to call “*emotional expression*”. Thus, the movement of the protoplasm is expressive of an emotion, and emotion or the expression of an organism is embodied in movement. . .the beginnings of living functioning lie much *deeper* and *beyond* language. *Over and above this, the living organism has its own*



*modes of expressing movements which simply cannot be comprehended with words. . . (Reich 1990/1949: 358–359)*

Reich observed that in all living organisms from an ameba to a human being there occurs a plasmatic movement which has two directions: Positive stimulus moves the living contents of the cell, or the protoplasm as Reich termed it, from the centre to the periphery and is expansive, while negative stimulus does the opposite with a contractive influence on the organism. He believed that these expansive and contractive movements were the foundation of emotions and expression. In deed, in the previous quotation Reich describes his understanding that bodily movements are both expressive of and tied to emotion – on the most basic level they are about opening up and surrendering to pleasure or retreating and closing off from anxiety-causing sources. He does so by pointing out the priority of expressive movement over linguistic expression. In his view, the biological and bodily core of an organism is permeated by a mobile life force. This force he eventually came to call orgone energy (Reich 1990/1949: 357). Even if Reich's theorizing on a life force has not found scientific support, his understanding of the expressive depth of the human body with its mobility is worthwhile.

The performing arts are grounded in the interaction of live performers and live audiences. The characteristic of live performance and communication is that it is embodied and mobile and in many ways unconscious and beyond volitional control. A performer cannot fully control her behavior and expression in performance. Part of it relies on learnt and habitual skills and as well as the reactions of the autonomic nervous system that affects the performers' breathing, muscular tension and minute shifts in their bodies. These are related to the inner stirrings that Reich discussed and partially to the phenomenal and pre-phenomenal dimensions of the body. For this reason if a performer is not aware of her actual feelings and sensations or fights against them in performance, the intended actions or expressions might be misinterpreted by the performer herself and unclearly received by the audience. This is so since, the audience can observe the performer in her entirety; her attitude in performing including her efforts, carefulness, tenseness etc. in addition to her actual actions (Mannila 2009: 44). On the other hand, contemporary dance is also an area in which volitional control is given up and unconscious and pre-reflective reactions are appreciated as potential pathways to previously un-experienced ways of performing (Foster 2003). In these cases the performer needs to be sensitive to and surrender to immediate internal and external impulses and follow them through.

In the end, in Reich's view psycho-physical health meant an ability to fully open up to the sensations of the body and to completely engage with what she or he is doing or who she or he is at the present moment. He believed that a healthy person was capa-

ble of a live contact with others and able to be impressed by them, nature and the arts, for example (Reich 1990/1949; Välimäki and Saksa 2006; Corrington 2003). To help his clients to loosen excessive rigidity of the body armor that narrowed the scope of their sensations and reactions Reich utilized a character analytic method that among other things involved clients becoming aware of their characteristic styles of reacting and comporting the body, sensitizing them to their feelings, releasing tension through deep breathing and bodywork as well as expressing their experiences in both verbal and bodily ways (Välimäki and Saksa 2006; Boadella 1973).

I believe that involving the performing artist in a similar process enhances her creative abilities, since as Reichian body psychotherapist and actor Laura Mannila (2009) points out, our characteristic behavior or character sets the boundary conditions for our expression and colors us as idiosyncratic performers. In its extreme it can present itself as mannerism, stuck and repeated habits, bodily attitudes and expression. However, when you become aware of your characteristic behavior, you have a chance of choosing and playing with it. Mannila (2009: 29) writes: “You cannot eliminate your character style’s influence on your performance willfully, but you can become aware of it and turn it to serve your professional self”.

### **Current Exploration**

In this phase of my project work I am exploring breath work as the first step with which to facilitate the self-awareness and release of physical tension of a dancer. I am exploring the breathing exercises I have learned, reading further into the subject and forging different breathing exercise sequences together with my colleague actor Helka-Maria Kinnunen. Physiologically, respiration stands at the very threshold of the voluntary and involuntary. While we can modulate our breathing at will, it is primarily an automatic function (Leder 1990). Reich underlined that it is common that early in life we learn to suppress emotions by controlling our breathing (Reich 1966: 273–275). Correlatively Reichian body psychotherapists and theoretists Nick Totton and Em Edmonson write:

Along with the suppression of breathing goes the suppression of specific impulses – to cry, to yell, to hit, to reach out for love, to run away. The muscles are tightened to stop us e-moting, moving out, and if this tightening happens regularly enough it becomes a chronic unconscious habit, built into the structure of our bodies – a part of our sense of ourselves, as familiar as an old scar. (Totton and Edmonson 2009: 15)

Instead

If we *breathe* freely and fully, then we *feel* freely and fully. Open breathing washes emotion through and out into expression; we are unable to hide it, either from ourselves or from each other. (Totton and Edmonson 2009: 13)

Breathing fully often requires a process of releasing tension that distorts and limits breathing (Lowen and Lowen 1977). In addition, paying attention to our breathing helps us anchor our awareness in the present moment and our bodies. If done in a non-judgmental, un-forceful and patient manner, it supports an attuned awareness of the non-verbal and pre-reflective dimensions of our being. Breath work influences the autonomic nervous system and muscular tension, too. This in turn can support better contact with the body's sensorial knowledge and the emotions and feelings dawning in the actuality of moment. Becoming aware of our breathing and accepting the way we breathe in different situations can increase our potential for self-regulation and engagement with the environment (e.g. Martin et. al. 2010).

And with these comments I end my presentation on some ideas that are instructive to the ongoing investigation. Thank you for your attention.

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# Possibility and Limitation in Dance Improvisation

Hilde Rustad



"I spent many years studying dance and in that time, I became brain-washed...

I came out of the Cunningham Company and I couldn't stop pointing my toe. That's the problem. We are creatures of physical habit." Steve Paxton

The body is often understood as a situation with infinite possibilities for movement and it is generally perceived that the dance improviser has the possibility to choose how to move, where, when, how and how long. However, the experienced dance improviser may be of the opinion that what he is doing is always the same and feel stuck in old habits in a way similar to what Steve Paxton describes in the quote above.

This paper will take a closer look at dance improvisation with a focus on group-improvisation.<sup>1</sup> In dance improvisation the body can be understood as the space in which movement is being initiated and takes place. The body can be seen and experienced by the moving subject and by others as spatial, and he or she can move parts of the body in the space and the whole body through the space. I will explore this double perspective of being spatial and in space related to dance improvisation, and I also want to make a

small investigation concerning whether or how the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1908-61) concept *habit*, and the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's (1930-2002) concept *habitus* may be of help in an understanding of dance improvisation. In other words: How may habit, habitus and space contribute to an understanding of dance improvisation?

## **Habit**

Merleau-Ponty connects the concept of habit to the moving body:

...it is the body which "catches" (kapiert) and "comprehends" movement. The acquisition of a habit is indeed the grasping of a significance, but it is the motor grasping of a motor significance. (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 164/165)

With Merleau-Ponty's habit the body can be said to have the ability to understand and absorb new meanings, and assimilate significance. To dancers working with improvising these kind of grasped significances are possible movements and movement material. How I understand this is that such new understandings in dance improvisation are instantly embodied and according to Merleau-Ponty opens up for the possibility of doing something which one was not able to do before. Merleau-Ponty further on specifies dancing as a motor habit:

The body is our general medium of having a world. Sometimes it is restricted to the actions necessary for the conservations of life, and accordingly it posits around us a biological world; at other times, elaborating upon these primary actions and moving from their literal to a figurative meaning, it manifests through them a new significance: this is true of motor habits such as dancing. (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 69)

Merleau-Ponty insists that habit cannot only be understood as conserving and limiting to our actions, but also as something which dilates our being in the world, and which thereby changes our existence. Habit, he says, "is a system which is open on to the world, and correlative with it." (Ibid: 166) This means habit, which we tend to think of as something fixed and limiting, can paradoxically be seen as something which makes change possible. Not only does habit make us endlessly repeat ourselves, but it can also be experienced as something which constitutes possibilities for improvisation in dance. Motor habits provide safety through being something known and familiar, but at the same time Merleau-Ponty explains habit as connected to an opening to the world and

innovation. Habit is not fixed, but has the ability to absorb new meaning, and in addition the body has the ability to acquire new habits.

### **Habitus**

Although more commonly used in sociology in a context of social classes, I have borrowed Bourdieu's habitus-concept as a means to understand dance improvisation. I will relate to habitus as a set of dispositions within the body. These dispositions are a result of everything a person has done so far, and will be determining what he or she will be doing in the future. Habitus can in this way be seen both as structure and structuring (Bourdieu 1999) and must be understood to encompass much more than merely body habit. I find it useful to separate between two different ways of using habitus regarding dance improvisation. One is what we may call a *personal dance improvisation habitus*, and this is the system of bodily dispositions which has to do with personal lasting embodied patterns and constitutes future movement possibilities. This does not necessarily differ from other dancers' habitus in major ways, but it may. It is very likely that a Finnish dance improviser who has always lived in Finland will have a very different personal dance improvisation habitus from an American dance improviser brought up in New York, and yet two Finnish dance improvisers will never have the same personal dance improvisation habitus. The other may be called a *dance improvisation tradition's habitus*. Often dance improvisers who work together have been taught within the same tradition and by the same teacher or teachers. These are matters which influence to what degree the dancers can be said to belong to the same *dance improvisation tradition's habitus*, and to see them perform may tell something about what it is that constitutes the habitus shared by dancers who work with dance improvisation together. Bourdieu has written:

The habitus is precisely this immanent law, *lex insita*, inscribed in bodies by identical histories, which is the precondition not only for the co-ordination of practices but also for practices of co-ordination. The corrections and adjustments the agent themselves consciously carry out presuppose mastery of a common code...(Bourdieu 1990: 59)

To have had the same or similar training in dance improvisation is precisely referring to this mastery of a common code. In a group the improvisation tradition- habitus will structure the group's way of being together, communicating and acting, as well as the dancing. To belong to a shared habitus means to have a common understanding about a



whole range of subjects. Even how dance improvisers dress or eat can be understood as part of their habitus. Whereas the personal dance improvisation habitus has to do with the specificity of individual bodily experience and history, the tradition-habitus has to do with dance history, education and praxis, and the two habitus` may in many ways be understood partly as part of each other.

Bourdieu stresses that habitus must be understood as a dynamic and ever changing situation. Choice will however be limited to the at all times existing habitus, whatever it is in the moment. Everything the dance improviser do and experience may be understood as becoming embodied, and part of habitus, and will in time determine and structure future movement actions and improvisations. The possible choices are embodied within habitus and connected to the idea of habitus as a dynamic and ever changing structure. According to Bourdieu habitus is not only deterministic, but a way to construct the world through a special way of orienting towards it, which is an active and constructive bodily tension directed towards the immediate future (Bourdieu 1999: 150). To Bourdieu habitus is infinite to the extent that it is continually expanding in response to new situations; Habitus is not static but a generative structure capable of what Bourdieu in fact chooses to call "regulated improvisation" and this can be understood as the ability to change something for the benefit of adapting existing schemes to fit new situations. (Weiss 2008:229)

This paper does not aim at juxtaposing the concepts of habit and habitus, but to see them as different theoretical concepts which might be helpful in an understanding of dance improvisation. However, Merleau-Ponty`s emphasis on the singularity of each and every body-subject makes it clear that each will find his or her own body habits and way of negotiating and thereby extending the parameters of his or her world. This means habit is to be understood more as belonging to the individual. Habitus, on the other hand, can be seen more as shared and understood in connection with groups and as including the individual and its surroundings, the expanded context and society as a whole. What dancers do in dance improvisation can be understood as having to do with the habit body as well as the personal and the tradition dance habitus.

## **Space**

According to Merleau-Ponty the body is always given as spatial and in space. He says "To be a body is to be tied to a certain world, as we have seen; our body is not primarily in space: it is of it." (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 171). We experience ourselves as spatial and as having volume. From early childhood moving in and through space we reveal knowledge as to how it is to move in smaller and bigger spaces, passing through doorways, in between objects as well as in between and together with other moving body-subjects. We

simply know the spatiality and size of our own body as well as that of others in any given position and while moving through space simultaneously as changing the shape of our bodies in dance. This means we relate to space as 3-dimensional, shape-changing spatial bodily beings moving through space or staying in one place. We are continuously perceiving ourselves and the changing situation around us as well as acting in it. Space can be thought of as disclosed through ourselves as bodies and in movement. Merleau-Ponty connected the body to expressive space, and expressive movement. To him the body is the origin of "...expressive movement itself, that which causes them (movements) to exist as things, under our hands and eyes." (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 169) Spatial considerations and immediate expressive spatial movement actions are part of what we work with in dance improvisation.

The dance improvisation is an expected unpredictable situation in which performers as spatial beings are as part of the space and visible to others. In the situation of improvisation dancers may relate to and play with the space simply as space. Merleau-Ponty (2002: 115) writes that the body appears to him as an attitude directed towards a task, and that the spatiality is not a spatiality of position but a spatiality of situation. Dance improvisation can in the same way be understood as if the improvisation itself is the task towards which the dance improvisers are bodily directed, – and this is what constitutes the spatiality of a dance improvisation situation.

## **Conclusion**

The dancers exist as spatial and move in physical space, as well as being part of the spatiality of situation which usually in group dance improvisation can be experienced as a situation of continuous change. According to Merleau-Ponty we understand space through being spatial. When it comes to movement *choice* may be understood as implicit and confined by the habit body and may further be understood as implicit in, and structured by, the personal habitus and the habitus of the dance improvisation tradition. A group improvisation situation with several dancers means the improvisers are relating to space, each other, sound, etc., as well as relating to the dance improvisation as such. The situation constitutes possibilities for action, and the unpredictability of group dance improvisation as something which is continuously changing may push or jump the borders of habit and habitus and perhaps sometimes even lead to radical change. The bodily dispositions that constitute the habitus of the dancer can be changed through dance improvisation.

As we have seen habitus and habit does not limit the dance improviser to do solely movements and actions known to him, but they provide structure for new experience as well as anchoring the improvisation in the already known. In this perspective the

concept known as open improvisation as something without score or structure where everyone may choose to do whatever they like – becomes impossible. Dance improvisers always already have a structure although it may be well hidden.

All the same, the unpredictable situation the group improvisation constitutes will most likely bring innovation, and dance improvisers, whether “true” or not, may experience themselves moving in ways they have never moved before. In improvisation the idea of choice and being innovative is crucial. Whether one chooses out of bodily habit as meanings the body has understood already, or as a result of structures of bodily dispositions, both habit and habitus can be seen as constituting possibilities and limitations. Simply by putting oneself in the space together with other improvisers relating to space and the other dancers, in the spatial situation of improvisation, - chances that one might do unexpected, not foreseen, new material, and getting oneself into new situations which has to be solved in new ways are likely. The spatiality of situation does not only play a part in the improvisation, but can be seen as to act as catalyst in making change happen in habit and habitus and thereby expand possibilities in dance improvisation.

Our bodies have infinite possibilities for movement, but most of the time we move in ways similar to how we have moved before and this can be understood and explained through the theoretical concepts of habit and habitus. However, the uncontrollable situation of group improvisation brings with it the possibility and necessity for new material to emerge, and thereby force change in habit and habitus. The continuously changing space will bring about new situations in which the dancer cannot do his old tricks, but has to invent new ones. This can be seen as connected to habitus which provides us with an internalized system of classificatory schemes through which we interpret new situations by relating them to similar situations we have experienced in the past (Weiss 2008: 230).

We move the way we move because of the culture we live in and the dance tradition we belong to. Dance improvisation as situation is dependant on spatiality, and simply on what goes on in space. It involves impulse, spontaneity, play and risk. The different dancers, as spatial beings will find themselves in continuously changing situations demanding new solutions, where habit and habitus can be understood as to provide both limitations and possibilities as to what to do. My point is that by taking a closer look at dance improvisation through different theoretical concepts one possibly arrives at another place than where one began. Habit, habitus and space show how what dancers do, in such a supposedly “free” situation as dance improvisation often is thought to be, is always limited by body habit, structured by habitus and closely connected to the spatiality of situation.

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<sup>i</sup> The "Dance improvisation" referred to in this paper is within the continuation of the tradition of American post-modern dance, which originated in the 1960's and -70's (Banes 1987)

# Gesture and Space of Body in Early Modern Dance

Turid Nøkleberg Schjønsby

At the beginning of 19.th century, different ways of dancing were developed. Reformers of dance in early modernism (1900-1925) gave the body a new actuality, both in dance and in culture, which influenced the whole society (Johnson, 1995). This created focus on the body, and resulted in a lot of dance-expressions, as well. Dance pioneers from another part of society than earlier (middle-class instead of aristocracy) created new ways of making dances. Their work had a great impact on the modern dance.

In this presentation I will focus three of the dance creators who had great influence on the modern dance of the 1900 century: Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis and Rudolf Steiner. According to their own ideas (Duncan, 1969; St. Denis, 1938; Steiner, 1965), they used “the movement of the soul” as an ideal for creating the dance. From the point of view in our time, they created a new respect for body in the arts. Their engagement was directed on embodying ideas, myths, music and speech. With basis in Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological theories on “gesture” and “bodyspace” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, 1994), I want to present studies of dance expressions early modernism, developed from Duncan, St. Denis and Steiner’s eurythmy and transmitted by tradition to dancers in our time.



**1. Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis and Rudolf Steiner**

My intention is to study the dance mainly from the dancer’s point of view and make an understanding of the origins of the movements. By help of Phenomenology you can study the phenomenon (events or circumstances that can be ob-

served) by sensing and being open-minded. Your subjective approach is important. The theory of Merleau-Ponty gives credit to the experience of the dancer. In the early modern dance the intentionality and the subjective intension of the dancer is regarded to influence the experience of the audience. According to Merleau-Ponty, the human body creates an expressive space which contributes to the significance of personal actions (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, 1994). The body is thus the origin of expressive movement. The spatiality of the human body is an example of how both psychological and physiological factors are united in creating as well in perceiving dance.

### **Bodyspace**

Human skills make a sort of space – different from the spatial space. Merleau-Ponty uses the example of an organ-player who is going to play a new organ, and after some hours with exercises he has adapted the organ to his “body space” (Merleau-Ponty, 1994, pp. 100-101). He also uses typewriting as an example of conquering the space. The skill of typewriting is in this way to conquer the body space. In dance you use the space which is given, and fill this with your skills. Your movements play with the space and interfere with it. This you can experience as volume in the movements, as melting together with the sound. Your body creates another space than the 3 dimensional space. It also is different from the space of a story which you can experience in a drama. In dance we have a given (empty) space, and our movement and consciousness are able to transform a given space to different spaces.

### **GESTURE**

Here I use the term *gesture* about movement of the body which expresses an idea or emotion. (By gesticulation you follow the speech by doing more or less conscious movements –this is not how I use gestures here). Gesture also can be movement which responds to sound. In my studies there is a distinction between *the coded*, and the *not coded* gestures (Neumann, 1965).

- **The coded gestures**, which was used very much in art before 1900, in rhetoric and in stage art (Neumann, 1965; Smith, 2000). In this category of gestures you have to know the meaning, or the codes. They are expressive, and are filled with experience from the traditions. They have cultural roots.
- **The “free” (not coded) gestures**<sup>i</sup> (Neumann, 1965) give room for spontaneity, and can be understood just by observing.

Merleau-Ponty deepens the understanding of the “free” gestures. According to Merleau-Ponty, you take the movements into your body, sensing them as gesture (Merleau-Ponty, 1994, p. 152). (Thus you can sense that a person is angry, or happy,

or accepting, asking etc.) The not coded gestures, which I here will call *free* gesture, create a space of meaning or feeling. By help of these, the dancer can change the physical space to a space of meaning.

In his work, Merleau-Ponty develops gestures in a continuation from body-space. A person who is angry exposes this anger in his whole behavior: his voice, his way of moving, his way of looking (Merleau-Ponty, 1994, p. 151). Other persons can sense the gesture. In the early modern dances the concept of gesture as used by Merleau-Ponty is a helpful tool to catch the quality of movement, because the gesture include the physiological and the psychological aspect of movement. Thus it includes the conscious intention of the dancer as well as the intentionality which create the embodiment of music and speech. Merleau-Ponty also compares speech with gestures. He finds that language starts with the emotional gesticulation (p.156). By studying the speech, he finds levels of gesture: phonetic gestures, word images, sentences. Although the speech as gesture are not analogue to the gestures in dance<sup>ii</sup>(Fraleigh, 1987)( Greimas, 1987), the knowledge of speech as gesture can be a help to understand and make conscious the different gestural levels in dance. Merleau-Ponty's theories gives a key to understand Steiner's basic ideas for speech-eurythmy (Steiner, 1968). Steiner developed gestures which are intended to transform the quality of phonemes in alphabet, the gestures of words and gestures of sentences.

