

# Nordic Journal of Dance

– practice, education and research



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# Editorial

The contributions to this issue reflect an interest in investigating the collective and collaborative aspects of dance, i.e. in making dance, teaching it and writing about it. Writing an article in collaboration is a striking example of this. But although research can otherwise seem a solitary endeavour, it is arguably collective in its fundamentals: refuse to acknowledge that your research is part of a particular tradition, and you aren't really able to contribute to it.

The issue opens with the article 'Dance Teacher Educator's Identity' by Norwegian dance teachers and researchers Hilde Rustad and Marit Skreiberg. Together, they explore Skreiberg's identity as a dance teacher who, in her work with students, stresses dancing and the passion for dance as a common platform she shares with them. In 'Dance Matters for Boys and Fathers', New Zealander Ralph Buck and Finn Isto Turpeinen collaborate on an exploration of the 'raw-board-working method', which values dance as a medium for sharing experience and developing relationships.

In the issue's first practice-based piece, 'Coffee and Choreography', Icelandic choreographers Sveinbjörg Þórhallsdóttir and Steinunn Ketilsdóttir reflect on their collaboration for the pieces Belinda and Goddess (2011), Ride (2014) and #PRIVATEPUSSY (2015). This is followed by 'From Two to One' by dancer and recent graduate from the Danish National School of Theatre and Contemporary Dance, Micaela Kühn. In her study, Kühn explores notions of participation in teaching and performance. In her artistic intervention 'The Child and I', Danish choreographer and dance educator Laura Navndrup Black reflects on artistic collaborations with children. The last International Federation for Theatre Research conference was organised by Stockholm University's Department of Culture and Aesthetics this past June. The German dance and performance scholar Maren Butte rounds off the issue with an elaborate report from the conference's (abundant!) dance panels.

At a time when we are more visible than ever, and that this visibility is distinctly of the individual (from

CCTV cameras to staging one's own individual body in selfies), we can wonder whether there might not be some radicalism in these explorations of collectivity and collaboration.

But there is another, scarier, implication. Cecilie Ullerup Schmidt put it concisely in her opening remark to the magnificent symposium she organised as part of her *Works at Work* festival in Copenhagen this past October ('Feminism, Friendship, Borderlessness'). Ullerup Schmidt pondered the extent to which we could still afford to have friendships and the extent to which we are, in fact, always already networking.

Dancers and choreographers are prone to working within these frames of friendship-network collaborations – and undeniably, this also implies some privilege. However, enjoying your work and being able to carry it out in collaboration with people you like does not mean that it is great to be at work all the time. Simon Critchley and Jamieson Webster's critique of the blurring of work and free-time, then, has a particular relevance to dancers/choreographers. Critchley and Webster insist on an 'informalization of the workplace where the distinction between work and non-work is harder and harder to draw' (2013)<sup>1</sup>. Adding time hanging out with friends to the sphere of 'work' might thus make a relatively small difference to dance practitioners. Nonetheless, it is worth bearing in mind that this also means that after our bodies and their work have been absorbed by capitalist systems, making them productive, in neo-liberalism our 'interpersonal relationships' – our friendships – have become invaded as well.

*We hope you enjoy reading this issue of NJD!*

*Franziska Bork Petersen  
Editor*

## Literature

Critchley, Simon and Webster, Jamieson. 2013. 'The Gospel According to «Me»', *opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com*, 29 June, accessed 30 November 2016.

<sup>1</sup> 'Your whole life is your professional life and all of it is up for grabs', commented my distinguished friend – and collaborator – Tabitha Innocent, when I told her about my thoughts on this.

## Dance Teacher Educators' Identity

Hilde Rustad and Marit Skreiberg

### ABSTRACT

This article investigates the professional identity of dance teacher educators by looking at one specific educator. We show how the practice-based dance knowledge acquired through the act of dancing creates a foundation for teaching dance and dance teaching, as well as theoretical dance subjects, such as dance pedagogy. Through this research, it has become apparent that there has been a lack of educator education in dance teacher education in Norway, and therefore, dance teacher educators can be understood to be self-taught. We show how, by making conscious choices, dance teacher educators have the possibility to enter and pursue educator education; how, through these choices, one gains new experiences; and how meaning making and experience are closely connected with identity construction as an ongoing process. The article adopts a phenomenological research approach inspired by Max van Manen, and the materials were gathered through interviews, conversations and textual readings.

### SAMMENDRAG

I denne artikkelen tar vi for oss dansepedagog-utdanneridentitet. Gjennom å undersøke én spesifikk utdanneridentitet viser vi hvordan praktisk basert dansekunnskap tilegnet gjennom dans skaper et fundament for danseundervisning og for undervisning av hvordan å undervise dans, så vel som for teoretiske danseemner. Gjennom denne undersøkelsen synliggjøres en mangel på «utdanner-utdanning» innen dansepedagogutdanning i Norge, og hvordan dansepedagogutdannere derfor i stor grad kan forstås som autodidakte. Vi viser i tillegg hvordan artikkelens gjennom bevisste valg har tilegnet seg «utdanner-utdanning», og parallelt hvordan erfaring og meningsdannelse er nært knyttet til identitetskonstruksjon som pågående prosess. Artikkelen har en fenomenologisk filosofisk og metodisk tilnærming i tråd med Max van Manen, og forskningsmaterialet er samlet gjennom intervju, samtale og lesing av relevante tekster.

# Dance Teacher Educators' Identity

Hilde Rustad and Marit Skreiberg

## Introduction

This article explores dance teacher educator identity. We have chosen to do this by exploring the identity belonging to one particular female dance teacher educator, Marit Skreiberg, who is one of the two authors of this article. The article identifies and describes important elements in the construction of dance teacher educator identity, and looks at experience and meaning as described from the subjective perspective of one person. We have asked how meaning connected to dance and education has played a part in the construction of Marit's dance teacher educator identity. Our research makes visible how such identity is constructed and reconstructed within the Norwegian dance education context in one particular case, and points at important connections between lived experience, meaning making and identity construction.

Marit Skreiberg is employed by The Norwegian college of dance /Norges dansehøyskole where she has been working for more than thirty-seven years. This institution was in former times named 'Ballettinsittuet' (1966 - 1985) and 'Den Norske Balletthøyskole' (1985 - 2011). In order not to cause too much confusion to the reader, we have used its present name 'The Norwegian college of dance' (2011 -) regardless of time period. All students are educated both dance teachers and dancers. The focus of the article, however, is dance teacher educator identity, and the term 'educator' refers to a person working in higher education.

Although elements which construct educator identity may overlap between educations, we believe

the construction of professional dance teacher educator identity to be quite different from most other teacher educator identity constructions, as dance in our case is characterized by being a physical and aesthetic bodily movement art practice.

According to Izadinia (2014, 426–27) teacher educator identity still seems to be under-researched, and especially teacher educators' professional identity seems not to be recognized as important. Research literature on dance teacher identity (Wang 2012), and teacher educator identity (Davey 2013, Izadinia 2014) does exist, but our search for research specifically on higher education dance teacher educator identity, has not given any results.

## Phenomenological approach

In order to answer our research question which is *what kind of elements are involved in the construction of dance teacher educator identity*, we have chosen a phenomenological approach as this question is closely connected to the experience of becoming dance teacher educator. Methodology and method are closely linked, and in line, with Max van Manen as described in his books *Researching lived experience* (1990) and *Phenomenology of practice* (2014). As such, the research belongs to the tradition of hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry.

Our aim is to describe identity constructive elements concerning dance teacher educator identity. Van Manen defines lived experience as «experience that we live through before we take a reflective view of it» (van Manen 2014, 42), and we understand pre-reflective experience as central in our enquiry. We are



*Marit Skreiberg. Photo: Camilla Storvollen*

investigating the lived experience of one dance teacher educator, from which we have detected thematic quality and meaning.

Thematic analysis involves making sense of a text and lived experience by interpreting its meaning, and can be described as «a process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure-grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of 'seeing' meaning.» (van Manen 1990, 79)

## **Method and material**

During the research process we were both working at the Norwegian college of dance in Oslo, and as dance teacher educators we find the topic of the article interesting and important. Inspired by the article «Writing together metaphorically and bodily side by side: an inquiry into collaborative academic writing» (Ritchie and Rigano 2007) we chose to write together; there has recently been an increasing trend for researchers to collaborate in research writing (Ritchie and Rigano 2007, 7). We used both «lead-writing»

where Hilde took the lead role in writing the first draft, and «bodily co-present collaborative writing» which means we were sitting beside each other and one person would talk and the other person would be writing (Ritchie and Rigano 2007, 4). In addition we wrote separately and shared documents with each other via e-mail.

The research material consists of experiential biographical material and is a result of 3 semi-structured interviews (SI), several research conversations (RC), and one essay (Skreiberg 2011). Hilde interviewed Marit and the conversations between the authors happened both as prolongations of interviews and separately, and throughout this process we both made notes. Hilde wrote down what Marit said in interviews. The interviews were used to «... explore and gather experiential narrative material» and as a «...vehicle to develop a conversational relation with a partner (interview) about the meaning of an experience» (van Manen 1990, 66). Marit's

essay «Why must I dance?» (Skreiberger 2011) is autobiographical personal narrative which Marit wrote as part of studying non-fiction prose. We understand the essay as a «personal life document» (Unrath, Anderson & Franco 2013, 84), and it consists partly of phenomenological descriptions, and partly of reflection and analysis.

The trustworthiness of our work has been strengthened by the fact that Marit, as both research subject and author, has read and reread the text throughout the research process which lasted from October 2014 to May 2015, and from August to October 2016. Working together in periods provided opportunities for reflection upon former reflection. In employing a method where *writing together* and *writing as research* has played an important part, we have sought to capture the constructive elements of Marit's dance teacher educator identity. According to van Manen (2014, 389, 1999, 90) writing is in itself a method, and the research is the writing. However, we understand the conversation between us, and the dialogical relationship of the research process, as equally important.

## Identity

Marit's involvement in and with dance is closely intertwined with her life as a whole. Giddens (1991, 76) claims that autobiography as interpretative self-history is at the core of identity. Although being aware that experience from all parts of life may be involved in the process of constructing professional identity, we have delimited the research area to personal experiences connected with dance and education. We realize this may go on behalf of showing Marit as a fully dimensional person, and as a shortcoming in the research project. However, we understand the chosen material as closely connected to her educator identity, and we made the decision in order not to make the article too long, and because we wanted to stay close to professional identity construction, which may resonate with other educators.

Van Manen writes:

In drawing up personal descriptions of lived experiences, the phenomenologist knows that the patterns of meaning of one's own experiences are also the possible experiences of others and therefore may be recognizable for others (van Manen 2014, 313).

In correspondence with van Manen we find it reasonable to believe that the description of elements constructing Marit's educator identity may resonate with how other dance teacher educators identify elements in the construction of their identity, as we believe many may have had their professional identities constructed in similar ways as Marit.

When it comes to 'identity' our point of view is that identity is temporal, always in movement, and something which develops throughout life (Møller 2004, 16). It is always as process; construction and reconstruction of identity is ongoing and involves meaning making and lived experience. Identity is neither something one is born with nor decided by society, it is a way of creating ontological meaning (Møller 2004, 66). The construction of identity involves an effort to combine past, present and expected future, and is but a continuous movement from which meaning is created (Lave & Wenger 1991, 34, Møller 2004, 76). In other words identity is not merely a result of unconscious choices, but of consciously made choices, which relates to Giddens (1991, 75) famous quote «We are, not what we are, but what we make of ourselves». We understand identity as something where the person in question has a fairly stable, continuous perception of self-identity, and where «... the decisive element is the ability to keep one's personal narrative going» (Giddens 1991, 76). Other research suggests that «identity emerges in and through narrative» and that «experiences of our personal and professional lives compose that narrative» (Unrath, Anderson & Franco 2013, 82).

During the research period we have identified different social community practices Marit has participated in, in order to understand her construction of professional identity as learning, meaning making, and negotiation of identity. According to Wenger (1998) participating in social communities of practice is especially important as to how one's identity is formed.

Jerome Bruner (2004, 694) writes «... eventually the culturally shaped cognitive and linguistic processes that guide the self-telling of life narratives achieve the power to structure perceptual experience, to organize memory, to segment an purpose-build the very 'events' of a life.» Additionally the transformation from spoken word to written text is important, something which is expressed interestingly in the following quote «Writing the text subjectifies our understandings of this experience but at the same time the printed text itself objectifies our experience. In this way 'writing plays the inner against the outer, the subjective self against the objective self, the ideal against the real'» (van Manen 1990, 129, in Ritchie and Rigano 2007, 8). Reflection, dialogue, writing together and separately, as well as reading each other's writing, brought the research process forward. As identity is always in movement, and based on Bruner and van Manen, this research process may, in itself, be understood as identity constructive.

## Elements of identity construction

Short biographical story line: In 1960, at seven, Marit danced classical ballet for a short period. At 12 she started dancing again, at Jorunn and Even Kirkenær's evening school, this time mostly jazz dance. At 14 she was teaching dance for the first time. In high school she danced folkdance, jazz dance and ballet. At 20 she started her three year education at The Norwegian college of dance (founded by Jorunn Kirkenær), to become a dancer and dance teacher. As a student she was singled out to teach in evening school (1975-

1997). After graduating she stayed in London for half a year, taking classes in dance and pilates, and teaching dance to students. When returning she attended daily dance classes for professional dancers, and worked as a dancer and dance teacher. In 1978 she was asked to teach at The Norwegian college of dance part-time. Parallel to this she was teaching part time at Fagerborg highschool dance department (1982-1997) and Jorunn Kirkenær's evening school. From 1997 onwards she was teaching full time at the Norwegian college of dance. In 1993 she started a longer study of special needs pedagogy, but stopped after one year. Later she studied pedagogical supervision (2001), vocational pedagogy (master degree 2007), and non-fiction prose (2012). Marit has been sitting in committees for the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), and the board of Dancing in school (Dans i Skolen). She is currently teaching a weekly, jazz dance class for adults in addition to her full time job.

Marit's first encounter of dance made a lasting impression. She writes:

I have always danced, I am told. I did not have to learn to like to dance, but to like other activities. When ballet was given to me the first time, it was soon taken away from me again. It was an ephemeral meeting between me, a little seven years old girl, and the magic world of ballet (Skreiberg 2011, 2).

One way to understand Marit's first dance experience, about which she writes it was «soon taken away» from her, is that she experienced dance as meaningful and as something which *belonged* to her. It seems the construction of Marit's dance-identity started at this early age, and that she through this meeting somehow formed a lasting bond with dance.

The fact that she started teaching dance at 14, shows how she felt ownership to dance, and how





ownership gave self-confidence and enabled her to teach at a very young age:

I loved my weekly dancing, so after some time I wanted to share the joy with my friends. I went to the headmaster of my school and asked him for help. He thought this a good initiative and gave me a room for free. I was thrilled. (SI)

Marit's early teacher experience seems based upon her enthusiasm for dance and trusting herself to teach others. This corresponds with how she reflects that she has «... been more interested in the practice of teaching dance, than in being a dancer» (SI).

