

Nordic Journal of Dance

– practice, education and research



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Editorial

We devote this issue of the *Nordic Journal of Dance* to papers on the subject of 'Dance & Democracy', presented at the 13th international Nordic Forum for Dance research (NOFOD Conference in June 14–17, 2017, at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. The goal of the conference was to explore issues related to democracy, such as empowerment, social justice, equality and freedom.

We contend that the word 'democracy' connotes not only a civil right to participate in society, but also the right to have a voice of one's own, to engage in a constant struggle for freedom and to protest against repression of any kind. This broad conception of democracy is not always honoured, either in society as a whole or within the realm of dance. Although dance is often regarded as a paragon of free expression and freedom, that reputation is frequently belied by manifestations of repression and exclusion. This issue provides rich insights into the manner in which dance is influenced by societal power structures that allow, encourage, inhibit or even prevent its performance. More positively, this issue includes papers that illustrate how dance can give 'ordinary' people voice and space for new expression, improve their well-being and provide opportunities for social interaction. Taken as a whole, however, the articles assembled here provide a clear warning that assuming that dance and democracy are naturally linked would not only be simplistic, but also dangerous.

The first two papers in this issue are devoted to historical and sociological perspectives. In her essay «Democratising Moves: Power, Agency and the Body», the keynote presentation at the conference, Stacy Prickett begins by analysing prevalent concepts of democracy in the 18th-century revolutions in the USA and France, followed by consistent threats to democracy worldwide.

The second historical and sociological article is Hanna Järvinen's «Democratic Bodies? Reflections on 'Postmodern Dance' in the United States and in Finland». Järvinen provides a critical reading of 'post-modern dance' in the (dominant) American and local Finnish contexts. She argues that when the term 'democracy' entered the discourse of dance, its meaning was adjusted to fit the canon of the art form. Both an ideal and a concept, she observes that references to 'democracy' in the dance context tend to ignore actual power relations inherent in art and its institutions.

The next two articles are «Cultural Rights, Well-Being

and Democracy in Elderly Care: The Dance Ambassadors as a Case Study.» by Kai Lehtikainen, and «'Når noko rart blir naturlig' Ungdomsskuleelevar si oppleving med deltaking i eit kunstnarisk danseprosjekt», by Reidun Nerhus Fretland. Both are based on research with non-dancers who were given the opportunity to participate in dance projects – Finland Dance Ambassadors, a service offered in various social contexts by the Dance Centre of Western Finland, and a Norwegian program organised through *Den Kulturelle skolesekken*. Both authors describe the societal and individual benefits of being involved in dance and expressing one's self through dancing, alone or with others, in a meaningful social context. These articles contribute to our knowledge of how dance can empower both elderly people in rehabilitation settings and children in secondary school.

The two last articles engage the theme of dance and democracy in different but equally critical contexts, exploring how power structures define the possibilities through which dancers express themselves and do what they love. In «'Get in Your Theatres; the Street is Not Yours': The Struggle for the Character of the Public Space in Tunisia», Heather Harrington, the only non-Nordic contributor to this issue, critically examines the efforts of two Tunisian dancers at using movement to address political concerns facing society. While asserting their right to express their dance and themselves, they also express solidarity with ordinary citizens in the face of the government's attempt to repress and control.

Hilde Rustad's context and concerns are quite different, evidenced from her title «Age and Gender in the European Contact Improvisation Community». From her position as an 'older' dancer in the Contact Improvisation (CI) community, Rustad examines the values associated with democracy within this dance genre. Despite the community's professed ideals, she observes that as dancers get older, they experience exclusion and that younger dancer overlook them. She problematizes how the power structure, social hierarchies and traditional gender roles retain their power, even within communities that consider themselves democratic, sensitive to diversity and committed to equity for all kinds of bodies.

In addition, Hanna Pohjola & Sini Lämsivuori have contributed with a Practice Oriented Article: «Beyond Tero Saarinen Technique: Method of Hybrid Pedagogy in Action.»

We wish all of our readers a Happy Holiday and hope that the contributors' empirical findings and theoretical perspectives will inform and inspire you.

Gunn Engelsrud
Editor

Democratising Moves: Power, Agency and the Body

Stacey Prickett

ABSTRACT

Recently, the word 'democracy' has been featured prominently in the press, with calls to restore it, save it from ominous threats and expose challenges to its principles, all predicated on an assumed understanding of the concept. Many of the roots of today's democracies reach back to the 18th century revolutions in the pre-U.S. American colonies and France, which continue to reinforce Euro-American values and ideologies of nation. The transfer of power remains a defining principle, shifting control from elites to the masses. How do the principles that inspired democratic revolutions relate to the ballot-box versions of democracy today? This article considers contemporary complexities of democracy as a concept, offering examples of how it is embodied through iconography, gestures of defiance and civil disobedience. Democratic values are explored in more formal choreography and in creative processes that establish associations with political agency.

Democratising Moves: Power, Agency and the Body

Stacey Prickett

Introduction

The following article was developed from my keynote lecture at the Nordic Forum for Dance Research (NOFOD) Dance and Democracy Conference. My conceptualisations of the term *democracy* are shaped in part by experiences in two nations – the US and Britain – and recent periods of political instability that can be traced back to an iconic symbol of freedom: the ballot box. Initial ideas for my lecture included celebrating the election of the first female U.S. president as validation of the nation's democratic system. However, that plan changed in November 2016, when Hillary Clinton lost the electoral vote despite winning the popular vote. Since then, headlines have warned of the demise of democracy in the US, as well as Britain, when a snap election in June 2017 deprived the Tory government of its majority in the British Parliament, although it remains in power as I write this. Both events have complicated the definitions of *democracy*, which emphasises the power of the ballot box and values shaped by the US and French revolutions. As explored below, such principles of democracy are endowed with multiple contradictions and universalised assumptions. Dance and body movement offer rich modes of engaging, embodying or reinforcing democratic ideals or responses to perceived threats. Actions perceived as democratising moves are presented as examples of group agency, individual gestures of defiance and choreographic examples that convey messages of social injustice.

Defining Democracy

Surveys on theories of democracy by Raymond Williams (1983) and Bernard Crick (2002) trace the political concept back to Athens. The Greek word combines '*demos* (the mob, the many) and *kratos*, meaning rule' (Crick, 2002, 11). The Athenian concept encompassed 'legal and political' equality, rather than economic parity (Crick 2002, 16). The Roman definition included the notion of citizenship, reinforcing a sense of belonging associated with an expectation of certain rights that became central to democratic principles. Challenges to autocratic rule globally emerged across the centuries in various moves toward representative rule. In Britain, for example, the Magna Carta in 1215 was one step during a long process of chipping away at authoritarian rule, helping to institutionalise a parliamentary system that has existed in one form or another since the 13th century.

A formal definition from the *Oxford English Dictionary* describes *democracy* as a type of rule:

1. A Government by the people; *esp.* a system of government in which all the people of a state or polity (or, *esp.* formerly, a subset of them meeting particular conditions) are involved in making decisions about its affairs, typically by voting to elect representatives to a parliament or similar assembly; (more generally) a system of decision-making within an institution, organisation, etc., in which all members have the right to take part or vote (*OED Online* 2017).

Keeping in mind these fundamentals, dramatic instances of how the term *democracy* circulates in everyday communication came to my attention. For



Ami Skånberg's artistic keynote: *Suriashi – marche féminine* Photo: Mikko Orpana

example, in late February 2017, about a month after Donald Trump was inaugurated the 45th president of the US, the *Washington Post* added a subtitle under its online masthead: 'Democracy Dies in Darkness'. It was the first time in the 140-year history of the newspaper that a subtitle was added. Although assumptions were made about whether the subtitle was a response to Trump's attacks on the press, plans to adopt the phrase were in progress at least a year before its appearance (Farhi 2017). Pleas to defend democracy appear daily in the press and were seen this year in stoic responses to terrorist attacks, reassuring the world that democracy would win over those who would turn a vehicle into a machine of terror. The word *democracy* also has been invoked to justify acts of death and destruction via regime change and oppression, as well as to reinforce autocratic rule, as I explore later. However, the word also has served to inspire and motivate.

Faced with such ambiguities, I want to question how democracy has been instilled in government and civil institutions. What are fundamental democratic values and how are they reinforced? To what extent are they changeable, depending on who uses the term? The evocation of democracy has taken multiple forms – how is it embodied and its principles acted upon?

Democratic Principles

I return to the official definition below, but the most widely recognised associations today refer to the struggles for democracy undertaken during the 1776 American Revolution and the 1789 French Revolution. Raymond Williams (1983) has identified significant changes that accompanied these events: the type of engagement between a government and its constituency, which shifted to a proportional representation, and the interpretation of «the people». Significantly, however, 'the mode of choosing representatives was more important than the proportion of «the people» who have any part in this' (Williams 1983, 95). A key issue that continues to shape power struggles was evident in the early years of the American nation: the need to «balance the imperatives of popular sovereignty against the fear of excessive democracy». (Wilentz 2005, 40). Although distinctions exist between the American and French contexts, both revolutions were uprisings of the people in which the power shifts generated fear, as well as celebration.

French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville's two-volume treatise *Democracy in America* and later

letters offer a vision of democracy in progress that resonates today, documenting a new nation's process of institution building that he observed in the 1830s. 'No taxation without representation' was the rallying cry that stirred the colonists into battle with the British, culminating in the American Revolution. Tocqueville noted how the American situation was linked to an expanding equality of social conditions, in which there were more literate people, more landowners and a growing population living with similar values (Delgou 2016). As historian Eric Foner (2005) summarised, however, Tocqueville recognised that 'Democracy... was more than simply the right to vote; it was a habit of the heart, a deeply rooted set of beliefs that encouraged both individual initiative and an active public sphere populated by numerous voluntary organisations that sought to better society'. Significantly, Foner (2005) argues that most prominent patriots were not democrats, 'but... the struggle for independence emboldened ordinary men and women to demand a greater voice in public affairs'. Economic autonomy was a core feature of the American version of democracy, as explored further below.

Ideals of liberty and freedom are often conflated with democratic concepts. Both appear in iconography as female figures celebrating the power of the people and the search for democracy. In Eugène Delacroix's 1830 painting, *La Liberté guidant le peuple* (*Liberty Leading the People*), Liberty takes the form of a woman, captured mid-stride climbing over barricades and fallen bodies. She holds the French tricolour flag aloft, inspiring another group of fighters to continue in the battle against King Charles X. The Statue of Liberty, a gift from France to the US, has held a torch aloft to light a way to freedom in New York City Harbour since 1886. In 1903, Emma Lazarus' poem was added to the base of the statue, reinforcing the link between the nation and immigration: 'Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning

to breathe free...' (quoted in Bragg 2008). Another gendered image is seen in the 10-metre-high Goddess of Democracy statue, created out of *papier-maché* during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests in Beijing. The statue, depicting a woman holding a torch, was demolished by troops when the protesters were cleared out. Replicas of the statue have been created in numerous cities, including Vancouver, Hong Kong and San Francisco (anon. n.d.).