### **Different types of gesture**

Through these studies it is obvious that different types of gesture are used:

- Coded and not coded ("free") gestures
- Emotional gesture: Gesture which express feelings, emotions, conditions
- Gesture based on music
- Gesture based on speech
- Gesture based on relations
- Gesture which tells an action
- Gesture which show (mythic) images

My studies of gestures in dance solos choreographed from Duncan, St. Denis and Steiner (eurythmy) are based on analyses from video recorded dances which are transmitted by tradition (handed down) into our time. By help of phenomenology, combined with choreology from ethnographical dance studies (Reynolds, 1974) and interviews of the dancers, I develop a method to map different levels of gesture I can find in these different dances.

PHENOMENON	STRUCTURE		GESTURE		
Description of dance	Phrase of movement	Motiv of movement	Emotional gestures sound gestures music gestures	Music or text as basic for gestures	Subtext The intention of the dancer

The studies show ways of using different principals of gesture. Of course these dance-expressions have changed from the original ones during a period of 80 years or more, but the analyses indicate that in the early modern dance, gesture is an important way to transmit certain qualities of movement through tradition.

#### EXAMPLES

##### Choreographies from Isadora Duncan

- *Narcissus* danced by Kathleen Quinlan (Recorded by Bowden, 1995).

Here we find emotional gestures. Phrases of music correspond with movements carried by an emotion. In the middle part of the dance, the movements do not correspond with the music, but are based on mimetic gestures.

- *Ave Maria*: danced by Kathleen Quinlan (Recorded by Bowden, 1995).

The main picture is Mythical. The dance is based on the communication in the motive of *The annunciation*. Some coded gestures from renaissance are used together with free (not coded) gestures. The gestures create an historic impression. (Probably the audience will not identify them as codes in the same way as in the renaissance. Here the old gestures have a more stylistic function).

##### Choreographies from Ruth St. Denis

- Music visualization: *Shubert Waltzes* danced by Robin Bäcker (Recorded by Rowthorn & Vanaver, 2002)

The gestures are developed from the structure of the music. We can recognize the motives, the phrases, and the parts of the dance in the movements. These structures can be performed quite neutral, or they can be combined with strong emotional gestures.

- *Incense*, danced by Vera Zahl (Recorded by Rowthorn & Vanaver, 2002)

In this choreography the gestures are actions related to religious rituals, and structured by music.



The centre of the dance, where the incense burn and we see the smoke go up, are less naturalistic than the beginning and end. The dancer follow the smoke with streaming gestures which can be recognized as arm drills from the Delsarte system of movement (Shelton, 1990).

### **Choreographies from Rudolf Steiner:**

- *Weegerin* (A poem from Albert Steffen danced by Maria Maximova (Recorded by Schjønby, 2006)

Gestures are created from sounds, words and sentences. The movements of the dance are responding to speech: sounds, words and sentences are basic for the gestures.

- *Lebenszauber* ( Music by Edward Grieg) danced by Margrethe Solstad (Recorded by Schjønby, 2005)

Gestures are created from intervals in music, pitch, tones, minor and major. I the middle part of choreography the minor atmosphere color the use of gesture with an inward attitude which is different from the major parts.

Are these gestures psychological or mainly physiological? Are they body or soul? Merleau-Ponty stresses that body and mind cannot be separated, but that each has their own being. This gives understanding for an ambiguous mode of existence which the dance reformers of early modernism were focused on in their work of giving the body respect and accept. Their embodiment of music, speech, myths and dramatic were presented as “movement of the soul”. The movements were formed in relation to other arts, paintings, sculptures, poems and as already pointed out; they even called some of their choreographies for “music visualization” and “visual speech”. Thus this studies show that the concepts of gesture and body space give a key to understand some important aspects of the embodiment of art, of bringing together different expressions of art as a unity, by help of bodily expression.

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<sup>i</sup> Neumann (s. 97 ff) call the not coded gestures “Gebärden”, and stress their monologue qualities.

<sup>ii</sup> This question is discussed from the dance phenomenology point of view by Sondra Fraleigh (1987) and from a semiotic point of view by Greimas (1987).

# Sabar Dance Events as Spaces for Social Interaction

Elina Seye

The sabar is a social dance form of the Wolof people in Senegal, a traditional form of entertainment. Sabar dance events can be organized to celebrate any kind of happy event, from name giving ceremonies to political rallies. Typically sabar events are organized by a group of women, often friends, neighbors or co-workers. Young women are usually in the majority at such events; men rarely dance and older women usually dance only at family celebrations.

In this paper I am considering sabar dance events from the viewpoint of performance studies, where e.g. Richard Schechner (2006:52) has stated that a performance creates its own reality, its own time and space, through the combination of ritualized behavior and play. In sabar events the space created is essentially a space for social interaction, but in distinction to everyday reality interaction takes place primarily non-verbally through drum rhythms, dance movements and other physical gestures. Although the modes of communication separate these events from everyday life, also real friendships and conflicts sometimes find their expression in sabar dancing.

## Defining the Performance Space

Sabar events usually take place in open air, on a street or a square, sometimes even on a sports field or a similar larger space. On smaller daytime occasions a canopy may be put up to shelter people from the sun and for nighttime events lights are often hung up. A street may also be cut off with fences for the event, but often the only physical objects marking the performance space are chairs that are brought to the borders of the area.

On the whole, the physical surroundings of a sabar event rarely have much importance; it is rather the presence and actions of the participants that create the space of performance. Here the sabar drummers are in a key role: they will start playing before the start of the actual event, in order to warm up and give younger players a chance to practice, but at the same time their playing will signal the neighborhood that a sabar event will soon take place here.

Furthermore, the beginning and ending of the event will be marked by certain musical phrases played by the drummers. So, it is the sounds played by the drummers that prepare the space for the event and mark the points in time where all participants are “transported” into the performance world and back again (see Schechner 2006:72–73).

With the musical signal for beginning people will move to the sides (if they are not there yet), forming usually a circular or oval space for dancing with the group of drummers positioned so that they can be seen by everyone. One of the musicians I interviewed, Mousse N'Diaye (1.3.2006), pointed out to me that even the word *gëwël* (musician or oral historian in Wolof language) literally means “the one who makes a circle”, referring to the ability of drummers to make people come and gather around them. Historically this was connected to the *gëwël*'s duty of announcing important news to the people (e.g. Leymarie 1999:30), and although news is usually transmitted in other ways nowadays, it is still hard to imagine any major event among the Wolof without the presence of drummers.

Thus, it is firstly the musical sounds provided by the drummers that define the performance space and secondly the participants themselves who will mark the borders of the area for dancing. Even when chairs have been placed around the area in advance, they can be moved if the area delineated by the chairs turns out to be too small or too big for the amount of people that have turned up – of course only in case there is enough space around to be used, in the streets of Dakar this is not always the case.

As soon as the drummers play the rhythmic pattern for ending the event, the performance space will be returned to its everyday function, people will get up from their chairs, some people starting to walk away immediately, others standing around talking to each other, organizers gathering chairs and drummers their drums.

### **Social Status in Wolof Society**

In order to talk about social relationships and how they are being embodied at sabar events, one needs to have some information about social status in Wolof society. The *gëwël*, musicians and oral historians, form a separate endogamous caste that is considered of lower social status than “ordinary people”. This is due to traditional views that good behavior equals restraint, and the higher the social status of a person, the calmer should be his/her conduct. The *gëwël* as a group of people whose hereditary duty has been to speak, sing and play music in public are therefore generally considered noisy and bad mannered – although their skills of performance can still be greatly appreciated.

The drummers at a sabar event are mostly men and members of *gëwël* families, whereas dancers are for the most part women and not of *gëwël* origin, although *gëwël* women may of course be participating as well. Since it is exactly public performance that signals lower social status, it can be seen as natural that it is young women who are the most eager to dance. In Wolof society there is a very strong age

hierarchy, and women are generally considered subordinate to men. So it is the young women who have the least risk of damaging their reputation by dancing in public.

Thus, to some extent sabar events follow the everyday conceptions of proper behavior, but on the other hand they are also broken. Through dancing, young women are able to express themselves in a way that would not be possible in everyday life, putting themselves into the centre of attention for the time of their short solos. In some situations, it can even be a social obligation to participate in dancing and thereby show one's respect or sympathy towards the organizers of the event whose social status is enhanced by the amount of participants and the quality of music and dance performances.

### **Embodiment of Social Relationships**

Sabar dances are performed for the most part as short improvised solos. Anyone of the participants can take part in dancing, and there are no rules about who should dance at what time or in what order. One or a few people at a time will move to the centre of the space to dance and then return to their places after they have finished their solo. Usually dancers will approach the drummers and dance facing them, so that the dancer and the lead drummer can see each other.

The lead drummer of the group is for the most time also the soloist, but other drummers can sometimes take over the solo part as well. E.g. in certain rhythms the bass drums are brought in front of the others to play solos. Whoever the soloist is, it is his job to follow the movements of a dancer with his playing, meaning that he has to anticipate the movements in order to play what the dancer is dancing, using traditional rhythm patterns corresponding to certain movement patterns and making the movements of a dancer thus audible.

An individual dancer generally has much more space than she needs for her dancing and therefore distances between dancers or between a dancer and the drummers or the observers are something worth considering. Most people dance quite close to the drummers facing them: this probably feels most comfortable for most women, because the people surrounding them will for the greatest part not be visible to them while dancing and they can concentrate on the interaction with the drummers. On the other hand, some people choose to dance further away from the drummers, close to their chair, maybe in order to be able to return to their place as fast as possible.

Some dancers will start dancing further away from the drummers and only approach them after getting the attention of the solo drummer. Skillful dancers may use this also as a conscious effect for drawing the attention of the audience to themselves. In this latter case the dancer will not focus exclusively on the drummers like

dancers often do, but after getting the attention of the drummers she will walk forward in a very flamboyant manner, looking around for the reactions of the people around her, before continuing to dance in front of the drummers.

For most participants, however, sabar events are less about showing off their dancing skills and more about having fun together with friends and/or relatives. Sometimes they direct their dance to another participant, dancing in front of a person sitting on a chair or going to dance together with another dancer, facing her instead of the drummers. Only very rarely do dancers intentionally face the “audience”, the other participants of the event, but rather their focus is either on the drummers or a single person in the audience.

Directing one’s dance to a certain person is a sign of friendship and/or appreciation of that person’s dancing skills. A good dance solo will also encourage others to go and dance themselves. In case the person is sitting down, dancing in front of her is also a way to get her to dance, but often you see the organizers of the event literally dragging people into the middle to dance. While dancing there is normally no touching, even when people are dancing face-to-face and very close to each other.

When directing one’s dance to a certain person, a dancer will usually dance as close to that person as possible (without touching), but otherwise physical distance does not seem to relate to how close or distant the participants feel to each other. It is rather the focus of attention that is important, as well as the movements and gestures and their relationships to the actions of other participants.

E.g. if there is someone dancing and another dancer moves in, if she is sympathetic to the person already dancing, she will stay a little further away doing smaller movements until the other one has finished her solo, or she will try to copy or mirror the movements of that person to show her sympathy and support. In case of antipathies, the dancer coming in later might on the contrary try to break the solo of the first dancer by trying to get the attention of the drummers with strong and accented movement patterns differing from those of the other dancer.

As mentioned, dancers usually prefer dancing close to the drummers, even when they don’t know them well. In most cases the dancers do not feel close to the drummers anyway, if only because of their status as *gêwël*, but the physical closeness has more practical reasons, facilitating the communication between the dancer and the drummers. Similarly the drummers always place themselves as a tight group, although sometimes one or two of them may move forward to play for a certain person dancing further away.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, the performance space in sabar events is a sonically and socially created space, where the physical surroundings have little significance. It is rather the music and the participants themselves that form a temporary space for social interaction through dance. In this space people can break free from the rules of everyday life to some extent, but on the other hand real social relationships are made visible in the ways people relate to each other in these performances. Here, physical closeness does not always correspond to feelings of closeness but friendship and respect are rather expressed through movements and gestures as well as focus.

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## **Interviews**

N'Diaye, Mousse 1.3.2006, interview by the author in Yeumbeul, Senegal.

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## Media Promoting Art – or Politics?

Sigrid Øvreås Svendal

In December 1962 *The Martha Graham Dance Company* visited Norway as part of the International Exchange Program organized by the U.S. during the Cold War. The Americans organized an extensive cultural program, often referred to as cultural diplomacy. In this exchange program, in the context of the Cold War, art was used as a weapon to gain allies, to win hearts and minds abroad. Many have heard of the ambulatory exhibitions of abstract expressionism or the jazz tours, but the government sponsored tours of dance have not received equal attention.<sup>1</sup> Modern dance as well as classical ballet was exported abroad to showcase American high-quality art, and to promote the best of the American artistic achievements.

The key question for this research paper will be whether the political context of the Cold War influenced the reception of the state funded tours. One way to look at the reception is to analyze newspaper reviews of the State Department financed tours, to see whether the media took any note of and reflected on the government sponsorship, the political context, or whether the art itself was the main focus. In other words, did local media promote art *or* politics? I'll do this by looking closely at the media coverage of one particular tour, the Martha Graham's State Department sponsored tour in Norway in 1962.

### **Graham as a cultural ambassador**

Graham had, as a choreographer and dancer, already been a part of the program since her first State Department tour in Asia in 1955 (Geduld 2010). By 1962 Graham had already had a long and successful artistic career. She was born in 1894, and started her dancing career in the 1920s. On the one hand you can say that Graham was an obvious choice, a natural cultural ambassador for the U.S., because of her personal abilities and her importance in the development of modern dance. But at the same time, one can say that the selection of Graham in 1962 was a safe and perhaps a bit boring choice, because she at that time represented the establishment in American modern dance. Several new directions in modern dance had developed in the U.S. during the last decade, but the cultural diplomacy program was reluctant to send avant-garde choreographers like for instance Merce Cunningham on State Department-tours. This explains why Graham and her company were sent in 1962, despite the fact that she was not the "hottest" or "newest" in American modern dance.

It is important to underline that the art that was selected to be part of the cul-



tural diplomacy program was created independently of the program (Prevots 2001 [1998]). The work was not intended to have a specific or political meaning. They should simply represent the best of American art. This meant that there were only a few selected artists who were considered suitable for the cultural diplomacy program. The selection of the artists was made by different panels. There was a music panel, a dance panel and a theatre panel. These panels were advisory panels, making recommendations, with the State Department as the final decision maker (Prevots 2001 [1998], 41-42). Even if the art was created independently of the cultural diplomacy program, one can say that the artists did lend themselves and their art to be treated as a form of benevolent propaganda (Kozloff 1974, 44). Though it is important to remember that the touring program offered American choreographers and dancers several benefits, such as a broadening experience, exposure to new audiences, and an indispensable source of income at a time when no other federal support for the arts existed in the U.S. (Prevots 2001 [1998], 5). Among the artists and audiences it was regarded as a marker of high quality to be on tour under the auspices of the State Department.

### **Did media promote art or politics?**

I've analyzed the media coverage of the Martha Graham tour in the three largest newspapers in Norway, *Aftenposten*, *Dagbladet* and *VG*. The material consists of two different types of articles; the pre-reviews which were written and printed in advance, and the reviews which were printed after the performance on the basis of the actual performance.

### **Pre-reviews**

All three newspapers presented the forthcoming visiting tour on the very same day; November 27<sup>th</sup> 1962. It is interesting to note that all newspapers informed their readers in this article that the forthcoming tour was made possible thanks to large subsidies from the U. S. Government. The advertising material even referred to *The International Cultural Program of the United States* as a presenter of the tour. This honesty of the government funding represents a change from previous State Department-tours in Scandinavia. New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre and Jerome Robbins' Ballet U.S.A. had all toured Scandinavia prior to 1962 under the auspices of the State Department, but the state funding were in these cases kept secret. Graham's tour differs from these by being the first State Department tour which was openly put in connection with the American cultural exchange program. In other words, a new strategy with openness and honesty seems to have emerged within the American cultural diplomacy.

The former strategy of keeping the connection between the U.S. cultural program and the dance tours a secret was based on a fear that cultural exchange would be

perceived as propaganda, if it became associated with the American government (Osgood 2006, 77). It could be expected that the newspapers would make this connection between state funding, the cultural program and propaganda, when the state initiative and funding of the tours were known. But even if the media knew about the state funding, and this performance being part of the cultural program, it was regarded solely as positive. The media did not regard the tour as cultural propaganda at all. *Aftenposten*, which also was a co-sponsor for the performances in Norway, even wrote: "The United States government has wished to make other countries aware of high-quality American stage and ballet art today, and we have a reason to feel flattered that Oslo is one of the cities that have made the list of bigger cultural centers in Europe." (*Aftenposten*, Nov. 27, 1962. All translations are mine). And why shouldn't the media regard this event as positive? As *Aftenposten* also wrote: "The costs of such a tour are so extensive that hardly any European stage could take the event at its own expense." (*Ibid*). In other words, without the U.S. government support Graham would probably never been able to visit Oslo in 1962.

The American strategy of being open and honest about the government support for the Martha Graham tour was clearly a successful strategy. The media did not put this information in connection with cold war, politics or propaganda. On the contrary it led to a grateful attitude to the U.S. and its government, whose financial support contributed to an artistic experience for the Norwegian audience. Although the U.S. government by sending high culture on tour wanted to achieve political interests, the important point for the newspapers and for the Norwegian audience was that the state funding gave them the opportunity to experience Graham and her company live in Norway.

Another important point with these pre-reviews, all of which were printed November 27<sup>th</sup>, is the surprisingly high degree of similarity in the articles. The same words and phrases are repeated and several sentences are even identical in all three newspapers. The following quotes were repeated, in exactly the same wording, in two or three newspapers:

"Martha Graham's contemporary dance differs greatly from classical ballet and represents one of America's major and original contributions to the dramatic arts." (*Aftenposten* Nov. 27, 1962; *VG* Nov. 27, 1962)

"It's been 35 years since Martha Graham first appeared on Broadway and thereby initiated a change in all dance – not only in the so-called "modern" dance, but also in classical ballet and theater dance in general." (*Aftenposten* Nov. 27, 1962; *VG* Nov. 27, 1962 and *Dagbladet* Nov. 27, 1962)

“With Graham’s form of dance, she is one of the most significant creative forces in the 20th century. As a revolutionary – in the spirit of Picasso and Stravinsky – she explored the human body and gave it new expression, opportunities through dance to express people's greatest hopes and their deepest despair.” (Aftenposten Nov. 27, 1962; VG Nov. 27, 1962)

All the newspapers also wrote about how Graham had left convention and introduced real art sculptures as set designs. And all of them told their readers that her premieres always were looked forward to with anticipation because most of the music was especially written for her. She also brought a complete orchestra with her on tour in 1962. The Norwegian newspapers, both *Aftenposten* and *Dagbladet*, showed extra interest in the music, by printing parallel reviews after the performance – one on the dance and one on the music.

The analysis shows that the three Norwegian newspapers to a certain degree printed quite similar articles on the very same day. We also know that the *United States Information Service (USIS)*, which were information offices established in relations to the American Embassies, worked extensively on getting media coverage on the State Department funded tours (Osgood 2006, 228). USIS was organized as a part of the American cultural diplomacy. Positive attention in the local newspapers in connection with tours was an important part, not to mention a target, for the cultural diplomacy. USIS sent out press material in advance and invited the press on different events. There is no other reasonable explanation for the high degree of similarity than that all newspapers used the press material from the USIS.

Even if the State Department funding of the tour was well known, all the newspapers nonetheless conveyed USIS’s press release and its contents uncritically. One can say that the Norwegian newspapers redistributed *what the American cultural diplomacy wanted to convey*. It illustrates how USIS, and therefore the American cultural diplomacy, had access to the Norwegian newspapers, and strongly influenced the content: In this case how the upcoming tour and the choreographer Martha Graham were presented.

If we return to the above mentioned quotes, it’s quite clear that the press release focused on how Graham’s work had led to a major change. According to the pre-reviews her dance was considered “revolutionary” and as “one of America’s major and original contributions to the dramatic arts”. This was all positive statements that emphasized American art. Positive attention on American culture was one of the purposes of the State Department tours and the American cultural diplomacy. Anti-American attitu-

des flourished in Europe at this time and there existed a particularly strong scepticism of American culture, which often was portrayed as degenerative popular culture that led to moral decay. One of the purposes of sending modern dance on government-funded tours was to counter-act these attitudes, and to increase knowledge on American high culture in Europe. In that sense, one can say that the Norwegian newspaper played a contributing part, as they at least in this case directly mediated what the American cultural diplomacy wanted them to do.

On the other hand, it is important to stress that these statements were not lying, perhaps slightly exaggerated, but they did not contain misleading information. Graham was not well known in Norway in the early 1960s, particularly not in the editorial world. In other words, it can be said that it was an advantage that information about Graham stemmed from the Americans themselves, and that the newspapers didn't attempt to write their own articles about the things they didn't know anything about. This is probably an important part of the explanation for why all the newspapers used USIS's press releases to the greatest extent: They had in general little knowledge of dance, and particularly on American modern dance. But even if the knowledge of dance was limited, the example shows how the U.S. cultural diplomacy was given access into local media to present their version. And there is no doubt that all the articles portrayed American dance and culture in a very positive light.