When she started studying in 1973 her class was the fourth in line to start the education at The Norwegian college of dance. Concerning learning teaching, the policy of the school was clear, Marit explains, «We had to have pedagogy so that the students could earn a living later on» (RC).

Of 24 students, she was the only one who after graduating was invited to teach. This indicates how

*Marit Skreiberg recreates teaching Jazz Ballet students at the 50-year anniversary celebration performance for the Norwegian College of Dance, June 18, 2016. Photo: Camilla Storvollen.*

she as a student inhabited, and perhaps made visible, recognizable educator potential. She accepted the offer and the transition-period from being student to being educator seems non-existent. This may be understood in relation to the following quote:

Watson (2006, 510) [who] suggests that identity may, in fact, color action when stating «who we think we are influences what we do; there is a link between professional identity and professional action» (Unrath, Anderson & Franco 2013, 83)

The offer to teach confirmed Marit's professional identity, based on former teaching experience and teacher education, and made her make the step into «professional action» to teach in dance teacher education.

There were no other dance teacher educations

in Norway at the time, and no other places to look for educated teachers who could teach in dance teacher education. As student at The Norwegian college of dance Marit was educated dancer and dance teacher, but not dance teacher educator. This means it was *the experience of teaching in dance teacher education* in itself, which started reconstructing her identity from dance teacher to dance teacher educator.

When returning from London Marit did daily dance classes, and worked as dancer and dance teacher. Dancing, in most technical classes is repeatable and reproducible, and the traditional way of learning is often through observation and imitation. Such 'every day practice' implies certain kinds of meaning to the dancing person, and people who are dancing, performing, teaching and spending time in dance contexts, acquire various dance related experiences that may be understood separately and/or interconnected, and as playing an important part in the construction and reconstruction of dance teacher educator identity.

In one of our meetings Marit is suddenly up on her feet, jumping and waving her arms in the air exclaiming «I think of myself firstly as a practitioner!» Marit's movement outburst indicates how dance as lived experience and bodily knowledge is right under her skin, ready to be used at any moment. «It often starts as a tingling somewhere in the body. The tingling sensation grows and often spreads quickly, and then I just have to move the limb where it starts. [ ] Eventually it becomes a dancing motion sequence, ...» (Skreiberg 2011, 1)

For many years Marit has been involved in work concerning how the school's curriculum corresponds with demands coming from the Norwegian ministry of education. Today the ministry is engaged in what goes on, and in controlling quality in higher education, but when Marit started working as an educator she had a lot of individual and institutional freedom concerning what and how to teach. She tells that in

former times the educator could have strong influence on curriculum, and thereby on institutional identity (RC).

«I was on my way to change tracks completely» (RC), Marit explains about how she in 1993 started studying special needs pedagogy. Marit's private narrative includes getting a divorce and being a single mum, and how to cope with everything was in periods challenging. She wanted to change tracks not only because of her turbulent private life situation, but because she could not see herself teaching new and unfamiliar dance genres such as hip-hop and break dance. However, she stopped studying special needs pedagogy, and chose to continue her dance-focused life narrative. «It is because of some inner drive that I'm still in this [dance] business» she says (RC).

## **Reconstructing educator identity**

When Marit started her master-studies in vocational pedagogy, participating in a quite different social community of practice opened up new horizons. «It has given me confidence and independence witch have helped me to develop and inner safety», she says (SI). There is of course major differences between dance people and others, as people who have been dancing for years inhabit movement experience others cannot share. However, it astonished Marit that it seemed so easy for outsiders to grasp what dance and dance teacher education was about, and in a similar way to discover her knowledge clearly had relevance and transfer value to other fields of study. She was astonished because this was a contradiction to what to her seemed to be a general agreement residing within the dance community, - that everything which went on in the dance field was more or less incomprehensible to outsiders. In meeting with people from other fields she had to negotiate meaning in experience, and being accepted by them brought about an increase in self-worth (Izadinia 2014, 431).



Actual dance teaching may happen as a result of conscious planning and thorough considerations, but it may as well be the result of ‘simply’ passing on one’s tradition. Marit says that answers to many questions were already given to her when she started educating students, «The values I got when I was a student were given to us without being pointed out, I think. I can no longer remember them exact but they are probably part of my identity, - they live their life in my teaching» (SI). This quote relates to Tore Lindholm’s writing on the concept ‘tradition’:

Being unquestioned as to adequacy and sharedness, a tradition situates its recipients, providing them with a specific repertory of interpretations, responses and courses of action which are spontaneously at hand (Lindholm 1985, 110)

This means the tradition one is educated within is decisive for how one thinks, teaches and passes on the tradition one belongs to. Similar to Marit’s experience Lindholm points out how the answers to questions that may arise are already given. The point being that in

*Marit Skreiberg recreates teaching Jazz Ballet students at the 50-year anniversary celebration performance for the Norwegian College of Dance, June 18, 2016.*

*Photo: Camilla Storvøllen.*

studying vocational pedagogy, and in meeting with other traditions both different and similar to her own, Marit had to negotiate meaning in experience, and by doing so she radically reconstructed her identity and is today less likely to pass on tradition uncritically.

Today many employees at the Norwegian College of dance are educated elsewhere. Some of Marit’s colleges belong to different dance teaching traditions, and by interacting with colleges Marit continues to learn, make meaning, and negotiate her identity (Wenger 1998).

Marit is nowadays teaching theoretical subjects only, and in one conversation she explains and demonstrates how she in teaching, while talking to her students, illustrates, or accompanies, what she says by doing recognizable dance repertoire (RC). She does not have to plan or exercise dance movements; she relies on embodied experience. By moving dancing in theoretical classes she brings herself as dancer into life



in front of her students. In doing so she makes her past visible in the present moment. Importantly, she makes her students recognize in her – not ‘only’ the teacher of theoretical subjects, but the dancer/dance teacher. Marit experiences that showing herself dancing helps her communicate with students: «My students and I have the same platform», she says, «we have both the dancing and the passion for dance in common, - it is when doing something, and being in action, the words become real» (RC). Practical dance knowledge matters to the students and gives Marit credibility and an authority she otherwise would not have possessed.

This relates to whether it is necessary for the educator to embody dance knowledge as part of her professional dance teacher educator identity. To our knowledge many Norwegian educators are educated as dancers and/or dance teachers, and may have worked as professional dancers. They are in other words not educated specifically to work in higher education. However, dance as bodily knowledge seems to be an important element in constructing dance teachers educator identity.

Marit is currently teaching a weekly dance class to a group of women. She started at 55, after having

*Marit Skreiberg recreates teaching Jazz Ballet students at the 50-year anniversary celebration performance for the Norwegian College of Dance, June 18, 2016.*

*Photo: Camilla Storvollen.*

been asked to help finding a teacher for this group she decided to have a go at it herself.

It is Tuesday evening a quarter to eight. My class has already started. With my eyes I sweep the room and meet the eyes of expectant adult women. The windows are coated with sweat, and we are all focused on what’s happening inside. As I move I hear myself counting: five, six, seven and eight, one more time: Stretch up on five, turn right on six, flick ball change, on seven and eight! (Skreiberg 2011, 5)

She appreciates how dance-movements are repeated within this familiar situation of teaching. To Marit the meaning of teaching dance connects the present with her past, and reawakens experience which she expects to be part of her future. The very *continuity* of her dance teaching is in itself meaningful.

## Educator values

Marit keeps close contact with her students, whom she teaches for three years, and between educator and student there is the possibility of forming strong dialogical relationships.

The students feedback, their honesty, not always put in a nice way, have often been the inspiration for me to ask myself over and over again, is this the right way to put it, will there be other ways to understand this? What is the newest research on this, - is there any? (RC)

This quote shows both how student – educator relationship can be complicated, and how to Marit, being an educator means to constantly questions oneself. This corresponds with how other teacher educators have identified trial and error techniques, self-evaluation and personal readings as important techniques to shape their identity (Izadina 2014, 433).

Marit reflects upon how all teachers are role models, and how it is important for her to be aware of the values she represents. She tries to show her students how they can recognize differences in values outside of, as well as within, the dance field. She emphasizes how she understands her work to be about questioning, relations and relation building (RC).

Marit tries to create student awareness considering how to be a dance teacher student in a meaningful way. She focuses on becoming a teacher, how to teach dance, and teaching and learning. She says an important part of her work is about teaching how to be good at preparing, teaching and reflecting. At the same time she focuses on educating students how to become «good human beings». She involves classical educational values, and explains her pedagogical project to be about generosity, respect and humility, combined with critical, but constructive, reflection (RC). Her educator values relate to ethics and to what van Manen calls the more «elusive

dimensions» of teacher identity, such as «reflective being, pedagogical virtues, teacher qualities, moral practice, and pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact.» (van Manen 1999, p. 77)

## Discussion and summary

Qualitative inquiry is based on the idea that no interpretation is ever complete, and we are aware that our analysis and interpretations are not the only possible ones. In retrospect we regret the fact that we did not consider it necessary to record interviews and conversations, as this would have made our working process easier and more transparent. In spite of this we believe we have achieved some new insights concerning the construction of dance teacher educator identity.

Important elements in the construction of Marit's dance teacher educator identity are the choices of education and additional education, and personal meaningful experiences such as the very first meeting with dance - leading into a lifelong bonding with dance. Further, - early teaching experience constructing teacher identity, combined with offers to teach which gave trust and self-confidence. Such offers suggests teacher educator potential as something which may be recognized by others.

Important insights achieved are how the very experience and practice of teaching in higher education in itself which played the most central part in Marit's educator identity construction. Additionally, already acquired professional identity is of importance as to how the educator develops her work further and makes choices, and whether and in what ways the educator's embodied dance knowledge is present and plays a visible part in her professional educator identity.

One way to understand the transformation from dance student – to teacher – to educator is through the meaning of tradition including the reproducibility of the different aspects of dancing, which connects to

bodily knowledge residing within the person as lived experience. Additional education involving meetings with other communities of practice, in order to learn and enhance the chances of staying within the field of dance teacher education is important.

We understand the very continuity of Marit's professional life-narrative as related to Giddens (1991, 76) who writes that auto-biography is at the core of self-identity, and is something that has to be worked at. Marit's ability to keep her professional narrative coherent and ongoing has been, and still is, a decisive element in her identity construction.

This article makes visible how dance as bodily knowledge may create a foundation for teaching theoretical dance subjects such as dance pedagogy. The shared experience of dancing opens up for dialogical relationships between educator and student. Showing embodied dance knowledge makes a difference and gives credibility and authority to the educator of theoretical subjects; it gives possibilities for communication with students educators without dance experience have no access to.

It seems paradoxical how Marit today, while solely teaching theoretical subjects in education, considers her embodied dance experience to be of uttermost importance. In how she understands her professional identity she puts practice based dance experience prior to theoretical dance pedagogical knowledge. This suggests how meaning residing within the lived experience of dancing matters to educators, and points at a possible underestimated value of practice in the teaching of theoretical subjects in dance teacher education and elsewhere.

By teaching dance and educating dance teachers, as well as moving dancing when teaching theoretical subjects, Marit is upholding a dialogic relationship between teaching dance and dance teacher education, and between practice and theory. This can be understood as a method to help bridge the gap between theoretical and practical dance teaching subjects.

Marit became educator by learning by doing. Although the dance traditions she entered and was educated within can be understood as providing the guidelines for her work both as dance teacher and dance teacher educator, she had no 'educator education' when she started working. As a teacher in higher education she is autodidact, a self-taught person who learned her subject through practicing, without the benefit of a formal education. However, by actively seeking relevant additional academic 'educator education' she put herself in situations where she had to negotiate meaning and reconstruct her identity. Since Marit started teaching in the Norwegian college of dance some 30 years ago, much has changed, and today demands such as research based teaching, is required. Her choices coincided with how the Norwegian ministry of education in later years has demanded that persons working in higher education need university degrees on the level of Master and PhD.

Marit has continuously looked for possibilities for learning and through taking on additional studies she has gained new knowledge. In her work as dance teacher educator she has applied new knowledge to former knowledge and experience. Scholarly and experienced based knowledge together constitutes her base for professional actions, and is central in her ongoing process of (re)constructing her identity as dance teacher educator. In Marit's professional narrative *teaching dancing* seems to be the meaning making core combining past and present, as well as expected future.

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## BIOGRAPHIES

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# Dance Matters for Boys and Fathers

Ralph Buck and Isto Turpeinen

## ABSTRACT

In this article, Isto Turpeinen and Ralph Buck reflect on reasons why dance remains relatively inaccessible for boys. They note that constructions of dance and masculinity are relatively narrow. They note that while these meanings are evolving, within the classroom context, the words 'dance' and 'boy' continue to raise many issues for teachers. In the following, Isto and Ralph draw upon their own teaching experience and speak to practices that might make a difference.

Boys do dance, but who cares if they don't? Within education contexts and within society, males have ample opportunities for success, achievement and fulfilment. It seems that many boys who want to dance can, and those boys who want to play ice hockey and rugby can. Do boys need to dance? This article reflects on Turpeinen's (2015) research on teaching boys in Finland and a key finding that draws attention to the power of dance in fostering and expressing love, most importantly the expression of love between fathers and sons.

As professional male dance educators, both Isto and Ralph have taught boys and girls for over 30 years in Finland and New Zealand. This article takes the view that dance does matter for boys and girls, in various ways.

## TIIVISTELMÄ

Tässä artikkelissa Isto Turpeinen ja Ralph Buck pohtivat syitä, miksi tanssi on ja pysyy suhteellisen saavuttamattomana pojille. He ymmärtävät, että käsitykset tanssista ja maskuliinisuudesta näyttäytyvät suhteellisen kapeina. He huomauttavat, että vaikka nämä merkitykset kehittyvät, luokkahuoneessa sanat «tanssi» ja «poika» herättävät kysymyksiä opettajille. Isto ja Ralph hyödyntävät omaa opetuskokemustaan ja jakavat ajatteluaan, jossa asiat ovat toisin. Samalla he pohtivat artikkelissa isien ja poikien yhteistä tanssia ymmärryksen ja rakkauden tilana.

Pojat tanssivat, mutta onko sillä väliä, jos he eivät tanssi? Yhteiskunnassa miehillä on runsaasti mahdollisuuksia menestyksen saavuttamiseen ja tavoitteidensa täyttymiseen. Pojat ja miehet voivat näin katsoen hyvin. Ne pojat, jotka haluavat, voivat tanssia. Ne pojat, jotka haluavat pelata jääkiekkoa tai rugbya, voivat tehdä niin. Tarvitseeko poikien tanssia?