The three images symbolise actions of the people in democratic processes that included 'open argument', encompassing freedom of expression and the right to gather -- moving beyond standard notions of power and associations of class. Whether or not there is real equality, Williams explains that there is a drive to 'act as if *all* people are equal, and deserved equal respect' (Williams 1983, 97). Significant moral values are invoked that combine with belief in the possibility of change, of individual and collective agency. The second part of the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition describes democracy as: 'a form of society in which all citizens have equal rights, ignoring hereditary distinctions of class or rank, and the views of all are tolerated and respected; the principle of fair and equal treatment of everyone in a state, institution, organisation, etc.' (*OED Online* 2017).

Claims of universal democratic concepts underpin projects that rank democratic values on a global scale. The non-profit organisation Freedom House evaluates democracy-utilising principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 'A truly democratic system includes a variety of other checks and balances that ensure freedom and resilience over time, such as a free press, independent courts, legal protections for minorities, a robust opposition and unfettered civil society groups' (Puddington & Roylance 2017, 3). The 2017 Freedom House Report classifies 195 nations and territories as free (45%), partly free (30%) or not free (25%). The US received a score of 85, while Sweden, Norway and



Dr. Stacey Pricketts keynote presentation.
Photo: Astrid von Rosen

Finland sit at the top of the scale, with perfect scores of 100. The Democratic Republic of Congo received a dismal score of 19, highlighting a contradiction between the notion of 'democracy' in the nation's name and the reality of its implementation.

What is celebrated as objective classification criteria glosses over a Euro-American emphasis on defining democratic principles. Dominant discourses emphasise a Western perspective of democracy that tends to reinforce a sense of superiority over non-Western socio-economic and political systems. David Slater (2003) assesses an ethno-centric universalism that disregards power relations and representations of the post-colonial or non-Western 'other'. Drawing on the work of political theorist Birku Parekh, 'Western liberal democracy has often imposed on other countries' systems of government that were not relevant to the skills and talents of non-Western countries...' (Slater 2003, 425). In the process, democratic interventions can undermine existing cultural values and institutional structures.

Threats to Democracy

The US elections offer a prime example of the complexities of democratic processes, and according to Freedom House, the nation has moved down on the democratic scale due to attacks on the press and restrictions to voting rights (Puddington & Roylance 2017). The electoral college system reveals another complexity. It was created to help balance out representative power between states of varying populations, starting with the first elections in 1789. On five occasions, the presidency was awarded to the person with the fewest popular votes. As the nation grew, American policies offered a new type of politics that moved away from what Crick calls 'reasoned debate... [that was] appropriate to a smaller political class, often bound by social acquaintance and common codes of behaviour' (Crick 2002, 77). A notion of community, of shared interests, is also seen in the imagined community Benedict Anderson (1991) articulates. Shifting demographics turn what would have been personal connections into imagined ones, with awareness of events in an area shared beyond the immediate locale with the advent of the printing press and national newspapers. Until the 19th century, the

term *democracy* held negative connotations among those in power, as it had the potential to empower the masses. Williams traces the shifting perceptions of how a majority group is perceived during a process of revolution: 'Masses is the modern word for *many-headed multitude or mob*; low, ignorant, unstable.' An alternative meaning endows the majority with agency, as 'a description of the same people, but now seen as a potentially positive social force' (1983, 195). A mass can have derogatory connotations, or it can be perceived as 'the people' in an empowering way. In Marxist terminology, the masses comprise proletarians, on the edge of power as consciousness of their collective power before awakening. In response to the horrors of Nazi totalitarianism, Hannah Arendt distinguished between 'the people' and 'the mob' – the people want political representation while the mob embodies hatred of society, and its members function individually unless a charismatic leader unifies them (Crick 2002, 86).

At various times, parts of the population that feel as if they are outside the political discourse rise up in what is labelled *populism*, which is behind movements that resulted in the 18th Amendment to the US Constitution, prohibiting the sale of alcohol in 1918 (later reversed). Populism is defined as 'a style of politics and rhetoric that seeks to arouse a majority, or at least what their leaders passionately believe is a majority (like the «Moral Majority» today, who are plainly a minority), who are, have been or think themselves to be outside the polity, scorned and despised by an educated establishment' (Crick 2002, 77). Populist organisers borrow their presentation style from revivalist meetings and evangelical pulpits – or propaganda, as some would argue. Churches were important places for circulating political ideas in Britain, while in the US, populist conflicts were based on rural vs. city interests. Populism was tied to the land – who owned it or worked on it – and once was linked to voting rights. With the Industrial Revolution in Britain,

populist interests evolved so that economic prosperity was not linked to the land. People could earn money and improve their existence by working in factories, 'raising standards of living that had something to do with an effective democracy' (Crick 2002, 79).

Other symbolic examples can be seen in early modern dance and ideas around economics and social justice in the US. The notion of rugged individualism as a defining national characteristic is tied to the capitalist system and the democratic opportunity to become rich. Different types of democracies are linked to particular economic systems and associated power dynamics. In the upheaval of the world-wide depression from the late 1920s to the mid-1930s, a left-wing dance movement gained momentum in New York City, challenging the established power structure and highlighting workers' increasingly desperate conditions. Organisations such as the Workers Dance League were populated by recreational groups such as the Red Dancers. They performed Edith Segal's dance, *The Belt Goes Red* (1928), which represented the workers taking ownership of the means of production. Young modern dancers argued that there was a responsibility to create socially conscious art for the people. The people envisioned were often manual labourers, exemplified by the proletariat celebrated in communist images and Marxist texts. Their ideal of a workers' dance was a democratic one -- a dance of, for and by the people (Prickett 1989, 1991, 2013).

Although global powers such as Britain and the US may make grand claims about democratic processes, other nations have long and varied histories of individual freedom and social liberties associated with democracy as a concept. These are similarly manifested in the diverse approaches and themes at the NOFOD conference. Lena Hammergren gave voice to Swedish female dancers and writers in recovering the history of the nation's early 20th century movement practices. Hanna Järvinen's account of democratic bodies in Finland and postmodern dance

reflect on power relations, political history and art institutions in relation to definitions set out in canon dance-history texts. Sigrid Övreås Svendal explored notions of democracy through access to historical archives in Norway that help counteract the marginal place of dance in the education system. The Swedish group ReAct creates site work that disrupts notions of public space and ownership by challenging viewers to respond to what is going on around them, rather than remaining disconnected bystanders who pass by with just a glance at the action. Guðrún Þórsdóttir and Jóhanna Vala Höskuldsdóttir documented how the Citizen Stage Project in Iceland helped Syrian refugees and other immigrants establish connections with local communities (abstracts are available at <http://nofodgot2017.akademia.is>).

Many ideas about democracy continue to resonate, spanning decades, despite changing contexts. Writing in 1966 as the free speech movement and student protests were gaining strength, cultural studies theorist Stuart Hall (2017) asserted that what was at issue was 'political commitment'. He identified major shifts in the post-war period that impacted on democracy and its implementation. World War II brought substantial changes to social and economic structures, and there was a 'transformation of the great ideologies of the past and the conditions with which they flourished' (2017, 86). Hall argued that 'ideology had followed trade, and trade followed the flag'. but that in the 'New World, it could be said that political ideas have clustered around weapons systems' (2017, 86). Changes in the 'maturation' or decline of mass political parties corresponded with a rise of 'new issues' that might not have been recognised as political in the past. Hall mentions how race and youth became political, while today, one could add issues of gender, sexuality and power over women's bodies.

For Hall, the final shift is the 'ideology at the end of ideologies', 'that modern technology renders ideology obsolete' (2017, 87). Technology poses new challenges

that some argue move away from democratic principles. Jon Delogu (2016) highlights how among the different groups that engage with democracy as a process or institution, the largest group consists of ordinary people. Some are educated, informed about issues, vote and become involved in their communities, while others do not vote or may not be allowed to vote. 'Each of these groups has a different amount of power – imprecisely measurable and ever changing in the Internet age – when it comes to controlling the meanings of democracy, and therefore, its fate' (Delogu 2016, 168). Theoretically, ordinary people have the most power, but the reality is often quite different. The circulation and control of data moved away from the academic, elite institutions: 'In the Internet age, the humble fact gatherer and organizer has the potential to become much more powerful, as the information can be relayed more, and in more ways, than when those roles for shaping and transmitting were solely in the hands of professors, university presses and librarians' (Delogu 2016, 169). Despite population growth, there has been a decline in the number of people voting and the membership rolls of political parties, juxtaposed with an increasing income disparity between those who don't vote and those who do.

Democratic freedoms also can pose complexities in which the chance to vote, to express one's opinion, can have negative repercussions, which is seen in some established democracies that are deemed to be in decline partly through the use of referendums:

Referendums represent a radical reduction of democracy to its most skeletal form; majority rule. Too often, they are called in order to circumvent some obstacle thrown up by political or legal institutions – a failure by elected officials to reach consensus, for example, or a constitutional barrier that powerful actors find inconvenient. Whatever the intent, referendums are an end run around the structures and safeguards of democracy (Puddington and Roylance 2017, 3).



Former and present chairs and vice chairs of NOFOD
Lena Hamnergren, Egil Bakka, Inger Damsbolt, Ingrid Redbark-Wallander, Leena Rouhiainen, Susanne Ravn, Camilla Damkjær, Astrid von Rosen, Hilde Rustad.
Photo: Mikko Orpana

The Freedom House Report highlights how the Brexit vote (which did not involve a majority of the voting population) authorised the withdrawal of Britain from the European Union. A referendum in Colombia offers a positive example of how checks and balances can work. A proposed peace agreement with the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Rebels of Colombia) rebels initially lost at the ballot box, but was passed after some changes were implemented (Puddington and Roylance 2017). In contrast, a referendum in Turkey, in April 2017, approved measures that increased President Erdogan's control, resulting in the extension of an undemocratic state of emergency. The *New York Times* described the new rules as 'indefinite rule by decree' that subverts parliamentary and constitutional court oversight. Thousands of people have been jailed and have lost their jobs, and many media outlets have been closed (Kingsley 2017).

Embodied Democracy

With this litany of problems, I want to turn around the possibilities and highlight how moral codes are deeply embedded within the concept of democracy. There is the potential for action, or agency, in which 'the people' can change the world. Returning to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the second definition of *democracy* reads: 'Those people who possess no hereditary or special rank or privileged status, collectively; the common or ordinary people; (in later use) *spec.* the whole body of citizens of a country, regarded as the source of political power; the people'.

The power of the people is demonstrated in the extended essay *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation*, by Gene Sharpe (2010). Available for free on the Internet, Sharpe's guidebook offers advice on how to conduct peaceful resistance. Written in 1993 and initially published in Bangkok, it has inspired many protesters in Burma, the Occupy Movement and the Arab Spring by explaining how political defiance offers chances to stand up to dictatorial rule in ways that guns can't.