## Reviews

All the newspapers distributed their own reviews after the performance. Unlike the pre-reviews which were written by ordinary members of the editorial, the reviews were written by reviewers with solid knowledge of dance. While the pre-reviews to a great extent were based on already existing press-material, the reviews represent the personal view of the reviewers. The reviewers in *Dagbladet* and *Aftenposten* praised Graham and her dancers for their outstanding technique and ability to communicate with the audience. The reviewer in *VG* was more critical, claiming that Graham's art didn't give him anything. Regardless of how the performance was received, it is clear that it was the art itself that was the main focus of all reviews. None of the reviews mentioned the state funding or the American cultural exchange program. They focused solely on the actual performance, and how they considered Graham's work.

But even if the reviews focused exclusively on the art, one might say that some of the rhetoric from the pre-reviews was kept. *Dagbladet*, for instance, labeled Graham as "one of the greatest choreographic geniuses and a pioneer in the new direction of American dance". (*Dagbladet* Dec. 8, 1962, my emphasis) There is little doubt that Graham can be defined as a genius and a pioneer. But if we take the different directions in

American dance in 1962 into consideration, Graham did definitely not belong to the new direction. At this time, she was a part of the establishment. The new direction consisted of choreographers like Cunningham, Paul Taylor and members of the Judson Dance Theatre.

It is nevertheless difficult to say whether this statement can be explained by the content of the pre-reviews, which we have seen emphasized Graham as a pioneer and a revolutionary, or whether it simply was the reviewer's genuine opinion. There is no doubt that the Norwegian critics saw the performance as innovative and fresh, despite the fact that most of the works were made years and decades before 1962.<sup>ii</sup> It is important to remember that the knowledge of American modern dance was limited in Norway at this time, and although Graham had had a career for many decades, her art was not well known in Norway. This might as well be the explanation behind the statement on new direction in *Dagbladet*. At the same time the reviewer in *Aftenposten* did not make the same mistake, by referring to Graham's lifelong career and her being a revolutionary once (Aftenposten Dec. 8 and 10, 1962).

## **Conclusion**

The research question in this paper consisted of three questions. I'll conclude by answering these.

**First, did the media reflect on the government sponsorship?** All the newspapers knew about the state funding, and that this particular performance was part of the American cultural exchange program. But it was only considered positive that the U.S. government was willing to spend money so the Norwegian audience could experience Martha Graham. The media made no deeper reflections on the government sponsorship, and none of them connected the state sponsorship with propaganda.

**Second, did the media reflect on the political context?** Neither the pre-reviews nor the reviews reflected on the political context, which was the underlying cause that made the tour possible. Thus we see that the American strategy of being honest about the state financing became a success. By being open and honest, the U.S. government was credited for bringing this tour to Norway, while it was not connected to politics or propaganda. The Cold War is not mentioned in any of the newspapers.

**Third, was art the main focus?** Yes! Martha Graham, her work, her dancers and her art was in focus in both the pre-reviews and the reviews. But even if the media in this case emphasized the art, it can be said that the local media promoted American art the way the American cultural diplomacy wanted it to be promoted. In other words, one can say

that local media did play a part of the American cultural diplomacy strategy. U.S. political interests were not mediated directly, but by increasing the knowledge about American art in Europe, the American politicians hoped for a friendlier political climate in Europe. The local media promoted American art explicitly, while the politics and its underlying content was more implied. Media clearly promoted both art and politics.

Where does this lead us? Firstly, one can say that this case study suggests that the American cultural diplomacy program succeeded. Second, one can say that this success also entailed consequences for the art, in this case modern dance. It has been claimed that abstract expressionism won support in Europe thanks to the American cultural diplomacy program (Kozloff 1974; Cockcroft 1974). I believe that American modern dance represented a major impact in itself, but that the cultural diplomacy program may have contributed to the strong foothold American modern dance got in Europe during the Cold War. I will analyze this subject further, as part of my PhD-theses.

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<sup>i</sup> See (Prevots 2001 [1998]). Some PhD dissertations and articles on the subject have been published the last years: (Brown 2008); (Copel 2000); (Geduld 2010). For the jazz tours see (Eschen 2006 [2004]). For abstract expressionism see (Cockcroft 1974); (Kozloff 1974); (Saunders 2001).

<sup>ii</sup> Choreographies on the repertory on the 1962-European tour were Night Journey from 1947, Seraphic Dialogue from 1955, Embattled Garden from 1958, Acrobats of God from 1960, Secular Games and Phaedra both from 1962.

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## Scenic Space and Technologies of Enchantment

Daniel Tércio

The first point to stress is the exploratory nature of this paper, as well as a previous debate (and a clarification to be made) concerning the definition of theatrical scene in relation to stage for theatre.

Eugenio Barba, in his *Dictionary of theatre anthropology*, considered the stage “as the collection of human, technical, material, aesthetic and other values which make possible the representation for the text itself” (1991: 238). Hence, for Barba, theatre is the end result of the collaborative relationship between the text and the stage. Throughout the history of culture the wide range of different collaborative relationships between stage and text is generating different theatres. Quoting Barba “there has not existed and does not exist a single theatre but as many theatres as there have been and are particular types of relationships effectively contracted between the text and the stage” (1991: 238). In that *Dictionary*, one may find a wonderful metaphor of theatre as the outcome of two hands clapping. Just as a single hand clapping produces no sound, theatre is only possible provided text and stage are present.

In dance one can say that the body is present while the text is not necessarily there, or rather, that the body is the text. Moreover (and this is not a mere metaphor) the body has two hands, which means that the body’s presence is THE condition for dance. Actually, in this paper two reasons underlie the adoption of the expression “scenic space”:

- First, the expression may expectably underscore the presence of the body over the stage, since the noun “scene” accentuates the meaning of the place where a bodily action or a theatrical event occurs.
- Second, the scene, whatever it may be, should be something seen by a viewer. This means that the viewer is another condition for the clapping of hands. Or rather, this means that the performing bodies are performing for and with other bodies.

This idea led to another one, which was arising from the reading of Alfred Gell’s *Anthropology of art*, and which will be explained briefly. Gell considered art as a component of technology. He argued that the various arts are “the components of a vast and often unrecognized technical system, essential to the reproduction of human societies” (2005: 43), which he calls “technology of enchantment”. Moreover, Gell explained that “the technology of enchantment is founded on the enchantment of technology. The enchantment of technology is the power that technical processes have of casting a spell



over us so that we see the real world in an enchanted form" (2005: 44).

Inspired by this perspective I wondered if throughout history technology had not been split into two realms: the realm of "hard" Technology, consisting of all those technical systems and processes that have been transforming our physical, biological and psychological environment; and the realm of "technologies of enchantment", encompassing all those technical systems and processes that have been framing our world views, reshaping our perception, and our body images, and movement patterns.

Dance is a performing Art, and performing arts fall within the realm of "technologies of enchantment", adopting the concept coined by Professor Gell. "Technologies of enchantment" have always resorted to "enchanted technologies", which included several ingenious devices together with crafts knowledge.

In performing arts, technical devices have been historically accomplished through numerous inventions, such as the linear perspective in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, or the movie screen projections during the 1960's, or the interactive screen projections during the 1990's... Thus I am proposing all those technologies to be considered "enchanted technologies", based on techno-systems interfering on the framework of the world's perception, rather than on the outside world.

I am aware that these thoughts should be refined. Despite the transitory condition of my reasoning, I would like to stress this idea: in dance, the scene is a vast technological place for the expansion of the body's intelligence.

The relationship between the body and space sets off the expansion of the body's intelligence. At this point, there is an analogy to be made: the above-mentioned wide range of different collaborative relationships between stage and text is symmetrical to the relationships between the body and its spaces. Throughout history, both are being shaped and mediated by different "enchanted technologies."

I am wondering if nowadays the space for theatrical dance, once illusion-like shaped, is turning in some cases into a vertigo structure, and the scene is pushing the spectator into a vertigo perception of the reality, and the performer's movements into the abyss. Regardless of this situation, I should add that one has not to consider stillness as the opposite of the vertigo experience, but rather as the healing from the speed domination.

I would like to present some notes from my non-conventional historical narrative notebook, with its cuts and continuities, with its own speed and stillness towards the vertigo experience in theatrical stages.

### **Illusion-crafted space**

In Renaissance and late Renaissance, treatises from Italian architects and artists included sketches and plans of the (then) new scenographic space. The stage was conceived like a machine and the viewers were placed facing the stage, at a front level, which unavoidably had an effect on stage directions.

At its inception, this perspective was linked to the Italian theatre model. The stage-box devised by *Ancien Regime* architects had arisen to accommodate a new kind of performance, enabling a new relationship with the audience.

Performing in perspective, which would become one of the foundations for stage apparatus, has led to the enlargement of the scenic space, simulating our visual sense of profundity by roughly reproducing human vision with artificial means. The viewer was then able to see inside the stage and further than the stage backdrop, even though he knew it was just a simulation of distance downwards.

Inside that machine and from the performers' vantage point, the fact that they were able to act in a single direction would radically change the dramatic language – one could argue that this body's intelligence was operating within new vectors, the stage turning into the vector sum of an illusionistic space. In this way the scene attained a balance, definitely preventing all points of imbalance from occurring or, at least, enclosing them within the rigid structure of the points of escape and pushing the audience into an illusion-crafted space.

### **The stage is a place for the abstract**

Quoting Postlewait and Davis, "Modernist stage design, shaped by Appia and Craig, displaced realism and antiquarianism by abstracting mass, volume and light to create a new vision of the stage space (or according to Craig, to recapture the old, abiding vision of theatre). With abstraction came the attempt to visually disavow the one-to-one correspondence of verisimilitude, making a virtue of the mimetic gap" (Postlewait and Davis 2003: 14).

On stage, there is a complex system of lines and vectors which influence the performer's body. In the 1920's Oskar Schlemmer was aware that the moving dancer or actor was supposed to follow pre-existent spatial framework's patterns. In moving, the dancer/actor creates new shapes – new dimensions – in the spatial structure. Therefore, the performer's body has the power to produce space. The release of the performer's body from his natural condition underlay the research carried out by Oskar Schlemmer. Costume, the *kunstfigur*, performed this function. This costume allowed the body to gain metamorphosis and formatting space.

### **Bodies, space and experimentalism**

Migration of non-‘artistic’ techniques to the arts realm — for instance, the acoustic-performative experiences by John Cage and cathode-ray objects by Nam June Paik in the 50s and the 60s —, as well as experimentalism by the Judson Church group, were crucial to an onstage new use. In actual fact, the discovery of the significance of detail and reverberation is closely related to the use of everyday movements on stage as well as to the repetition. At the same time, and subsequently to the experiments completed within the activity of the Judson group, a choreographer such as Trisha Brown would embark on radical experiences, for example, taking up new stages, and converting roofs and walls of New-York buildings into performance venues.

In the meantime, during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, cinema and video screenings became recurrent, thus, triggering off a new relationship with the scenic space. In connection with this, Marc Boucher wrote:

“The use of projected images in staged performances has become commonplace in a very short period of time. The spectacular effects it provides are now largely taken for granted, and the more subtle ones are not much discussed either. Projected moving images radically transform the stage. It acquires instant kinetic value by incorporating this newer form of representation within itself.

The project image can be perceived as a visual ‘mise en abyme’, a dynamic background (or foreground when a scrim is used), a novel light source or even as an actor, depending on the given artistic means, uses, and contexts” (Boucher 2004).

### **Unfolding space and staging detail**

Philippe Decouflé, Alwin Nikolais’ student, inherited incredible movement plasticity from his teacher, having added circus languages and the intention of building fabulous universes; Decouflé’s work reveals a choreographic writing of micro-gestures, as in *Le P’tit Bal* (1994), a choreography for cinema, and in *Decodex* (1995) presented for the first time at the Marseille Festival, a performance that stages bizarre creatures submitted to scale transfers. The camcorder is sometimes used to capture detail and duplicate both scenic and corporeal elements, consequently uncovering the labyrinthine revelation of existence.

More intimately, I recall the artworks by the Portuguese creator Rui Horta, specifically *Pixel* (2001), *Scope* (2007), and *Talk Show* (2009). The first piece de-multiplies the scenic space into a succession of plans where performer(s) are rebated; the stage functions as if over the mechanical assembly of the renaissance perspective’s different plans; now deep-rooted those plans offer an endless rebating possibility, in which the

spectator is involved as well by handling a filming camera. As for *Scope*, it is a piece built on two characters, man and woman romantically involved, with technical apparatus connecting and dividing likewise; it is indeed amazing how Horta uses the technological device to build-up the fault — how he works on the technique's dramatic dimension — splitting the audience in two parties and creating the opportunity to listen to the other side's viewpoint. As for *Talk Show*, the fault is deeply staged in three different floors and the ambiguity between the real and the virtual is explored.

Another example: in *Kammer Kammer* (2000), William Forsythe uses a multiple-screening device on practicable screens that are moving around the scenic venue. Narrator and characters appear on stage 'indifferently' on both physical and projected spaces, advancing a storyline oscillating between tangible and intangible, and permeating the spectator's reception with ambiguity.

### **Fall and dive**

Hence, the viewer is often led to the idea of fall, enhanced both by the technical resources under use, namely screening effects, and by the experimentation of a kind of movement derived from fields like physical theatre and martial arts. According to Virilio, the frequent use of whirlpool, turnaround, and unbalance, particularly in contemporary dance, stresses the feeling of vertigo. Virilio uses a key concept – speed: “speed, by its violence, becomes a destiny at the same time as being a destination. We go nowhere, we have contented ourselves solely with leaving and abandoning the vivacious and vivid [vif] to the advantage of the void [vide] of speed” (2008: 40). Therefore, “speed is identified with a premature aging, the more the movement accelerates, the more quickly time passes and the more the surroundings are stripped of their significance” (2008: 42).

Wim Vandekeybus has been one of the most impressive choreographers in this energetic and speedy performance. In *Blush*, for example, he installs on stage a screen system projecting sub-aquatic environments' films. Performers move energetically on stage, whirl vertigo-like, and fall permanently. At times, they dive into the screens. On these occasions, the audience can see the performers' bodies inside the film, like inhabitants of fluid environments. Shortly afterwards, they might suddenly reappear on the stage dry area, returning then to fall and vertigo. Projected images operate as if they were constantly swallowing and vomiting the performers' actual bodies. The relationship between the real world and the screenings' virtual world becomes ambivalent, tuned projection and choreography playing a part in that.

Examples should not have to end here and they oughtn't to be valued as mere illustrations of what one may call vertigo structure or abyss stages.

I started this presentation underlining the presence of the body in the space through dance. Eventually the body turned out to be a producer of fragmented spaces and a falling entity, a vertiginous entity. It is time to start again: the body is *the* place – the intelligent point of reunification and understanding of a fragmented world, the point to find new territories.

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## **Becoming one body – Manifestations of kinesthetic empathy while watching dancers close by or further away**

Liesbeth Wildschut

Years ago, in 2005 to be precise, I visited the Kikker Theatre in Utrecht, the Netherlands. My body went rigid right at the opening scene of *Bacon* by Nanine Linning. Three bodies were hanging upside down, high above the floor, their feet in ropes. My body felt what this position induced and wanted to escape from this distressing situation. When two of the dancers alternately reached the ground again and began their dance, I kept focused on the dancer still hanging above the floor, bending and stretching her torso. An almost impossible effort, according to my abdominal muscles. Only when she made contact with the floor did I feel released from the enormous tension in my body.

My body reacted strongly to the movements I was watching. These sensations evoked emotions I can still remember, (many) years after the event. Watching the fierce or compressed movements started a process in my body, which made me feel strongly connected to the acts of the performers, as if it was me performing these movements. This way of involvement, kinesthetic empathy, is an involvement process many choreographers wish to bring about.

As Nanine Linning writes on her website ([www.naninelinning.nl](http://www.naninelinning.nl)): 'Maybe the highest good in a dance performance is to let the audience and the dancer become one body.' For these choreographers it can be inspiring to gain more insight into the mechanisms of such a, often unconscious, connection between spectator and dancer.

Of course, affective, cognitive and sensorimotor body systems work closely together and regulation mechanisms play a large part. Yet without wishing to neglect the complexity of these combined processes, in this article I would like to isolate the concept of kinesthetic empathy and elucidate its workings. I present some results of a small-scaled empirical research, exploring differences between manifestations of kinesthetic empathy between spectators sitting close by or further away, while watching the performance *Landscape* (2009) by Amy Raymond.

### **Kinesthetic empathy**

In the field of Theatre Studies, the distinction between a cognitive way of involvement and empathy was already discussed by psychologist Theodor Lipps (1906) in the early twentieth century. His ideas are still of interest (see Curtis 2008). In 1939 the dance theoretician John Martin mentioned the audience's physical reactions while watching dance. He stated that we not only watch movement but, as we are sitting in our seats,

also participate in it, and so we experience the same emotions as the dancers do (Martin 1965 [1939]: p.53). His theories are still referred to (among others by Foster 2010; Bleecker 2002, 2008; Wildschut 2003), although his presupposition that watcher and dancer experience the same emotions is abandoned nowadays. Important is that Lipps as well as Martin are convinced of the idea that spectators who are watching movements feel the spontaneous urge to imitate them, which in turn leads to specific kinesthetic sensations which evoke emotions linked to these movements.

In *Bewogen door dans* (2003) I elaborated on the process of kinesthetic empathy with the help of empathy theories which focus on imitation of movement, research results in the field of non-verbal communication, views from dance therapy and results of neuroscientific research. I was able to further accentuate the concept of kinesthetic empathy by using the results from the empirical research I carried out among 391 children after they had watched an abstract or narrative dance performance. In addition, I received valuable information from forty dance experts (dancers, choreographers, students and teachers from professional dance training courses and professional dance observers) who described their experiences with kinesthetic empathy.

From recent neuroscientific publications we have gained further insight into the process of kinesthetic empathy. Successful use is being made of brain scans to study the functioning of the human brain. It involves sliding a person's head into a powerful magnetic field to see what parts of the brain become active when certain tasks are carried out. Experiments with virtual reality confusing the brain, or research in which brain damage plays a part, can also help us gain a better understanding of the workings of the brain. Research results give insight into the transformation from watching movement to initiating movement and experiencing emotions. Through these new insights our knowledge of dance also increases and this is useful for the practice of dance. By laying bare the mechanisms which are active while watching dance the interaction between performance characteristics and audience characteristics can be better understood.

### **Firing mirror neurons**

I will focus on the physically felt moving with the dancers, of which the perceived movement is the stimulus and the spectator receives information coming from his own body. We get movement information of our own body through the proprioceptors, sense organs located in our muscles, tendons, joints, nerves and middle ear. The question is how the transformation from watching a movement to initiating or carrying out this movement takes place.

In the early nineties, neuroscientist Giacomo Rizzolatti and his research team at the University of Parma (Italy) made a remarkable discovery. They managed to register

certain cell activities in the brains of monkeys who were making grabbing movements, but they also accidentally discovered that the same neurons (nerve cells) of the monkeys were active when they *watched* the movement. This means that neurons located in the motor area of the brain are activated while observing movement. Analyzing this discovery the researchers supposed that these mirror neurons (so called because for these neurons *seeing* is the same as *doing*) form a system to match observation and execution of motor actions (Pellegrino et al. 1992). I will use research which followed from this discovery involving the monkeys to get more grip on the concept of kinesthetic empathy.

In the case of human brain research fMRI scans are used. With the help of a strong magnet changes in the oxygen concentration in the brain are measured. On a computer screen one can see active parts of the brain lighten up, for instance parts in the motor areas when a limb is being moved. When watching actions, brain activity outside the visual area in the brain can be seen in cortex areas, which were considered as fundamental or main motor areas in the past. The discovery of the activity of these mirror neurons, which results in an internal mental transformation, turns out to have implications for understanding many aspects related to our understanding of the behavior of others. The activation of mirror neurons puts the observer in the same internal state as when the action in question is carried out (Umiltà et al. 2001).

### **Hidden and visible manifestations**

In the documentary *Noorderlicht*, Rizzolatti and his colleague Gallese discussed their research results. According to Vittorio Gallese our brain has a system that is capable of projecting gestures made by others on the same areas which we use to steer these gestures when we make them ourselves. Rizzolatti supposes that in case of a 'brake' only part of this system is activated. This brake system, presumably located in the frontal cortex, only allows certain behaviour. People who suffer from brain damage in this area cannot stop imitating, even if they are ordered to. Rizzolatti observes that the brake system can also 'leak' to the action activation area in the case of people who do not have such brain damage. This almost results in action against the observer's will (*Noorderlicht* VPRO, 23 May 2002).