Tanssin ammattikasvattajina Isto ja Ralph ovat opettaneet tytöille ja pojille tanssia yli 30 vuotta Suomessa ja Uudessa-Seelannissa. Tässä artikkelissa he osoittavat, että tanssilla on merkitystä niin tytöille kuin pojille, monin eri tavoin.



# Dance Matters for Boys and Fathers

Ralph Buck and Isto Turpeinen

## Boys do dance

Boys do dance, but who cares if they don't? Within education contexts and within society, males have ample opportunities for success, achievement and fulfilment. It seems that many boys who want to dance can, and those boys that want to play ice hockey and rugby can. Do boys need to dance? Is there something that dance offers that is not available for males in other hobbies, curricula and recreations? Moreover, maybe the absence of boys from dance classrooms has provided a greater opportunity for girls to access and participate in dance.

As professional male dance educators, both Isto Turpeinen and Ralph Buck have taught boys and girls for over 30 years in Finland and New Zealand. This article takes the view that dance does matter for boys and girls, but the authors ask in what way dance matters for boys. They concede that not all aspects of education or society have to 'work' for or appeal to males. They also acknowledge that males and females see the world from different perspectives (Connell 2005; Davies 1989; Gard 2001) and that, on a gender spectrum, there are diverse ways of being and expressing gender. There is no one way of being male or female or transgender. Rather, notions of gender fluidity allow for diversity and shifting identity (Burt 2007; Lehtikoinen 2006; Li 2016; Risner 2004, 2007, 2008).

This article springs from Turpeinen's (2015) doctoral research on teaching boys in Finland and his subsequent insight related to the power of dance in fostering and expressing not only pedagogical love but also love between fathers and sons. The authors' collaboration is situated within a larger research

project, 'ArtsEqual', which draws attention to the role of arts education within Finnish society. One argument behind the authors' belief that dance matters for boys is the logic that if boys, and hence men, can learn to better build relationships and express feelings through dance, then there may be subsequent improvements in gender equity, social equity and tolerance of others.

ArtsEqual (Project No.: 293199) is a multi-disciplinary 6-year research project (2015–2020) initiated by the University of Arts Helsinki, Finland. Funded by the Academy of Finland, ArtsEqual focuses on 'big picture' questions related to inclusion, participation and equality in Finnish Schools and society. ArtsEqual is composed of several teams of researchers. Team 1, with a focus on arts education in schools, takes the view that arts education has untapped potential in fostering equality for all children within education. By extension, therefore, the arts arguably have a foundational role in fostering equality in Finnish society.

The ArtsEqual project complements the UNESCO Seoul Agenda: Goals for the Development of Arts Education (UNESCO, 2011), which draws attention to the intrinsic and instrumental benefits of arts education within education. This international policy strongly advocates for the role of arts education in attending to issues of gender equality, social equity, civic mindedness, quality of living, cultural plurality and living sustainably. However, as Snook and Buck (2014) note, there remains a gap between international policy and local classroom activity. Isto and Ralph argue that one strategy for bridging classroom activity and international policy is to improve dance pedagogy for engaging with all children, but especially boys.

## Raw-Board-Working: A strategy for engaging boys and parents

In this article, Isto and Ralph reflect on reasons why dance remains relatively inaccessible for boys. They note that constructions of dance and masculinity are relatively narrow (Burt 1995; Lehikoinen 2006; Li 2016; Risner 2009). They note that while these meanings are evolving, within the classroom context the words ‘dance’ and ‘boy’ continue to raise many issues for teachers (Buck 2011; Li 2016; Skelton 2001; Turpeinen 2015). In the following, Isto and Ralph draw upon their own teaching experience and speak to practices that might make a difference.

An ongoing classroom reality in New Zealand and in Finland is that boys are a minority within arts education. The Southern Finland Regional State Administrative Agency (Aluehallintovirasto 2014, 6) reported that ‘boys continue to participate in basic art education a little: only one fourth of pupils are boys. In dance and crafts the pupils are mainly girls.’ Internationally, this is a common situation (Buck 2003; Li 2016; Risner 2009; Warburton 2009).

Isto and Ralph both value embodied dialogic pedagogy (Anttila 2015) that foregrounds the formation of interactive relationships within a dance lesson. Their teaching and learning rests upon a constructivist ontology wherein knowledge is made and re-made on an ongoing basis through dialogue (Anttila 2003). Isto’s recent research (Turpeinen 2015) on ‘raw-board- working’ echoes this pedagogical philosophy in practice.

Raw-board-working is a teaching and learning approach in which the participants share ‘raw’ experience through action and use this as the starting point for further reflection, dialogue and storyboarding for action sequences. In Turpeinen’s (2015) research, he invited fathers to be involved in the dance lessons and performances, in effect inviting fathers and one mother to dance with their sons. Raw-board-working is a heuristic model that spirals around action (dance), dialogue and reflection (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Raw-board-working framework (Turpeinen 2015)



In terms of pedagogy, the raw-board-working framework is rooted in the sharing of experiences by pupil and instructor in a dialogue-based relationship. A philosophical assumption informing the pedagogy during the research was that growth (learning) comes through nurturing experience and reflection upon that experience with others. Underpinning this approach is an expectation of dialogue, democracy and equity (Freire 1972; Greene 1991). Within the study, Isto described this epistemology to the boys as aiming for the ideal that 'life should be good'. That is, to lead a good life, you need to build your identity and acknowledge your own personal physical and spiritual state. Moreover, the research respected the reality that the notion of 'individuality' is a created interaction between the self and social contexts (Dewey 1934). The assumption that follows from this position is that meanings of dance and self are constructed in dialogue with others, events and phenomena (Crotty 1998; Eisner 1998; Merleau-Ponty 1962).

Empathy and shared experience are important ingredients in nurturing growth in a teaching and co-working environment, based on what Turpeinen (2015) calls, in Finnish, *kattoatmosfääri*.<sup>1</sup> This may also be regarded as fostering an embracing atmosphere, inclusive of dialogical relations (Buber 1923/2013) or, as Eeva Anttila (2003, 294) calls it, a 'dialogical atmosphere'. Anttila goes on to note that there is more than one type of dialogue in action at any one time in a dance lesson. An 'array of dialogue' (Anttila 2003, 309) shows the possibilities for a person to, first, have a relation to body, sound and image; second, to continue in relations with others; and third,

to be part of a dialogical network.

The key concepts within the raw-board-working pedagogy are dialogue, experience and the creation of a teaching environment in the form of an embracing atmosphere. The ideal way of working is the sharing of experience of both learner and teacher in a dialogical relationship. Concern, care and shared experience are connected with ideas of 'a good life'. Fostering a nurturing atmosphere is concerned with working towards a good life. Another way of explaining this is fostering a kind of 'love'. Within the present study, we mean pedagogical love.

'Love', like 'good life', is difficult to account for in terms of pedagogy. According to Turpeinen (2015, 94), '[H]ere I am wondering whether «my love» is my devotion to my work as a teacher, or in general my affection for human beings. How do you grab something that flows in constant movement?' Looking to Plato's definitions of love, he described love in terms of *Eros*, associated with erotica; *Philia*, siblings' love; and, *Agape*, where love is about being altruistic (Plato 1951). In terms of pedagogy, aiming to foster a nurturing, loving, embracing teaching and learning environment is worth pursuing, and the word 'love' should not be avoided simply because it has multiple meanings. Turpeinen (2015) argued that reaching to hold or pursuing an understanding of love is beneficial. Love permeates our lives in different situations. To Buber (1923/2013), love is inclusive and lies in experiencing the other. For Juha Varto (1991), love is a basis for being human. Without love, the individual will not live. Love is the 'primal essence of all essences' (Varto 1991, 55–58). Arguably, dance educators concerned with fostering mind, body and spirit in nurturing and embracing atmospheres cannot but be concerned with pedagogical love.

Through the raw-board-working method, dance is valued as a medium for sharing experience and developing relationships. The vigour of this method is that when fathers and sons dance together (e.g. in Isto's ongoing research), they implicitly communicate

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1 The direct translation from Finnish to English has the words 'ceiling' (Fin: katto) and 'atmosphere' (Fin: atmosfääri). These two words together are somehow not immediately suitable, but best relate to Csikszentmihalyi's (1990, 1994) notion of flow.

about who they are and see each other as equals, as dance partners. In this emerging relationship, trust is essential and talking is less important. As the fathers and sons dance, they get to know who they are, what their capabilities are and what matters to each other. Upon reflecting on the raw-board- working method, Ralph noted the simple and effective process and the ease with which the choreography was produced.

Isto's doctoral (Turpeinen 2015) and post-doctoral research included interviews with fathers about how they felt about their sons dancing, how they felt about participating in dance themselves and what they appreciated about dancing with their sons. Initially, when observing their sons dance, they felt distanced. They did not know their sons as 'dancing boys', the skills they had or the relationships made within the group of boys. The fathers felt like they were meeting their sons afresh and had to ask themselves several all-pervading questions: What is dance? Who is a dancer? – and the big one: Is that my son?

A dominant theme emerging from fathers' comments was summed up in an often-used word: *distance*. Watching their child move, listening to their child talk with peers and with the teacher, seeing their child create and feeling their child's body move all seemed foreign or distant. As one father reflected, '[T] here were the moments of feeling other, a total stranger, even though he was my own son.'

Learning by watching included observing dance actions, relations and behaviours happening in the studio. The boys revealed social relations and skills in the process of learning to dance. The perceptions of the fathers were about making sense of what their sons' dance meant in this particular studio, in particular the working style and atmosphere. Most importantly, however, as one father noted, 'There is my son, embodied, succeeding, having spirit and emotions. That is all new to me.'

Doug Risner (2009) observed that narrow and stereotypical notions of dance and gender

were dominant reasons informing dancing boys' marginalisation. In Isto's doctoral and post-doctoral research, the fathers reflected on 'what dance is, and what dance is not'. In addition, the sons were showing self-confidence in the dance studio, learning and exploring through a process. Fathers felt distanced because they did not have the personal confidence or skill to participate in the sessions, unlike their sons.

Varto (2012) and Rauhala (2009) comment on the notion of 'skill' and how it provides access to participation and, in turn, appreciation of the intrinsic worth of the activity. Without the direct experience accumulated over several dance lessons/years, fathers felt distanced from their sons' embodied and subjective knowing. The boys worked with know-how and enterprise or pursuit, in which their bodies were instruments used to achieve something that was intrinsic to the experience itself. Fathers noted how far they felt from their own fleshed knowing (Varto 2012). The narrow and stereotypical notions of dance and gender as reported in the literature were real for these men. They were feeling them and re-seeing their sons. To understand dance and their sons, they needed a closer experience, an experience to share with their sons. As one father (56 years old, Engineer) commented,

In sum, it is the fact that in this project it is nice to dance together (the father and the son). Other hobbies have had 'the door closed' to me. I only hear, 'Come and get him in an hour'. This dance project, where we dance together, has the mechanism that allows for discussion and acquaintance between parents and children. And still it is a part of everyday life. It is really a good feeling. It is a really good project for me to dance with my son.

The dance workshop rehearsals were meeting places in which the participants were at a situational and embodied crossroads: coming from somewhere, becoming something in the process and leaving on new pathways (Rauhala 2009). Several boys

commented on the feeling of new intersections, new layers of experience and subsequent hesitations. One boy (9 years old) said of this change, 'My father in the same rehearsals? It was odd at first. I did not want to. But soon I wanted it. It was more fun to do things with my father than alone.' The father (56) of this son reflected on the change. He emphasised the experience of being closer, which opened up possibilities of talking at a tacit (Polanyi 1958) level. Both father and son continued, 'We could not talk about such things before . . . art, dance as visual . . . After this, we went further in our own analyses. And now, we are more together anyway.' The father pointed out that being separated from the son's mother and home is difficult, but through dance he and his son have planned to do more things together. Something that fostered this closeness was their reciprocal encouragement in the dance classes.

### **Working with various masculinities**

Valuing the raw-board-working method, Isto realised that the fathers had to have a shared experience so that they could enter an embodied dialogue with their sons. Thus, it was necessary to replan sessions so that they proactively engaged the fathers. Creating a caring, nurturing atmosphere for fathers (beginners) and sons (more advanced learners) required a subtle approach. As Isto commented, being a father himself was key to understanding how to develop a safe learning environment for these men.

Men and boys are conscious of the range (and lack thereof) of masculine identities (Burt 1995; Gard 2001). When they participate in dance, they are conscious of issues concerning power, sexuality and status (Skelton 2001). As Buck (2011) found, boys and men, as learners in the dance classroom, require male mentors and role models that affirm their sense of being masculine, in whatever guise that may take.

During Ralph's PhD research concerning

teachers' meanings of dance in New Zealand primary schools, he had a playground conversation with three boys he had taught the previous week. The conversation went like this:

*Tom: You're gay, are ya?*

*Me: Does it matter?*

*William: You're cool.*

*Mark: You're not gay are you?*

*Tom: You're a good dancer.*

*Me: I'm not, who cares if I am?*

*Mark: You're a good dancer.*

*Tom: Dance is cool.*

*Me: Did you do dance today?*

*Mark: Nah.*

*Me: Do any yesterday?*

*Mark: Yeah.*

*Me: What was it like?*

*Mark and Tom: Cool, good. See ya.*

*Me: See ya.*

(Buck 2003, 282–283)

Ralph's reading of this conversation is that while these boys enjoyed dance, they needed to check out his sexuality in respect to dominant local perceptions of masculinity, and in doing so check their own credibility as boys dancing. These boys were comfortable and happy dancing, yet their personal comfort needed to be reconciled with their reading of societal meanings of male dancers and male teachers. Obviously, the scarcity of male dance teachers in their own experience played some part in raising their uncertainty, along with stereotypes that may have been imprinted on them relating to the notion of a male dance teacher. There seemed to be a peculiarity about a man using his body to communicate ideas to them and expecting them to use their bodies to respond expressively, and it required clarification.

Isto and Ralph have repeatedly observed boys checking their own and others' masculine credibility. The often-sked question 'Are you gay?' is indicative

of such checking. Ralph and Isto have observed and practiced diverse pedagogies in response to such questions but also as a way to make dance more accessible and less threatening to all boys. They have found similar concerns and barriers that provide just enough disincentive for boys to step away from dance.

Reflecting on Turpeinen's (2015) research and Buck's (2011) research, they found common themes that speak to the issue of why boys don't participate in dance. Some of these themes are briefly addressed in the following.

### **Access**

Isto reported that within Finland, there were very few dance schools that catered to boys, and those that do are mainly situated in the south of Finland (see Aluehallintovirasto 2014). Distance and expense provide disincentives for participation in dance classes for all learners. For boys, however, barriers to access may be seen in terms of a lack of role models that give those small but encouraging winks or punches; having a limited understanding of what doing dance could be; having limited arguments to defend a desire to or advocate for dance; feeling unsure about how to participate in dance, which may be as simple as, what do I wear?; and, feeling unsure about how to participate if they have little prior experience. All of these reasons and many more provide barriers to access.