He details how to organise against and challenge dictators who have superior military strength by identifying their weaknesses while avoiding armed conflicts. The appendix lists 198 methods for non-violent action, ranging from formal statements of opposition, processions, marches and honouring the dead, to non-cooperation through boycotts, walk-outs, strikes, and social, political and economic interventions (Sharpe 2010). International studies scholar Erica Chenoweth's research into non-violent protests reminded readers of how the American armed revolution that began in 1776 was preceded by a series of 'economic boycotts, demonstrations, tax revolts, the building of alternative-governance institutions and economic systems and, finally, the Declaration of Independence' (Chenoweth 2014, 352). Statistical analysis supports the conclusion that civil-resistance campaigns since 1946 have been more successful in achieving 'democratisation than countries experiencing armed struggle' (Chenoweth 2014, 354). It is through bodily movement that campaigns for democracy are initiated.

Some significant articles have analysed the power of the body in protests to maintain discipline in civil-disobedience actions instead of using an unrestrained mob. The concept of 'passive resistance', non-violent protest, or civil disobedience has shaped multiple struggles, but came to prominence under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, starting with protests in South Africa and gaining strength in India in the drive toward India's independence from the British, which was achieved in 1947. As Warren Cohen (2009, 26-28) summarised, in 1930 Gandhi led a 250-mile/400-kilometre walk from Amhedabad to the Arabian Sea to protest a British tax on salt. The 24-day walk to the coastal village of Dandi highlighted how the British had made the recovery of salt an illegal activity. The Dandi Salt Marchers challenged taxes on a commodity that is vital to the survival of people and animals, while asserting the rights of Indians to

extract their own salt without paying taxes or fees. The protest succeeded, as the taxes were nullified.

Actions such as the Salt March inspired Martin Luther King Jr., who helped lead the American civil rights movement as it gained strength in the 1960s (Nojeim 2005). Earlier individual acts of non-violent resistance resonated far beyond the local communities in which they occurred. Women such as Claudette Colvin and Rosa Parks were arrested in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955 for refusing to move to the back of the bus and give up their seats to white people. A physical action – taking a stand by remaining seated – transformed into a moral imperative, prompting a wider bus boycott that had severe financial repercussions. Courts already had ruled against segregation, but the separation of races remained public policy in Southern states such as Alabama. Group marches from Selma to Montgomery were met with violence by state police until federal troops intervened to ensure marchers' safety. News media broadcast footage of violent responses to the peaceful marchers nationwide, helping to spur passage of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965. Although the 1964 Civil Rights Act had legislated equal rights, further action was required to abolish literacy tests and other prohibitive procedures that had suppressed minority participation at the polls, with some voting restrictions still being fought today.

Gestures of Defiance

Many instances of civil disobedience involve acts of stillness, embodying a power that Randy Martin reflected on:

Consider the duality between motion and stillness. Holding stillness is a point of power. This is implicit in the relationship between being obliged to move and holding the capacity to move... the counter-intuitive part of dance is stillness. The political can be posed around the refusal to be moved by people (Martin in Kowal, Siegmund and Martin 2017, 7).

Susan Leigh Foster (2003), Martin (2006) and André Lepecki (2013) have analysed the agency of the body in protest actions. Foster's (2003) account of the Greensboro lunch-counter sit-ins articulates the notion of choreographing protest. In 1960, four young African-American college students challenged segregation policies at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. Decisions about what to wear and how to act centred on how they presented themselves and how their images would be read by the world outside. They simply sat on the stools while the counter was open, waiting to be served. Their stillness required great discipline as their opponents became increasingly aggressive and violent. Their protest led to others using the same method.

Like the marches, the lone individual who held up a procession of tanks around Tiananmen Square in 1989 became a strong symbol. Images of 'Tank Man' resonated around the world, although the protesters' immediate demands for democratic policies were suppressed. Here, one man's stillness confronted the might of the military. Other iconic gestures of defiance include the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games, when two African-American runners each held one black-gloved fist aloft during their medal-award ceremony. The clenched fist symbolised the struggle for racial equality and was associated with the radical Black Panthers group. Although there were some black activists in the group who advocated for violent protests, the Black Panthers also sponsored social programmes such as the Free Breakfast for Schoolchildren program, which helped ease poverty in Oakland, California, neighbourhoods in the late 1960s (Hilliard, 2008). While it was met with negative reactions at the time, U.S. Olympians Tommie Smith and John Carlos' protest was immortalised when a statue of them was erected in San Jose, California.

A 'hands up' gesture became a popular protest message after the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Anusha Kedhar (2014a, 2014b)

offers multiple readings of the action, noting that it can be interpreted through Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. It also can be read as 'a failed sign (not seen, ignored, did not generate the response hoped for – [which is] submission).' As a 'gesture of innocence', it offers bodily proof that the person is not holding a weapon. As a choreographic tactic, it can be perceived as performing non-cooperation. And in the choreopolitics of freedom, the hands-up gesture provides the ability to use movement as a political act. Kedhar's analysis resonates in the choreography of Kyle Abraham, whose work *Pavement* premiered in 2012. Abraham and his dancers were creating the piece when the young black teen Trayvon Martin was shot in Florida, his killer acquitted on a self-defence claim. For Abraham and many other black males, the hands-up gesture became automatic, an action undertaken when one is constantly challenged by authorities. In *Pavement*, gestures of friendship and encoded greetings among members of a local community shift suddenly into gestures of submission. As I analyse elsewhere (Prickett 2016), the repeated action of moving hands behind one's back into a simulated handcuffed position was first initiated by Abraham who was performing in *Pavement*, an action taken up by others in the group. The other dancers eventually put themselves into a passive pose, transitioning from being controlled externally to an action that is part of their habitus.

Other photos of race-related protest actions have been published, either gestures or standing one's ground at Black Lives Matter protest marches. A photo was widely circulated of nurse Iesha Evans standing alone as two police officers wearing full body armour approached her. *BBC News* online printed a Facebook post that offered a rich analysis of Evans' powerful corporeality:

[Jami West wrote] Look at her posture. She is balanced, powerful, upright and well-grounded

from the crown of her head to the heels of her feet. She is only protected by the force of her own personal power. By contrast, the officers have the transitory, temporary protection of their equipment that will be removed at the end of their shift. They are rocked back on their heels, knocked off balance and appear about to fall over backwards just from the power of her (cited in Anon, 'Baton Rouge Killing', 2016).

There is a powerful juxtaposition between a vision of a calm, unarmed young woman wearing a long sun-dress that is blowing in the wind, and the highly militarised and armed police who approach her.

Tenets of democratic freedom are embodied by Baktash Noori, a young Muslim man who stood blindfolded on a Manchester city street in the days after the May 22, 2017, terrorist bombing at a music concert. Without being able to see who was approaching him, he stood with open arms next to a sign that reads: 'I am Muslim & I trust you. Do you trust me enough for a hug?' (Revesz 2017). As documented in the YouTube video *Life of Bako*, people are filmed walking past him on the city street, some slowing down to read his sign and reflect on his stillness. Eventually, one man turns and initiates a gesture of trust, reaching out and hugging the blindfolded Noori. More and more people pause and step up to hug him, often with their bodies in full contact then they move away, smiling broadly. A queue of people grows as they wait their turn to participate in Noori's act of openness and trust in hugs that range from brief to hearty and long, helping to turn around negativity and shatter stereotypes in the process.

Democracy is often associated with contact improvisation, as documented in Sally Banes' (1983) book *Democracy's Body* and Cynthia Novack's (1990) book *Sharing the American Dance*. The form evolved through democratic creative processes, challenging hierarchies of traditional choreographic practices. Steve Paxton, co-founder of the style, spoke

of being influenced by Merce Cunningham's assertion that any movement could be dance and that any *body* could be viewed in some way as an 'aesthetic conveyor' (Novack 1990, 53). From these early principles, the Judson Church workshops drew in people who studied choreography with Robert Dunn. They adapted improvisational processes, in part due to practical necessity because of the difficulty in arranging rehearsals when everyone was available. Yvonne Rainer's *Continuous Project Altered Daily* (1969) began to ask: 'Where do social hierarchical roles originate and how can they be changed; how to make artistic decisions; how not to depend on anyone unless it is mutually agreed; what mutuality means, and how to detect it' (Paxton 1972, 129). The Grand Union performance group, which evolved out of workshops, was labelled an 'anarchistic democratic theatre collective' (Paxton 1972, 128). The 'anarchistic' part refers to the group's opposition to structure in its creations (Novack 1990, 59-60), and the 'democratic' part refers to how it advocates equality.

Danielle Goldman's (2010) research into improvisational practices explores the relationship between contact improvisation and protest. In 1961, the Freedom Riders were a group of activists challenging segregation on busses, who were trained in non-violent direct action. Goldman argues that the early protesters' reactions involved improvisation, paying close attention to their bodies, expanding the emphasis on contact improvisation as democratic (2010, 96-97). One reaction was to fall, using 'slack musculature and stillness' -- not as 'motionless', implying passivity (2010, 98), but demonstrating how 'wilful mobility can exist within stillness' (2010, 100-101). A racial imbalance exists, however, as different responses are generated if the person is black or white. Goldman engages with the imbalances of power that Ramsay Burt (2006) notes in his account of the Judson Dance Theatre.

Writing in 2003, Ann Cooper Albright (2013) further reflected on democratic principles and a

sense of inclusivity within contact improvisation that resonates in other dance practices such as community dance. Albright recognises that the democratic aesthetic is full of tension at times because of 'two kinds of dancing: one that emphasises virtuosic dancing and one that emphasises movement communication that is accessible to anybody' (Albright 2013, 262). These examples demonstrate how one can think of democracy in relation to diverse definitions of politics and consider moral issues raised by democratic processes. They also demonstrate empowered body movement across a range of situations and how democracy is shaped by the people.

Conclusion

The word *democracy* is constantly evoked in the press, particularly in terms of unstable socio-political situations confronting people in 2017. It has been used to initiate regime change and humanitarian rescue missions, while the potential for liberty and freedom continues to inspire hope. As democracy is threatened across the globe, historical and contemporary examples demonstrate agency, power and the body in action. From standing one's ground to ceding power to moving in cooperative action, the values of democracy are embodied in multiple ways.

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BIOGRAPHY

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Democratic Bodies? Reflections on «Postmodern Dance» in the United States and Finland

Hanna Järvinen

ABSTRACT

By looking at how 'postmodern dance' signifies in the dominant American and local Finnish contexts, I offer a critical reading of how the notion of 'democracy' is intertwined with particular dancing bodies and ideas of nation and ethnicity. This requires a historical outline for how 'democracy' entered the discourse of dance, and specifically, how its meaning has shifted in relation to the canon of the art form. Using the contrast between the hegemonic centre and what is constituted as a (geographic, linguistic, ethnic) periphery reveals how 'democracy' is used in contemporary dance discourses to obfuscate power relations inherent to art and its institutions, especially in relation to the agency of dancers.