If we apply these research results to the situation in the theatre where during a dance performance the spectators focus on the movements of the dancers, their pre-motor brain area will show activity related to the observed movements. It is conceivable that the repression mechanism of some spectators may show leaks. The questionnaires filled out by forty dance experts (Wildschut 2003) showed that moving with the dancers is an inner experience, but can also be visible from the outside. Many answers show that



visible movement is restrained and has a kind of 'overflow' in the farthest limbs. A student at a dance academy stated: 'I think it is more inside of me, but sometimes I "betray" myself by moving my hands or head along with the dancer.' A choreographer remarked: 'My reactions are too visible for the people around me. This bothers me sometimes because I'd rather imagine myself being unnoticed.' Often contracting and relaxing muscles are mentioned, for instance when falling movements occur, and a change in breathing, in particular when watching modern dance. A teacher at a dance academy writes: 'A vague relaxing of my shoulders when I watch a fall. Contraction of my muscles in the case of a sudden bow.' (Wildschut 2003:170-171)

This is in line with the brake system as discussed by Rizzolatti. The descriptions by the experts show that some leakage in the brake system is concerned. Their urge to move is channelled in a direction acceptable for that moment, for instance by moving a hand or a foot.

### **Watching *Landscape***

While watching a dance performance, the audience receives an amount of information. Although the dance itself is usually a domineering aspect, the spectators determine for a large part where to focus their attention and if they want to be involved in an empathic, experiencing and/or an understanding, rational way. In kinesthetic empathy the attention for, or maybe even concentration on, the movement plays an important role. Concentration on the movement can be caused by the interest of the spectator, for instance because of his or her own experience with dance, but also by the choreographer who draws the attention to the movement and addresses the body of the spectator.

In 2009 Amy Raymond made *Landscape*, a research project under the wings of Dansateliers. Her interest in the awareness of physical sensations of spectators, in how spectators connect to the performers and in the question if proximity makes the piece more available, gave me the opportunity to explore further the findings of my earlier research, carried out among the experts. I decided to focus on two questions:

1. Are there differences in the awareness of kinesthetic empathy watching the performance close by or further away? (Experts mentioned both possibilities.)
2. Which parts of the body are involved mostly? (Experts mentioned inner felt as well as visible manifestations in several body parts.)

*Landscape* was performed by two dancers: Kevin Polak and Miquel de Jong. During two of the four scenes the dancers were also visible by projections. The piece was made for a small audience and performed in a shuttered gymnasium. Therefore Dansateliers organized two performances especially for this occasion and invited students of Utrecht University.

They were asked to sit close by or further away. Immediately after the performance they filled in a questionnaire about their involvement during each scene.

### **The questionnaire**

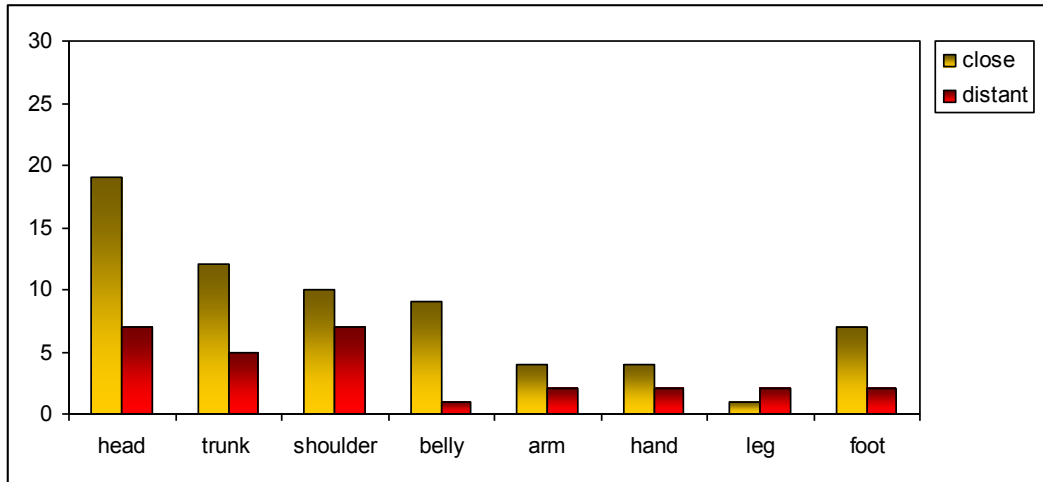
Related to each scene I asked seven questions about possible involvement strategies, with one question per episode about physical experiences. (For example, while watching the man with the table top, I felt my body moving along.) They were answered on a seven-point scale. The episode with the strongest physical experience was chosen and with this scene in mind, more questions about the students' experiences of kinesthetic empathy were asked: four questions about their awareness of invisible, but inner felt physical experiences and four questions about visible movements. They were also asked which part(s) of their body was (were) involved.

### **Findings**

The respondents, all studying Theatre and Dance at Utrecht University, consisted of 12 men and 37 women, aged 18 to 56, average 23. While 28 respondents wanted to sit close by, 21 of them choose their seats further away. Differences between the distant and close by group were analyzed.

Respondents sitting close by (N=28) felt their body move stronger with the dancers in a visible way than respondents sitting further away (N=21) ( $p=0.02$ ). No significant differences were found for inner felt movements.

Movement was felt in different parts of the body, especially head, trunk, shoulder and belly, as you can see in the diagram below. They were asked in what body parts movement was felt, without distinction between inner felt and outer visible manifestations. At first sight the diagram shows more activity in the close by group (light colored). T-tests made it clear that significantly more respondents sitting close by felt their head and belly moving than respondents sitting further away (dark colored) ( $p=0.017$ ;  $p=0.019$ ).



## Conclusions

Studying the diagram, one sees that only in the leg more respondents of the *distant* group felt activity. However, there are no statistics, because of too few respondents. Therefore, this would be an interesting direction for further research. The body posture of the respondents could serve as an explanation: the distant group was seated on chairs, the close by group seated on the floor with their legs folded. Some members of the expert group (Wildschut 2003) mentioned the importance of an open posture while watching: if you are not willing to connect yourself on a movement level with the dancer you keep your arms and legs crossed (p.170). By sitting on the floor, legs are easier forced in a closed position then when sitting on chairs.

Although the results can be influenced by the choice of the spectators themselves to sit close by or in the back, the experiment shows that some manifestations of kinesthetic empathy are stronger when the audience is seated close by. Activity felt in the belly, the centre of a moving body, was hardly mentioned by respondents sitting further away. Since this experiment took place in a (large) gym, differences in a theatre setting probably are even more significant. For choreographers who intent to evoke the feeling of being one body with the dancers this can be an indication to take into consideration to perform in small auditoriums.

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# Sacred Spaces: History and Practice in Christian Sacred Dance

Emily Wright

This paper surveys the history of Christian sacred space and the ways in which moving bodies shaped and were shaped by the spaces particular to Christian worship. Further, it explores the practice of contemporary sacred dance in the American Protestant sanctuary and its effects on the contemporary practice of Protestantism.

“...And upon this rock I will build My church.”<sup>i</sup> These words from the book of Matthew are the first mention made by Christ in reference to the new entity of his followers. The word “church” used here comes from the Greek *ekklesia* and is used to denote both the physical place of assembly and the community of all believers (Strong 1986). The most common meeting place for early Christians was the “*domus ecclesiae*” or home church. A typical Roman home consisted of an entryway from the street, which opened into a large, central atrium. At the far end of the dwelling, opposite the entryway, were the oecus, or family room, and the triclinium, or dining room. Scholars believe that the triclinium was the initial meeting place for followers of Christ as the emphasis of their gatherings was a “love feast” or the sharing of a communal meal, including the observation of what would later become known as the Eucharist, a ritual observance of the death of Christ with the symbolic partaking of his body and his blood in the form of bread and wine (Doig 2008:5). Because these homes were virtually indistinguishable from other private homes of the time, little evidence exists to suggest what types of movements these early Christians employed in the practice of their faith. From the writings of various church leaders in the patristic era, one gathers that dancing did take place, although more frequently in proximity to the tombs of the martyrs than in the spaces of communal worship, which were smaller and meant to primarily accommodate eating and drinking (Davies 1984: 44-45).

The emergence of the first structure explicitly designed to house Christian worship began in approximately 318 C.E. with the construction of the Lateran Basilica in Rome (Doig 2008:24). As its name suggests, the Lateran Basilica was modeled after the Roman public house of the same name. Religious scholar Jeanne Halgren Kilde notes, although the term basilica can refer to a wide variety of public assembly halls, “its strong connection to the basileus, or emperor, remained clear.” (Kilde 2008:46). The shift from home church to basilica, while gradual, exemplifies the ways in which Christian worship practices shifted as well, from an emphasis on the varietal, decentralized and communal methods of numerous regional bodies to the formalized, cen-

tralized, hierarchical, and imperialized entities under the rule of a few, powerful leaders. The long central nave, or aisle, which led worshippers towards the raised platform that now signified the sanctuary or holy of holies, encouraged the development of processions. The particular character of early Christian processions in the formalized space of the basilica conveyed a degree of ceremony and rigidity taken directly from imperial court ritual (Kilde 2008:51).

The structure perhaps most commonly associated with the notion of church is the cathedral. "The word cathedral is derived from the Latin word *cathedra* ("seat" or "chair"), and refers to the presence of the bishop's or archbishop's chair or throne."<sup>ii</sup> Cathedrals began to emerge as an even more elaborate form of the basilica in the Middle Ages. Several modifications and/or additions developed, which had significant implications for the practices of Christian worship. The first was the innovation of the cruciform plan, in which a narrow aisle called a transept was inserted perpendicular to the nave so that the main hall formed the shape of a cross. Processions could now advance along the shape of the cross in contemplation of the sacrifice of Christ. This notion of journey coincided with another development in Christian practice, the pilgrimage. This "movement of the body within and through space," according to Kilde, illustrates the theological emphasis on the notion of the Christian journey (Kilde 2008:86). Further, the practice of identifying with the sufferings of Christ by locating them within the bodies of the pilgrims simultaneously furthers the pilgrim's identification with the humanity of Christ and reifies the tension between body and mind in Christian practice. In later Gothic architecture, the eyes of the worshipper would immediately travel up, further emphasizing the felt experience of this tension between the earthly, sinful body grounded in the path of the cross and soul's desire to transcend to the heavenly realm. This notion of transcendence and its association with body/mind dualism would have pervasive effects on Western ideas about the body in general and dance in particular. The burgeoning ballet would take this notion as its aesthetic ideal and as the narrative subtext of its training practices and choreographic creations. Later, when twentieth century churches would begin to introduce liturgical dances to their congregations, they would turn to ballet, whose aesthetic not only illustrated this tension, but employed it with a controlled and codified movement vocabulary in the tradition of Christianity's oldest rituals.

In her essay, "Communal Transformations of Church Space in Lutheran Lubeck," historian Bonnie B. Lee discusses the ways in which one particular community deliberately modified their religious space to reflect the new beliefs and practices of the Reformers (Lee 2008:149-167). The first significant change was the removal of the rood screen, an architectural embellishment that separated the clergy from the

congregation. While the clergy still remained on an elevated platform, the purpose was more practical than symbolic in that this elevated position allowed the clergy to be more easily seen and heard by the congregation. While never completely eliminated, the implication of these actions, among others, served to lessen the rigidity of hierarchical authority and to decrease the separation of the sacred from the profane. The second development was the gradual removal of images in the forms of shrines to saints or iconography. Instead, various aspects of the space were embellished with scripture in decorative script. In this way, as Lee points out, the word actually became image in that it replaced the iconography with words that were viewed as works of art (Lee 2008:161). A final significant change was the advent of conducting the service entirely in the native language of the congregants, rather than in Latin. Not only was the sermon now conducted in common parlance, but also the congregation was further involved in the service through responsive readings and singing.

While the gradual shift in emphasis from the rituals of the sacraments with their attendant imagery and corporeal involvement to text-based practices would create a greater sense of participation and personal responsibility among the body of Protestant believers, this text-based participation would further emphasize the mind over the body in religious practice. The irony of these changes, as historian Nigel Yates points out, is that while designed to increase the involvement of the laity, the dominant role in the service was still assigned to the clergyman. In fact, Yates suggests that active participation by the congregation actually decreased as they were forced to sit attentively through longer services conducted by the clergyman without the freedom to attend to their own private devotions (Yates 2008:22). In addition, the notion that the linkage of art and music to the Word of God justifies their presence in religious practice would also impact the development and implementation of liturgical dance, or dance explicitly for the purpose of religious expression.

As we have seen from the previous example, many of the “new” worship spaces for Protestant Christians involved the reclamation and reconstruction of existing Christian (i.e. Roman Catholic) spaces. And due to the continued conflict and sometime persecution of Protestant congregations in many areas of Europe, when new structures were created, they were often along the most basic and utilitarian lines. Well into the nineteenth century, many of these spaces continued to reference the basilica in that they remained rectangular in shape with an elevated platform at one end from which the clergy conducted the service. With the shift during the Reformation and beyond away from the visual and sensual and toward the act of listening to the expository preaching of the Word, any space for the practice of religious dance was virtually eliminated. Many Protestant theologians and leaders de-

cried as “sinful” even participation in social dancing. Works such as Ann Wagner’s, *Adversaries of Dance*, and Elizabeth Aldrich’s essay, “Plunge Not into the Mire of Worldly Folly: Objections to Social Dance in Nineteenth-Century America,” provide an overview of the historical Christian polemic against dance, which illuminates the legacy of ideas about the body and dance in Western, and particularly American, contexts. Aldrich’s essay relies heavily on Wagner’s delineation of the arguments against the “essential nature of dance” as disorderly, trivial, anti-intellectual, and artificial, and the “incidental characteristics of dance” as leading to sexual immorality, the squandering of time and resources, unnecessary health risks, and participation in “worldly” pleasures to the peril of the immortal soul (Wagner 1997:363-378). However, Aldrich’s specific focus on “anti-dance” literature, a collection of essays, sermons, and other publications written primarily by Protestant pastors from the Reformation to the early twentieth century, demonstrates the dramatic increase in negative attitudes toward dance post-Reformation (Aldrich 2008:20-33). While these texts focus primarily on American social dance in a broad milieu, their narratives stem directly from a religion-based dialogue within American Protestantism that continues to impact dance practices in secular and religious frameworks.

However, as Kilde demonstrates, by the end of the nineteenth century the emerging designs of American Protestant churches would dramatically reverse these notions, even foreshadowing the contemporary mega church. Although the new emphasis on listening began with the Reformers, many facilities, particularly those modeled on the basilica format, were ill suited to the task (Kilde 2002:12-21). The advent of these new “theatrical” spaces for Protestant Christian worship indicates that by the end of the nineteenth century, a significant shift was occurring in along ideological lines. And while these facilities would fall out of favor with liberal Christian denominations, who after the turn of the century desired to return to more traditional ritualistic forms, these spaces would remain popular among conservative evangelicals, which would have implications for the reemergence of religious dance in American Protestant Christianity.

The surge in liturgical dance in American Protestantism began in the middle of the twentieth century with among other factors, the formation of the Sacred Dance Guild in 1958. Since its foundation, involvement and inclusion of liturgical movement has soared in popularity, particularly within the last twenty-five years. In tandem with this renewed interest in dance is the advent of the mega church, a general term referring to a congregation of two thousand or more members, and new worship spaces to accommodate them. While the construction of these new, large-scale worship spaces is varied, several trends are apparent. First, is the reappearance



of the amphitheater formation, with its curvilinear seating focused toward an elevated “stage.” Secondly, pews or benches have been replaced by individual cushioned chairs, or in more elaborate facilities, with movie theater seats, complete with arm rests and a folding seat to allow attendants to pass easily along the row. Finally, the stage is equipped with theatrical lighting and projection screens, which project song lyrics or sermon points and sometimes brief illustrative video clips during the service. For all intents and purposes, this new space is a theater in form and function. For anyone who has ever performed in a traditional, basilica-style church with a small, often carpeted platform and a permanently affixed lectern, this type of space sounds like a dream come true. And although these spaces offer a platform more conducive to the practice of western concert dance, I submit that they actually hinder the development of the practice of dance in Christian worship and continue to reify the body mind dualism so pervasive in American Christianity.

Firstly, the stage, while opening up a large space within which to move, nevertheless demarcates that movement to a particular area, and much like the processions of the earliest Christian rituals, participation in that area is delineated by status. The emphasis on highly stylized, theatrical movement is inaccessible to the average churchgoer. Only particular members of the congregation who are skilled in a particular kind of dance, often ballet, are permitted to enter that space and only for limited periods of time. In terms of hierarchical status, a particularly problematic issue surrounds this notion of who gets to dance. Most liturgical dance ensembles situated under the auspices of worship or ministry within the church are composed of amateur dancers of varying skill levels. Some groups want dancers with a certain level of training; others are content to allow anyone to participate who has the desire to dance and the willingness to attend rehearsals. However, many professional Christian companies face a dilemma in that there are a relatively small number of Christian dancers with high technical skill levels. Some are rigid in their exclusivity—only professing Christians may be a part of their groups, no matter their level of technical acumen. Others are more fluid—if a dancer wants to work with them, has the necessary skill level, and doesn’t mind that much of the content is influenced by Christian themes or ideas, then no problem. The problem comes however, when these companies are invited to perform in churches as part of the worship service. While professional Christian companies face this issue to varying degrees, this tension is currently uninterrogated. If Christian dance is to be validated in the same way as other modes of religious expression, will it submit to the same traditions of exclusivity that began so early with the rites of baptism and the observation of the Eucharist, but that

continue today within Protestantism in the practice of “fencing the table,” in which those who are not professing believers may not partake of Communion?

A second consequence of these contemporary theater spaces is the relegation of much of the congregation to passive observers. The felt experience of sitting in a dimly lit auditorium in a cushioned chair with one’s focus being directed by powerful beams of light toward an elevated platform is so powerfully reminiscent of a theater experience that one cannot help but slip into passive observation and the expectation of entertainment. Dance is present in the service, but by framing the experience in this way, it reinforces the idea that dance is entertainment, fluff, a superfluous diversion, rather than a means by which people can engage in deep communion with their God.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, is the means by which the use of dance is justified in Christian practice. As we have seen from the history of the Reformation, the Word replaced image in Protestant worship spaces. In the same way, dance and the body must be connected to word to justify their place in the worship service. Most contemporary Christian dances are performed to praise songs with simple lyrics so that congregants can easily make the connection between the movements and the meaning of the dance. Even when music without lyrics accompanies the dance, the drive to create a mimetic narrative is strong, if not mandated by church leadership. This practice stultifies the experience of dance as a means of knowing, particularly those things that often seem beyond the realm of human words to express.

It should be noted that there are instances in which contemporary liturgical dance in American Protestant churches departs from the previously mentioned examples. Sometimes the aisles are utilized for movement in addition to the stage, so that the dancers are in some ways among the congregation. In rare instances, congregations learn simple gestures and can then participate in a more limited way in communal embodied worship. The charismatic denominations in general make frequent use of spontaneous, improvised dance as a part of their communal worship service. However, the frequency with which traditional Western concert dance and the architectural constructs necessary for its implementation appears merit attention. The implementation of Western concert dance as a means of Christian worship is ill suited at best and at it worst is contradictory to the aims of Christian worship entirely, which is to engage the individual in an encounter with the divine. Although the moving body is perhaps more prominent in Protestant churches than it has been before, we are further than ever from realizing an embodied practice of our faith.

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<sup>i</sup> Matthew 16:18b New American Standard

<sup>ii</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathedral>

## Lecture-demonstrations and workshops

# On The Representation of Space

Camilla Damkjaer

### Tension 0: Circus and dance

This is where I was thinking to start: where the aerial disciplines of circus break with the horizontal space of dance. But in fact, in order to break with the naïve assumption that the interest of aerial disciplines lies simply in the contrast they provide to moving on the ground, we must begin by analyzing the space of the rope itself.

Besides, the comparison would have built only on a distinction of genres: who says that dance has to be on the ground? Perhaps that is exactly why the postmodern questioning of dance by choreographers brought some of them to experiment with vertical space.

But I have to start with the rope itself. I have to make a sketch of the space of the rope, a sketch of the “representation” of space. Before anything else that is perhaps what the rope does to space: it renders vertical space visible.

My sketch will be simple, but sometimes the simplest things are the most complex. For instance, a vertical rope has a very simple spatial design. But to understand the space of the rope, we have to see it not as a static set of dimensions, but as a set of aesthetic tensions.

So perhaps I should start by saying what I mean by aesthetic tension. I here mean a constellation where two or several aspects or qualities stand in a relation of difference that cannot be resolved. They are neither united, nor in opposition, but in a constant relation of paradoxical difference.

For instance there is such a tension between theory and practice in this presentation. It may seem that I rely only on practice in my analysis, but it is paradoxically influenced by theory. The two reinforce each other without ever merging totally. The more practical it seems, the more it is informed by theory. The more theoretical it seems, the more it is based on practice.



### **Tension 1: Up and down**

The first tension in the rope is simply the one between the two directions of the rope: up and down. But is it really that simple?

As an object the rope has two ends, but when rigged they are held out in a tension created by the distance between those two ends. And when a body enters into the rope as it hangs from the ceiling this is intensified by gravity. The body is held in a tension between the muscular effort of holding on to the rope and the force of gravity drawing the body towards the ground, affecting all movement in the space of the rope.