Isto's raw-board-working method, which invites fathers into the dance class, is a strategy that counters the disincentives of distance and cost. Inviting the fathers in can also immediately place the boy in a leadership position, in which he is the more skilled or experienced dancer, and this shifts power, image and self-esteem. Alternatively, the father may suddenly become a 'mentor' or dance buddy. This pedagogy shifts the role of the parent from 'taxi driver' to 'dance partner'. In this role, the fathers have a new opportunity to be with their children. As fathers, Ralph and Isto both deeply appreciate what this means in

terms of building strong relationships with their sons.

Ralph and Isto also appreciated that this is not straightforward. When Isto asked Ralph if he (Ralph) would be able to dance with his own 20-year-old sons, Ralph hesitated and said, 'It would take time for us all to get comfortable. We have done salsa together, but I was the teacher and they were students, along with their peers. For me to dance *with* my sons; that would be tricky.' On reflection and after more chatting, Isto and Ralph thought the raw-board-working process would be a useful strategy in this context.

Isto's research found that fathers would drive the length of Finland in order to have such opportunities to dance/work *with* their sons. One example of this was an occasion when fathers happily supported their sons' participation in a boys' dance camp at the Kuopio Dance Festival. In summer 2016, the dance camp was organised for the 30th time. One father (35) said that he had looked forward to it, he and his son had practiced their dance together and with other fathers and sons. He commented that it was fun. The mention of 'fun' presented another bonus to the father. Instead of just being the 'transport' for the child from one hobby to another, there was now a common time with a common action. In sum, this father stated that he 'wanted more this kind of co-work, if and when the time allows'.

### **Reinforcing 'a' masculinity**

It is easy to fall into the mistake of trying to make dance appealing to boys by paralleling dance with 'boy activities', and to align with a 'boy code' (Pollack 1999) by using sports metaphors, by inviting competition, and by allowing 'laddish' behaviour more common on a sports field than a dance room. Albeit a fine strategy for initiating dance, the error in this action is the perpetuation of limited and limiting perspectives of masculinity. Boys are diverse with diverse meanings for being themselves (Varto 2012). To value the 'tough guy' image only reiterates limited and stereotypical norms.

Every child is an individual and requires individual consideration. One father with two sons in Turpeinen's (2015) research discovered this when he took his boys to the dance classes. One boy loved to excel, compete and be physical, while the other appreciated dance for the sensual, playful and expressive qualities: two boys, two different needs and motivations for participating. The dance teacher needs to accept diversity as a given before anyone steps in the room, and then cater for difference throughout the lesson. A good teacher does this comfortably, and in so doing makes dance accessible for diverse boys with diverse masculinities.

Another side of masculinity is often connected with violence (Jokinen 2000; Real 1997; Tiger 1970, 1999). Crime statistics (and daily experience) confirm that boys as a group are more aggressive and tend to be more violent than girls. Kindlon and Thompson (1999) argue that the difference between boys and girls is remarkable when it comes to physical violence: 'It is clear that the emotional education our culture gives boys is failing them – and all of us' (1999, 231). A simplistic evolutionary explanation is that males are by their nature more violent. Tiger (1970) noted, however, that when 'social and psychic conditions improve', males (and females) are less violent. Tiger (1999) continues by arguing that the shifting of dominant social behaviours will not happen at random. As such, the shifting of limited and limiting perceptions of maleness that are often equated with aggression, competition, strength and conservatism remains difficult.

Sport can reveal the beauty and ugliness of masculinity, and so can dance. We suggest that promoting diverse options for being physical, expressive and strong supports ideas that there are many ways to be a boy and a man. Dance provides another way, another outlet, another meeting place, another vision that may appeal to many boys and men if they have it as an option. Having options is part of working towards

a better society, as mentioned above.

One father (52) reflected on his role as a man and as a father. He told stories about his role as a father and about the fathering histories within his own childhood. Between the generations in his family, he could see how the males' temperament changed and how aggressiveness appeared. He described himself as being a 'passive-aggressive' man. Sometimes he regarded himself as being 'hot-blooded', becoming angry quickly. In one instance, he became angry quickly (to his own surprise) when his son (12 years old) played videogames and did not stop when asked. He reflected on his behaviour and his own father's behaviour. He remembered him as being quick-tempered: 'He got angry suddenly, in a second, maybe without having an understandable reason.' His grandfather also had the same kind of temperament. Using a Finnish expression, he described a classical male Finnish action: 'He chased the family outside with the axe into a snow blanket in winter.' The fact that such an expression exists and continues to be used in contemporary Finnish society is telling and concerning.

The Second World War (1939–1945) did not help men in Finland, as noted above. There was a two-fold personal and cultural experience: on the one hand, the war was a terrible personal experience, and then there was the heroic attitude, the so-called 'The Winter War Miracle', with respectable, organised aggression and killing. Between these two extremes of terror and heroism was a generation of fathers left wounded and silent.

Turpeinen (2015) states that a boy or a male is coded with narrow notions and attitudes. William Pollack (1999) writes about a 'boy code' in his book *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood*. Importantly, Pollack is making the point that parents, especially fathers, have a role to play in rescuing their sons. Our argument is that dance presents opportunities that provide diverse realities for

sons. Dance can be part of a rescue plan.

Turpeinen notes that this kind of boy coding is alive in Finland. One cultural phenomenon that reveals the narrowly constructed 'boy codes' is found within art hobbies. One cause for situation is the fact that within the basic arts education system in Finland, only 5% of boys enrol in dance education. More widely, boys tend not to value the arts as a hobby. The arts are not respected by boys. Writing about gender socialisation, Real (1997) notes that in western culture, boys and girls 'halve themselves' (Real 1997, 23). This statement supports Turpeinen's (2015) observations in his long experience as an arts educator in Finland. Boys are encouraged to develop their public, assertive selves, but they are systematically pushed away from activities that exercise emotional expressiveness and develop the skills for making and appreciating intra- and inter-personal connections. This was also seen in some of the stories from the parents in the dance workshop.

There are stories about fathers who have more respect for the walking wounded, separating voluntarily from their children, drinking too much alcohol and denying difficulties, than solving the problems. The interviews showed polarised male attitudes in respect to divorce situations. As mentioned earlier, issues of love, nurture, gender roles and much more inform boys' and men's behaviours.

Without doubt, human relationships are complex, yet within this study, fathers were happy to experience an activity that questioned behaviours and fostered relationships. The fathers in this study acknowledged faults, histories of behaviour and aspirations for their sons; as such, there is hope for better social relationships and scope for dance to take a role in influencing men's social behaviour. As Turpeinen (2015) suggested, there is a degree of change, and the lack of closeness is changing, but the change is slow. Real (1997) noted how fathers and sons play out a culture's values about masculinity. Men who

were judged as having warm, nurturing relationships with their children were shown to be healthier, less depressed and, surprisingly, more successful in their careers. Although dance workshops as presented in this study cannot provide enough evidence to support the claims made by Real (1997), the study does open the door for further research about the role of dance in social transformation in Finland.

## Meanings of dance

Related to the above points is the limited perception of dance. This issue became very apparent in Ralph's PhD research in 2003 when he interviewed a male school principal. When organising a time and place for an interview, the principal quipped, 'So, will I need my tutu?' For him, dance meant ballet, and indeed, for many people, dance means ballet. In Isto's experience in an elementary school in Finland, it meant ballet and folk dances. When limited perceptions of dance prevail, boys find reasons for not participating. The main reason is the perception that dance is a feminine art form (Risner 2009). Again, the issue is solved comfortably by an alert teacher and a suitable curriculum. The possibility for parents to get involved in their children's dance hobby may help in opening up what dance is, and what dance is not.

## Conclusion

Boys do dance, but it seems important to understand better what it is about dance that matters for boys. We, as teachers and researchers focusing on dance and boys recognise that boys do need teachers, pedagogies and opportunities to participate that meet their needs and identities. To be fair, the same issues are relevant for girls. In this article, we speak to contexts that inform boys' participation in dance. We note the particular role that fathers have in fostering 'a good life' for their sons. We also note the relevance that teachers have in utilising pedagogy that invites participation and looks beyond stereotypes of dance and males who dance.



As noted in this article, dance has the potential to develop key relationships. One of these is the relationship between a father and son. If we can value dance as a strategy for educating men to relate to others better, then we can perhaps begin to shift some foundational societal behaviours with respect to violence, equity, tolerance of others and acceptance of diversity. The ArtsEqual research project is supporting this ambition. Researching dance pedagogy for boys may seem unrelated to the larger aims of ArtsEqual. However, if dance can support boys and men in expressing emotions and building relationships, and if dance seems to have potential for fostering this process, then researching how to improve boys' access to dance is paramount.

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## BIOGRAPHIES

**Ralph Buck** (PhD) Associate Professor, Head of Dance Studies, University of Auckland has been recognised with several teaching and leadership awards. His research and teaching has been presented around the world and in leading research journals and books. His work with the World Dance Alliance, World Alliance for Arts Education and UNESCO draws attention to potential roles of dance as a dynamic agent for change within security, health and education concerns.

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## Coffee and Choreography – Considering collaboration in conversation

Sveinbjörg Þórhallsdóttir & Steinunn Ketilsdóttir

### ABSTRACT

In a casual conversation over a cup of coffee, Icelandic choreographers Steinunn Ketilsdóttir and Sveinbjörg Þórhallsdóttir look back and contemplate their choreographic collaborations, *Belinda and Goddess* (2011), *Ride* (2014) and *#PRIVATEPUSSY* (2015). In a discussion and debate, they attempt to define their collaboration, reminiscing and reflecting on their processes. They look back and discuss the challenges they faced and the development of ideas and working methods that took place throughout their time working together.

### SAMANTEKT

Í spjalli yfir kaffibolla líta danshöfundarnir Steinunn Ketilsdóttir og Sveinbjörg Þórhallsdóttir yfir farinn veg og hugleiða samstarf sitt við gerð dansverkanna, *Belinda og Gyða* (2011), *Reið* (2014) og *#PRIVATEPUSSY* (2015). Í samtali á léttum nótum rýna þær í þróun hugmynda og aðferða við gerð verkanna og gera tilraun til að greina samvinnuna og þær áskoranir sem urðu á vegi þeirra.

# Coffee and Choreography – Considering collaboration in conversation

Sveinbjörg Þórhallsdóttir & Steinunn Ketilsdóttir

SK – OK, Sveinbjörg, how do you want to do this? As always, we have a deadline and are running out of time. It is so typical for us to find ourselves in a position like this once again. Finding time out of our busy schedules to sit down together is always a challenge. But what do you think is the most challenging aspect of a collaboration?

SP – I think that, in all collaborations, one needs to put ego aside and stay open. I find the collaboration and the creative process the most exciting parts of projects. When like-minded people come together and share an interest in a subject, creativity can multiply, and something magical can happen, but at the same time, it can be fragile and intense. To find this balance is interesting and challenging. For me, our collaboration has always been very dynamic and effortless. We knew each other and had worked together before and already developed trust, which I think helped us.

SK – But, Sveinbjörg, how did it all start? Looking back, I remember you approaching me asking if I wanted to collaborate. I do not think I would have ever dared to approach you and ask. The next thing I remember, we were sitting in your kitchen, drinking coffee, exchanging ideas and cooking up a proposal to apply for funding. But I cannot remember what the original concept was: horses, women, mares, creatures, physicality, strength? Were we dealing with the horse and the mare right away? Or did we start by talking about women and the female body?

SP – Yes, OK? I remember us sitting in our new space, the Reykjavík Dance Atelier above the Kex hostel, wondering about a theme or a starting point. Our main excitement and motivation at the time were to find a

way to work together. We spoke about women's issues and gender equality because of the book you brought with you, *Listin að vinna bylli karlmanna* (Keating W.S., 1950), a handbook written in the 1950s about the art of winning the favour of men. We laughed a lot and had a great time going through those old tips. I also remember us talking about nature and how the weather in Iceland has influenced us as artists, and that is when I shared with you my interest in horses, their beauty and behaviour. And voilà! To make a long story short, the theme was decided: women and mares. Later, it became clear without discussing it directly that women's rights were a subject we both shared an interest in, and it became a stronger emphasis in our collaboration.

SK – Wow, it is so funny that I remember it all quite differently. I do not remember that exact moment at Kex as vividly as you. But we had many very long, interesting and heated discussions about our first project, *Belinda and Goddess*, as we mirrored each other's poses, drinking coffee and deliberating deeply about the concept and our ideas. And, yes, the book, THE BOOK. I think that I found it when I was helping my mother clean a book cabinet. For some reason, I decided to hold onto it and bring it to one of our meetings. It is an amazing book and such a great document of the reality that women faced at that time. Some of the things in the book are stereotypical ideas about gender roles and traits that we are still trying to figure out today. But the way I remember us starting to talk about horses was when we were writing a grant proposal. In the application, we expressed that we intended to collaborate, and we used the



Icelandic phrase *að leiða besta sína saman*, which directly translates as ‘leading your horses together’. I always thought that the meaning of the phrase was people putting their strength together to work towards improvement. Later I looked up the actual meaning and translation and found out that it means: ‘to debate, quarrel or fight’, and the ‘phrase normally refers to a strong disagreement’. The Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies suggests on its website that horse fighting was popular in the olden days; men would bring their stallions together to fight and watch the spectacle for fun. I think it is interesting to reflect on this definition now all these years later, especially in regards to collaboration. I do not know about you, but my experience has been that sometimes disagreement, heated debates and even fights can fuel creativity and bring new ideas to the surface. I guess we never really have fights in our collaboration, but we can say that, in our case, we are bringing our forces together: two bodies, two individuals, two passionate and emotional females, both very opinionated and political in our

*Ride (2014). Snædís Lilja Ingadóttir (left) and Halla Þórðardóttir (right). Photo: Steve Lorenz.*

actions who share a deep interest in feminist matters. I do not know; I am just going on and on. What do you think defines our collaboration?

SP – I do not know. There is no one answer, I guess. Our collaboration is very effortless. We respect each other, and as I mentioned earlier, there is trust. We are passionate about the same subjects and agree on transferring them through the medium of dance and performance in our works. I think that we also share a similar work ethic, and we often call ourselves *vinnukonur* (workers), super-active women—sometimes too active, I guess. We work fast, and we finish things. There is a drive that characterises our collaboration. We are passionate and ambitious, and we have a motivating influence on each other. We also have fun, and we laugh a lot. That is important, very important! This kind of collaboration allows for freedom to express different opinions and creates opportunities for the work to go in different directions.

Of course, we do not agree on everything. That is normal; we are very different, but your comments never offend me. Disagreeing and debating are part of the game. I like the dialogue and the debate in decision-making. In general, I more enjoy working in collective work in a democratic way, sharing ideas with others. I believe that working collaboratively can have more creative results, although that does not mean that this is always the case. In my article 'Can creativity multiply within a collective and devised theatre work?' (Thorhallsdottir, 2008), I argue that creativity can multiply within a collective and art-making situation if certain conditions are part of the picture. A highly motivated state is achieved when people are engaged in an activity where the challenges match their skill levels (Sternberg 1999, 301). Creativity can multiply if chemistry, knowledge, a common vision and passion exist within a group. Our voices and our ideas are found through the voices of and the interactions with one another (Thorhallsdottir 2008).