ABSTRAKTI

Vertaamalla kuinka eri tavoin 'postmoderni tanssi' käsitteenä merkityksellistyy vallitsevassa amerikkalaisessa ja paikallisessa suomalaisessa kontekstissa, pyrin kriittiseen luentaan 'demokratian' käsitteen sitoutumisesta hyvin erityisiin tanssiin ruumiisiin ja ajatuksiin kansakunnasta ja etnisyydestä. Tämä vaatii sivupolkuja demokratia-käsitteen historiasta tanssin diskurssissa ja erityisesti tavoista, joilla sen merkitys muuttui suhteessa taidemuodon kaanoniin. Hegemonisen keskustan ja (maantieteellisesti, kielellisesti, etnisesti) periferiaksi määritetyn erojen kautta paljastuu, kuinka 'demokratiaa' käytetään nykytanssin diskurssissa hämärtämään taiteen ja sen instituutioiden valtasuhteita, erityisesti mitä tulee tanssijoiden toimijuuteen.

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Introduction

Switching from one cultural context or historical period to another often causes a sense of disturbance: words that connote in a manner that seems obvious and self-evident in one time and place suddenly no longer make sense. How and what kind of dance is connected to 'democracy' is a case in point. In the following, I offer a critical reading of how the notion of democracy is intertwined with particular dancing bodies and ideas of nation and ethnicity. Using the contrast between the hegemonic centre and what is constituted as a (geographic, linguistic, ethnic) periphery reveals how democracy is used in contemporary dance discourses to obfuscate the power relations inherent in the apparatus of art and its institutions¹, including academic research on dance.

As a discourse of power, art functions in anything but a democratic manner: decisions about aesthetic value are not voted on, not even by the 'citizens' who are subjects to its 'state'. On the contrary, the institutions of art seek to limit who may be considered its subjects and what may be validated as art. (Bourdieu 1995, esp. 40–43) In other words, for something to be considered art, it is subjected to the discourse of art, which will inevitably result in uneven power relations between subjects.² From the perspective of political agency, therefore, it is difficult to resolve notions of democracy (majority rule and social equality) with this kind of inherent elitism of art as an apparatus (notions of 'masterpieces' or authors as representatives of a period, style or 'nation'). To unpack what 'democratic' signifies in dance requires attention to specific cultural contexts and a longer history of power relations; a

tracing of how the uses of 'democracy' have shifted in relation to what is and is not considered 'art' in dance.

Democratic Exports

Writing on art dance at the turn of the twentieth century, critics rarely use the term democracy. However, in *Modern Dancing and Dancers*, J. E. Crawford Flitch (1912, 27) applies it to separate ballet from other forms of dance: 'If dance is essentially the art of democracy, springing out of the gladness of the crowd, the ballet in its origin is aristocratic.' Flitch is one of the early twentieth-century authors who truly created the foundation of the hegemonic narrative of how dance as a cultural practice developed and how its different forms relate to each other: the claim about dance as 'the art of democracy' follows his argument against dance as mere 'amusement', whether in ancient societies or in the ballroom (Flitch 1912, 15–24). Flitch and his contemporaries not only represent dances associated with the upper classes and European courts as the pinnacle of human civilisation, but they also separate staged art dance (dance subject to the apparatus of art) from dance as social practice in order to associate the former with 'high art' and the latter with 'popular culture'. This exemplifies the European heritage of dance history, as well as how that history associates with the author's subject position – it is hardly surprising that for a British author, aristocracy correlates with 'high art' and has a positive connotation.

No wonder, then, that the earliest example I have found to explicitly associate staged art dance with democracy dates back to 1915–16, when the Russian

impresario Sergei Diaghilev brought his company, the Ballets Russes, to tour the United States and Canada. Lacking all the star dancers from their European triumphs, on whom the advance publicity had focused, the managers of the tour at the Metropolitan Opera quickly shifted the publicity campaign to argue that in this company, every dancer was a star, and that because every dancer was equally good, the company was artistically democratic – a word designed to appeal to American audiences. (Järvinen 2010) In contrast, contemporary Western European media tended to represent Russia as a 'backward' autocratic state and Russians as not-quite-European.³

Somewhat paradoxically, the Ballets Russes exemplifies the kind of art that emerged due to the democratisation process of the Russian state. A period of general unrest following the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5 resulted in the 1905 Russian Revolution and the transition from an absolutist to constitutional monarchy in the foundation of the first Russian State Duma. However, the 1906 parliamentary reform in the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland made this part of the empire the first country in the world to grant its citizens universal full suffrage (including the right to run for elected office).⁴ The Finnish case quickly became a point of contestation in the Russian Duma: the Constitutional Democrats («Kadets») and liberals hoped that the new constitution in Finland would enforce constitutional order in Russia proper, whilst the more conservative nationalists saw the autonomy of Finland as a threat to the unity of the Empire and a refuge for revolutionaries. (Khrpachenko 2014, esp. 20)

In the arts, the 1905 Revolution meant partial relaxation of censorship and emergence of a new kind of public discourse on art, even if the Revolution's aftermath saw increased repression and censorship of culture as well as severe punitive measures directed against those deemed responsible for the unrest. Certain representations of the body and sexuality –including those staged by the Ballets

Russes – only became possible after the Revolution as sexuality, the idea that sexual acts were constitutive of an individual's personality, was associated with the principles of liberalism and constitutional democracy in Russia. (See Järvinen 2014, 200–201, 211–18, 222–25)

In light of this political history, it is significant that democracy is first associated with the Ballets Russes by an Estonian political exile to the United States, Jaan Sibul. As Ivan Narodny,⁵ Sibul wrote several articles on Russia, ballet, and the Russian Ballet for *Musical America*. This magazine was the soapbox of the Musical Bureau of the Metropolitan Opera, who footed the bill for Diaghilev's American exodus. In marked contrast to his earlier articles to the same publication,⁶ Narodny (1915) contrasts the Ballets Russes with the 'decadent artificiality, preconceived emotions and fossilized formalities' of French and Italian ballet, and argues that the company 'strive[s] to keep to the traditions of the race', notably Russian folklore, which has ensured that '[w]hile it is aristocratic politically, Russia has remained democratic artistically.'

However, as the democratic art of the Russians failed to impress,⁷ Narodny again shifted his argument. In *Dance*, he argues that

The art of dancing, as it stands to-day, promises much encouragement for to-morrow. [. . .] The past belongs to the aristocratic ideals, in which the Russian ballet reached the climax. The French were the founders of aristocratic choreography; the Russians transformed it into an aristocratic dramatic art; to the Americans belongs the attempt at a democratic school. (Narodny 1916, 261)

However, Narodny's grounds for concluding that '[t]he future of the art of dancing belongs to America, the country of the cosmic ideals' are quite atypical for the period. The cosmic, he argues, is a development of democratic ideals that will no longer be tied to any past

tradition or race. Positing Isadora Duncan as a first, failed attempt at 'democratic expression', he claims that 'American art naturally lacks fundamentally national elements.' (Ibid., 263–67)

Instead, it is the art of cities and ragtime's syncopated rhythms:

The symbolism of the city is destined to take the place of the symbolism of the country. The New York plasticism will be also the plasticism of Paris and Petrograd. The ethnographic and aristocratic era in the art of dancing has reached the climax of aesthetic development. We are entering the era of cosmic art. (Ibid., 267)

Essentially, Narodny gives American dance the task of both being and representing democracy: democracy is a quality of America, the country without nation or race. As with Fitch, this democratic dance is not tied to individual artists. As far as I know, this is the first time American art dance is joined with democracy as a political credo in a manner that later becomes a staple in American dance history. Some 85 years later, in 'Dancing Democracy', Ann Daly (2002, 8) represents American modern dance as a conscious struggle for democracy in opposition to the European tradition of ballet:

the self-consciously democratic endeavor of modern dance [. . .] that sought to distinguish itself as a democratic art form, in response to the perceived elitism of the European ballet.

Daly proposes that dance is a civic space, where diverse groups of people come together in kinaesthetic empathy and dialogue, and a practice where audience participation in the creative process and in performance cultivates citizenship. In other words, democracy (a political system) is used as a shorthand

for moral ideals of social equality that are opposed to the elitism of (explicitly foreign) ballet.

This juxtaposition speaks of the predominance of aesthetic thinking in the application of the term 'democracy' in dance; in other words, 'the politics of art lies in its aesthetic function,' (Kowal, Siegmund and Martin 2017, 5). Independent of any explicit political message or struggle. As a historian, I find that such aestheticisation ignores both the agency of dance-makers as producers of culture and the uses of power in designating something as art.⁸ Postmodern dance' is a case in point.

Legacies of the Cold War

Sally Banes coined⁹ the concept 'postmodern dance' in the 1980s to differentiate the experimental American dance of the 1960s from American modern dance. Postmodern dance is therefore not *postmodernist* in style or character nor is it dance during or reflecting postmodernism as a historical period. As something that comes after, Banes's postmodern also connotes aesthetically surpassing, as well as superseding, the modern; the terminological choice is indicative of canon formation, a creation of 'vanguard' art in opposition to contemporaneous forms. Consequently, as Susan Manning (1988) argued already in 1988, given subsequent developments in art dance, the Judson Dance Theater could equally be classed as the last instance of modernism.¹⁰

The ghost of American modern dance is even more evident in Banes' evocation of democracy. As Clare Croft (2015, esp. 16–17, 67–71, 87–92) shows, during the Cold War, the State Department of the United States made two crucial moves in strengthening the association of American dance and democracy in its export of American art as anti-Communist propaganda. First, in order to create in modern dance an 'original' American art form in modern dance, the State Department explicitly excluded the European roots of American modern dance; and second, American

art was framed as the export of American ideals of democracy and freedom, in which the civil rights struggles of American minorities were represented as dissent emblematic of the superiority of the political system over Communism. In other words, America was great because it allowed protests even though these protests arose from a lack of representation in a purportedly representational democracy. Moreover, as Hannah Kosstrin (2013, esp. 6–7) argues, American modern dance could represent an ideal of the nation only after the suppression of the actively political left-wing modern dance tradition of the 1930s.

Therefore, when Banes credits the Judson Dance Theater and American postmodern dance as creating *Democracy's Body* – the title of her 1983 book (Banes 1995) – she continues the political discourse of the Cold War. In postmodern dance, European legacies are absent, and contemporary European dance follows the American example, or, in the words of Banes herself, 'Pina Bausch represents a local German outgrowth of certain American first-generation postmodern concerns.' (Banes and Manning 1989, 15) American dance is the dance of the desirable political system, regardless of whether this system or the dancing bodies thus named truly correspond with either principles of democracy or the population of America (Burt 2006, 22).

In contrast to *Terpsichore in Sneakers* (Banes 1987), *Democracy's Body* (1995) emphasises the collective participation and shared ideas in the Judson group, as well as their connections to artists in New York more generally. Yet, given how Narodny framed American art as the art of ragtime and skyscrapers, Banes' use of 'democracy' is rather conspicuously white, as is the history she narrates of American avant-garde and vanguard dance (Banes 1995, esp. xvi–xvii). In her argument, democracy functions as an aestheticisation that unintentionally downplays the contemporaneous political struggle for representation taking place in the dancing bodies of, for example, Alvin Ailey's American Dance Theater at the 92nd Street

YM-YWCA a few miles north of the Judson Church (Kowal 2010, esp. 1–7).