This distance and tension is also visualized in the difference between the body hanging close to the ground, and the body hanging at the top of the rope. However, this phenomena is made even more paradoxical by the presence of the floor and the ceiling that the rope bind together. At the top of the rope a tension is created through the distance from the floor, but also the closeness to the ceiling. And at the bottom of the rope there is a tension between the body and the ground: so close and still not touching, a tension that adds itself the distance between up and down, and is reinforced by the presence of gravity.

In other words the tension between up and down, is not only a tension between two ends kept apart by a distance, it is also a tension between an effort of the body and a force of nature, and it is a paradoxical set of relations where the tensions between up and down are increased both by the distance to and the closeness to either the floor or the ceiling.



### **Tension 2: Vertical – horizontal**

Another tension that is just as obvious is the tension between vertical and horizontal. So obvious: the verticality of the rope, in contrast to the horizontality of the floor.

But let us not be mistaken: the horizontality does not only exist in contrast to the floor, it is a tension that is at stake at any level of the rope. There is a horizontal angle on the rope at any height and it is constantly activated through the movement of the body, stretching out in space.

Though the tension horizontal/vertical may seem similar to the difference between up and down, they are different tensions. Whereas up and down is a tension between two directions on a vertical line, the tension between vertical and horizontal is the tension with the perpendicular cut that can be traced at any moment of this vertical line.

So when sketching the space of the rope, it seems as if the different spatial dimensions of the rope overlap and tend to activate each other. And also: they may be there, drawn through the rope's visualization of space, but they are further activated and brought into play, perhaps even constructed, by the moving body.

In fact, to really understand the space of the rope, we have to understand it in relation to the spatial dimensions the moving body. However, through the interaction with an object, the spatial complexity of the human body is also multiplied.

### **Tension 3: Two and three-dimensional**

One part of the spatial dimensions of the rope that becomes more visible through the action of the human body is the space around the rope.

When we look at the rope on its own from the distance of the spectator, the rope seems almost flat, as if it would create an almost two-dimensional picture. But when the human body enters into it, it becomes obvious that it is not two-dimensional, but three-dimensional.

However, there is a tension between the two- and the three-dimensional space of the rope. When performing in a frontal space the moving body is struggling to em-

phasize the two-dimensional picture of certain figures and avoid unintentional turning. But when performing in a circular space, the performer must struggle to satisfy the frontal perspective of each spectator.

The tensions created in the space around the rope, also have to do with the effect that the body's weight has on the rope, making the upper part of it tight and the lower part of it loose. When trying to reach around the rope, at the same time as the weight of the body tightens it, it creates distorted tensions in the relation between the body and the rope.

### **Consequential tensions: Time and space**

The sketch I have made only draws the most simple spatial dimensions of the rope. But out of this simplicity we begin to see a picture of the "representation" of space, the space that the vertical rope makes visible and articulated, a space that we often just conceive of vaguely as "in the air".

And through these simple dimensions, a set of complex tensions begin to emerge and multiply. Each of them are in themselves complex. Each of them interacts with the other tensions. And all of them interact with and complicate the spatial dimensions of the human body. That is the paradox of the simplicity of the rope.

Furthermore, the spatial tensions of the rope even interact with other non-spatial factors. For instance effort and also time. In fact, the spatial dimensions of the rope are influenced by the time that is stretched out between the moment you leave the floor and the moment you come back to it. The longer the body is up in the rope, the more evident it becomes that it is suspended. And the more it is suspended, the longer the time span seems.

Perhaps that is the ultimate consequence of the spatial tensions in the rope. Through the tension between up and down, between horizontal and vertical, between two- and three-dimensional, another tension is reinforced: the one between gravity and effort. And this in its turn reveals a tension between the spatial conditions of the rope and the time it is possible to stay there. Or in other words: through the effort of moving in the space of the rope, time becomes visible.

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# Revealing the Site through Phenomenological Movement Inquiry

Victoria Hunter

## *Introduction to the practice:*

The workshop explores how phenomenologically based movement inquiry can ‘reveal’ the site and engage individuals with ‘other’ ways of knowing and experiencing environments, and considers how embodied movement practice explores, confirms, challenges and changes the space in which it takes place.

In particular, the practice employs concepts of phenomenological reduction, reversibility and simultaneity to explore creative methods through which the body might enter into a spatial ‘dialogue’ with the site and effectively ‘translate’ the site into movement. In this sense, the practice aims to tell ‘of’ the site corporeally as opposed creating work ‘about’ the site through importing or imposing narratives and or themes.

My practice is informed by phenomenology not only as a lens for analysis and reflection but also as a **stimulus** and a method for developing embodied movement inquiry.

In particular, concepts of:

1. Phenomenological reduction
2. Reversibility
3. Le Chiasme (Merleau Ponty, 1962)
4. Present-ness

The term ‘present-ness’ is applied here to refer to a process of embodied *reflexivity* and aims to develop on from Sheets-Johnstone (1979) and Fraleigh’s (1987) discussion of ‘pre-reflexivity’ in which the body-self is ‘given over’ to the movement exploration.

In my practice I acknowledge that we are reflective in this type of exchange in an embodied, whole-person sense, bodily and holistically as opposed to being ‘lost’ in the moment of ‘given over’ to the dance. In this type of practice, advocated in today’s workshop, we are present, aware and reflective through the body as the primary mode of knowing and being-in-the-world.



*Tasks:*

1. Capturing the Space
2. Imprinting

Exercise: **Phenomenological reduction**

Reducing and focussing our attention on ‘things in particular’ (Mikunas and Stewart in Fraleigh,1987)

Score: **Noticing:**

Move around the space, notice, arrive, take time, explore through the body.

Repeat.

Leading to.....

**Categorising:**

Q : *What* were you responding to?

*What* patterns of movement emerged, which site essences can they be traced back to?

*How* did you do it? (Can you unravel the process?)

**Scoring:**

Develop a simple instruction based score that enables you to pursue a particular site essence / line of inquiry further.

Example:

**‘Capturing’ Task**

Explore the notion of ‘capturing’ the space with the body

Capture and bring the space in to the body – allow this space to play,  
explore and develop its journey internally within the body then

release this

force back into the environment.

and Consider the body and its actions simultaneously affecting the space  
being affected by the space.

to Acknowledge the effect of your intervention within the space – respond  
the changing, energised space.

Repeat and develop the process, capturing, exploring and releasing  
space. Respond.

Repeat.

(V. Hunter 2007, *Project 3* Choreographic process diary extract.)

Note: For a fuller description and discussion of this practice in relation to the creation and performance of a durational site-specific dance work see Hunter, V. 'Spatial Translation and 'Present-ness' in Site-Specific Dance Performance'. *New Theatre Quarterly*. Vol xxvii. Part 1. February 2011.

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# Dancing in Nature Space

## - Reflections on a *research installation*

Paula Kramer

### Contextualisation

At NOFOD 2011 I presented a *research installation*, a prototype of a material as well as metaphorical communication tool of my research, *something* that is both static and there, yet also processual and changing, as participants were invited to add to it and remove elements. I developed this installation as part of a more general intention of working in a way that allows practice-as-research to extend into practice-as-dissemination, rather than aiming for a translation from embodied practice into words only.

Follow your curiosities, dwell where you like.

You are invited to leave your reflections, drawings or comments hanging in the installation or anywhere else. You may also comment on comments. You don't have to be silent, but you can. Don't hesitate to touch what you would like to.

(Excerpt from the installation guide available for visitors/participants)

Poetry, photographs, interview excerpts, materials, quotes and drawings from movement practice are suspended in the space on thin white thread. A big ball of coarse string anchors in the middle of the room, with two ends floating upwards, interweaving with the thin thread. The sound score is a mix of field recordings from research sites and collaborative improvisations with the musicians of Coventry's Transgression Ensemble.



A key part of my practice-as-research PhD is to explore and apply practice-as-dissemination. I develop tools and modes with a *dense frequency*, that are filled with, and capable of, transmitting both research content and experience. I aim to offer frameworks that are both reflective and generative - of thought, experience and insight. This installation is one proposal of working in such a way.

My research focuses on dance practices in the natural environment. Engaging with practitioners in a case study sense and reflecting on my own practice, I use a mix of methods that draw from ethnography and practice-as-research.

Working with two case studies – Helen Poynor and Simon Whitehead – and one of my main dance teachers previous to the PhD – Bettina Mainz – inspired the content of the installation at NOFOD. Helen Poynor lives and works on the South-Western Coast of England, Simon Whitehead in Wales, Bettina Mainz in Berlin. All three are well known for their environmental movement practice and have established their particular way of working over the course of many years. My research practices include being a workshop and training participant, a conversation partner in repeated and in-depth interviews and a fieldnotes taker. I am also in a continuous process of developing and reflecting on my own movement practice in the outdoors – through moving, performing, teaching, documenting and writing.

The images and words in the installation partially stem from my entering the work-zone of other artists, thus need to be understood as reflections of my experience and understandings, not as ‘true facts’ about other artists’ work.



## Terminology

I employ and test a specific term in this installation – the word *nature space*. Adopted from Bettina Mainz, who uses in her practice both the German *Naturraum* and its poetic English translation *nature space*, the term does not quite exist in English, yet is fully comprehensible.

The German term *Natur* means *nature* and one possible translation for *Raum* is *space*. Other possible translations include *area* but also *room* and *chamber*. *Naturraum* in German describes a specific geographical or geological region.

A more sophisticated translation of *Naturraum* is *macrochore*, used in the context of Landscape Ecology. Almo Farina for example defines microchores as farms, mesochores as parishes or communities and macrochores as provinces or regions (Farina 2006: 277).

I use the direct translation *nature space*, in the hope that it offers a poetic opening. Rather than suffocating immediately in the dualistic hell of nature vs. culture, a construction which is – as has been widely discussed - viscerously entangled with gender and race amongst other categories that structure power relations, it allows (and be it for a fleeting moment only) to think about nature as a location of practice and a place of being.

Yet even within *nature space*, I agree with Bruno Latour's lecture remarks on the term nature, one is always 'inside dispute': "[...] we are actually in the dispute about nature, constantly. [...] So to be close to nature is not to be close to outside, undisputable entities, but actually to be inside dispute" (Latour 2004).

When I asked Bettina Mainz for an explanation of her use and understanding of *nature space*, she wrote the following (again my translation from German):

"I understand the word 'nature space' always in relationship to space being 'alive and happening', which is true for any kind of space.

'Nature space' is filled with simple and universal things, like the sound of the wind and the trees, the scent, quality and texture of the ground, the space in between and the distance to the blue and grey of the sky, to the tree tops, the play of light and so forth.

All of this has a specific being, a momentary atmosphere, a density, pressure conditions, openings, movements, stillness, proportions and rhythms, in which I can move." (Mainz 2011)

In the context of my research then - and I have to say, for now - I am working with *nature space* as a location of movement practice that has both material and tangible as well as poetic and metaphorical properties, one that is both touchable and perceivable and one which inspires physical imagination, insight and creative engagement.

Bettina Mainz (herself a former student of Suprpto Suryodarmo) practiced space as ,alive and happening' specifically in the context of studying with Adam Bradpiece, one of the first Westerners to work with movement artist Suryodarmo in Java in the late 1980s. Sandra Reeve, also an experienced practitioner-researcher and former student of Suryodarmo from that same time, similarly speaks in a workshop announcement of the environment as a "world-in-motion" and a "becoming-world" (Reeve 2011). Approaching the topic from a different angle, yet affirming this understanding that stems from movement practice, Doreen Massey opened her keynote at NOFOD 2011 with one of her core arguments, namely the notion that 'space is alive' (Massey 2011). Massey has further elaborated the topic for example in her seminal book *For Space* (2005) and in this case pointed towards one of many highly fruitful confluences between Dance and (Cultural) Geography.

### **Decentralisation and belonging**

As an early and temporary distillation of my fieldwork, I will now look more closely at one specific dynamic of working as a dancer in *nature space* – the dynamic of 'decentralisation' and 'belonging'.

In *nature space* the mover is engaged with, as well as exposed to, a context that is equally alive as the human body and being. While the mover practices or performs, "the world goes on" (Oliver 1992: 110). Not only does the dancer move and change, so do the animals, the plants or the weather and climate conditions.

Helen Poynor describes the ramifications of this mode of constant change in *nature space* in the context of Anna Halprin's work: "For Halprin, the fact that nature is in a state of constant flux requires the performer to be able to respond instantaneously to changing conditions rather than attempting to control them" (Poynor 2009: 127). When teaching, Poynor also speaks of the environment as larger and more powerful than the movers, and asks to attend to conditions of potential danger - especially when working underneath cliffs or amongst big boulders and with the changes of the tide (fieldnotes Kramer 2011).

The dancer in *nature space* thus occupies a decentralised position, is present only as one amongst many, and finds form and possibilities between adaptation, intervention, co-existence and play, rather than exerting control.

I argue that connected to decentralisation in this context is 'belonging', the sense of finding one's place or "becoming part of a larger whole" (Poynor 2009: 126). To act and exist as a dancer within *nature space* entails establishing a temporary sense of self and placement within a location. In my own practice, which is inspired by and connected to working with Bettina Mainz and more recently with Helen Poynor, the theme of belonging and sensing my place in the world (as well as feeling estranged from it) comes up repeatedly. The possibility of the world making sense and sensing myself as part of a larger system belong to the core reasons for my continuous commitment to working with and researching environmental movement practices. Yet my practicing in *nature space* is not, and does not intend to be, an experience of unbroken harmony. For me it always includes the frequent possibility of feeling lost, dislodged and overcome by the puzzled insecurity of 'what the hell am I doing here'?

But back to the sense of belonging. Helen Poynor writes in her 2011 brochure: "Grounding ourselves through an embodied encounter with the land which refreshes both body and spirit we rediscover our 'place in the family of things' (Oliver)" (Poynor 2011)<sup>1</sup>.

Dance and movement therapist Teresa Bas who participated in a workshop I taught in 2009 previous to my PhD research, wrote me the following email about her experience (this is my translation from Spanish):

"[...] I felt a sense of heightened sensitivity in myself. It's strange because I could have lost myself in watching the landscape, but nothing like that happened. On the contrary, I felt my body was very present in this environment and my concrete physical as well as my intuitive feelings were heightened through the contact with the natural materials (through vision, smell, touch, etc.). This gave me a better focus to guide my movement from inside, however in relationship to the outside. It was really very surprising! I have never experienced this so clearly." (Bas 2009)

My understanding here is that both Helen Poynor (explicitly) and Teresa Bas (more implicitly) refer to embodied experiences of presence, contact and 'belonging' in the specific context of working in *nature space*. Both describe in different ways an experience also familiar to me: nurturing an embodied physicality in the context of *nature space* allows for a sense of belonging and of being a part of this world.

### Where to from here?

My argument then is, that the two aspects ‘decentralisation’ and ‘belonging’ are deeply interconnected within this field of practice. It is precisely the decentralisation of the human, which renders moments of finding and sensing one’s place in the world possible. A necessary part of practice, however, is a persistent embodied physicality within *nature space* as ‘alive and happening’, rather than assuming a disembodied and decontextualised mode of decentralisation.

I would argue further, that this kind of decentralised positioning of the practitioner-performer, this sense of not-being-fully-in-control whilst simultaneously belonging and being part of the environment, has relevance and potential beyond dance and performance. Experiencing the possibility of embodied co-habitation within *nature space*, rather than aiming to control it, offers a possible and necessary practice of repositioning human beings in the context of the current ecological crisis.

Sandra Reeve offers a similar perspective drawing from her own practice: “[...] in its emphasis on community and context, on being ‘among’ and being ‘part of’”, she writes, “it encourages a sense of belonging rather than longing and a sense of the world as a shared habitat rather than owned territory. This sense of belonging and sharing is profoundly ‘ecological’” (Reeve 2011).

It is thus a shared hope, that movement practices which expose themselves to the continuous changes of the outdoors constitute one of many tools that allow us to understand and practice our being in this world in a way that fosters what political theorist Jane Bennett might call a “vibrant” co-existence (Bennett 2010).



Images 1-3, 5 photographed by Paula Kramer, Image 4 photographed by Pepucho Gómez.



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<sup>i</sup> Poynor quotes Mary Oliver's poem *Wild Geese* (Oliver 1992: 110) here.

# Reading inner and outer space in *Amerta* movement improvisation: A technique for composing while moving

Lise Lavelle

## Introduction

This paper focuses on my workshop held at the conference. It starts by presenting *Amer-ta* movement improvisation after which it looks at reasons for giving a workshop at the conference instead of a paper presentation as a question of methodology inherent in the subject of improvisation. Finally the workshop's program is presented, its key concepts as well as the physical practice.

My study of *Amerta* movement improvisation including my approach to instructing this workshop has mainly been based on primary research in the field in Java and to a minor degree in Europe, using the observer and participant observer method as part of my doctoral dissertation (2006). In addition secondary literature has been consulted. This fieldwork is still ongoing till date both on Java and in Europe.

I also refer to my article entitled 'Embodying the present moment: Basic features of an Asian movement improvisation,' (Lavelle 2009: 106-113).

*Amerta* means the 'nectar of life' in the sense of life's elixir. *Amerta* movement improvisation is a holistic, non-stylized motion, which originates in Java, Indonesia, created by Javanese performance artist and Buddhist Suprpto Suryodarmo, but is mainly practiced by Westerners from all walks of life. In terms of movement it is based on everyday activities such as when people go about their daily chores or such as in the spontaneous movements of children playing. These movements may consist of 'lying, crawling, standing, walking, running, jumping, sitting, stopping, breathing to feel one's condition,' and so on.

A special feature of *Amerta* movement improvisation is that it combines a physical movement practice with awareness and the cultivation of inner attitudes, i.e. with a training of the mind as in meditation. It does so through applying a consciousness technique called reading, specific to *Amerta* movement improvisation. Reading, through Suprpto Suryodarmo, comes from practices of Javanese meditation most specifically *Sumarah* relaxed meditation as well as *Vipassana*, *Theravada* Buddhist insight meditation as this has developed on Java. The *Amerta* practice is always seen on two levels, a physical one related to the practice and a symbolic one related to the practitioner's life. Thereby *Amerta* movement improvisation is also training for life.

As a language *Amerta* movement improvisation has been applied to personal development, to 'dancing one's life,' based on the approach called *Pribadi* Art [Individual Art],

focused on here, and to performance art, including new rituals, installations, peace-making and ecological events, founded on the approach called Messenger Art.

### **Why a workshop**

The aim of giving a workshop instead of a paper at the conference was to introduce the *Amerta* movement improvisational practice via an experience felt by one's own body, thereby supplementing earlier paper presentations. This choice, moreover, is due to the very open structure of *Amerta* movement improvisation. Being a practice arising from the practitioner's inner condition in interactions with her/his environment from one moment to the next, it has no predetermined form and no predetermined gestures to study or to refer to from a distance. That is why it can be argued that in order to do *Amerta* movement improvisation full justice, it is essential to participate in the practice, feeling it by one's own body, in addition to observing it from outside or to reading a paper about it. Participation observation is vital when it concerns researching improvisation, according to the author of a new book on improvisation published by The University of Wisconsin Press.

As much as possible, I studied with the improvisers whose work (...)  
I speak of ... Body research takes a lot of time. But I took the time because  
the idea that written or even video research of artists could replace physical  
experience seemed completely out of the question. (Buckwalter 2010: 197).

### **Key *Amerta* concepts**

Before starting the practice it is essential to get acquainted with key *Amerta* concepts behind the practice, such as 'reading,' 'responding physically,' 'inner space,' and 'outer space.'

**Reading** is a consciousness technique, which entails using one's whole body (body-mind-spirit) as an instrument of perception in order to get information about one's inside and outside during a practice. Reading is input obtained from seeing, feeling or sensing, as well as through becoming attuned to one's environment. Reading is crucial, because it provides the 'material' or input needed for the practitioner to compose the movement's expressions from inside out and create a vocabulary by movement. Reading, moreover, is essential because it makes the practitioner wake up to the present moment, to her/ his own body (physicality), her/his attitude (emotions, feelings, thoughts), and to the site of practice. Thus reading provides grounding in body and space as well as clarity of mind, clarity as to making the many choices inherent in improvisation as well as in living life. Reading makes the practitioner body-conscious, atti-

tude-conscious and space-conscious. Reading also comprises purification through making one aware of old habits and concepts not needed any more or old movement vocabularies still being reproduced automatically by the body during an improvisation. That way reading opens the way for a de-programming to take place within the practitioner, for a return to one's genuine being, to the emergence of resources and hidden potentials and for change to happen. Reading brings the unconscious into the light of consciousness where one can act upon it.

**Responding physically** entails using one's whole body in three dimensions as a tool for expression as well as for composing movement. This is the basis of *Amerta* movement improvisation, transforming, translating life into a physical movement dance. It refers to movement initiated from the physicality of the body (body-nature), as opposed to from the practitioner's imagination or associations. An example of responding physically to a location, in a very simple sense, is when the practitioner with the whole body or with just an arm or a leg, points to her/his intended direction in space. Or it can also be when she/he indicates the cardinal corners of the world in a bodily way, as traditional Central Javanese actor-dancers and shamans often do spontaneously when performing in natural environments.