SK – I have to agree with you when you say that our collaboration is mainly defined by trust and respect for each other. The creative process for *Belinda and Goddess* was one of the most fun processes I have ever gone through. As you described earlier, it was fun and quick, almost like a one-night stand—such a crazy time. There was a lot of drama around, too. And gossip, lots of gossip that found its way into the process, and we started researching over-exaggerated dramas on women, for example, Almódozar movies. We kind of went with every crazy idea that came into our minds. We wanted to sing, so we did. We wanted to gossip, so we spoke gibberish. We somehow managed to end up way beyond our comfort zones. Before we knew it, we were on stage in spandex unitards and big hair, on all fours, desperately trying to remember ridiculously complex counts, petit allegro, conversations in made up Spanish, and trying to stay in tune singing the blues. Thinking back, I do not understand what we were thinking, but I think the humour and lack of

time took over. We were just having too much fun with all of it, and we had a deadline, like always. But, in spite of all the fun and humour, we were serious and talking about issues we were very passionate about.

SP – Yes, I'm sweating just thinking about it! But, on a more serious note and back to business, Steinunn, do you think that, during our creation of *Belinda and Goddess*, a certain exploration of the concept was transferred into methodology?

SK – To start with, I think we are both pretty obsessed with the body and physicality. Because we were researching the horse, this extremely strong and sturdy creature, we became heavily interested in the fleshiness and physicality both of the mare and of the woman. The pure animality of a creature, human or animal, became an essential part of our research. I think that, by focusing so heavily on the physicality and materiality of the horse and hence the woman, we somehow managed to display affect and emotions.

SP – I agree. In the simplicity of focusing on the physicality of the creature and its characteristics, we, as female performers, managed to transform and express the complexity of the woman and the ambiguity of the subject; simply placing two female bodies on stage is already a statement on its own. The humour and the sexuality were also important parts of this work that somehow came about without any effort. I had so much fun creating *Belinda and Goddess*. I also remember we were both going through a stressful period in our lives.

SK – Yes, oh, my God, it was such a stressful time. You were starting a new job, and I was starting a new love affair—long days and long nights. All this physicality in *Belinda and Goddess* became a much heavier focus in our next project, *Ride*. We took these ideas and contemplations to a different level and became more serious. We started thinking about how man manipulates nature with form and about the objectification of bodies, of both women and horses. We were looking at the Icelandic horse and how breeding

and training can be a form of violence and comparing that to the pressure that is put on women's physical appearance. I think that, because of these interests of ours, the essence of the choreography in *Ride* became form and formation, which suited the concept of the manipulation of bodies and the idea of taming or domesticating either a woman or a horse.

SP – How do you think we managed to develop the concept of *Belinda and Goddess* into the group work of *Ride*?

SK – To be honest, it was more challenging than I thought it would be. I think that the biggest challenge was to take something that we created for ourselves and transfer it to a group of nine women. How do you make something that worked for two people work for a group? The actual execution was challenging, more difficult than I thought it would be. It was tricky to stick with a concept without getting stuck. I wonder if the concept and the old ideas actually weighed us down. It was a really good foundation to build on, though, but how do you develop an old idea into something new? It sounds simple. Sometimes, I wonder if the drive to do more and develop can actually pull you back and become an obstacle, but at the end of the day, I think we learned much from *Ride* that we took with us into our next project, *#PRIVATEPUSSY*, a few months later. Sveinbjörg, what do you think was different in our approach in *#PRIVATEPUSSY*?

SP – I think we managed to keep the concept in *#PRIVATEPUSSY* clear but open. Anything could happen, and the work could take any direction, which was very liberating in comparison to *Ride*, which was focused on developing a predetermined concept. We learned from the previous works how important it is for us to create an atmosphere with everyone present throughout the whole process. The composer, for example, was with us in the studio the whole time, researching and improvising with the dancers, which was crucial. The subject, women in pop culture was also appealing to our group of young dancers, who all

knew each other really well and were used to working together. We were researching contemporary feminist affairs and artists to whom they easily related, such as Beyoncé, Pussy Riot, Emma Watson, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and more. During the making of *#PRIVATEPUSSY*, the Free the Nipple movement regained steam in Iceland after a teen was taunted for posting a photo of her breasts to promote a Free the Nipple day at her school. That triggered a viral surge of women posting photos of themselves to protest the sexualisation of women's bodies (Dicker, 2015). This movement influenced our dancers and was reflected in improvisations in the studio and in fruitful conversations. They were passionate about the subject, and that shaped the whole process. Working with this group of political, opinionated, strong young women was vivid and fun. I was pleased with the outcome and would love to develop it further, but then again, I do not know about developing a concept again. Are we not always doing that in one way or another anyway? But back to business, Steinunn. How would you describe the main subject in our work?

SK – Yes, oh, my God, what are we always trying to say? It is complicated, or maybe it is very simple. I do not know. Is it something about value? The value of a person? The value of a human or an animal? The value of life? I think it is also about seeing and looking further past the surface, past the glitter and the gold. The value of both the physical and the intangible. I think it is also about the core of collaboration, sticking together and supporting each other. It is about unity, the joining of forces, the joining of ideas, the joining of bodies to create some kind of a change.

SP – Yes, it is complex. It all started to make sense to me when I was studying yoga in Bali in January, and my mentor Emily Kuser taught me an important word: *kula*. *Kula* is a Sanskrit word, and her explanation of it is: a community of like-hearted people dedicated to waking up. For me, it is all about *kula*. But, Steinunn, again, back to business: tell me, now that we have



decided to collaborate again on a very exciting project with many other interesting artists, are you excited?

SK— Oh, my God, yes, I am so excited. Here we go again! We have to develop our ideas and concepts and find the time to do so. When do we start? When is the deadline? Can we have coffee?

To be continued . . .

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## BIOGRAPHIES

**Steinunn Ketilsdóttir** is an Icelandic choreographer. She received a BSc in business administration from Reykjavík University in 2002 and a BA in dance from Hunter College in NY in 2005. Steinunn completed her MA in Performance Studies at Tisch School of the Arts NYU in 2016 where she was awarded upon graduation.

Steinunn works independently and collaboratively and has been nominated and awarded for her own works and collaborations. She is an active participant in the independent dance scene in Iceland and is currently working on researching expectations in performance through her choreographic projects.

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**Sveinbjörg Þórhallsdóttir** graduated in 1995 from Alvin Ailey A.D.C. in NY. In 2008 she received an MA in choreography from Fontys University in Holland. She has worked in dance and performance productions in major theatres in Reykjavík and been nominated and awarded for her works.

In 2004 Sveinbjörg co-founded Panic Productions, which emphasised on collaboration with artists with diverse competences. She co-founded Reykjavík Dance Festival and the Association of Dance House that runs the Reykjavík Dance Atelier. Sveinbjörg is a lector and programme director of contemporary dance at the Department of Performing Arts at IAA. She has collaborated with Steinunn Ketilsdóttir since 2011.

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# From Two to One – An Exploration into the Integration of Artistic and Pedagogical Practices.

Micaela Kühn

## ABSTRACT

This article concerns the first part of my final research project at the Danish National School of Performing Arts for a postgraduate diploma in Danseformidling/ Dance Partnership undertaken in the first term of 2016. It is an inquiry into the relationship between artistic and pedagogical practices in the context of dance education, initially aiming at their integration by looking for a common denominator.

Proposing a loop structure as a methodological and practical framework, I reflect on the research inquiry *'How can artistic and pedagogical practices integrate in the context of dance education?'*

To conclude, the notion of *participation* in art and pedagogy is addressed as one of the entries to the possible imbrication of the practices. It is proposed that underlining the participatory aspect of artistic and pedagogical practices would carry questions on the modes of production and spectatorship in the former and the taken-for-granted roles and methods in the latter. I am proposing that pedagogical formats with a strong emphasis on shared meaning making are helpful towards the integration for which I am aiming.

## SAMMENDRAG

Denne artikel omhandler første del af mit endelige research-projekt på Danseformidlingsuddannelsen fra Den Danske Scenekunstskole, udført i første semester i 2016. Det er en udforskning af forholdet mellem kunstneriske og pædagogiske praksisser i en danseuddannelsessammenhæng, initialt sigtende mod deres integration via identifikationen af en fællesnævner.

Ved at foreslå en loop-struktur som metodisk og praktisk ramme reflekterer jeg over forskningsspørgsmålet: *«Hvordan kan kunstneriske og pædagogiske praksisser integreres i en danseuddannelseskontekst?»*

I konklusionen bliver begrebet *deltagelse* i kunst og pædagogik adresseret som en indgang til den mulige sammenfletning af praksisserne. Det foreslås, at en understregning af deltager-aspektet ved kunstneriske og pædagogiske praksisser vil medføre spørgsmål til henholdsvis produktionsforhold og tilskuernes roller i den første type, og de forventede roller og metoder i den sidste. Jeg foreslår, at pædagogiske formater med et stærkt fokus på fælles meningskabelse er hjælpsomt for at opnå den integration, jeg stiler efter.

# From Two to One – An Exploration into the Integration of Artistic and Pedagogical Practices.

Micaela Kühn

## Introduction

The present article is based on my final dissertation for the postgraduate diploma in *Danseformidling/* Dance Partnership at the Danish National School of Performing Arts, in the frame of a practice-based research project. This diploma, equivalent to a master's program, focuses on the combination of artistic and pedagogical practice by implementing and facilitating participatory projects and teaching. The overlap of these two practices is the starting point for my final project and, consequently, this article.

As a *danseformidler*,<sup>1</sup> I do not see a distinction between my pedagogical and artistic practices. I consider them as one practice that is much richer than the sum of the two separate practices. The non-separation of the two practices or roles is where my main interest resides: an integrated understanding of artists who have a pedagogical sense present in their work and facilitators who consider their work to be equally artistic. The dissertation is an attempt to look for a common denominator and understanding of pedagogical and artistic practices. In the present article, I will focus on one of the angles of the inquiry: *participation* as entrance to the possible imbrication, which represents the first part, or *loop 1*, as I call it in the structure of my dissertation.

## Practical contextualisation

This project was carried out between February and May 2016. I should acknowledge that this segment is the initial and not conclusive one, meaning that many questions remain open and are answered or narrowed down in the second loop.

All participants involved were active at the Danish National School of Performing Arts, either as a student or as a teacher. In the first loop, I gathered a group of seven volunteer students from the dance and choreography programme (equivalent to a bachelor's degree) at the school. Each received an invitation that explained my interest in exploring the notion of participation as a possible link or common denominator for artistic and pedagogical practices. It was important for me to underline the openness of the proposal: it was the initiation of an investigation rather than an established practice to share.

## Working Concepts

### Participation

I approach the theoretical aspect from my interest in relations: teacher and students need each other for education to exist, and dance needs an audience to be an art form. Without communication, none of this would exist. Going further, I identify my main interest as not just communication but also the activity of doing something with somebody else, or actively partaking in a shared situation. Therefore, I propose *participation* as a theoretical point of departure, bringing into question the concept of spectatorship and pedagogy as a practice of participation.

To narrow down the large topic, *participation*, and to establish a definition of it for this essay, I refer to theory on participatory performance, one reason why I chose Claire Bishop as a reference source: '(...) people constitute the central artistic medium and material, in the manner of theatre and performance'

(Bishop 2012, 2). This sentence follows a diverse list of names of 'post-studio practices' that she collects under the name of 'participatory art'. She stresses that the participatory aspect is neither about interactive performances based on one-to-one situations, nor about performances in which the audience serves as an 'activator', but about the plurality of 'people'. This aspect becomes more specific when it is put into the historical context of performing arts: Bishop states that in participatory art, 'the artist is conceived less as an individual producer of discrete objects than as a collaborator and producer of situations; the work of art as a finite, portable, commodifiable product is reconceived as an ongoing or long-term project with an unclear beginning and end; while the audience, previously conceived as a «viewer» or «beholder», is now repositioned as a co-producer or participant' (Bishop 2012, 2).

I now return to *participation*, rather than *participatory*, because it works as a broader umbrella, which also embraces the general everyday understanding of participating as simply doing something with somebody else or actively partaking in a shared situation. Moreover, *participation* offers the chance to examine work that might not be considered explicitly *participatory*: 'Even if a work of art is not directly participatory, references to community, collectivity (be this lost or actualised) and revolution are sufficient to indicate a critical distance towards the neoliberal new world order' (Bishop 2012, 12). For the clarity of this essay, I make the distinction between *participation* and *participatory*, with the second being the realisation of the first through formats and frames that make the partaking aspect explicit or obvious.

Hence, it can be said that participation implies a general turn towards critical thinking and a different understanding of being active. With regard to this, I found resonances in Jacques Rancière's words: 'Being a spectator is not some passive condition that we should transform into activity. It is our normal situation'

(Rancière 2009, 17). For him, the emancipation is about recognising the spectating situation as the normal one, and about undoing the partition between spectating and performing: 'Emancipation begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting ... It begins when we understand that viewing is also an action that confirms or transforms this distribution of positions' (Rancière 2009, 13). As in Bishop's definition of participatory art, Rancière is stressing the questioning of the taken-for-granted roles and putting them at the centre of attention.

## Pedagogy

To focus on the participatory aspect of education, I draw on Gert Biesta's theory of education, which concentrates on the relationship between student and teacher and the learning process itself, rather than on one specific end of the educational situation, be it the student or the teacher. Biesta proposes a model of education as the practice of participation, by addressing the active partaking in communication as a central element. He starts by elaborating on communication as participation, stating that 'meaning only exists in social practices, which means that it is located in between the individuals who constitute the social practice through their interactions' (Biesta 2004, 17). Thus, in order to obtain access to the available meanings in a system or a culture, or to establish new ones, one needs to participate by experimenting in social situations. Biesta continues by developing education as a practice of participation, saying that 'it is the social situation that emerges from the interaction between the teacher and the student that actually «does the education». In this respect, we can say not only that education happens in the gap between the teacher and the student. We might even say that it is this gap itself that educates' (Biesta 2004, 18). Given this, we can state that the teacher and the student encounter one another in a zone that neither of them can unilaterally control, and hence there is no control of the effects of the activities on either of them. According to Biesta's

proposal, that uncertain space is the one educating.

Returning to Rancière, I see some commonalities with Biesta's proposal. After explaining that every learning process requires the intelligence of translation in order to communicate with the intelligence of the other, Rancière continues by saying that 'this poetic labour of translation is at the heart of all learning' (Rancière 2009, 10). In the same book, he says that 'distance is not an evil to be abolished, but the normal condition of any communication'. If we complement both understandings from Rancière and Biesta, it could be affirmed that the translation is necessary because of the otherness of the other, and that it transforms the communication – hence the learning situation – into a shared possession of the partners in action. In the second quote, Rancière presents the distance as an essential requirement for communication to happen, which I find similar to Biesta's concept of a *gap*.