Moreover, the two most cited examples of explicit political protest in the Judson canon, both based on Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A – Convalescent Dance* (1967) and *Trio A with Flags* (1970), postdate Banes' periodisation. In this way, explicit participation in political action becomes the result of formal interest in everyday movement and compositional practices rather than a question of agency or affective reaction to perceived social injustice. Art becomes the ur-site of politics, reducing agency to aesthetics. As Kowal (2010, esp. 244–54) notes, the stakes of black bodies resisting political oppression through everyday movement were quite different from those of white artists taking on the proscenium space, even when both sought to transform what was framed as 'normal'.

Shifting Qualities of 'Democracy'

As the American political system is currently reminding us of all the arguments against democracy from Plato onward (see Christiano 2015), it is high time to ask what purpose 'democracy' serves in the dance historical context: what are the attributes given to these 'democratic' bodies and whose bodies get excluded from the definition? Any universalism that equates democracy with righteousness undermines the freedom of artistic agency that 'democracy' is evoked to serve. In other words, we ought to pay more attention to what justifications are given for calling certain dance forms 'democratic', as such justifications are neither self-evident nor necessarily indicative of a positive political or aesthetic development.

As Clare Bishop (2004, 77–78) points out, what may have seemed indicative of democracy or moral good a few decades back can seem insufficient or outright false today, as

political, moral, and ethical judgments have come

to fill the vacuum of aesthetic judgment in a way that was unthinkable forty years ago. This is partly because postmodernism has attacked the very notion of aesthetic judgment, and partly because contemporary art solicits the viewer's literal interaction in ever more elaborate ways.

The postmodernism that Bishop references is not to be confused with 'postmodern' as the term is used in art dance, but the postmodernist focus on qualities other than the aesthetic has influenced the principles for evaluating dances, including postmodern or contemporary dances, today. In other words, postmodernism requires that postmodern dance be discussed in terms of economic, political and discursive power relations. Bishop continues,

It is no longer enough to say that activating the viewer *tout court* is a democratic act, for every art work – even the most 'open-ended' – determines in advance the depth of participation that the viewer may have with it. [. . .] The tasks facing us today are to analyze how contemporary art addresses the viewer and to assess the quality of the audience relations it produces: the subject position that any work presupposes and the democratic notions it upholds, and how these are manifested in our experience of the work.

In other words, Bishop reveals the fallacy in how postmodern dance practices are viewed as 'democratic' simply because they involve the audience or question the organisation of the (proscenium) stage. Although it may well be argued that the bodies of postmodern dance are 'democratic' in terms of how parts of the body or different kinds of movement are treated, to understand this *as art* already brings about specific power relations. Moreover, calling such practices 'democratic' obfuscates what kinds of subject positions dance presumes, strengthens, or undermines: where

are those dancers and dance aficionados whose bodies this ostensibly democratic art consistently racialises, excludes, and persecutes?

As Banes (1987; 1995), Foster (2002), Burt (2006) and others point out, the Judson artists were crucial in the shifting of the role of the choreographer from the author figure responsible for every step and gesture in the composition towards that of a facilitator in a given performance situation, or author of tasks or structures through which a performance practice gets framed. What Bishop's point underlines, however, is whether this shift produces democracy in art dance – something I see as rather moot as long as the choreographic composition is credited to the name of a singular author. The power inherent in the authorial subject position is exemplified in the case of *Trio A*, originally conceived as a choreography anyone could do, but gradually 'copyrighted' by the choreographer, Yvonne Rainer (2009, esp. 16). Even dance scores or task-based works are not democratic as choreographic processes because their author is always-already epistemologically privileged over the performers or participants – this is the case even in works like Deborah Hay's Solo Performance Commissioning Project (1998–2012), where the choreographer and dancer engage in a degree of negotiation over the choreography.

The more one delves into the conjunctions of American dance as a dance of, by, about, and as democracy, the more obviously 'democracy' becomes a rhetorical device serving to represent American dance as better and more 'advanced' – whatever that might entail – than that of other places in the world. In this manner, the notion of democracy has been made to serve a canonising function that turns any other dance into a belated, derivative, or outmoded development, whilst connecting American dance with the political ideal of democracy in a move that is essentially nationalistic in nature. Which is what brings me to my comparison with Finland.

'Postmodern Dance' in Finland

In Finland today, 'postmodern dance' seems almost interchangeable with 'contemporary dance'. Historically, the terms emerge almost simultaneously in the 1980s. They have since replaced the third term used at that time, 'new dance', which derives from the British usage and the eponymous *New Dance* magazine by the X6 collective. However, due to the lack of historical understanding of how these terms relate to corporeal practice – what qualifies as 'postmodern' or how 'contemporary' differs from 'postmodern' – in discussions with dancers trained in Finland in the 1990s, I have found that few of them understand the genealogy of the 'postmodern dance' they were taught as being part of the textbook continuum of dance stemming from the Judson Dance Theater in the 1960s, albeit not limited to this group.¹¹ In part, this may be because postmodern dance did not come to Finland from America; rather, the crucial locus in the early 1980s was the Amsterdam School for New Dance Development (SNDO), where American, British, European, and Asian art dance traditions came together. Several generations of Finnish dancemakers have graduated from this school, and once back in Finland, spread the gospel of contemporary dance. In one of the few texts about postmodern dance from the 1980s, Arto Hyvönen (1985) lists Jaana Turunen, Sanna Kekäläinen, Riitta Pasanen, and Soile Lahdenperä, as well as, conditionally, Jorma Uotinen, as 'postmodern dance' in Finland. Uotinen's background was in jazz dance and ballet, whereas Kekäläinen graduated from the London School of Contemporary Dance, with connections to SNDO, where Turunen, Pasanen, and Lahdenperä all studied. However, Hyvönen does not discuss this genealogy.

Another strand of postmodern dance derived from performance art, especially feminist performance art. The early work of Kirsi Monni, for example, or Reijo Kela's site-specific projects, and much of the work of the Suomussalmi group, belong to this tradition. Given the close ties performance art in Finland has to visual

arts and physical theatre, the monikers 'postmodern' and 'postmodernist' have added to the confusion about what, exactly, 'postmodern dance' might be. Lack of research and historiography of art dance contribute to this confusion: the only dissertation on postmodern dance in Finland, Aino Kukkonen's (2014) *Postmoderni liikkeessä*, focuses on the work of Uotinen, Kela, and Kekäläinen at the turn of the 1990s, at which point various 'postmodern' dances had been seen and taught in Finland for nearly a decade.

Like Banes' Judson books, Kukkonen's thesis reveals the power historians wield in categorising dance and defining what is remembered and how. Kukkonen (2014, 10–11, 23–30) situates postmodern dance in theories of postmodernism, allowing her to separate her Finnish cases from the Anglo-American discourse. The early histories of postmodern dance in Finland, including practitioners with much stronger genealogical connections to American postmodern dance than Uotinen, Kela, and Kekäläinen have, are relegated to the background. Transitional figures – notably Ulla Koivisto, who, like Kela, studied with Merce Cunningham in the 1970s – are excluded from this narrative, where Cunningham lies somewhat awkwardly between modern and postmodern.

Of the choreographers she discusses, Kukkonen (2014, esp. 75–76) only notes the 'democratic performance space' in Kela's work, and presents this as Cunningham's influence. She does not posit that Kekäläinen, Uotinen or Kela would have been 'democratic' in either their working methods or aesthetics – despite repeating the claim that the postmodern dance of the 1960s was about 'freedom, democracy, and feminism' (ibid., 33) and associating democracy with the working methods of the key production house of New Dance in Helsinki, Zodiak, led by Monni (ibid., 64, 155). In this manner, democracy loses its focal role in connecting the desirable movement of dancing bodies with the ideal of a nation or with a group that would be purportedly

more democratic than its contemporaries.

Nowadays, the heterogeneous forms that are associated with 'postmodern dance' in Finland do share a vague understanding of contemporary dance forms as 'more democratic' than modern dance or ballet – less focused on the figure of the choreographer, more reliant on improvisational techniques and movement in which all parts of the body are used. However, these 'democratic' qualia are not associated with locality (the Republic of Finland) or ethnicity (Finnishness). Contemporary dance is not seen as 'democracy's body' or as this democracy's body, but rather an elitist endeavour that is inherently international – a proof, if anything, of the Westernness of this part of the world. This speaks of the different history and difference in what kinds of dance and whose dancing bodies qualify as representative of democracy in Finland.

In Finland, ballet was very much a Russian import; for decades, its primary stage was the former theatre of the Russian garrison in Helsinki, Aleksanterinteatteri. As in Germany, the roots of non-balletic art dance were closely tied to women's gymnastics and eurhythmics: free-form or 'barefoot' dance mostly emerged from Finnish dance and sport enthusiasts who returned after studying in German-speaking countries (e.g. Laakkonen and Suhonen 2012). Bordering the Soviet Union, Finland was a target of the propaganda tours of the State Department of the United States, resulting in visits by American companies in the 1960s. However, like the other Nordic countries, Finland also has dancing bodies explicitly associated with the nation-state, a century and a half of history of performed folk dance (kansantanssi, tanhu). After Finnish independence in 1917, folk dances were advocated by temperance movements and women gymnasts, for whom the controlled, symmetrical corporeality of these dances represented the acceptable, correct form of Finnishness, excluding the lewd, unruly, and often drunk bodies of actual Finns dancing, as well as the competitiveness of sport. As in the contemporaneous

forms of modern dance, the aesthetic ideal was the nationalist ideal of the new republic, justified with racist rhetoric: the wholesome, robust, healthy body engaged in regulated physical activity was also a white, *Finnish* body. In the 1930s, the folk-dance movement had strong ties with National Socialist Germany, to the extent that there were arguments made for folk dance to be excluded from the dancing ban during the Winter and Continuation Wars.¹² If anything, it is still this kind of dance that is seen in nationalistic terms as 'the people's body', as something anyone can practice.

The representation of folk dance as an eternal form embodying not the state (Finland) but the nation (ethnic Finns) is related to how 'classical' is used in 'classical ballet' or 'classical Indian dance' to lend these forms a homogeneity and a history that erase their twentieth-century invention (Genné 2000; Banerji 2017). Yet, as the nationalist opposite to the elitist and international art dance, their positioning emphasises Finland's past as a colony (annexed first to Sweden and then Russia), 'where the national [ballet] company becomes a staple of the state's ability to escape the «belatedness» of their emergence as nations', to use André Lepecki's (2006, 126) formulation. The belated emergence of art dance in Finland includes both ballet – the Finnish National Ballet being founded in 1922 – and postmodern dance, which only makes its appearance in the 1980s.

However, if we consider that even in American parlance, 'postmodern dance' was only established with Banes' work in the early 1980s, to function much like earlier labels as promotion of a specific narrative of what American dance is and should be, then this belatedness immediately seems less drastic. Hyvönen (1985) essentially reviews *Terpsichore in Sneakers* five years after its publication and attempts to apply its tenets to Finland. Moreover, if one notes how, in any local form that dance takes, many strands of inspiration and different histories of dancemakers come together, then the local form can no longer be seen simply as

a poor copy of the American original from the 1960s; rather, it becomes a hybrid, much in the manner that these 'originals' were: the Judson Dance Theater emerged from a fortuitous coming together of artists from different fields interested in exploring what can be done as dance or performance, with the generous support of the community that formed their audience and favourable critics who spread knowledge about their work, notably Jill Johnston.