**Inner space** relates to the practitioner's inner attitude or energy as based on her/his instincts, reflexes, physical sensations, feelings and thoughts.

**Outer space** relates to the site of practice in the physical sense, to its form and material as well as to its atmosphere or energy. It includes co-practitioners and the whole environment.- *Amerta* movement improvisation is practiced in all kinds of spaces, indoors and outdoors, even in a kitchen or a living-room, such as was the case in a workshop, given by Suprpto in Spain, 2010. In Java, however, the practice generally takes place in natural environments either under the vaulted roof of a traditional Javanese practice hall open on all four sides (*pendopo*), or at heritage sites such as at temples and historic power sites in the mountains or at the ocean.

### **Introduction to *Amerta* movement basics**

The workshop held at the 10<sup>th</sup> NOFOD conference focused on the *Pribadi* Art [Individual Art]) approach, also referred to as the 'reality approach,' and which is founded on the individual practitioner working with her/his body as a material, a kind of earth for creating movement. It represents basics within *Amerta* movement improvisation.

Basic practice is characterized by movement being initiated from the physicality of the body, i.e. directly from the soul. This is in order to engage in a dialogue with life, understood as nature, God (the spiritual world) and society, through physical movement instead of through words only, and to build a vocabulary, a language by movement

based on one's genuine inner being in dialogue with the environment, for expression of self and for communication. The practice demands much of practitioners. They need individuality, termed to 'stand on one's own two legs,' and maturity in order to deal with the many choices inherent in improvising freely. These choices concern posture, rhythm, speed, placement, timing and direction in space, change of direction in space as when coming to a crossroads and so on.

Practitioners start by listening to their own body and its special language. They start by allowing the body's sensations, instincts, reflexes, impulses, sounds, rhythms and tempo to appear. They let the body's pre-verbal language and stirrings rise from the darkness of the unconscious and transform into movement in the outside world, helped by the ego. (Lavelle 2006: 45). What makes this kind of ordinary movement speak and communicate is not esthetics but the honesty and quality of each movement released, the depth of awareness involved, together with the degree of aliveness of the expression. In the following the terms 'free movement' and '*Amerta* movement improvisation' are used interchangeably to characterize the practice.

### **Workshop program**

Introduction to *Amerta* movement basics.

Video illustration.

Practice:

- 1 Warming up, preparing free movement in three exercises: 1a. 1b. 1c.
- 2 Free movement in and across space.
- 3 Perception exercises reading inner and outer space and the space 'between.'
- 4 Composing while moving.

Feed back (Very short).

The workshop lasted 60 minutes and took place in the movement studio. It consisted of a verbal introduction to *Amerta* movement basics, as seen above, and was followed by a few minutes of video, showing *Amerta* students practicing movement on the theme of space in an open landscape in the mountains of South Java, 1995, (Legoretta, Geo 1996). The practice started after the video and consisted of four parts as follows: 1. Warming-up preparing free movement in three exercises: 1a. 1b .1c.

2. Free movement in and across space; 3. Perception exercises reading inner and outer space and 4. Composing while moving (very briefly). A very short feedback from participants (for lack of time) finished the session.

## **Practice**

### **Warming up, preparing free movement**

Practice started with a warming up program consisting of three exercises, preparing the participants physically and mentally for practicing free movement in and across the space. In Java warming up physically in the Western sense is not part of the schedule. But at the start of a practice students spend time adapting to the site of practice by tuning in to it.

1. The first 'warming up preparing free movement' exercise (1a) was structured over a pattern of 'running-walking-resting' non-stop in the space. This was in order to get the pulse up and to tune oneself as an instrument like musicians tune their musical instrument before a concert. The second warming-up exercise (1b) consisted of floor work. Here practitioners were lying on the back on a mattress, working with the big muscles of the torso, especially those of the back and the spine. They were arching the back in the manner of a cat, one vertebra by one while at the same time trying to sense from inside their body how the muscles were working. The aim of the exercise was for practitioners to get into the body with the awareness. Moreover, practitioners were asked to be aware of how the breathing was brought about by the movement of the body and not controlled by the mover. (1c) This exercise was about experiencing gravity in the body, like for practitioners to sense the weight of their thigh. They were still lying on their back, now with one leg extended flat on the floor and the other bent toward the chest. While relaxing the thigh muscles of the bent leg so as to feel the weight of the thigh they managed to let this weight make them roll over on the side, half way off the mattress and out onto the floor. The aim of the exercise was for practitioners to experience the body as a weight-bearing and weight-moving structure, because that is a prerequisite for engaging in free movement in and across a space and for responding physically to life in the manner of *Amerta* movement improvisation.

### **Free movement in and through space**

Students were now on the floor, after having rolled off their mattresses and ready for free movement. This was moreover, facilitated via a guided 'tour' through a movement series of 'lying, crawling, walking' mirroring a child's development phases. 'Walking' in *Amerta* movement improvisation simply means free movement. Practitioners continued to move in the lying position, exploring individual variations over this position. They were asked to move in the manner of a little baby, mainly using their torso but not putting any weight for support on the palms of the hands or the soles of the feet. In this manner they proceeded from the lying position to an exploration of crawling with variations and to standing upright on their two legs starting to 'walk,' to move freely in the

studio. Before setting out they were asked to be aware of the difference in terms freedom of movement range and of outlook, when changing from the lying crawling positions to the standing upright position, how sight now took on a dominant role, because they needed to see the space in front and around them so as not to bump into each other and so as to be awake like when one is in the traffic. What did it feel like to move freely? Did their body want to turn on a tango or do *tai chi*? Or contact improvisation? What was their genuine gait? Were they aware of the back even when moving forward? Symbolically the back represents one's past. That way different skills were trained through the free movement.

### **Perception exercises reading inner & outer space and the 'space between'**

Practitioners trained in getting awareness of inner & outer space through reading. They started by reading themselves in terms inner space, i.e. in terms of sensations, feelings and thoughts. Then they shifted their awareness to a fixed point in space outside, as a wall, a window in the studio, or a tree outside the windows. And finally they read the 'space between,' i.e. space between themselves and their chosen point in space outside. This is because space is not empty, space 'has life in itself,' its own density and as such is an active partner of movement. Hence *Amerta* practitioners 'crawl' on space, 'crawl' on the air, like they crawl on the ground. When reading a neutral attitude of mind is important, one of accepting without judging, accepting not necessarily in the sense of agreeing but simply to acknowledge the state of affairs. The aim of reading inner and outer space and the 'space between' based on a neutral attitude was to achieve clarity of mind, to facilitate grounding in body and space as well as aliveness in the present moment facing reality.

### **Composing while moving**

The whole workshop centered on composing while moving in the sense that practitioners expressed themselves from inside out via physical movements based on their readings of inner space in dialogue with the outer space of the studio and co-practitioners. They did so via their choices of postures, gestures, tempo, rhythm and so on, as well as via their attitudes and energy while moving. All these elements create references as a vocabulary in the body with the potential for developing into a language by movement. However, the practitioner's skill is not only to act out her/his impulses. Within the moment of improvisation this skill consists of shaping impulses in a manner, which Suprapto Suryodarmo calls to 'make costume'. One can compare 'making costume' in movement to situations in everyday life where people choose which clothes to wear according to their mood or according to an image they want to convey, as well as in keeping

with circumstances at work, play, partying, and so on. For the practitioner this is like branding herself / himself through a specific style of movement. (Lavelle 2006: 96-97). The workshop finished with feedback from participants, very short for lack of time.

With this paper I have presented my workshop practicing free movement according to the *Amerta* manner and method, centered on the consciousness technique of reading and on space understood in terms of the practitioner's inside in dialogue with space outside understood in terms of the site of practice including co-practitioners and the whole environment. Reading is necessitated by the lack of predetermined form and predetermined gestures. This forces the practitioner to create, i.e. to compose the movement's form and gestures instantly while moving in dialogue with the site of practice. This language by movement cannot be studied from a distance or even by observing it only, because it is changing all the time. It is specific to the individual practitioner (person-specific) and to the site of practice (site-specific). Because of that I argue that participation observation is vital in order to do *Amerta* movement improvisation full justice as well as other forms of improvisation. In conclusion one may state that the responsibility for learning steps or forms and gestures and which, traditionally in dance is placed on the dance teacher has been moved to the practitioner within *Amerta* movement improvisation (Torgersen 1988: 63). The same may be said about the role of the choreographer. Thereby the *Amerta* practitioner has been empowered.

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## Three Interactive Scenes of the Crystal Cabinet

Åsa Unander-Scharin



Choreography is a field where corporealities are at play. Corporeality does not simply depend on the materiality of the body, but rather on the imagination that stimulates the sensations. Choreography and digital technology create a space for experimentation where new corporealities can be produced and explored in multiple ways. This lecture/demonstration focused on the use of interactive performance technology to produce the three scenic subjects of the stage performance *The Crystal Cabinet* (2008). The idea was initiated by the composer, the choreographer and the video designers, and proposed to Piteå Chamber Opera, who produced the performance that toured in seven cities in the north of Sweden. *The Crystal Cabinet* took the form of a dream play opera in twelve scenes, including texts and images from William Blake's (1757-1827) illuminated books (2000) performed by twelve musicians, three opera singers and two dancers connected to moving computer animations and interactive sound technology. The libretto was developed in various kinds of collaboration between the composer, the director and the choreographer, and shifts between two different kinds of scenes: a fictional frame story about William Blake and ambiguous visits to his illuminated poems. While the frame story scenes are composed and staged in a relatively traditional way, the in-between passages use the connection of choreography and interactional staging techniques to transform the characters to become ambiguous creatures influenced by the ones found in Blake's images and poems. To create his books of compound text and image, Blake invented a printing-machine with which he could print his handwritten texts and pictures. After printing, he coloured the pages by hand. We transformed this idea into an interactive area where the connections among bodies, technology, voices and words work in several directions. To explore the singular corporeal experiences found in his metaphorical poems and images, the performers in those passages leave their frame story characters to become human-machine subjects transformed, deconstructed and elaborated by the rhythms and dynamics of a virtual voice reading

Blake's texts. Throughout the performance computer-animated versions of his images and words move across the stage, and in the vision scenes the acoustic of the room is transformed via microphones connected to a computer. The title of the opera is borrowed from one of Blake's poems, and the concept 'the crystal cabinet' also became our name for the shining globe that the performers pass through, in order to reach the interactive area.

As the choreographer and part of the libretto-team of *The Crystal Cabinet*, my artistic concerns in the interactive scenes lay in the development of scenic subjects that challenge traditional ways of developing opera characters from psychological identification and interpretation of a pre-conceived role. When working out the crystal cabinet scenes, the visits in to Blake's poems, we decided to connect the performers' movements to a computer that processes the words, rhythms and dynamics of a play-backed voice reading his texts. The rhythms and dynamics of the voice are at the same time circled back to the performers' performance of gestures and poses generated from Blake's poems and images. Beyond the notion of technology as a tool for command and control we wanted to use it as a way to acquire new rhythms and discover new kinetic possibilities in a non-hierarchic connection of body, movement and text.

The lecture/ demonstration focused on how unthought-of effects, new rhythms and scenic subjects can be derived from the various body-movement-word-technology connections in the interactive scenes of *The Crystal Cabinet*. Rather than being a tool, for imitation and extension of already known human powers, the technology of these scenes was developed to interrupt habitual linear ways of performing text and choreographed movement. Some of the areas that were explored concern how the integration and/or disturbance of technology generate new choreographic methods and artistic concepts. A video overview and excerpts from the three interactive scenes was shown as part of the presentation: 1) *The Assistant* who slowly transforms into body shapes and expressions generated from Blake's printings, 2) *Master Blake* when he enters the machine to grasp the words of a new poem from the air, and 3) *Angela* who hybridizes with the 'crystal cabinet' so that the rhythms of her body and the machine-voice become amalgamated. In March 2011 a more detailed article will be published in the on-line journal *Body, Space Technology*, connected to video excerpts from the interactive scenes of *The Crystal Cabinet*.

*The Crystal Cabinet*, Piteå Chamber Opera, 2008. Music: Carl Unander-Scharin. Libretto (based on texts by William Blake): Carl Unander-Scharin, Keith Turnbull & Åsa Unander-Scharin. Choreography: Åsa Unander-Scharin. Video design and animations: Lene Juuhl & Mark Viktov). Director: Keith Turnbull. Angela, Dick: Claudine Ulrich (dancer). The inventor Blake, The Father: John Erik Eleby (bass). The Assistant, The

snake: Jan Vesala (dancer). Chairman, The Girl, The Mother: Kristina Hansson (soprano). Secretary, The boy, Tom, The Angel: Johan Christensson (tenor). Interaction design and software application: Mateusz Herczka, Carl & Åsa Unander-Scharin, updated version by Nesa Nenad Popov, 2008. Costumes: Katarina Wiklund. Conductor: Mats Rondin. Musicians: Norrbotten NEO Duration: 80 minutes. Video recording: Johannes Oscarsson. Photographer: Staffan Nygren

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## Roundtables

### Introduction to the theme:

#### ***Dance in Nordic Spaces: Emergences and Struggles***

Karen Vedel

In the upcoming publication “Dance and the Formation of Norden. Emergences and Struggles”, we have explored the role of dance (understood in the widest possible terms as theatrical, folk, and popular dancing) in the making of Norden. Rather than provide conclusive answers, our work points out some of the ways in which these questions may be explored.

A shared point of departure has been Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of fields of cultural production defined in the broadest possible terms as “system(s) of difference / differential deviations in the pursuit of distinction” (1990: 226 ff). The reading and discussion of field theory kick-started the identification of relevant topics and concepts through which we went on to examine the role of dance in the production of cultural as well as national and regional identity. Furthermore it spurred the idea to focus on emergences of dance fields on the one hand, and the concomitant conflicts, tensions, or struggles on the other.

Placed in a rough chronological frame, the chapters alternate between two approaches: Either exploring and juxtaposing dance material from two or more Nordic countries, whereby similarities and differences/variations are determined. Or looking at the national in the larger Nordic context, whereby dance material from one country is contextualized with material from other countries.

Being the key concept of the larger frame for our research, the idea of *Nordic spaces* provides a complementary theoretical framework for our project. Drawing on among others Henri Lefebvre, the applied notion of space holds, that spatial confinements such as the geographically defined region, has a both absolute (apparent or mental) and socially manifest (real) existence (2005: 231). Thus, in our context, space is understood as relative and historicized, colonized through social activity such as cultural practices, representations and imaginations. Suggesting that there is no such thing as space outside of the *processes* that define it, it follows that cultural practices such as dance do not occur *in* space, but rather *create* or *define* spatial frames as they unfold. Rephrased under this perspective, Norden is seen less as an identity project generated by individual dance agents than as a continuous unfolding of Nordic spaces, co-

constituted by dance activities. Given this definition, our understanding of Norden is both concrete and abstract. Continuously shaped and reshaped Nordic Spaces are created at the micro level of individuals, dance events, and activities, and at the macro level of the nation states and the region - through cultural policies, institutions and various forms of infra structure.

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## Nordic Night Fever

Inger Damsholt

The topic of my contribution to our project and to our first volume reflects my own interest in social dance as participatory culture in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since the 1960s discotheque culture has been a major cultural flow influencing social dancing in many parts of the world including *Norden*. The term 'discotheque' is here used in the context of recent Anglo-American research, which has produced a number of histories of the discotheque and/or 'disco' phenomenon (e.g. Braunstein 1998 and 1999, Jones and Kantonen 1999, Brewster and Broughton 2000, Lawrence 2003, 2006 and 2009).

My chapter in the book is concerned with ways in which the cultural flow of discotheque culture reached Norden in the late 1960s and 70s. And the largest part of the chapter focuses on and ways in which three particular discotheques in Norden participated in and perpetuated the late 1970s transnational flow of disco dancing that came with Travolta and Saturday Night Fever. The main argument of my chapter is that discotheques in Copenhagen, Oslo and Stockholm constituted themselves in a complex cross between the global and the local, thereby making and unmaking the region Norden by means of dance practices.

In order to shed some light on the complex cross between the global and the local I refer to Ulf Hannerz and the concept of 'transnational cultural flows' highlighting the notion that culture is appropriated differently in diverse local contexts. The idea is that globalization is not tantamount to cultural homogenization, but rather that cultural diversity is being organized in new ways in an age of near-universal modernity. The basic question of my chapter is whether this 'discotheque' in any way contributes to the formation of *Norden* or if it rather disrupts the constitution of Norden as a specific space of cultural communality? In the following I will summarize some of the signs of 'globalness' and 'nordicness' I find in this complex cross.

In the first part of the chapter I present an account of how the cultural flow of discotheque culture reached Norden in the late 1960s and the 1970s. 'Globalness' was found here in the import of the international or American format of the discotheque and the trend for having English speaking DJs. Moreover, the global Twist craze, and later development of free style dancing are clear examples of 'global dancing' which seemed to permeate dance floors in all the Nordic capitals.

The flow of the discotheque format and free style dancing partly reached the cities via the other Nordic capitals, thus in some ways creating a regional space. I will

just give you one example here namely the geographical mobility of the British DJs in *Norden*. One of the largest agencies booking disc jockeys in *Norden* in the 1970s was the *International Discotheque Entertainment Agency* (I.D.E.A.), run by Alan Lawrie who contracted disc jockeys to markets that included Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. So while British DJ Peter Sinclair mostly worked in Oslo discotheques, he also sometimes worked as a DJ in discotheque *Trocadero* in Copenhagen. And similarly British DJ Carl Kingston was based in Oslo, but sometimes worked in discotheque *Daddy's Dance hall* in Copenhagen.

The largest part of my chapter focuses on the way in which disco freestyle, disco partner and disco line dancing was negotiated in three specific discotheques: *Daddy's Dance Hall* in Copenhagen, *Bajazzo* in Oslo and *Tramps* in Stockholm. The analysis is based on ethnographic interviews with three groups of people who frequented these discotheques during the late 1970s. My main question is: If the late 1970s transnational flow of disco dancing, of which John Travolta in *Saturday Night Fever* became an icon, seemed to connect the entire world into one global discotheque, did disco dance practices in *Norden* in any way demarcate a specific regional space?

According to the informants, the partner disco dance, or the Hustle, had no direct impact on the three Nordic discotheques. The three dance floors were dominated by disco freestyle dancing, described as “normal dancing”, “very simple”, “moving your legs quietly from right to left”, “from side to side – step, close, step, close” etc. On the level of dance moves seen on the floor, the impact of *Saturday Night Fever* was to be found in the dancer's occasional incorporation of some of the moves that have later become iconic of Travolta as well as the film. The participation in the transnational flow of disco line dancing differed a bit in the three Nordic discotheques. At *Daddy's* in Copenhagen and at *Tramps* in Stockholm none of the informants remember any line dancing going on, but according to the Norwegian informants line dancing happened occasionally at *Bajazzo* in Oslo.

Considering aspects that seem to demarcate *Norden* as a regional disco space, it was particularly interesting to me, that in all of the three groups of informants, several comments were made in reference to a particular Nordic mentality, which was sometimes constructed as Danish, Norwegian or Swedish, but nevertheless had the same characteristics. The core of this idea is that Nordic people do not want to ‘show off’ in the sense of displaying virtuosity. According to the informants, dancers at the Nordic discotheques in the late 1970s did not want to ‘show off’ in the sense of going beyond the very simple step and movement vocabulary.

Readers of these proceedings may not be familiar with the term *Jante Law*, which is a term used colloquially as a sociological term to negatively describe an attitude



towards individuality and success claimed to be common in Norden. As such the Nordic mentality is understood as a mentality, which places all emphasis on the collective - a pattern of group behaviour, which does not encourage anybody to stand out as achievers.

Considering the way in which Nordic discotheques perpetuated the global flows of popular dance seen in *Saturday Night Fever*, it seems that the Nordic mentality might have stopped people from participating in more advanced corporeal practices such as the Hustle or disco line dancing. While more or less assumed 'inborn' talents may have been accepted, it seems that problems arose when people tried to lift themselves out of their regular roles and 'dress themselves in borrowed feathers', or in this case other dance steps, moves or forms than those that were considered sufficiently Nordic in their simplicity and low key style.

So to sum up, the Nordic negotiations with the transnational flows of disco dancing presented in this chapter, are representations of both a global (American) mainstream culture and a Nordic culture of equality, moderation, modesty and humility. As opposed to the strategic political and intentional constitution of a Nordic dance field seen in Karen Vedel's chapter, the Nordic discotheques created a space in which choreographic virtuosity of social disco dance was implicitly 'down-played', according to a Nordic simplicity and low key style. Similarly, in stark opposition to a Nordic space of dance agents fighting for their inclusion in national state fundings, described by Hammergreen in her chapter, Nordic discotheque dancing created a space in which it seemed to exclude itself from a realm of art in which skills and virtuosity was recognized.