In brief, Biesta and Rancière acknowledge the importance of the relational aspect and the crucial distance between the participants, the translation process, the non-uniformity of it, the uncertainty of the possible outcome and the understanding of it as the re-creation of social situations. These working concepts – with Bishop on participatory art, Biesta on Pedagogy, and Rancière providing a second voice in both areas – constitute the point of departure for the practical work in the studio.

## Open Research Session I

Together with the seven volunteer students, I conducted a four-hour Open Research Session (ORS), in the format of a one-time workshop. From a research perspective, the aims were to explore directions for the topic, to generate data in different formats (written, audio and video), to discuss the topic with people I appreciate and find interesting – the students and I knew each other previously – and, hopefully, to be able to narrow down the inquiry after it. Pedagogically, the objectives were to ignite some kind of self-driven

reflection on heavy topics from an empirical starting point rather than a theoretical one, and to present the idea of reflection-in-action and on-action as an artistic tool. I decided to call it an 'open research session', rather than a workshop or class, because of the openness in the possible outcome. The tasks were ideas I generated from studying the previously mentioned references. Here I will present the first two tasks we carried out together:

### - Practicing reflection-in-action on participation as warm-up.

The first task of the session was an improvisation in which one would first define one's own role as either *spectator* or *performer*. This role was retained through the first round and swapped for the second one. Everyone received four questions/instructions on a piece of paper, placed in a random order: 'What is she doing?'; 'For whom is she doing it?'; 'Join her if you feel like it; 'What am I doing?' Each person was also presented with the name of another participant to observe, that person being understood as the one identified in the questions. The participants were given four minutes to answer each question and were not allowed to advance to the next one until told to do so. Each person was observing and being observed at the same time.

The aim was to warm up physically and mentally by doing whatever was felt necessary on a physical level, and by waking up the sense of reflection-in-action. The idea was to initiate a reflection on the roles of *spectator* and *performer* intuitively, based on doing rather than talking about them: how active am I as spectator or as performer? Where is the limit between the two? Is there a limit? With regard to my interest in underlining the idea of reflection, I should mention Robin Nelson's concept of 'praxis', which he proposes as 'the possibility of thought within both «theory» and «practice» in an iterative process of «doing-reflecting-reading-articulating-doing» (Nelson 2013, 32). This

has been a relevant concept that accompanied this process, not only for the practical work in the studio but also as a methodological backbone.

### - Interrupting by repeating.

After the reflection-in-action task, this provided an opportunity for more elaborated reflection-on-action triggered by questions posed by me: 'What is the difference between being a performer and being a spectator?'; 'As a performer, how much do you know about the spectator (and vice versa)?'; 'How much do you care about the experience of the other?' These questions were presented in relation to the previously described exercise (practicing reflection-in-action on participation as warm-up).

In groups of three, one participant took the role of speaker, one of the listener-speaker and one of listener-writer. The speaker talked freely on the topic; the listener-speaker interrupted the speaker by repeating words or sentences that appeared interesting, catchy or unclear; and the listener-writer wrote down those words. There was a time limit of four minutes for each constellation, followed by a rotation of roles, so that each participant adopted each position. After the three rounds, we collected all the papers and went through them individually in silence.

### Findings

I gathered a substantial amount of data from the session: group discussions were recorded as audio files and all the written material was at my disposal. Inspired by Max van Manen's *selective reading approach*,<sup>2</sup> I worked with the audio files, applying my version of a *selective listening* approach; I chose to transcribe the quotes that appeared relevant to me in relation to the topic. After writing down the selected quotes, and in order to provide some distinction in their relevance, I applied my own form of triangulation: I compared my transcripts with what was in the papers as written documentation from the ORS, and I only selected the

quotes or concepts that were present in both.

Here, I present some of those quotes with their respective analysis:

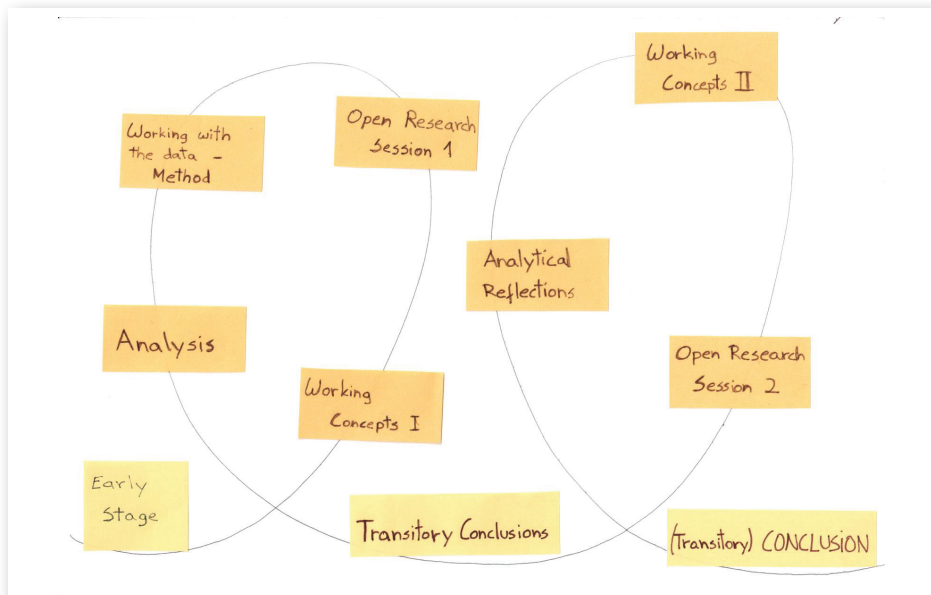
### - Awareness of the gap and its uncertainty

There is like a certain amount of 'you know exactly where you are going but you still let things in', somehow. That you have the feeling that you can affect them if you want to, but actually, you don't have the need to affect them because you are guided already.

In this quotation, in which a student links the relationship between student and teacher to the one between performer and observer, one can observe how she addresses the reciprocal capacity of affecting each other through the interaction. Keeping in mind that she is talking about the pedagogical relation, it is possible to link her thoughts to Biesta's concept of the *gap*, and say that the gap or distance is sensitive and negotiable. Thus, knowing that the gap is not directly controlled by the partners in the interaction, as Biesta proposes, this quote can be interpreted as a realisation of the capacity of affecting it, if one has the awareness of that distance.

I don't know if you can make this comparison, but, like, a good teacher for me and a good performer, there is something that is the same. Like this confidence, or that you have it under control somehow.

There is somehow a level of trust, a little, even though you are challenging them (the audience) all the time ... there has to be some kind of trust, even though it is the craziest performance that invites you in ... There is something that needs to happen, or I feel that has this little pedagogical part in it.



*Structure of the research: Loop 1 and 2*

The above quotes suggest that in the pedagogical relation, as well as in the one between spectator and performer, the key elements are ‘something that needs to happen’, and ‘a certain level of confidence, to have it under control’. All quotes coincide in giving high relevance to the interaction, to what is happening between the teacher/performer and student/observer. Because of this focus on a third aspect – the relationship – and not directly on the people involved, one could say that it takes away a certain degree of the personal implications from the teaching situation: the actions of the teacher or the student would affect the relationship rather than affecting the other directly, giving more importance to what Rancière calls ‘the labour of translation’ and Biesta ‘the shared process of meaning making’.

However, ‘if education is located not in the activities of the teacher nor in the activities of the learner, but in the interaction’ (Biesta 2004, 12), then interaction is not going to happen in a vacuum: the activities are the ones that are going to offer a frame for interaction. Therefore, the activities should be well

thought through with regard to the possibilities for interaction they offer. In that sense, a pedagogy that wants to emphasise the participation aspect should focus on the social aspect of teaching: How can I as a teacher offer possibilities for interaction to happen? And equally importantly, how do I as a student stay open to and propose different ways of interaction?

Some hints at answers may appear in the formats I proposed during the ORS. I now proceed to analyse elements that can be abstracted from the exercises in congruence with the previous ideas.

### **‘Participatising’ the studio**

Looking back at the ORS, I realise there is a double or *meta* approach: the subtopics discussed were related to participation within a participatory structure. We not only *talked about* participation, we also *engaged in* participation. This congruence between the content and the frame I call *participatising* the studio, inspired by Biesta’s statement that ‘we should think of

the curriculum as a representation of practices inside the walls of the school, and not as a representation of formal abstractions for these practices . . . the teaching of mathematics should be about bringing the practice of *mathematising* into the school' (Biesta 2004, 17).

As an example, the warm-up exercise ('practicing reflection-in-action on participation as warm-up') was in itself inspired by my interest in challenging the opposition between doing and observing. The task was about spectatorship and participation in its contents, and had a participatory frame. I chose a complex task with many layers and roles at the same time to underline the participatory aspect: everybody was necessary, because the roles were interdependent. Because of the complexity of the task, I proposed the method for reflection previously described, which underlined the shared meaning making, and thus participation, which was 'interrupting by repeating'. In this setup, there is a dependency on each other's roles, not just as a chain of reactions, but also in how the three different roles influenced each other: the *speaker* needs to keep in mind the tempo to allow the *writer* to write and at the same time that her own flow is being interrupted by the input of the *repeater* underlining possibly irrelevant ideas; the *repeater* needs to stay attentive to the one speaking and be aware that any interruption may alter the direction of the speech; the *writer* is receiving two inputs, listening to the one speaking and the other repeating, while being the one shaping the writing.

To sum up: Applying a method that underlines shared meaning making can be understood as a form of *participatising* the studio, instead of only examining it from the outside. Here, I applied a double layer, using formats that are underlining the shared meaning making, to generate a discussion about the same topic.

## Conclusion

The topic of 'participation' was applied not just in the theme of the ORS but also, more importantly, in the

formats of the session. The congruence between these two is my form of applying what Biesta suggests is teaching by (re-)constructing a social situation, or the curriculum as a representation of practices.

Formats that require exchanging interdependent roles (e.g. interrupting by repeating) or dealing with multiple roles at the same time seem to trigger a sensibility that can be helpful for the idea of integration of pedagogical and artistic practices. In this case, with students who are open to experimentation and have a high level of abstraction, such as those with whom I worked, it is visible in their reflections. These specific formats have been arranged to stress clearly the participatory aspect of communication – *participatising* the process – in order to get the most information out of them for the sake of this project. In this context, this way of *participation* through very specific *participatory* formats has shown itself to be fruitful in relation to the aims of the research. This is not to say that *participation* would only happen through interactive formats; as mentioned before, it is inherent to any relational situation.

The commonalities of the question of spectatorship and interactive aspects of the mentioned formats trigger reflections on teaching and performing as created situations that share the uncertainty of a third element, namely the *gap* or *distance*. That uncertainty is not about simply letting things happen, but about having a focus on activities that offer spaces for interaction. If 'education is located not in in the activities of the teacher nor in the activities of the learner, but in the interaction' (Biesta 2004, 12), activities take on a very important role, not because they educate but because they offer the frame for interaction.

Exploring the notion of *participation* appears as a direct way of entering pedagogical and artistic practices, because it acts as a thread between both. Participation in performance and education stands for a strong focus on interaction and on structures that facilitate interaction. Within the context of the



performing arts, it is connected to a change in the mode of production and, thus, the roles of *performer* and *spectator* that are taken for granted are questioned. The same can be applied to the pedagogical situation: Instead of focusing on the assigned roles (teacher as expert and student as ignorant), it stresses the relationship and the uncertainty and negotiability of it. It gives an explicit relevance to the gap or the distance between the two. As seen in the analysis, the teaching and performing situation seem to become closer when the participatory aspect is underlined and it can thus trigger a reflection on a common understanding of both, instead of seeing them as two separated practices.

## Notes:

- 1 Since there is no exact translation for the word *danseformidler*, I keep the original in Danish. The closest approximation would be dance facilitator.
- 2 'In the selective reading approach we listen to or read a text several times and ask, What statement(s) or phrase(s) seem particularly essential or revealing about the phenomenon or experience being described? These statements we then circle, underline, or highlight.' (van Manen 1990, 93)

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## BIOGRAPHY

**Micaela Kühn Jara** is a dance practitioner and facilitator based in Denmark. Micaela recently graduated with a postgraduate diploma in *Danseformidling* from the Danish National School of Performing Art. Micaela works as a facilitator and performer in South America and Europe and collaborates with artists from other fields, as well as giving pedagogical and choreographic

assistance. Her interest lies in making quality artistic processes available for people or situations where they are not usually accessible, as well as questioning established modes in the more professional arena. She is currently working with the inclusive dance company Szene2wei (Germany) and the choreographer Alfredo Zinola (Italy/Germany).

# The child and I

Laura Navndrup Black

University of Roehampton // The Danish National School of Performing Arts

**T**he artistic practice-led research project 'The Child and I' involved one-to-one artistic collaborations between myself and two children, aged 10 and 14 respectively. I initially set out to develop an approach that would focus on the clarity and integrity of the child's ideas. However, I quickly found that I had inadvertently set up a provocative situation; the constellation of adult and child in a relationship that was neither parental, care giving, therapeutic or educational in nature seemed problematic, and forced me to (re)locate my interest in the child. What did I want from her?





Tempting as it was to tap into the potential of the child as Other, and make use of the powerful ambiguities proposed by placing a supposedly unknowing, innocent and sometimes unpredictable performer in a staged space, my default position as an adult required me to provide circumstances to protect and support the child in her creative and personal development.



A gentle and supportive approach was a prerequisite for the child to engage in and contribute to the situation, and through our collaborations we – the child and I – found a practice that operates between these two areas, using tasks of object handling and mimicry to produce daily art works.







Contributor: **Laura Navndrup Black** is head of the Dance Partnership education at The Danish National School of Performing Arts. The presented video stills are excerpts of a research project undertaken during MRes studies in Performance and Creative Research at University of Roehampton.

# Performing the Archive.

## A Report on the IFTR-Conference «Presenting the Theatrical Past» (Stockholm 2016)

Maren Butte

[T]he past is not that which vanishes at every second that passes, but rather that which presents itself in the present as a forceful absence, a set of references, signs, lines of forces, all traversing the body on stage, and defining the ground on where dance (all of us) stands.

*André Lepecki*

This year's annual conference of the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) was hosted by Stockholm University in Sweden. Under the direction of Lena Hammergren, Rikard Hoogland, Erik Mattsson, Willmar Sauter and Meike Wagner from the Department of Culture and Aesthetics at Stockholm University the seven-day conference, held from June 12 to 18, 2016, was dedicated to questions of performance and history. It was titled 'Presenting the Theatrical Past. Interplays of Artefacts, Discourses and Practices' and addressed questions concerning 'our relationship to theatre history and the relation between past and present.'<sup>1</sup> In today's times of political, social and ecological crisis, with its gloomy forecasts, the subject of historical research feels as urgently meaningful as analysing the present or speculating about the future: What are the 'troubled pasts' coproducing the complex situations today?<sup>2</sup> What kind of 'hauntology' do we need to understand the ghostly relations between then and now? (Derrida 1994).