In Conclusion

«Postmodern», once imported to a different historical and local context, causes confusion that reveals its politics; and the prevalence of the Judson Dance Theater in (textbook) histories of dance exemplifies the hegemony of American narratives of the history of dance as an art form. A canon is a prescriptive narrative of aesthetic development and signification, where contemporaneous forms are represented in a stylistic hierarchy in which whatever is framed as the vanguard is never neutral. Research is one means of canonisation (e.g. Dodds 2011, esp. 2–3), while curricular and pedagogical choices are another. Because Banes' books are the key texts taught whenever 'postmodern dance' is evoked, it is important to note what narratives they support and undermine, and to read them in the light of different historical and local contexts.

I hope to have shown that 'postmodern dance' not only depends on definitions of American modern dance, but that to call this dance 'democratic' continues a nationalist argument about the superiority of American dance, and a century of connections between (white) American dance and democracy that both obfuscate the plurality of art dance in America and exclude genealogies and corporealities beyond the United States. 'Democracy' and its adjectival form are used to focus attention on hegemonic white bodies in a manner that aestheticises the political and conceals presumptions about what kinds of corporealities are accepted as 'quotidian',

'pedestrian', or 'normal'. Assumptions about whose dancing bodies are 'democracy's body' – the difference in signification between 'Finnish dance' and 'dance in Finland', for example (see Roms 2011) – require a sensitivity to diversity that seems the more urgent in democratic states where nationalist parties have co-opted ideas of the nation. In the transposition of the term 'postmodern dance' to a context where it no longer signifies in a nationalist fashion makes visible some such uses of power, including the association of 'democracy' with 'vanguard art' or the truly anti-postmodernist reliance on aesthetic judgment.

Notes

1 In the Foucauldian sense, art could be called an apparatus (dispositif): a system of relations between material and discursive practices that has a strategic function of control in society. For Foucault, institutions are discursive formations that create subjects of power and seek to immobilise particular specific subject positions. (Foucault 1980, 194–198; 1982, esp. 222; also n2 below).

2 Foucault (2001, 817–849) discusses the author as a specific kind of subject, but he never relates that subject position to art as an apparatus or institution, nor does he discuss the other kinds of subjects validating something as art.

3 In France, the Revolution of 1789 had done away with the three-estate system, whereas Russia retained a four-estate system (as well as the Julian calendar). Consequently, French commentators on Russian affairs tended to liken Russia to their Ancien Régime (ibid., also Mikkelä 1999, esp. 146–47). The United Kingdom, of course, still upholds a two-estate system in the bicameral parliament.

4 In 1809, Tsar Alexander I granted the newly annexed Finland a Diet that included the same four estates as the Riksdag of the Estates in Sweden. As with most regimes retaining estates of the realm, this form of national assembly was democratic to a very limited degree, leaving large sections of the population without representatives or political rights. Before Finland, only New Zealand had granted active suffrage for women.

5 Literally 'John of the People'. A writer and critic, Sibul had spent some time in jail in Russia due to his revolutionary activities (New York Times 4 April 1906; Poole 1906; Narodny 1909, esp. 201).

6 On 13 July 1912, Narodny (1912a) spoke of ballet as 'nationally aristocratic in character'; on 20 July 1912 (Narodny 1912b), he wrote: 'Of all Russian arts of the stage, ballet is the most aristocratic and the oldest.'

7 The disintegration of the ensemble and the poor quality of the principal dancers in the Ballets Russes was quickly evident for those American critics who had seen the company in Europe, such as Carl Van Vechten. Van Vechten's (1917, 149–61) detailed analysis stamped the company mediocre, 'the dregs of the Russian Ballet.'

8 As Peter Osborne (2013, esp. 49, 71, 75) notes, a crucial issue here is how the aesthetic dimension fails to account for the ontological specificity of art.

9 In the so-called 'Terpsichore in combat boots' debate (Manning 1988; Banes and Manning 1989) Banes insists that 'postmodern' was a term used by practitioners (Banes and Manning 1989, 13), and 'Post-Modern Dance' had been the title of a special issue of TDR in 1975 (K[irby] 1975). Yet, Banes' books established the term as a stylistic category in practice as well as research.

10 Pouillaude (2009) makes the same argument to separate contemporary European art dance from American postmodern dance; see also Osborne (2013, 47–51).

11 Who qualifies as a member of the Judson Dance Theater and why is a great example of canon formation.

12 See Hoppu (2008) and Laine (2015). Finland was the only country participating in the Second World War that banned all social dancing in 1939–44, with a partial dancing ban continuing until 1948 («Suomalaisen seurataansin historiaa» s.a.).

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BIOGRAPHY

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Cultural Rights, Well-being and Democracy in Elderly Care: The Dance Ambassadors as a Case Study

Kai Lehtikoinen

ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to introduce how the Dance Ambassadors are perceived by nursing staff and supervisors in institutions of elderly care. The Dance Ambassadors are a dance-based service concept offered in various social contexts by the Dance Centre of Western Finland. Three central themes were identified in the perspectives of nursing staff: dance as a form of rehabilitation and support, dance as a contribution to a meaningful life, and participation in dance as a basic right. In the research, a multi-sited dance ethnographic approach was adopted to collect data. Then a thematic analysis was conducted in tandem with a descriptive-interpretative mixed methods approach to code and interpret the data. Social and theoretical frames as well as key concepts including cultural rights and cultural well-being are introduced in the article. In the discussion, some critical concerns are highlighted regarding the rehabilitation discourse in relation to dance in elderly care contexts and the unequal access to dance for people in late adulthood, which stands in stark contrast to the Constitution and its emphasis on human rights and equal treatment. Some suggestions are provided to improve the situation.

ABSTRAKTI

Tämä artikkeli tarkastelee, miten hoitohenkilökunta ja esimiehet vanhustyön alueella ymmärtävät tanssikummitoimintaa. Tanssikummit ovat tanssiperustainen hyvinvointipalvelun konsepti, jota Läntinen tanssin aluekeskus tarjoaa erilaisiin sosiaalisiin ympäristöihin. Raportoin kolme keskeistä teemaa, jotka tunnistin käyttämällä monimenetelmäistä kuvailevaa ja tulkitsevaa lähestymistapaa yhdessä teema-analyysin kanssa tutkimusaineistoihin, jotka olin kerännyt monipaikkaista tanssietnografian lähestymistapaa hyödyntämällä: tanssiminen kuntoutuksena ja tukena, tanssi edistämässä mielekästä elämää ja tanssi perusoikeutena. Aavaan myös tutkimukseni sosiaalista ja teoreettista kehystä ja esittelen avainkäsitteet kuten kulttuuriset oikeudet ja kulttuurihyvinvoinnin. Keskusteluosassa esitän kritiikkiä liittyen kuntoutusdiskurssiin, jonka kautta tanssi usein ymmärretään vanhustyön alueella. Lisäksi nostan esiin, miten myöhäisikäisten ihmisten kohdalla epätasa-arvoiset mahdollisuudet osallistua tanssiin ovat ristiriidassa perustuslain ja sen korostamien ihmisoikeuksien ja yhdenvertaisen kohtelun ajatusten kanssa. Lopuksi esitän muutamia ehdotuksia tilanteen parantamiseksi.

Cultural Rights, Well-being and Democracy in Elderly Care: The Dance Ambassadors as a Case Study

Kai Lehtikoinen

Introduction

In the ArtsEqual Research Initiative, located at the interface between dance research, dance educational research and medical humanities, my research focuses on dance in elderly care in Finland. The ArtsEqual Research Initiative is supported by the Academy of Finland's Strategic Research Council under Grant 293199/2015. ArtsEqual investigates how the arts and arts education can meet the social challenges that Finland will face in the 2020s. To investigate democratic participation in the participatory work of Tanssikummit (Dance Ambassadors), a dance-based service promoting the well-being of people in late adulthood in Southwest Finland, the research questions were as follows. How is the purpose of the activity articulated by different stakeholders? How do people engage in dance through the activity? How does the activity generate cultural well-being? To what extent does the activity reinforce the implementation of cultural rights?

In this article, I will use excerpts from the data to address mainly the first question from the perspective of the nursing staff and supervisors in elderly care that were interviewed for the research. Due to space constraints, only English translations of the extracts will be displayed. Next, I will discuss previous research and then introduce the Dance Ambassadors service concept and shed light on my methodology and the key concepts that framed the research.

Previous research

Numerous studies on dance, dance therapy and movement therapy suggest that dance has an impact

and effect on the health and well-being of people in late adulthood. The benefits of dancing can range from positive effects on functional mobility and motor skills (e.g. Houston and McGill 2013, McKee and Hackney 2013) to bodily awareness and spatial cognition (e.g. McKee and Hackney 2013; Murcia et al. 2010; Wallmann et al. 2009) and from physical balance (McKinley et al. 2008; da Silva Borges et al. 2012) to skills learning (Rösler et al. 2002). Dancing can also have positive effects on cognitive function and memory (e.g. Ravelin et al. 2013; Guzmán-García et al. 2011; Kattenstroth et al. 2010) and participation in social interaction (e.g. Bräuninger 2014; Houston and McGill 2013; Murcia et al. 2010). In addition, dancing can reduce anxiety and distress (e.g. Palo-Bengtsson and Ekman 2002; Duignan et al. 2009), stress (Kreutz 2008) and even chronic pain (Murcia et al. 2010).

Whilst acknowledging that there may be methodological issues with studies on the health benefits of dance, and that approaches in dance practices – and in doing research – vary, there is enough evidence to suggest that dancing does provide benefits for people in late adulthood. These benefits, such as the ones mentioned above, can contribute significantly towards the experienced well-being and quality of life of people who engage in dance activities.

National context

In Finland, where increasing life expectancy marks a shift towards an increasing elderly population and a growing sustainability gap, policymakers have become interested in the benefits of participation in



Photo: Riikka Campomanes

dance and other arts activities. Researcher Heikki Oksanen from the Government Institute for Economic Research defines the concept of the sustainability gap as the estimated imbalance in projected government revenue and expenditure (Oksanen 2014, 43). In their report on welfare services, Development Director Ulla-Maija Laiho from the Ministry of Employment and Economy and researcher Pekka Lith point out that the sustainability gap is partially linked to the social fact that when people live longer and retire, they also tend to use more and more public health and social services, which increases public costs. Meanwhile, due to a low birth rate and low immigration, there is an insufficiently active workforce to generate the necessary amount of income tax to maintain the sustainability of the welfare system. This imbalance creates a situation where there is a need to make savings or cuts to public health and social services, where the costs are remarkable (Laiho and Lith 2011, 10). As the sustainability gap grows, the situation calls for new means, such as dance-based services, of achieving well-being to keep people in late adulthood healthy, socially active and sharp in order to reduce – or at least not increase – costs in public health and social services.