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## Tracing Dance Fields, Agents and Venues in Kristiania 1909-1925

Anne Fiskvik

Professional dance in Norway has generally been thought to have been underdeveloped and more scarce compared to the other Scandinavian countries. But is this really so? In this paper I will present part of a case study that I have been doing together with Egil Bakka at NTNU as part of the project Dance in Nordic Spaces. We have examined dance agents and venues in the Norwegian capital Kristiania between 1909-1925. Whereas Egil Bakka have looked into folkdance- and ballroom agents, I have tried to document what kind of theatre dance activities took place between in Kristiania in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Through examining several of the major newspaper in Kristiania – “Tidens Tegn”, “Dagbladet”, “VG”, “Morgenbladet” and “Aftenposten” I have searched for information about all kinds of dance activity that took place in Christiania in the period between 1909-1925. The material found in newspapers give information about different genres of dancing.<sup>1</sup>

This paper takes a closer look at one of the most important happenings: The establishment of a semi-professional ballet company at the Nationaltheatret in 1910 by Gyda Christensen. It also looks at some other activates that were referred in the newspaper between 1909-1925.

### Norwegian theatre dance before 1909

Historically, dance had been a part of most attempts to institutionalise theatre activity in Norway. The German dancer and actor Martin Nürenbach was the first to obtain royal permission to perform publicly in Kristiania, offering theatre and dance from November 1771 to February 1772. He represented the typical travelling actor of the 18th century, who was often versatile and could both dance and sing and act. This versatility can also be found in another, somewhat later important figure, namely Johan Peter Strömberg. He was granted permission and opened his theatre in Kristiania after much delay in 1827. In 1827, Strömberg's theatre had 16 actors, male and female, all of Norwegian origin, and a corps de ballet consisting of 22 poor children from the capital city (Anker 1958: 44). Unfortunately, Strömberg faced many problems and finally, he was forced to resign as director. But his theatre was continued under the name “Christiania Theater” and it functioned as the main city theatre from 1837 to 1899, when it was replaced by the “Nationaltheatret”. (Anker 1958: 44).

Several new theatre venues were established in Kristiania between 1880-1910, some showing mostly serious repertoires while others aimed mainly at popular enter-

tainment. In 1887, director Bernhard Holger Jacobsen created a “Tivoli Theater” and park. This establishment included a theatre venue called “Circus Varieté,” which became very popular and its performances were regularly mentioned and critiqued in various newspapers. After 1900, Johan and Alma Fahlstrøm established various theatres: The “Fahlstrøms Theater”/“Eldorado Theater,” “Centralteateret,” and the short-lived “Folke-teatret.” Especially the “Fahlstrøms Theater” (1903–1911) seemed to have been positive towards showing dance. The “Fahlstrøms Theater” staged operas and operettas and also hired ballet dancers. For instance, they hosted guest performances from the Royal Danish Ballet with Ellen Price (de Plane) and four other dancers (announced as “De fire,” the four) in June 1910. Announcement, advertisements and critiques for these can found in the main papers of Kristiania and they reported every performance and all the doings of the prima ballerina Ellen de Prince. (See, for instance, *Dagbladet*, 5 June 1910 and 6 June 1910).

### **Kristiania’s “nationaltheatret”**

The most important theatre in Kristiania in the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the Nationaltheatret, which opened in 1899. It gradually became an important place for dance, but it took some time and resistance. When the government established the plans for Nationaltheatret in the 1880s, one of the major goals stated was to “educate and enlighten people of all classes” (Frisvold, 1980: 20). Often, neither operettas nor even opera were considered intellectual enough for this purpose, and dance performances should be seen in light of this hostile attitude that shines through in public discourse towards everything that was not serious, spoken theatre. When Bjørn Bjørnson was director at the Christiania Theatre between 1890 and 1908, he was critiqued heavily when he staged the operetta “Den Skjønne Helene.” (Frisvold, 1980: 21).

At the same time, all kinds of musical theatre, vaudeville, revues, opera, and operettas were popular with the audiences and often brought in good money. The debates about the public’s tastes and demands for high moral followed almost all productions that were staged at the Nationaltheatret between 1899 and 1925. The orchestra, under the leadership of composer Johan Halvorsen (1864–1935) accompanied the regular theatre performances and gave concerts.

During the first 20 years, Nationaltheatret gave 25 operas and 8 operettas. Furthermore, between 1910 and 1919, one Pantomime and various ballet performances were given.

Obviously, ballets and pantomimes were small in number compared to the “serious” repertoire that were staged and played approximately 250 days of the year. The

operas, operettas, and ballets were also staged in the beginning of the summer season and around Christmas time, mostly to draw audiences to the theatre.

### **Dance at nationaltheateret**

Gyda Martha Kristine Andersen (1872–1964, also known under her married names Krohn and Christensen) was a key person for dance numbers used at the Nationaltheateret. Christensen made her debut at the “Christiania Theater” in 1894 as a singer and was transferred to the newly built Nationaltheatret when it opened in 1899. In 1910 she became the main ballet and dance instructor and this represented more stability for the ballet. Earlier ballet teachers, for instance, Augusta Johannesén and, after her, Thora Hals Olsen had been hired when needed (Hansteen, 1989: 50). Since Christensen had a full position at the theatre, she could work with more continuity and higher ambitions than her predecessors. The ballet school could strengthen the dance activities at the Nationaltheatret, and since Gyda Christensen’s daughter Lillebil showed talent for ballet, it also gave her valuable dance training. It is likely that Christensen’s ambitions for her daughter played a large role in her work with the ballet company.

Gyda Christensen played an important role in the staging of opera, operettas and ballets at the Nationaltheateret from 1910 and onwards and was responsible for almost all of the ballet productions between 1910 and 1919. The students at the school gradually became good enough to be used in various operas and operettas. In the period up to 1919, Christensen managed to build a dance company that at its best achieved semi-professional standards with Lillebil Ibsen as the main star (Wiers-Jenssen 1924: 47–48). In the years between 1910 and 1919, Christensen used her position as a highly regarded actress and director to establish ballet connections all over Europe. Her private financial situation enabled her to travel a great deal: She went to St. Petersburg to take ballet lessons at the Maryinsky Theatre and to learn the Russian style in 1914. In 1914–15, she was taught by members of the Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes in Monte Carlo. Her travels were news material in the printed media. For example, in *Dagbladet*, 28 February 1910, there is an announcement (under the heading Art and Culture) stating that “Mrs. Gyda Christensen and the conductor Halvorsen have gone to Dresden for a short trip to see a production of professor Dohnanyi’s new—and already famous pantomime. The Nationaltheateret has bought the rights to stage this play” (translation by AF). Christensen was very impressed by the work of Fokine and his ideas about a more “true” and natural ballet, and those ideas were also integrated into the performances at the Nationaltheatret. Certainly, Christensen worked in a “Fokinian realm” when she was invited to choreograph for Max Reinhardt in Berlin between 1916 and 1919.

Even though Norway was on the outskirts of Europe, the investigating into newspapers have shown that many of Kristiania's theatres wanted to follow the latest trends, not least due to Christensen's contacts and efforts. Once Christensen's new ballet ensemble was considered trained enough to go on stage, they gave regular performances, mostly around Christmas time. Some of these include "Liselil og Perle" (premiere 17.12.1912) and "Dukken," a short version of Coppelia staged by Ivan Tarassof (premiered 22.12.1914). These are only examples to show the international orientation of the ensemble and Christensen's admiration for Fokine's innovations.

### **Dance in the newspapers**

The different newspapers in the capital (Aftenposten, VG, Dagbladet, Tidens Tegn, Morgenbladet, Ørebladet) covered and wrote reviews to various degrees of the more serious dance performances. For instance, they all wrote about Gyda Christensen's "Chopin-Soirees," a series of solo performances, which premiered in May 1909. She danced barefoot to piano accompaniment, and this was considered "serious" and high art. All the big newspapers in Kristiania covered her "Chopin-soirees" and they were even performed at the Nationaltheatret in May 1910. An article in Dagbladet considers Christensen's solo performances as trend setting and a great inspiration for the young and upcoming dancers. (Dagbladet, 23.05 1909).

An interesting question is whether there was a difference in the attention given to "serious" dance performances compared to more popular ones. A close investigation into the period May–July 1910 shows that the newspapers covered events such as the pantomime "Pirette," the ballerina Ellen Price de Plane's "The Four" and Thora Hals Olsen's solo performances. They also mentioned (but rarely critiqued) dance in the operettas and operas that were performed at Nationaltheatret and Fahlstrøm's Theater. The close investigation also show that it was not just the "high art" ballet performances that were reviewed. Dance and dancers in circus and variété performances were also sometimes critiqued or previewed, although not as frequently as the ballet performances. For instance, Tidens Tegn wrote about the "versatile and very interesting dancer miss Johnson" who was performing at the Tivoligarden in June and July 1910. (Tidens Tegn, 14 July 1910).

Guest performances by foreign and famous dancers are frequently covered in the papers. For instance, in May 1910, Ellen Price de Plane is mentioned almost daily in Tidens Tegn between 14 and 30 of May. But it is worth noting that in the pantomimes, operas, and operettas that were critiqued and reviewed, the acting and singing were given more attention than the dancing. In Tidens Tegn, the pantomime "Pirette" was reviewed on 13 of May by Einar Skavland but the dancing is barely commented upon,

apart from Skavlan stating that “Gyda Christensen was responsible for the movements and dancing.” He thus focused his attention on the singing and the music, ignoring the dance steps and movements, which were a large part of the performance. Skavland, who in other cases show a well-developed understanding of dance, still chose to ignore the dance part of the performance. I assume that the readers would expect to get a thorough report on the music and acting because those elements were considered the more serious ones than the dancing.

Quite a few of the critics, for instance, Reidar Mjøen (who wrote for *Dagbladet*), and the already-mentioned Einar Skavland (who wrote for *Tidens Tegn*), clearly had competence to measure the domestic classical ballet against international ideals and standards. (Mjøen was a great fan of Gyda Christensen and her daughter Lillebil, and he even wrote a book about Lillebil that was published in 1919). Sometimes, the critics found that the expected standards were met, as can be seen by the enthusiastic reviews of performances by Lillebil Ibsen (*Aftenposten* 21.12.1915). Other times they were not so favourable, as in the (anonymous) review of Per Aabel and Ruth Brünings Sandvik from 1924 whose dancing the critic describes as almost embarrassing, “When these two young people have learned more and developed both themselves and their technique they can come back again. There is still a long way to go.” (Undated review from 1924, Translation by AF).<sup>ii</sup>

### **Summary and concluding remarks**

The establishment of the ballet company at the Nationaltheatret between 1910-1919 was one of the most important developments towards establishing professional theatre dance in Norway. Christensen was “an energetic fighter for creating a genuinely artistic organized Norwegian ballet” (Wiers-Jensen, 1949: 16, translation by AF). Her importance for the further development of dancers, teachers and pedagogues cannot be overestimated. At the same time, there were several guest performances taking place, as well as dance being part of the Circus and Tivoli performances and the operettas. The dance scene in Kristiania was thus quite rich and out of this gradually developed a more professional standard for Norwegian dancers. Some of the dancers who trained at the ballet school at Nationaltheateret became professional dancers of international standard, as for instance, Lillebil Ibsen and Augusta Kolderup. Others opened ballet schools and started the training of a coming generation of ballet dancers, Per Aabel opened a ballet school together with his dancing partner Ruth Brünings-Sandvik in the early 1920s. Quite a lot of what was happening was written about and commented in the press, and the critics seem very informed and “on top of things”. I have looked at some of this material, but hopefully more investigation into this material will reveal that the

Norwegian theatre dance history is much richer and varied than what has been previously thought.

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Specific citations from: Aftenposten 21.12.1915, Dagbladet 25.01.1902, 28.02.1910, 05.06.1910, 06.06.1910, Morgenbladet 01.09.1953, Tidens Tegn, 13.07.1910, 15.07.1910, Urd 11.08.1900,

Various programs from Nationaltheateret 1909-1919

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<sup>i</sup> The only dance-related books published in the period are two biographies "Gyda" (Sinding 1919) and "Lillebil" (Mjøen 1919).. These deal primarily with ballet and present the "high art" dance artists Gyda Christensen and Lillebil Ibsen as international stars.

<sup>ii</sup> The review is part of a folder with information about Peer Aabel at Nationalbiblioteket. There is no information about which newspaper it is taken from.



# Fields of Folk Dance and Spheres of Modernization

Petri Hoppu

My presentation analyzes the principles of folk dance canonization and the emergence of national folk dance fields in Norden at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. I use Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *cultural field* as the main concept explaining fields of folk dance in Norden in terms of a complex and diversified activity: in this chapter the multiple ways of producing fields through aesthetical classifications, exclusions and inclusions are examined. Furthermore, the emerging fields of folk dance are contextualized within the spheres of modernity, whose different characteristics strongly influenced their formation.

I see the emergence of national folk dance fields to a large extent as a process of canonization. The canons, **selected** dance repertoires, can be seen as cultural capital, products and resources of which agents, such as folk dance teachers, instructors or other active members of the folk dance organizations, are in pursuit. The canons were not established without struggles, rather it took years for them to be constructed and appropriated. The process began to take shape at the very end of the nineteenth century.

The first organized folk dance group was Philochoros from Sweden, established in 1880 by students from the University of Uppsala. The group consisted originally merely of male dancers. The group had several performances every year until approximately 1910 and gained success not only in Sweden but also in other Nordic countries where they toured. The repertoire of the group consisted of documented vernacular dances, but the most popular were dances composed by Anders Selinder, ballet master at the Royal Swedish ballet in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The influence of Philochoros was remarkable in many respects: the group inspired people to establish new groups, its dances were commonly admired, and some of the emerging folk dance groups in other Nordic countries, in addition to Swedish groups, adopted them. Consequently, one result of Philochoros's activity was the appearance of a certain common repertoire in the Nordic countries. Yet what was even more important, national repertoires, which were later canonized, were constructed following Philochoros's example in terms of the aesthetics. In all Nordic countries, in the spirit of the German philosopher J.G. Herder, educated people began to collect peasants' dances, and they formed the majority of the dances in the repertoires. However, the dances were sometimes adjusted in order to better meet the aesthetical ideals actualized *par excellence* in Philochoros's spectacular dances. Also new dances were composed in Sweden, Finland and Norway. It must be added, however, that the canonization of the

repertoires was not only a process of accepting and adopting but also that of discriminating. Not everything was accepted in the canon but the dances had to meet certain standards that were formulated, not explicitly however, during the early years of Nordic folk dance.

One important way to establish folk dance canons, the folk dance publications, was related to another cornerstone of the Nordic folk dance fields: popular education influenced especially by N.F.S. Grundtvig the founder of *folkhøjskole* in Denmark. Many publications reached an almost biblical status, although they were not always a result of careful folkloristic investigation. When examining the canons, the publications provide one of the best sources. They reveal underlying processes of inclusion and exclusion: their contents show us what dances and formations that have been favoured, and, with comparison to documented dances, what has been ignored. The publications created the basis for national canons, even if this was not the publishers' explicit goal. One must remember that the purpose of the publications was not scientific but pedagogic that of popular education: canon construction was probably not something the publishers had in mind, but they chose dances they considered proper for pedagogical purposes. Therefore, it is no wonder that both documented, traditional dances and composed or modified dances could appear side by side in the publications without any problems. It was through the practice that the canons, including all these dances with different backgrounds, were finally established, and the idea of authenticity of the canonized folk dances was crystallized. The published dances were considered authentic representations of dance culture of the specific nation, and thus, the canons that came up were believed to depict the culture in a truthful way. Canon construction legitimated the dances, and dances, seen as authentic, legitimated the canon.

According to Regina Bendix, searches for authenticity have belonged to the domain of the feelings of loss inherent in modernization, maintaining a belief in a pure cultural essence and stimulating nationalistic tendencies. (Bendix 1997:8.) Among the first folk dancers, the sense of authenticity was clearly connected to the ideals of national romantics, nationalism and national culture.

In the Nordic countries the romantic ideas of nation and a national culture were utilized in the processes of civilization and education. The most famous Finnish statesman of the nineteenth century, J.V. Snellman crystallized this idea in the following way: "The nation must be civilized, and the civilized must be nationalized!" In the field of folk dance, however, this task was not carried out by the nation states, but it took place within civil society and free organizations.

The combination of Enlightenment and Romanticism in folk dance was actualized in the organization culture that became the functional core of the national folk

dance fields emerging in Norden. Bourdieu points out that a field is a competitive system of social relations functioning according to its own specific logic or rules and being defended by its gatekeepers: experts that testify to the legitimacy of cultural practice. A field is articulated and constructed hierarchically by distinctions, which produce good taste and which are seen as natural and self-evident. (Bourdieu 1984:68.) Rather than regard a field as a stabile system, Bourdieu emphasizes its dynamic aspects. He sees the relation between those who belong to the field and those who strive to gain access as a fierce struggle between social actors who defend their privileges and others who dispute them. Importantly, the definition of a field can be challenged, its rules can be questioned and redefined, but a field cannot be destroyed. (Bourdieu 1996:166 – 173.)

Folk dance fields in Nordic countries were fields of cultural power, with certain agents holding a position as gatekeepers and others challenging their legitimacy. The ones who were considered owning the cultural capital wanted to stick to the status quo: they often had the right to publish the volumes with folk dance instructions in addition to their formal high positions in the strongly hierarchical organizations. Their opponents were not against folk dance itself, but they wanted to question the rules and principles, which governed the field and which were considered natural and self-evident, securing the imagined authenticity of the tradition.

A good example of an opponent to the folk dance nomenclature is Ernst Klein who wanted to challenge the popular views concerning Swedish folk dance as early as in the 1920's and 30's revealing the true theatrical origins of many popular folk dances (Klein 1978). However, Klein did not try to destroy the field of folk dance but to reinvent it by introducing new concepts like *vernacular dance* (folklig dans) in order to distinguish between the dances of the folk dance movement and the traditional dances of the rural people. Although Klein's ideas were certainly known among Swedish folk dancers, the established canon maintained its status until the 1960's (Nilsson 2007).

The canonization of Nordic folk dance at the beginning of the twentieth century had a strong impact on the dance cultures in these countries. On the national level, there emerged an image of 'traditional folk dance', which referred to the repertoire of folk dancers and not the social dances among common people: the latter were usually excluded from the realm of folk dance. Furthermore, the folk dance repertoire was often regarded as THE national dance repertoire.

On the Nordic level, a certain Nordic repertoire was established. The first traits of a common repertoire can be found in Philochoros's, often originally Selinder's dances. However, the repertoire gradually changed and expanded, as the close connections between individuals evolved into an established Nordic cooperation in the field of folk

dance. Since the 1920's Nordic folk dancers began to arrange common meetings, where they could learn each other's dances over and over again.

Finally, as a result of both the activities of national organizations and Nordic co-operation, folk dance turned into a mass movement with thousands of enthusiasts all over Norden. Through repeated practice, annual programmes, as well as mass performances, led and controlled by the leaders of the organizations, the sense of authenticity of the dances and the status of the canons were reinforced and reproduced, and for decades, they were seldom questioned.

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## Participatory Dancing – The Polska Case

Mats Nilsson

*This paper deals with what will be a chapter in the forthcoming book **Dance in Nordic Spaces: Emergences and Struggles**, and look at **the local in the larger Nordic context** where material from one country is contextualized with material from other countries. The presentation was done with a PowerPoint presentation and some video examples.*

Behind the text is a fieldwork done 2003-2009 at different polska event, primarily in Sweden but also in Norway and Denmark<sup>i</sup>. Fieldwork here means “being there”<sup>ii</sup> as an intervjuer and participatory observer both as a dancer and a researcher. Both the field as a concept and the fieldwork as such will be deeper disused in the book.

When talking about music and dance in Scandinavia, polska nearly always refers to a whirling couple dance. The same name, polska, is used for at least two different ways to dance. One where the couple rotate on the spot and one where the couple rotate in a waltz circle around the room. There are choreographic differences but also similarities, and both forms are danced to the same music. Even if the name can be traced back to at least 17<sup>th</sup> century when it is used for couple dance and the music used among both gentry and peasants, this article is this about polska dancing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Today, around 2010, polska dancing can be found in at least four main contexts. The dancing goes on in folk dance clubs, where people meet once a week to learn and exercise different variants of polska. An other context is connected to the folk music movement where polska is very popular as music and many people also try to dance. Those two contexts can be seen as participatory, with mean that all people join in and are a part of the event as potential dancers and musicians.

Two other contexts can be seen more as presentational, with means that there is an obvious division between the dancers/musicians and a group of “on-lookers”, audience, judges etc. Here we find contexts like dance competitions and award dancing and another that are more aesthetic dancing, that has been adopted to art stage and comes close to some kind of contemporary modern dance. Polska can be found in all four contexts, but in this article it is the participatory dancing events that is in focus.

In short polska dance consist of couple whirling, walking and turning under arms. There are a few basic forms with a lot of variations. The importance of the ¾

beat “rubber band” rhythmical music is obvious, and also important is that the music is nearly always played by good, “live” musicians. Mostly couple means man and woman dancing together, but two girls dancing is common. More uncommon is couples with two boys, but they are there. The dancers have national, and also international, networks and travel far away for the big polska dance events. The most popular dancing occasions can be divided in two parts, the summer in the countryside at folk music festivals and “spelmansstämmor” and during the winter period at dance houses and connected to folk music concerts. Especially young people often refers to the combination of the  $\frac{3}{4}$ -beat music and the constant whirling with a partner as the main reason to dance polska. Sometimes this combination creates what is called and described as “flow”, a state of mind that leaves everything but the ongoing movement in the rhythmic sound aside<sup>iii</sup>.