Dance-related topics and the perspective on body practices and corporeality took a central position at the conference. The recurrent issues of the discussions

were the ephemerality of (dance) performance and notation; questions of dance historiography and the status of sources and documents for historical research in relation to body knowledge; relations between tradition, institution, repertoire and training; the aging body in dance; and concepts of re-enactment, recreations or restagings.

### Performance as Ephemeral Event

At the conference, located right on the campus, about 900 researchers from all over the world focused on critical perspectives on theatre and dance history in different formats, such as panels, working groups, roundtable discussions, a New Scholar's Forum and special events. The conference programme offered versatile approaches to theatre history spanning panels (partly organised by working groups) like 'Intermediality in Theatre and Performance', 'Arabic Theatre', 'Caribbean and African Theatre', 'Queer Futures', 'Performance and Religion', 'Music Theatre', 'Political Performance'. Some of these panels were explicitly historiographical, such as those arranged by the working group 'Theatre Historiography'. This collaborative group, with transnational faculty members including Mechele Leon, Nora Probst and Jo Robinson (current conveners of the group), was established in 1993 and held an open discussion workshop at the conference with short presentations discussing methods of theatre historical research.

In her introduction at the opening ceremony, where Jean Graham-Jones (president of the IFTR) also gave a warm welcome, Meike Wagner raised the



Keynote Gabriele Brandstetter. Photo: Erik Mattsson

leading questions of the conference: How do we deal with (theatre) history, what do we do with it? To what extent is historical research an exploration of the present? What methods can be used to (re)construct the theatrical past – can it ever be? Since its rise in the early 20th century, the discipline of theatre studies has been occupied with researching the relation between the more ‘sustaining’ materials like textual sources and the ephemeral event. Every performance unfolds transitory action; it is fleeting and is passed from one moment to another. As Peggy Phelan famously wrote

in 1993 in the context of performance art and media in the 20th century, ‘Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented (...) Performance’s being (...) becomes itself through disappearance’ (Phelan 1993, 7).

### Writing Theatre History from the Peripheries

As researchers, we must deal with the consequences of this ‘disappearance’, but theatre’s past could be accessible via artefacts or historical objects, like archive materials, sites, venues, documents, costumes, in relation to their contexts, historical ideas and discourses (IFTR 2016, 4). Every theatre scholar is familiar with the ‘processes of assembling, choosing and interpreting the sources’, pulling the ‘many sources, many voices’ into a unified (hi)story (Hammergren 2004, 20). The IFTR conference reconsidered the status of sources and this process of ‘writing history’, following Hayden White’s idea that all narratives include interpretation (Carter 2004, 3). And Lena Hammergren, one of the conference’s organisers, had emphasised before that sources and their interpretation depend on their media availability and must be characterised as ‘social construction’ changing through time and with each use – there cannot be an objective truth (Hammergren 2004, 22). As usual and constitutive to IFTR conventions, the multitude of speakers from different continents and countries, from Iceland to India, provided multiple histories and heterogeneous contexts undermining any kind of ‘Western’ or Eurocentric canon. The conference opened up spaces for micro-histories and encounters. The papers introduced local and incoherent pasts with inner shifts and gaps of their own, historiography from the margins and peripheries. As one of many examples, in her paper ‘Mind the Gaps. Evidencing Performance and Performing Evidence in Oral Histories of Performance Art’, Heike Roms (Aberystwyth University, Wales) introduced a perspective on Cardiff’s very specific

history of performance art based on ethnological field studies (interpersonal exchanges and interviews). As another example, in his paper 'Memory, Rhetorics and Remembering in the Post Colony', Pedzisai Maezda (University of Cape Town, South Africa) analysed the traumatic political event of mass murder in Zimbabwe code-named Gukurahundi (1982–1987) in relation to the performative practices of its remembering that are performed and transmitted today considering practices of memorialisation through the annual public holiday known as Unity Day (22 December) and artistic interventions and counter-histories.

### **Bodies in Movement. The Persistence of Performative Acts**

One of the major concerns of the conference's critical confrontation with historiography was to discuss how performative practices despite their ephemerality 'keep traditions alive or engage in re-enactments of theatre events and representations' (IFTR 2016, 4). How do body practices, rituals, trainings and everyday actions produce a transfer of knowledge beyond a textual one? In her seminal book on the relation between performance and history, Diane Taylor characterised this transfer of knowledge in 2003 as 'repertoire' or lived archive, a performative set of actions which produces knowledge by enacting memory.<sup>3</sup> Performative acts (in oral or semi-oral to digital societies) usually are seen as ephemeral and nonreproducible, and therefore, they often have been neglected or despised in their political meaning or impact (Taylor 2003). Implicitly and explicitly revisiting Taylor's argument, the conference focused on these repeating acts and explored a 'persistence' of performing acts (Taylor 2003, XVII). It enabled participants to rethink the hierarchy or dominance between the more enduring text materials and the *act* focusing on the physical experience, corporeality and embodiment – and its meaning for theatre historical research. The restaging

of Jacques Rousseau's *Pygmalion – A Melodrama*, which was performed at the Ridrarhuset Stockholm at the conference by a group of researchers and performers from Stockholm (Mark Tatlow, Laila Cathleen Neumann and João Luís Paixão, supported by Willmar Sauter), was one of the convention's highlights. It deeply demonstrated the benefits of bodily enactment for research. Performer João Luís Paixão had practiced the gestures and intonations of Pygmalion for months, considering historical image materials and instructions by Rousseau and constantly trying out with his own body what happens and what could have happened. This historically informed performance (HIP) again affected the research about Rousseau, and it enabled the audience to form an impression of the acting styles, practices of embodiment and the pace, rhythm and dramaturgical logic. In this practice as research, the historical and the contemporary bodies' can 'encounter': In her seminal book *Choreographing History* dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster proposes a kind of historiography that is departing from the physical experience and suggests a 'kinaesthetic empathy'<sup>4</sup> with the past. This incorporated perspective was attained in many of the papers and presented research projects during the conference. They probed an empathy with bodies of the past. Bodies were not understood in an essentialist or ontological way but as procedural materialisations or sedimentations of practices. They themselves were thought and discussed to be in movement; construed and determined by their own cultural contexts, their techniques (in the sense of sociologist Marcel Mauss) and by the repetitive acts of gender, sexuality and identity (Judith Butler); as well as regulated by discourses, (hetero-)normative regulations and racial politics. Many of the papers reflected this in their explorations considering everyday practices, habits of clothing and relations to objects and architecture, as well as artistic practices of dance-technique, training and skilling. Bodies of the





*Wiles at Drottningholm. Photo: Erik Mattsson*

past and bodies of the present produce meaning in complex and multifaceted constellations which have to be considered in an incorporated historiography. The IFTR conference allowed its participants to rethink body concepts and to de-hierarchise the relation between textual and physically based historiographical approaches.

A very productive session for this interrogation with regard to dance were the meetings of the working group 'Choreography and Corporeality' (organised by Aoife McGrath, Philipa Rothfield and Lena Hamberg), a platform for sharing research on dance, performance and the body, in an international context.<sup>5</sup> The essays and discussions introduced specific body-related topics like liminality; Indian dance history; queer, black popular culture; dance and phenomenology; dance

and cognitive learning practices; reconstructions of Pina Bausch; and questions of habit and improvisation in dance. Further panels on dance and dance history reconsidered ballet as dominant narrative (Jean Lee, Goldsmiths University London) or new contexts that shed different light on the history of dance (e.g., the paper by Alexander Schwan, Free University Berlin) about the reperformances of works by Trisha Brown in museums, 'Redoing Postmodern Dance and Rewriting Dance History', or by Johanna Laakkonen (University of Helsinki) titled 'Sehr verehrte Frau Eckstein! Letters as Source Material in Dance History'.



Welcome sign. Photo: Erik Mattsson

performances in museum spaces, like the showing of collected works by Trisha Brown at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York and is characterised by words combining the prefix ‘re-’: re-enactment, reperformance, restaging, recreation and so on.<sup>6</sup> In her keynote, Brandstetter sensitised for the *mal d’archive* (in the sense of Jacques Derrida) in historiography and at the museum: What is found, what is presented, what becomes representative for the history of mankind, for the history of dance? What is the official (national, global, power-compliant) narrative of history, and what is excluded? ‘Who is afraid of representation?’, Brandstetter asked, quoting Lebanese artist Rabih Mroué. For example, the German Goethe Institute website, she explained, presents 50 pieces to represent contemporary German dance and implicitly and unintentionally claims canonical authority. In 2009, French choreographer Boris Charmatz created a different approach. He developed a ‘Museum in transition’ as a space for exchange and encounter. He transformed the Centre Choréographique National de Rennes et de Bretagne into the more open and neutral Musée de la Danse, where choreographers, dancers and audiences can interact with pieces from the past – a living archive. This nonhierarchical and nonrepresentative model of historiography is based on the physical encounter and on an archaeological exploration and recreation of movements from the past transferred to the present (body). The body as archive, as André Lepecki also has argued (Lepecki 2010) is a central metaphor for dancers; they seem to be interested in the ‘access routes’ to the past via the body, which is never just a body but a complex set of relations with history written into it; it is disciplined, trained and used in specific ways. What happens when this body dies, Brandstetter asked referring to a choreographic project by Deborah Hay about the transmittance of movement. Also, Brandstetter referred

## Museum, Representation and the Body as Archive

The keynote presented at the opening ceremony by Gabriele Brandstetter, professor of dance studies from the Free University Berlin, unfolded a line of thought along tendencies of contemporary dance and choreography that influenced many of the discussions and the vocabulary in the following days. It was titled ‘The Museum in Transition’ and asked whether and how performing artists have affected historiography. It explored the relation between the museum (as an archival space for the representation of history) and performative acts. Brandstetter referred to the so-called *archival turn* in dance and performance art that approximately began with Marina Abramović’s exhibition and performance piece *The Biography* (1992/99), followed by a number of exhibitions and

to a work by Mette Ingvarsten: *69 Positions* (2014), in which the choreographer presents a guided tour through a performative exhibition about the history of performance art and dance with a focus on pieces concerned with nudity and sexuality. Ingvarsten displays source materials, such as photographs and a letter from Carolee Schneeman from a recent correspondence with her. But she also lets history flow through her body when she re-enacts fragments of the pieces herself (like the scene in Anne Halprin's *Parades as Changes* from 1965 where the performers undress in front of the audience), permanently commenting on what she is doing, letting oral history and anecdotes disrupt what the audience knows about performance history and allowing them to experience something in between past and present. Brandstetter defined these anecdotes as 'petite histoires' and as an alternative kind of historiography. To escape the *mal d'archive* and of representation, Brandstetter demanded a focus on the points of encounter, a micro-perspective on the micro-movements of exchange, a museum or historiography of transition. This also means reading historiographical traditions against the grain, minding the margins and peripheries by concentrating on anecdotes, which Reinhart Koselleck, Stephen Greenblatt and Joel Fineman have characterised as 'chance' or 'motivation rest', a spot, a blemish in history that can cross out and reorder the *grand récit* (coherent narrative) of the integrative, progressive historiography.

### **A Visit to Drottningholm Theatre: Kinaesthetic Encounters with the Past**

The keynote and paper sessions were complemented by a rich variety of social activities, including a joint learning of a baroque social dance (led by music-theatre scholar Silvia Bier, University of Bayreuth) and different organised visits of historical venues in and around Stockholm, for example, tours to the

Theatrum Anatomicum in Uppsala, Gripsholm Castle and Strindberg's island, Kymmendö. Participants of the conference also were invited to visit curated and site-specific performances by Nikhil Chopra about drawing as a memory technique, a performance installation by Elisabeth Belgrano and Björn Ross with elements of baroque singing, and others. But the core, or 'heart', of the conference programme was a joint visit to the grounds of Drottningholm with castle, gardens and a recently renovated Baroque theatre outside the city of Stockholm. The historical building held its 250th anniversary this year. It has been a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) world heritage site since 1991 and is an astonishing example of historical theatrical architecture which is still in operation. Ballets and operas are still being performed there. It was built by Swedish autocrat of the European Enlightenment, King Gustav III, and it presented its first performance in 1766. It retains not only the original architectural shape (with an auditorium containing 454 seats in ascending rows) but also backdrops, stage machinery (for example, the effect of curling ocean waves by horizontally rotating blue-painted scrolls) and props. David Wiles, professor of Drama at the University of Exeter, presented a keynote in the midst of the scenography, illuminated by candelabra. He presented insights into the history and the use of the architecture in which there is being performed today and yet feels like a ghost from the past with a context of its own. Interwoven with a performance demonstration under the musical direction of Mark Tatlow with singer Laila Cathleen Neumann and actor João Luís Paixão again, Wiles asked: What is the use of historical research? He made palpable that the presence of the Drottningholm Court theatre is so 'powerful that work on the stage always feels awkward unless it engages with the unique environment' (IFTR 2016, 8). Then, this happened: Neumann presented a baroque style aria and a Händel cantata while engaging and interacting



*Visit at Drottningholm. Photo: Erik Mattsson*

with the scenography on different levels, trying out directions of the voice and kinaesthetic changes in posture and distance. Wiles pled for engaging in the historical ‘otherness’ and remained sceptical about the ‘mythical goal of historical authenticity’ (IFTR 2016, 8). ‘We cannot replicate the past’, he smiled, ‘but we can experiment on the basis of different historical premises’ (IFTR 2016, 8). In an extra panel the next day, Drottningholm was celebrated again, with Wiles and Marvin Carlson, Mark Franko and others. Here, the participants could take up the discussion about the ‘recreation by experiment’ and more general thoughts about the value of preserving aspects of the past for purposes of making theatre in the present and about the possible difficulty for us to think outside the parameters of modernism (IFTR 2016, 8).