However, it is not just money that matters. At the individual level, it matters that people can make life meaningful by engaging in arts and culture

throughout their lifespan and in all life situations. In 2010, motivated by a dynamic and holistic view of health and well-being in Finland, art and culture were recognised in a five-year national action programme that aimed to 'promote well-being and health by means of art and culture and to enhance inclusion at the individual, community and societal levels' (Liikainen 2010, 4). In the programme, 18 actions were proposed. They ranged from legislative and administrative measures to funding, and from cross-sectoral collaboration to research, training and the dissemination of information (Liikainen 2010). Consequently, the programme paved the way for arts-based services for well-being, such as dance, in elderly care. In the past seven years, such initiatives have been emerging increasingly across the country (Lehikoinen 2017). Next, I will introduce one such initiative – namely, the Dance Ambassadors.

Dance Ambassadors

The Dance Ambassadors concept can be understood as a low-threshold, dance-based service for well-being offered to organisations and municipalities by the Dance Centre of Western Finland (DCWF). Established in 2005 as one of seven regional dance centres in Finland, DCWF caters to the two provinces in the southwestern part of the country: Finland Proper and

Satakunta. As a third sector organisation (i.e. a non-governmental, not-for-profit association) in the field of arts and culture, DCWF is financed by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the cities of Turku, Pori and Salo. Its mission is to promote dance art, boost its availability and accessibility in the region, improve its operational conditions and employ professionals in dance (Leinonen-Vainio 2013).

The Dance Ambassadors service concept was introduced by DCWF in 2009. The service concept emerged from the testing of dance-based initiatives with people in late adulthood who were receiving 24-hour institutionalised care in the city of Turku. The testing, which included both performing for people and engaging them in dance through workshops, took place as part of Hymykuopat (Dimples), a project funded by the European Social Fund from 2009 to 2011. Eventually, a long-term approach was adopted, where professional dancers frequently participate in the everyday lives of the care homes and their residents. Riikka Campomanes, the producer of DCWF, explains as follows:

In other words, ... the core of the Dance Ambassadors [service] ... to do [it] durably as part of the everyday ... it is not a sort of momentary, like, the artist buzzing on the spot. Instead, the artist is there like the nursing staff, like, all day working in that community. Thence, s/he can ... participate flexibly in the everyday [life] of the community. (Interview 18.3.2016)

Later, the idea was conceptualised as a service concept including a name and brand identity. The service idea was further developed by transposing the idea from nursing homes to home care visits to people in late adulthood living in their own homes. Subsequently, the service idea was transposed in a range of other contexts including, for example, kindergartens, youth centres and schools.

Thus, the aim of the Dance Ambassadors' work is to enhance the well-being of individual people and groups by bringing professional dancers and dance teachers into different social contexts to engage people in dancing, dance and movement improvisation and everyday social interaction. As a hybrid practice at the interface between dance and other occupational realms, the concept locates dancers and dance teachers as practitioners outside their more traditional fields of work. Such positioning suggests expanded professionalism in dance and dance education, and it requires new skills and competencies from them.

This service concept and the activities that it entails can be articulated from at least four perspectives: (1) participants, (2) dancers working as dance ambassadors, (3) the producer selling the concept to municipalities and (4) supervisors and members of the nursing staff in elderly care institutions. All these perspectives are worthy of detailed exploration. However, due to space constraints this article will focus only on how the supervisors and members of the nursing staff have addressed the purpose of the Dance Ambassadors in elderly care.

On theoretical frames and key concepts

To explore the Dance Ambassadors in elderly care, I draw from service design and economics to talk about a particular service concept. This may seem like imposing neoliberal jargon uncritically on dance and dance education. However, the term 'service concept' is used in this article because, in 2011, DCWF launched a project to develop its dance-based business ideas as part of its third sector industry structure. Subsequently, the project led to the conceptualisation of dance-based service products of well-being (Honkanen and Skaffari 2012). More generally, in Finland, such an endeavour is linked to political interests to encourage third sector organisations from the arts and culture field to provide services of well-being (Koivisto et al. 2010).

In reference to the services of third sector organisations in culture, sport and youth work, business director Marjut Paju (2010) links service concepts to the idea that a range of activities can be designed to constitute an operational entity or a service chain to meet the needs of a targeted customer group. For Paju, a service concept includes not just the service idea but also how the service is communicated and delivered. In service design, such strategic planning is called productification. For example, researchers Tiina Tuominen et al. (2015) define productification as a process through which a service product and the value that it offers are crystallised by describing and standardising the different parts of the service product. While some artists may oppose the use of economic terms to discuss the arts, I find terms such as 'productification' and 'service concept' useful because they help us distinguish dance-based services from 'mere' dancing by highlighting not only the idea of value creation but also the fact that services are generally designed and communicated to meet the needs of particular groups of people.

To discuss dance-based services in elderly care, I draw from researcher Tuulikki Laes' (2013) work in music education research and talk about people in *late adulthood*. I find it important to avoid using concepts such as 'the elderly' or 'seniors', which often entail narrow or negative connotations that limit identity and social agency. Indeed, it could be suggested that many people in late adulthood wish to identify and be treated as individuals beyond such restrictive concepts.

Drawing from discussions in Taikusydän (2017), a multi-sectoral coordination and communication centre for activities and research in the broad field of arts, culture and well-being in Finland, I use the concept of cultural well-being to talk about a subjectively acknowledged or collectively shared experience that suggests that participation in the arts and culture can have positive effects on the physical,

mental or social well-being of people, and that such participation is connected to the subjectively experienced quality of life. The concept of cultural well-being entails the following idea:

Culture and its impacts that enhance well-being permeate the person's entire lifespan. Art and culture are understood as part of good quality of life and lifelong learning. A human being is seen as an active agent. (Taikusydän 2017)

In my theorising, cultural well-being is intricately linked to sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) ideas on cultural and social capital – and also bodily capital – that participation in dance enhances. These forms of capital can be linked to philosopher Martha Nussbaum's (2011) idea of capabilities that enable people to act in their lives in ways that contribute towards well-being.

Cultivating these different forms of capital is intricately connected to basic human rights:

The rights of people to participate in the arts and culture as well as to develop themselves and their communities through them and the possibility of people to express themselves freely are basic cultural rights safeguarded by the UN Declaration of Human Rights, several human rights conventions that oblige Finland and the Constitution of Finland. (Lehikoinen and Rautiainen 2016, 2)

To perceive participation in dance, as well as in other artistic activities, as a cultural right is crucial because cultural equality, when realised, makes it possible to build up cultural, social and bodily forms of capital, 'to be part of every individual's ability to make choices and to be active in their life in ways that produce well-being and meaningful life' (Lehikoinen and Rautiainen 2016, 2).

However, democracy in terms of equal access to the arts and culture does not guarantee well-being as such. As Nussbaum (2011) points out, besides equal opportunities, people need to use the capabilities that such opportunities provide them and act in ways that generate personal well-being and common good. For that to happen, facilitation and encouragement are often needed – especially in elderly care, where institutionalised people can become passive quickly. Thus, with democratic participation in dance, I refer not only to equal access to dance and equal opportunities to contribute to the contents of dance activities but also to the appreciation of how different stakeholders articulate the purpose of dance activities – dancing in elderly care in this research.

On methodology

To investigate the work of the Dance Ambassadors, I applied a dance ethnographic fieldwork approach (Williams 1999), together with a descriptive-interpretative mixed methods approach (Elliott and Timulak 2005) and thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006). In anthropology, doing ethnography generally entails long-term fieldwork at a single site. However, in this study, I utilised the approach of multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1995). Such an approach can be used for studies that address multiple sites that share a single phenomenon, such as the presence of the Dance Ambassadors. In my research, multi-sited ethnography helped me trace the work of the Dance Ambassadors across and within multiple locations of activity, and hence, grasp the complexity of the work as it unfolds at different sites.

Thus, in the spring of 2016, I followed the work of six Dance Ambassadors over a period of five months at three sites – in a home care service for people in late adulthood and in two assisted living residence units. The home care service was provided by the City of Kaarina, while the assisted living residence units were part of the municipal social services of the City of

Turku, both located in Southwest Finland.

The research data consist of the field notes from observing the practice of two Dance Ambassadors, a transcript of a focus group with six Dance Ambassadors, a transcript of an in-depth interview with a producer of the Dance Ambassadors, professional journals of the Dance Ambassadors from a period of approximately four months (i.e. personal notes concerning their work and interactions with participants), transcripts of nine participant interviews, transcripts of two focus groups held with staff members of two institutions of elderly care and transcripts of interviews with two supervisors from the institutions studied.

The recorded interviews and focus groups were transcribed verbatim. I conducted purposeful sampling (Creswell 1998) to meet the saturation criterion as I worked to identify key ideas regarding the Dance Ambassadors service concept. After reading the data repeatedly, I engaged in a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006), resulting in three central themes that are discussed in this article as especially central to the nursing staff perspectives on the Dance Ambassadors' activity. Thematic analysis provided a flexible qualitative analysis method to search, identify, analyse and interpret patterns or themes within all data collected for the project. I started with a preliminary list of ideas that I identified as significant in the data. Eventually, however, I ended up coding as many themes as I was able to identify. In this process, some codes surfaced from the interviewees' narratives while others were taken from the literature. While coding, I remained cognizant of the surrounding context of the coded extracts to grasp the contextual significance. For me, the coding process was like having a 'dialogue with the data' (Elliot and Timulak 2005, 154). More generally, the analysis entailed a 'constant moving back and forward' (Braun and Clarke 2006, 86) between all the data, the coded extracts and the writing of my analysis, which I gradually constructed from such interpretative dialogue.

Analysis – central themes from the nursing staff perspectives

In the following section, I present the results of the thematic analysis undertaken. The central themes generated through the thematic analysis of the Dance Ambassadors' activity from the perspectives of nursing staff are *dance as a form of rehabilitation and support*, *dance as a contribution to a meaningful life* and *participation in dance: a central right*. I will comment on each of them in the sub-sections.

Dance as a form of rehabilitation and support

In elderly care, supervisors and members of the nursing staff often see dance as a form of rehabilitation. For example, in the interview extract below, dancing with and for people in late adulthood is grasped as a form of social rehabilitation.

She [the Dance Ambassador] lives everyday life with our residents and sort of operationalises it. That is what I think is her [task]...
(Interview, supervisor, assisted living unit 7.6.2016)

In the next extract, dance is grasped as a form of physical rehabilitation that improves the functional mobility of people in late adulthood.

Well, physical activity, yes... when people participate, their limbs move, arms especially... it makes our nursing work easier afterwards.
(Interview, supervisor, assisted living unit 7.6.2016)

However, as the extract shows, the physical benefits of dancing were also seen to generate ripple effects that extend beyond the well-being of the participants and make a positive impact on the work of the nursing staff.

In other words, the interviewee, a supervisor of an assisted living unit, can be seen to construct the work of the Dance Ambassadors not only as a form of rehabilitation but also as a form of help or support for regular nursing.