Folk and traditional are words and concepts often used in the discourse about polska music and dance. In many ways they are good words for polska music and dance, but they exclude important aspects of what is going on today. And in some sense they also mislead, because folk and traditional for most people refers to old dead and museal things, while polska dance and music are very alive and modern – if one wants to see it that way. For myself I prefer to see it as a subculture, a modern popular cultural expression parallel to a lot of other music and dance forms going on in the contemporary society. Polska is done here and now even if the historical traces and traditions goes longer back than for instance jazz or rock music and dance traditions do.

In a condensed way we can describe the history of polska dancing as dance and music that has moved through time and space from popular to folk and back to popular and then to world music and dance. It has been known and spread in vast parts of North Europe but are today mostly seen as a Scandinavian (i.e. Swedish and Norwegian) dance and music form. Probably it was once danced to both  $\frac{2}{4}$ ,  $\frac{4}{4}$ -beat and  $\frac{3}{4}$ -beat music, but is today mostly danced to  $\frac{3}{4}$ -beat. It had gone from a lot of local popular variants around the Baltic Sea in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century to become standardized dances and part of the national “folk” movements in Scandinavia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and today it has again become some very popular dance and music variants at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The last can be seen at least when visiting the folk music places where polska is danced in Sweden. But it is happening things also in Norway and Denmark, where there are signs and tendencies in the same direction as in Sweden.

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<sup>i</sup> Nilsson 2009.

<sup>ii</sup> See i.e. NN.

<sup>iii</sup> A concept discussed i.e. by Chichentymihaly.

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## Dance Houses and Other Shared Infra Structure

Karen Vedel

My chapter examines the emergence and consolidation of contemporary theatre dance from the 1970s until today in the context of Norden. The investigations are based on the hypothesis that the process, through which dance became a discrete field of cultural production, was a critical one that also defined non-synchronous, uneven relations with other fields. (McNay 2000: 52)

As pointed out by Petri Hoppu, networks and partnerships in folk dance were established across Norden already in the early part of the 1900s. The collaborative activities were continued and expanded into the area of theatre dance in the more formalized Nordic cultural cooperation after World War II, such as the Nordic Ministers Council (NKF) and the Nordic Cultural Foundation. In the committee structure of the NKF, dance was in the beginning considered a part of theatre. A joint Nordic dance seminar in Finland in 1977 became the starting point for a series of activities catering to different aspects of dance and the production of dance performances. The meeting was followed by a series of almost annual gatherings around themes such as choreography, dance pedagogy and musical composition for dance.

During the following decade, there was raised a demand for a separate committee for dance. The demand may be seen as a claim for a space in which to articulate not only the field's internal logic, but also dance specific standards for evaluation. Stated in the words of Norwegian choreographer Emte Stag, one of the pioneers in the 'Project Nordic Dance Committee' (1987 – 1990): "As long as dance in both cultural political and aesthetic terms is considered a subordinate function in theatrical productions - the markers, whereby excellence are measured, will remain un-articulated, and critical appraisal of the dance will continue to be made on values that apply not to dance but to theatre." (Hjort and Larmo 1988: 31, translation Karen Vedel, italics added)

I have looked at some of the ways in which the web of relations, created and sustained by the myriad of activities in the realm of the Nordic cultural collaboration contributed to the carving out of a Nordic space for dance. And I have looked at the implications of the activities at the regional level for the building of dance infra structure at the national level.

### Project Nordic Dance Committee

The Nordic dance encounters between 1977 and 1987 fostered a vision for a Nordic dance committee that was realized with the support of the Nordic Cultural Foundation



between 1987 and 1990. Instrumental in articulating the structural specificities relating to theatre dance, the activities were continued in Project Nordic Dance Committee.<sup>i</sup> Over the run of the conferences, workshops, festivals and other collaborative activities, networks were formed across the national dance fields.

Compared with the relative permanence of the *theatre* field, dance tended to have instable infrastructures with largely project based activities alongside a few large institutions. In terms of employment, dancers typically had short term jobs with little security and low pay. With regard to professional training, the encounters drew attention to the special requirements for dancers and choreographers. Reviewed were also the support structures for dance productions and the need for physical facilities such as rehearsal spaces for daily training and the access of dance to performance venues.

Furthermore Project Dance Committee sought to build a more informed dance discourse by supporting activities in academic training and research. These plans included the publication of a Nordic journal and a textbook on dance history. And last but not least there was identified a distinct body of research, to which dance refers. The reflexive dimension in the Nordic collaboration was in focus in another well-attended dance meeting in Finland, held approximately one year after the first.<sup>ii</sup> The three-day meeting featured presentations by scholars and practitioners on topics ranging from dance medicine/therapy over psychological aspects to the history of theatre and folk dance. With the launch of NOFOD (Nordic Forum for Dance Research) the different corners of the dance field finally came together. Since 1990 NOFOD has held ten research conferences hosted in turn by the different Nordic countries.<sup>iii</sup>

Before the end of the committee's three year project period, the theatre committee was restructured under the title "Theatre and Dance in Norden" signalling an empowerment of dance alongside theatre.

### **Shared Dance Infra Structures**

This is to say that the regional dance infra structure provided a platform for dance political activities and the building of infra structure at the national level.

When the members of Project Nordic Dance Committee had committed themselves to bring together educational institutions, theatres with dance ensembles, unions, free lance dance artists etc, their starting points were different.<sup>iv</sup> One example is that Finland already had a Dance Delegation and Swedes a Dance Committee. During the three years of the committee's existence, it worked to establish similar unified bodies in Denmark, Norway and Iceland that should function as driving forces in the national contexts.

A comparison of the national dance infra structures in the Nordic countries today, shows that it has been modelled over more or less the same frame starting from national umbrella organizations, such as dance delegations, committees or a coalition of unions and smaller associations. The establishment of dance as an autonomous field has further entailed the building of institutions such as dance houses reserved for dance activities, educational institutions, dance information centres and perhaps touring structures aimed at providing dance to the more remote parts of the country. Customized to fit the cultural political system of the different countries, this frame, reiterated with local variations, contributed to the recognition of dance as a distinct field from which relations with an exteriority could be negotiated and sustained.

### **Norden, a strategic platform for dance**

The distinction between *strategies* and *tactics* adds a useful perspective to the discussion of the impact of the quest for the autonomy of dance in the Nordic structures on the standing of the national dance fields. In the words of de Certeau: “(E)very ‘strategic’ rationalization seeks first of all to distinguish its “own” place, that is, the place of its own power and will, from an “environment.” (2000: 36) According to his definition *strategies* are “... actions, which thanks to the establishment of a place of power (the property of a proper), elaborate theoretical places (systems and totalizing discourses) capable of articulating an ensemble of physical places in which forces are distributed.” (2000: 39) Strategies, he adds, rely on “...on the resistance that the ‘establishment of a place’ offers to the erosion of time...”

Where strategies privilege relationships anchored in place, tactics are defined as calculated actions determined by the absence of a proper locus, relying instead on a “clever organization of time”. Deprived the option of general strategic planning and the subsequent overview of a visible and objectifiable space, tactics operate in isolated actions. As an art of the weak, they are obliged to accept the chance offerings of the moment. In other words, as long as dance did not ‘own’ a place of its own, the calculation of power relationships relied on tactics, on being able to take unexpected initiatives and make use of the cracks that occasionally opened up in the operation of the privileged powers.

My study of the position of dance in the cultural politics of Norden that the operational mode governing the lobbying of the Nordic structures in the 1970s and -80s started out as *tactics*, *strategic* action became possible once the autonomy of dance as an art form had been established. Looking to the national level, it seems that dance groups and free lance dance artists in Sweden and Finland, already having established a platform for dance, were operating in institutions and organizations that made it possi-

ble to engage in the calculation and manipulation of power. The not-yet-institutionalized dance artists in for example Denmark faced a very different situation and were thus forced to remain in the tactical mode for some time still, while struggling to gain foothold. With the shift in the standing of dance as a performing art in the Nordic Structures in 1990, there was lent “muscle” to the dance artists, providing them with the sense of critical mass offered by the larger regional network and the inspiration that came with it.

By way of concluding the discussion, the chapter argues that not only were the cooperative activities in theatre dance across Norden instrumental in the building of the region, Norden also contributed to the making and consolidation of national fields of dance.

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<sup>i</sup> The five members of Project Nordic Dance Committee 1987-1990 were Doris Laine (FI), Emte Stag (NO), Lena Malmsjö (SE), Kirsten Ralov (DK), Örn Gudmundsson (IS).

<sup>ii</sup> The “Idea and Research Seminar” at Hanasaari, Finland took place December 4 – 6, 1987. The meeting had 140 participants.

<sup>iii</sup> The first conference of Nofod (Nordic Forum for Dance Research) took place October 19 – 21, 1990 at Kolle Kolle outside Copenhagen. Attendants were altogether 87 participants including dance pedagogues, dancers, critics and scholars.

<sup>iv</sup> The five members of Project Nordic Dance Committee 1987-1990 were Doris Laine (FI), Emte Stag (NO), Lena Malmsjö (SE), Kirsten Ralov (DK), Örn Gudmundsson (IS).

## Conference Information

### Program

THURSDAY 27-01-11		
Time	Place	
15.45 & 16.45	Campus Torv	<b>Kitt Johnson: <i>Mellemrum #1</i> – A site specific solo</b>
15.00-18.30	Campus Torv	Registration
16.00-18.30		Reception
18.30-19.00	100	<b>Opening of The 10th NOFOD Conference Theme: <i>Spacing Dance(s) -Dancing Space(s)</i></b> by keynote speakers: Lena Hammergren, Doreen Massey, Sarah Rubidge and Egil Bakka. <b>EXTRA! Performance by sports dancers:</b> Martino Zanibellato and Michelle Abildtrup (DK). Ranking 4th in the world in latin dance

FRIDAY 28-01-11		
Time	Place	
8.30-9.00	Campus Torv	Registration
9.00-10.30		<b>Welcome</b> by Head of Institute Jørgen Povlsen and Chair of NOFOD Leena Rouhiainen. <b>Keynote speaker</b> Lena Hammergren: <i>Everybody's Dance: Democracy and Dancing in Nordic Spaces</i>
10.30-11.00		Coffee break
SESSION 1		
11.00-13.00	95	<b>Paper presentations</b> <b>Theme: <i>History, (re)presenting space and body</i></b> Hanna Järvinen: <i>Arcadian Space: Images of Early Twentieth-Century Modern Dance</i> Emily Wright: <i>Sacred Spaces: The Practice and Implications of Christian Sacred Dance</i> Sigrid Øvreås: <i>Media promoting art – or politics?</i> Anu Laukkanen: <i>Kinesthetics of queer sexuality in belly dancing</i>
11.00-13.00	96	<b>Paper presentations</b> <b>Theme: <i>Spacing dance training, didactics</i></b> Eeva Antilla: <i>Dance as a place for learning</i> Gun Roman: <i>The event generation</i> Charlotte Svendler Nielsen: <i>"It was just as if you were naked!" The artistic-educational space in primary school classes as a pedagogical challenge related to embodiment and vulnerability</i> Elisabete Monteiro: <i>How dance students feel space?</i> – A case study
11.00-12.00	Dance Studio	<b>Lecture demonstrations</b> Anne Makkonen & Jaana Turunen: <i>Spaces of the Past and the Present</i> Camilla Damkjaer : <i>The Representation of Space</i>
12.00-13.00	Gym. Hall	
13.00-14.00		Lunch
14.00-14.20	Dance Studio	<b>Solo performances by students</b>
To be continued next page...		

FRIDAY 28-01-11		
Time	Place	
SESSION 2		
14.30-16.00	95	<b>Paper presentations</b> <b>Theme: <i>Historiography, discourse</i></b> Katarina Lion: <i>One through the other – spaces of dance historiography reflected in a reversed mirror</i> Lotta Harryson: <i>Historiography's impact on the understanding of staged dancing</i> Sesselja Magnusdottir: <i>Making the periphery to center. Re-narrating the history of western theatre dance, using feminist- and postcolonial approaches</i>
14.30-16.00	96	<b>Paper presentations</b> <b>Theme: <i>Spacing dance training, didactics (continued)</i></b> Biliana Vassileva Fouilhoux: <i>How to construct a space perception of a dance gesture through an AFMCD intervention</i> Maria João Alves: <i>Dancing in open spaces: A teaching-learning project using e-tools</i> Mariana Siljamäki et al.: <i>Pedagogical conceptions of Finnish transnational dance teachers</i>
14.30-16.00	100	<b>Paper presentations</b> <b>Theme: <i>Memory, rhythm, changing relations</i></b> Helle Winther: <i>With the body as sounding board - Dance as development potential in professional-personal space</i> Kirsi Heimonen: <i>Breathing the now when the past is forgotten – Movement and dance among people living with memory loss</i> Derek McCormack: <i>The refrain of rhythmic spaces</i>
16.00-16.30		Coffee break
16.30-17.30		<b>NOFOD National Meetings</b>
17.30-		<b>NOFOD General Assemblé</b>

SATURDAY 29-01-11		
Time	Place	
8.30-9.00	Campus Torv	Registration
9.00-10.30	100	<b>Keynote speakers</b> Doreen Massey: <i>For Space</i> and Sarah Rubidge: <i>On Choreographic Space</i>
10.30-11.00		Coffee break
SESSION 3		
11.00-12.30	95	<b>Paper presentations</b> <b>Theme: <i>Performance space, culture</i></b> Christy Adair: <i>Shifting Locations in Opiyo Okach's Shift Centre</i> Elina Seye: <i>Sabar Dance Events as Spaces for Social Interaction</i> Sidsel Pape: <i>En dansekunstners erfaringer med kirkerommet – muligheter og begrensninger</i>
11.00-12.30	96	<b>Paper presentations</b> <b>Theme: <i>Phenomenology, body and space</i></b> Hilde Rustad: <i>Body as space and possibility for dance improvisation</i> Turid Nøkleberg Schjønby: <i>Gesture and space of body in early modern dance</i> Henning Eichberg: <i>The energy of dance- Cultural swing in bodily space</i>
11.00-12.00	Dance Studio	<b>Workshop</b> Victoria Hunter: <i>Revealing the Site through Phenomenological Movement Inquiry</i>
12.30-13.30		Lunch
SESSION 4		
13.30-15.30	95	<b>Paper presentations</b> <b>Theme: <i>Space, place and narratives</i></b> Lorraine Nicholas: <i>Place and Space at 'The Place'</i> Irene Velten Rothmund: <i>Release technique: Reflections on history, experience and teaching</i> Ingibjörg Björnsdóttir: <i>The Danish Connection</i>
13.30-15.30	96	<b>Paper presentations</b> <b>Theme: <i>Phenomenology, body and space (continued)</i></b> Shantel Ehrenberg: <i>The Dancing Self/Other: a conceptual overview</i> Leena Rouhiainen: <i>A phenomenological and psychoanalytic approach to working with perception, expression and the contemporary dancer</i>

		<p>Lis Engel: <i>The poetics and politics of phenomenology of Dancing space(s) and life – stories opening into philosophical and social dimensions of embodied sensitivities and creativity, living movement and lived meaning in contemporary dance in education and art</i></p> <p>Gunn Engelsrud: <i>The dancing subjects and the how the body produces the spatiotemporal field of experience in dance</i></p>
13.30-14.30	Dance Studio	<p><b>Workshops</b></p> <p>Lise Lavelle: <i>Reading inner and outer space in Amerta movement improvisation: A technique for composing while moving</i></p> <p>Gediminas Karoblis: <i>The space in Modern Ballroom and Argentinean tango</i></p>
14.30-15.30		
15.30-16.00		Coffee break
SESSION 5		
16.00-17.00	95	<p><b>Lecture demonstration</b></p> <p>Åsa Unander-Scharin: <i>Three Interactive Scenes of The Crystal Cabinet</i></p>
16.00-17.00	99	<p><b>Lecture demonstration</b></p> <p>Paula Kramer: <i>Research Installation: Dancing in nature space (Relating dance to nature-space)</i></p>
16.00-17.00	96	<p><b>Paper presentations</b></p> <p><b>Theme: Phenomenology, body and space</b></p> <p>Stine Degerbøl: <i>Trapeze-presentation: contemporary circus</i></p> <p>Susanne Ravn: <i>Space and improvisation in Argentinean tango</i></p>
19.00-	Niels Bohrs Allé 1	Conference dinner



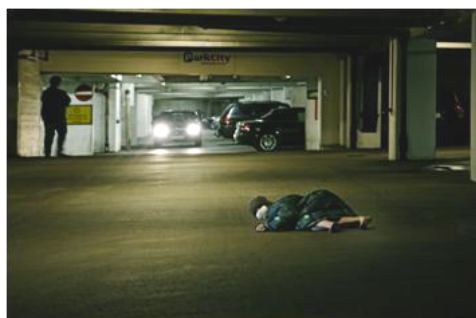
SUNDAY 30-01-11		
Time	Place	
9.00-10.00		Meeting with the new board
10.00-11.30	100	<b>Keynote speaker</b> Egil Bakka: <i>Dance of the past in the spaces of the present</i>
11.30-12.00		Coffee break with sandwiches
SESSION 6		
12.00-14.00	95	<b>Roundtable discussions</b> <i>Dance in Nordic Spaces: Emergences and Struggles</i> Inger Damsholt: <i>Nordic Night Fever</i> Anne Fiskvik: <i>Norwegian Dance Agents and Dance Activities in 1909-1910</i> Petri Hoppu: <i>Fields of Folk Dance and Spheres of Modernity</i> Mats Nilsson: <i>Participatory Dancing – The Polska Case</i> Karen Vedel: <i>Dance Houses and Other Shared Dance Infra Structure</i>
12.00-14.00	96	<b>Paper presentations</b> <b>Theme: Creating spaces in and for dances</b> Moura Margarida: <i>Space(s) in Portuguese folk dances</i> Daniel Tércio: <i>Scenic space and technologies of enchantment</i> Diane Oatley: <i>The performative hybridity of Flamenco dance: Transformation in liminal space</i> Britt-Marie Styrke: <i>Rooms of possibilities, spaces for change – reflections on dance and education</i>
12.00-13.00	Dance Studio	<b>Workshop</b> Johan Borghäll: <i>Explorations of Movement and Signs - Can we learn something about the significance of signs by being involved in creating and moving to them?</i>
14.00 –14.15	100	<b>NOFOD closing session</b>

## Performance – Kitt Johnson

### ***Mellemrum #1* – A site specific solo by Kitt Johnson, X-act, Denmark**

This performance is essentially an exploration of the general concept of the spaces between. Plus an in-depth exploration of the specific site of this solo - its past and present as well as its physical and psychological peculiarity. In *Mellemrum #1* Kitt Johnson invites the audience to see a familiar space through a performative perspective; to experience the extraordinary in the ordinary.

*Mellemrum #1* was originally created for the site specific festival MELLEMRUM in May 2008.



**Choreography, dance and costume**

KITT JOHNSON

**Composition and live music**

STURE ERICSON

**Extra**

MARKUS HOFFMANN

**Text**

ROSMARIE WALDROP

Photo: Per Morten Abrahamsen (2008) "*Mellemrum #1*" by Kitt Johnson

**Kitt Johnson**, dancer, performer and choreographer has been described as “the hand-maid of metamorphosis,” and her style as “an amalgam of the styles of Kazuo Ohno crossed with Mary Wigman”. With sublime body control, she transforms herself in her solos into mythic/mystic creatures from another world that crawl under the viewer’s skin. This has made Kitt Johnson one

of the most internationally renowned and widely-touring Danish artists. She appeared in the New York Times’ top 10 list of the dance experiences of 2003. In 2009 Kitt Johnson was nominated for a DORA, The Canadian Performing Arts prize, in the category “Dance performance of the season 2009”. Her unique idiom has developed through encounters with many different forms of expression, such as modern dance, contact improvisation, martial arts, German Expressionist theatre, shamanistic dance, and Japanese Butoh.

Website: [www.kittjohnson.dk](http://www.kittjohnson.dk).

Credits The Danish Arts Council, financial support of Kitt Johnson X-act

## Performance - Sports Dancers

Martino Zanibellato and Michelle Abildtrup, Denmark

Martino and Michelle have danced together for nearly 10 years. They have specialised in Latin and have won the Danish Championship four times and are at the moment ranked four in the world. They are economically supported by Team Denmark, the supportive organisation for elite athletes in Denmark. They spend more than half of the year traveling around the world, participating in tournaments, giving shows and teaching upcoming sports dancers.

Pictures:

[http://www.danceplaza.com/index.tpl?style=foto&action=personal&couple\\_id=856&blader=0](http://www.danceplaza.com/index.tpl?style=foto&action=personal&couple_id=856&blader=0)

Videos:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GN4q4gRy0jM>

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