The conference was an inspiring, challenging and rich – as well as a well-organised – event. It challenged participants to rethink and discuss questions about the relation between the past and present from a specific angle. It explored the

interactions between now and an unfinished then by interweaving theoretical and practical approaches. Or as the conference’s title had anticipated, it played with these entanglements as ‘presenting’ could mean both presenting as displaying a perspective on the past and PRESENTing as again ‘bringing into now’. This indicated the living archive of embodied practices and their endurance by repetition and reperformance. It clearly challenged a linear idea of time; the model of *past – present – future* became transformed into a circular or iterative concept of history: a ‘theatre of repetition and recurrence’.<sup>7</sup>

## Notes:

- 1 About the conference's concept, compare to the introduction in the Conference Programme, Stockholm University 2016, p. 4.
- 2 Compare Reinhold Göring: Troubled Pasts – Transition and Repetition, concept of the Master Programme Medienkulturanalyse at the Heinrich Heine-Universität Düsseldorf (<https://www.phil-fak.uni-duesseldorf.de/mka/>, accessed 09/09/2016).
- 3 Diane Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire. Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, London / New York: Routledge 2003, esp. pp. 16, 19, 20. 'Embodied performances have always played a central role in conserving memory and consolidating identities in literate, semi-literate, and digital societies.' *Ibid.*, p. XVIII.
- 4 Susan Leigh Foster, *Choreographing History*, Bloomington: Indiana UP 1995, p. 7. In her introduction, Foster asks how historians could 'consort with dead bodies' and how this affects or constitutes an alternative way of writing the bodies which are constantly writing and choreographing themselves, producing meaning. *Ibid.*, p. 6, 8.
- 5 In September 2016, a publication will be released in this context: Thomas DeFrantz and Philipa Rothfield (Eds.), *Choreography and Corporeality: Relay in Motion*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2016.
- 6 Brandstetter aligns these practices of repetition with the delimitation of postmodernism and with the effects of postmigration by referring to an early article by Mark Franko from 1989 about the 'Repeatability, Reconstruction and Beyond' (in: *Theatre Journal* 41 (1) 1989, pp. 56–74) where he actively rethinks historical sources.
- 7 That was the title of the curated panel from the University of Leipzig about theatre and historicism in 19th century Europe by Patrick Primavesi, Micha Braun, Andrea Hensel and Günther Heeg; see also conference programme, p. 55.

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# Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies for Dance Professionals

Antja Kennedy

**T**he Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies (LBMS) forms a sound base for experiencing movement, observing precisely, and describing and documenting non-verbal behaviour. Through an understanding of the entire range of possibilities of movement, the Movement Studies can be applied to any form of work involving movement and dance in the pedagogic, therapeutic, scientific or creative fields.

For **dance teachers**, LBMS is useful for establishing good pedagogical lesson structures, for improving verbal guidance skills while teaching movement, and for refining the observation and correction of problems. Laban deliberately did not develop a dance technique because he wanted to promote the dancer's individual path.

**Dance students** who work with LBMS expand their creative abilities and discover new growth opportunities by recognising movement patterns and personal preferences. Thanks to the improved movement observation, complex dance sequences can be perceived more quickly and with more precision.

For **choreographers**, LBMS can be a source of inspiration, as it can open up an almost inexhaustible range of variations through experimenting with an existing vocabulary. It can also be used as a tool with which one can consciously develop a personal style through the synthesis of various elements. Furthermore, it can facilitate communication with the dancers through a common terminology.

For **dance therapists**, LBMS is a reliable structure to grasp the movement repertoire of clients, allowing them to make a precise diagnosis and to create an adequate intervention. A client's movement can be described within the parameters of LBMS in

an objective way, thus promoting verbal reflection for conscious integration of the experience.

**Dance scholars** can use LBMS for precise analysis in relation to their hypotheses. Movement Studies' terms and their corresponding systematisation support the study of movement. One can choose different methods for qualitative and quantitative research and analysis on the macro as well as the micro level. The observation process can then be documented in the different notation options, which can then be reproduced by other dance scientists.

## Overview of the Theoretical Framework

Dance practice without theory is like speaking a language well without knowing how to read, write, or analyse its grammar. To be able to understand language we first need an alphabet – that is, an agreement linking sounds to meaningful symbols. To understand movement or to describe a dance, we need an alphabet of movement – an agreement which relates a movement to a corresponding concept or symbol.

LBMS differentiates movement into six categories, which are all present in every movement: *Body*, *Space*, *Shape*, *Effort*, *Relationship* and *Phrasing*. The movement categories provide answers to the following questions:

*Body*: What is moving? (Which parts are moving? Which actions? Which body connections? Which patterns of total body organisation?)

*Space*: Where does the movement go?

*Effort*: With which energetic quality?

*Shape*: With which plastic modification?

*Relationship*: What is the relationship to something/somebody through movement?

*Phrasing*: In which temporal order?

The peculiarity of each individual movement originates not only from the addition of the different elements, but from their versatile combinations and interrelationships. Furthermore, each movement is coloured by the category which stands further in the foreground. There are a number of more detailed aspects within each of these six categories (altogether, over sixty) which can be experienced and observed.

## Body

This aspect answers the question: what does the body do? Laban (1950) not only differentiated the *body parts* (see fig. 1), but he also distinguished different *body actions*. On the most general level, there is either *stillness* or movement, i.e. *action*. The body actions are usually seen as the following: *gesture*, *change of support* or an action ending in a weight-shift; *jump* or air moment; *rotation* or turn; or *locomotion* or traveling. Today we also look at *body attitude*, i.e. the

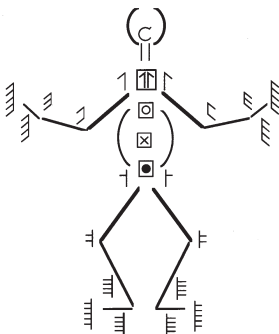


Figure 1 Body part symbols.  
(Kennedy, 2009; Graphics: Elisabeth Howey)

posture which is held in movement as well as the *body connections* and *organisational patterns*.

## Space

Laban differentiated between the general space around us and the personal movement area, the *kinesphere*.

The *general space* is the area which the mover can reach through locomotion. It can be an open space (outdoors) or a defined space (indoors). A mover can orient himself in space in relationship to a *front* which is either set (e.g. in a theatre) or which he defines (e.g. towards the mirror). If there is a front, there will also be a back, as well as a left and a right side of the space. Then the mover can decide where to orient the front of his body (facing) in respect to this front in the space, because movement can sometimes be best seen from a certain angle.

The *kinesphere* is the area around the body which can be reached with the limbs when standing in one place. Laban developed his space concepts for the kinesphere in three-dimensional models called the Platonic solids. He drew on the corners of these models for his spatial reference points and defined movement as the shortest pathway between two reference points. For example, the *vertical*, *horizontal* and *sagittal dimensions* are in the model of the *octahedron* (fig. 2). Laban developed movement scales within these models, comparable to musical scales, which follow exactly described pathways and harmonic laws (like

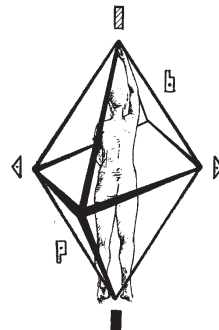


Figure 2 Octahedron.  
(Kennedy, 2009; Graphics: Elisabeth Howey)

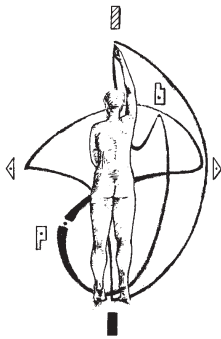


Figure 3 Defence scale  
(Kennedy, 2009; Graphics: Elisabeth Howey)

symmetry and mirroring). An example is the *defence scale* in the *octahedron* (fig. 3).

Laban (1991) named 15 scales in the three different platonic solid models. His student, Valerie Preston Dunlop (1984), delineates 27, which can be further varied. These scales can be used as the basis of dance training or to give an observer prototypes for spatial movement to which he can refer when he observes.

## Shape

Laban's first profession was visual art. Therefore, it is not surprising that Laban initially saw movement as a development of one still shape to the next and described it as «a series of shape transformations» (Laban, 1920, p. 214).

Peggy Hackney, a student of Bartenieff, objectifies the metaphors used by Laban for still shapes: *pin* as an elongated shape, *ball* as any round shape, *wall* as a flat shape, and *screw* as any twisted shape. Hackney (1998, p. 221) adds the *tetrahedron* as any angular spherical shape.

Laban's first attempts at defining the shapes used while moving (1926, p. 94) have been revised by Judith Kestenber (Lewis & Loman, 1982, p. 57–58) and are now called by Hackney (1998, p. 222) *modes of shape change*. These modes are differentiated into three different aspects: *shape-flow*, which is self-

oriented shape change; *directional*, which is goal-oriented shape change, either spoke-like or arch-like; and *carving*, which is three-dimensional shaping. Hackney again has designed symbols for these concepts.

Furthermore, Hackney (1998) sees the *shape qualities* as a separate aspect of shape, which can be affined to the dimensions. The six shape qualities are *rising* and *sinking*, *spreading* and *enclosing*, and *advancing* and *retreating*. Consequently, when they are observed in complex three-dimensional shaping, words or symbols need to be combined. For example, when a dancer does a battement forward, s/he would be *advancing* and *rising* at the same time.

## Effort

In order to describe the dynamic quality of a movement, one usually uses very imagistic, subjective and interpretive modes of expression; for example, «a person thrashed wildly around himself». Laban has created a more objective and clear structure for the characterisation of energetic qualities in the movement.

Laban (1988) defined four *effort factors* of movement: *weight*, *flow*, *space* and *time*. Each factor consists of two elements, which are two extremes on a continuum between the fighting and the indulging poles.

*Flow effort* means an active attitude towards the continuity of movement. In *bound flow*, one controls the movement so that it can be halted anytime. A movement with *free flow* is hard to stop instantaneously.

The concept of *space effort* is the inner attitude towards the space, which is observed through the type of the attention given to the space. The concept answers the question of how someone moves into space. Does the mover use *direct* space effort, focusing the movement in space, or does the mover have a flexible movement in space, or does the mover have a *flexible*





*Directional mode of shape change on low and middle level. Photo: Eva Steinborn*

*Time effort* is not about the pulse or the speed of the movement, but the inner attitude towards time. It could be one of fighting against time; this unrest can evoke *quick* and accelerating movements. Or one could enjoy the time, wanting to extend or *sustain* it and decelerate the movement.

*Weight effort* can be an active attitude towards the use of one's weight, either using as little weight as possible, therefore decreasing pressure or becoming *light*, or using as much weight as possible, therefore increasing pressure or becoming *strong*. The weight effort can also be passive so that it is giving into gravity, becoming either heavy or limp.

Each element can be executed with different intensities, so that there are many shades between the two poles of the continuum. With only eight effort elements, their numerous combinations and their temporal ordering possibilities (see *phrasing*), we can distinguish the versatile nuances of dynamic qualities in movement.

It can be vital to make very fine distinctions in

change depending on only one factor. For example, a *strong-quick* movement is different from one that is *strong-quick-direct* or *strong-quick-free*. Laban called the first combination of weight and time a *rhythm state*, the second combination of the three factors weight, time and space an *action drive* (in this case, it is called a *punch*), and the third combination of weight, time and flow a *passion drive*. All three combinations could possibly be observed in the above-mentioned «thrashing» person, but each would have a slightly different connotation of the meaning.

## Relationship

Ann Hutchinson Guest, a student of Laban's, has developed various definitions of the relationship category. Sometimes the kind of relationship established can be more important than the *body*, *spatial*, *effort* or *shape* component of the movement which produced it.

A basic relationship concept is moving towards or away from one's own body parts, someone or something. It could also be a motion toward or away from a concrete destination point (e.g. a table), a spatial reference point (e.g. high) or a point of focus (e.g. an imaginary centre).

Hutchinson (1983) has defined different degrees of relationship: *to be aware*, *to address*, *to be near*, *to touch* and *to support*. These can be active from only one person while the other is «passive» or receptive, or both people can be actively relating. Each kind of relationship can be maintained for a while or it can be only a brief moment and then released.

## Phrasing

Movement usually happens in phrases. A phrase has a beginning, middle and end. Generally, Laban distinguished a phrase of the movement as having an *exertion* and *recuperation* phase. Bartenieff (Hackney, p. 239–241) emphasised the moment of *initiation* and also what we do as a preparation for the movement, since it will determine how the movement is *followed through*.

Phrases can have different lengths. We can distinguish various types of phrases and analyse the phrasing of each of the above-mentioned categories of movement. Phrases can *increase* or *decrease* depending on how many body parts, shape qualities are used, the complexity in space, the degrees of relationship, or effort loading or intensity. We can determine whether phrases are *consecutive* (always occurring after each other), *congruent* (beginning and ending at the same time), or *overlapping* (having a different beginning and/or ending) within one category or within two or more categories.

## Bartenieff Fundamentals Somatic Bodywork

The Bartenieff Fundamentals were founded by the dancer and physiotherapist Irmgard Bartenieff (1900–

1981), a student of Rudolf Laban. The Fundamentals have been developed further by Peggy Hackney, among others, and now contain an extensive range of exercises, sequences and movement topics for full body mobilisation.

The Bartenieff Fundamentals strengthens the body's connections and activates the coordination patterns. The facilitation of new movement patterns occur with movement activity (alone and with a partner) and is expanded by means of hands-on work. Movement principles and themes become conscious and can be experienced through basic exercises and thematic improvisations. The goal is to train effective and physically connected movements to achieve maximum expressiveness. Experience shows that such an approach has a harmonisation effect on our body, as well as mind and soul. This somatic bodywork is an essential part of LBMS and utilises the whole LBMS framework.

## Training program in Berlin

The *European Association of Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies* (EUROLAB) awards a certificate for the programs *Basic* and *Advanced*. With the Basic certificate, the acquired knowledge can be applied in one's own professional field. Upon successful completion of the *Advanced* level, graduates acquire the status of *Certified Laban Movement Analyst (CLMA)*. With the *CLMA* one can become a «Registered Somatic Movement Educator» with International Somatic Movement Educators and Therapists (ISMETA).

EUROLAB, which is based in Berlin, offers the Certificate Program *Basic* in English in an intensive format: 4 weeks of classes for 2 summers, plus homework (via internet) throughout the year. The next *Basic* program starts in the summer of 2017.

The goal of the Certificate Program in LBMS is to acquire the foundation for a holistic understanding of movement, as well as to bring the inner and outer

perception of movement in line. Integrating the body through the *Bartenieff Fundamentals* and Laban Movement Studies practice will in the end enliven the expressiveness of the body. In total, LBMS provides a practical basis to experience movement, to precisely observe, and to describe and document non-verbal behaviour. Practical movement is always put into a theoretical context, which in turn can only be understood through the movement experience. Through this approach new relationships and links emerge – a «moving knowledge».

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# Nordic Journal of Dance

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<http://www.nordicjournalofdance.com/>

Present your work in *Nordic Journal of Dance: practice, education and research*.

Volume 8(1) will be published in June/July 2017. The deadline for submissions is February 1, 2017.

*Nordic Journal of Dance* invites practitioners and researchers to submit a variety of texts in two categories:

## **Research Articles:**

NJD expects these articles to present methodology, findings and theoretical argumentation related to diverse dance practices and artistic processes as well as learning and teaching dance/movement in the Nordic context. The maximum length of the submitted article is 5 000 words including possible endnotes and references. Please include two abstracts of a maximum length of 200 words: one written in the language used for the article and the other in a Nordic language (for articles in English) or in English (for articles written in native language), and a 100 word biography.

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