Dance as a contribution to a meaningful life

Social exclusion and loneliness have been acknowledged as contributors to depression in late adulthood (Ansio et al. 2017). In the elderly care sector, there is an apparent lack of resources (time, money, skills) for the nursing staff to contribute to ensuring that the residents have meaningful lives. In the next extract, participation in dancing is contrasted to the everyday monotony that people in late adulthood experience in elderly care. That is, participation in dance is seen as providing meaningful content for life:

... then there is the psychological [aspect], that there is meaningfulness, and the day is not so long. There is [a] programme in it.
(Interview, supervisor, assisted living unit 7.6.2016)

In a focus group, some members of the nursing staff pointed out that dancing generates joy, which can be regarded as an important element of a meaningful life for people in late adulthood. In the work of the Dance Ambassadors, it is often small things, such as improvising with colourful scarves, which generate delight and joy in the participants. One of the nurses describes this as follows:

...it makes you happy and... I ...have observed it, and then there were those silk scarves, so all those colours ... I am sure, a person gets really a lot from it. I would believe that it is really necessary and fun.
(A nurse in a focus group 7.6.2016)

In the focus group, the idea of meaningful life content was discussed further by two of the nurses as follows:

Nurse 1: Well, it [dancing] introduces body language ... you can express yourself and realise that you can, despite your bad condition, move, and you can dance, for example, in a wheelchair. And surely, that brightens the day for quite a many. They may get quite personal attention and kind of human closeness.

Nurse 2: That's what it is, and that's what they miss.

Nurse 1: Yes, and you can enjoy your life even when bedridden.

Nurse 2: That is true. We as nurses are not able to be present all the time. We do the assigned or daily tasks, but being together is minimal and so is spare time.

Nurse 1: Yes, and recreational activities more generally, as there is no time.

Nurse 2: So, that's a bit of a problem, exactly.

(Extract from focus group 7.6.2016)

As the extract above shows, active participation in dancing is seen as providing opportunities for self-expression, learning and realising one's full potential despite personal predicaments. Such qualities in the Dance Ambassadors service concept were seen to contribute to the meaningful life content of the participants. Furthermore, the Dance Ambassadors' presence in the moment and the physical closeness that the work entails were seen as qualities that contribute towards meaningful lives for the participants. Interestingly, these were also qualities that the nurses saw as missing from their work.

It could be suggested that a meaningful life also includes people being treated – not only in elderly care but also in life more generally – with dignity by taking into account their identities, life histories and interests.

In contrast to nursing, which one of the supervisors in elderly care saw as a form of generalising practice that treats people as a mass, the work of the Dance Ambassadors was seen as an individualising practice that acknowledges the participants' identities and histories. To encounter every participant with such dignity requires from the Dance Ambassadors mindful attention, to be present in the moment, and respectful dialogue, where paying attention to what the other is communicating – and also what the other is not necessarily pointing out – matters.

Participation in dance: a cultural right

The nursing staff and supervisors interviewed for this research understood that participation in dance and other cultural activities is meaningful for people in late adulthood. They also seemed to acknowledge that the right of people in late adulthood to participate in dancing and other cultural activities is often subject to the availability of opportunities for participation. Indeed, as the extract below shows, physical distance, lack of access to transportation and the goodwill of relatives are frequently mentioned factors that determine who gets to leave home and participate in activities provided in city centres:

Here, we are so far ... it is not possible just to walk to some event, because a car is needed. And not everyone has a [free] taxi card [which municipalities grant based on Social Services or Disability Services Act]. It limits their ability to move. If we were close to the city centre, it would be entirely different. One could just simply walk out of the door and walk to any theatre or whatever. So, their access is highly unequal. Relatives take out those who are in a better condition. That clearly improves opportunities.

(Interview, supervisor, assisted living unit 7.6.2016)

The limiting factors as described above can be understood as mechanisms of inequality. That is, they can effectively hinder participation in dance as a basic and undisputed cultural right. Consequently, such mechanisms, when not removed, hinder equal access to cultural well-being.

Conclusion and critical discussion

In this article, I introduced the Dance Ambassadors as a case study example of dance-based services for well-being that are becoming increasingly available in Finland due to the current societal and political pressures to keep people in late adulthood healthy and active. The justification for such services is often connected to existing research on the connections between dance, health and well-being in late adulthood. Indeed, as shown in the brief literature review provided in this article, we already know that participation in dance can provide benefits to people in late adulthood. Such benefits have attracted the attention of political decision-makers, who face the societal and economic challenges that the rapidly ageing population and growing sustainability gap have created in Finland.

In the article, I discussed how the purpose of the work of the Dance Ambassadors has been perceived and valued by the nursing staff and supervisors in particular elderly care institutions in Southwest Finland, where I did my fieldwork. Using a multi-sited dance ethnographic approach to collect the data and thematic analysis combined with a descriptive-interpretative mixed methods approach to code and interpret the data, I identified three themes: dance as a form of rehabilitation and support, dance as a contribution to a meaningful life and participation in dance as a basic right.

In light of the data, it can be argued that the nursing staff and supervisors interviewed tend to perceive the Dance Ambassadors' work – dancing for and with people – as a form of physical or social

rehabilitation for people in late adulthood. While such a perception sees participation in dance as beneficial, if embedded in a nursing discourse or more generally in a medical discourse, it may provide a rather limited and instrumental view of dance as a tool for rehabilitation only. In addition, the nursing staff and supervisors saw that dance activities provide meaningful life content and joy for the participants. Here again, the work of the Dance Ambassadors is understood instrumentally as a fix that helps to patch up the lack of resources (time, money, skills) that causes a lack of contact and monotony in everyday life for people in late adulthood in elderly care.

If the above-described views are dominant in institutions of elderly care, this may leave other views, which see participation in dance first and foremost as a basic cultural right that is guaranteed to everyone by the Constitution, in the shadows. Therefore, it is important that the Dance Ambassadors collaborate with nursing staff and supervisors in elderly care and help them understand that dance as a basic cultural right is much more than rehabilitation. It is meant to ensure that everyone – regardless of their age, life situation or ability – has an opportunity to participate and develop themselves together with others through the medium of dance. It is intended to give everyone an opportunity to express themselves through the medium of dance. Consequently, cultural well-being, which consists of increased cultural and social capital and strengthened capabilities, can emerge from such participation and lead to improved physical, social and mental well-being.

The problem is that participation in dance is not an option for all people in late adulthood who live in assisted living residence units or who live at home alone and receive care from the municipal home care service. The nursing staff and supervisors interviewed acknowledged that there are limiting factors in elderly care contexts regarding equal access to dance. In my analysis, such factors were identified as mechanisms of inequality that make achieving cultural well-being

through participating in dance possible for some people, but not others. Such inequality stands in stark contrast to the Constitution and its emphasis on human rights and equal treatment. Indeed, the requirement of equal treatment in the Constitution means that all people must have equal access to dance and other cultural activities and, through them, enjoy equal opportunities to enhance their cultural well-being. To ensure equal access to dance as a cultural right for people in late adulthood, professionals in dance and dance education need not only to collaborate with the nursing staff and supervisors in elderly care but also work strategically to advocate the value of dance in society. This can be done, for example, by disseminating research on the connections between dance, dance education, health and well-being, and also with participatory workshops that give decision-makers personal experience of the cultural well-being that dance can generate in people.

Finally, from the perspective of basic cultural rights, a question arises. Does the work of the Dance Ambassadors, when available, contribute towards equal access to dance as art? The Dance Ambassadors activate people and engage them in dance and movement improvisation in the assisted living residences or private homes of people in late adulthood. This, according to my preliminary analysis, contributes towards cultural well-being, but only partially to equal access to dance. The problem is that the Dance Ambassadors service concept does not take into account that some people in late adulthood, regardless of their condition, may, for example, also wish to see dance performances at performance venues on equal terms with other audience members. Due to a lack of transportation and assistance, people in late adulthood often experience great difficulties in participating in such performances even if they might want to. This puts them in a disadvantaged position compared to many other people, as their cultural rights are not fulfilled. To improve their

situation, what is needed – besides engaging them in dancing and movement improvisation – is also to get them out of their homes to participate in dance events at performance venues. This calls for dance organisations, such as regional dance centres, to provide assistance, companionship and transportation for people in late adulthood. This could also provide new opportunities for professionals in dance and dance education to collaborate with elderly care institutions by conceptualising dance-based services that include interpretative co-reflection of dance in ways that stimulate the cognitive functions and social engagement of people in late adulthood.

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BIOGRAPHY

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«Når noko rart blir naturleg» Ungdomsskuleelevar si oppleving med deltaking i eit kunstnarisk danseprosjekt.

Reidun Nerhus Fretland

ABSTRACT

In this article, the focus is on creative dance in school, democratic teaching and co-determination. Teaching dance in Norway has a low standing and corresponds to a small fraction of the curriculum's intentions and goals. However, research indicates that students have a desire for greater involvement. The study, therefore, investigates what happens when secondary school students participate in an artistic dance project led by professional dance instructors. The students were expected to be active participants in the creation and performance of dance art. There was a particular focus on whether the students experienced co-determination, whether the pedagogical approach could be characterised as democratic teaching as well as what this meant for the students' learning in the process. The methodological approach was qualitative, comprising personal interviews with 17 students who participated in the project. The analysis shows that most students had little experience with creative dance prior to the start of the project. They experienced the project as «strange and unusual» at first and «natural, fun and educational» thereafter. All students experienced co-determination. The dance project can be an example of democratic teaching, whereby students express an enhanced sense of opinion and attitude towards dance as an art form. It also indicates a possible way in which to realize the curriculum's goals and intentions regarding dance as creative and aesthetic expression.

SAMANDRAG

I denne artikkelen blir det sett fokus på skapande dans i skulen, demokratisk undervisning og medbestemmelse. Danseundervisninga i Noreg står svakt og samsvarar i liten grad med læreplanen sine intensjonar og mål. Forsking syner at elevane ynskjer større medverknad. Studien undersøker kva som skjer når ungdomsskuleelevar deltek i eit kunstnarisk danseprosjekt leia av profesjonelle danseinstruktørar. Elevane skulle vere aktive deltakarar i skaping og framføring av dansekunst. Det vart særleg sett fokus på elevane si oppleving av medbestemmelse, om den pedagogiske tilnærminga illustrere ei demokratisk undervisning og kva dette kan bety for elevane si læring i prosessen. Metodologisk tilnærming var kvalitativ og det var gjennomført personlige intervju med 17 elevar som deltok i prosjektet. Analysen viser at dei fleste elevane hadde liten erfaring med skapande dans før prosjektet starta. Dei opplevde opplegget som «rart og uvanleg» i starten, men etter kvart «naturleg, kjekt og lærerikt». Alle elevane opplevde medbestemmelse. Danseprosjektet kan vere eit eksempel på demokratisk undervisning der elevane uttrykte ei forsterka meining og haldning til dans som kunstform. Det kan og syne ein måte å realisere læreplanens mål og intensjonar med dans som skapande og estetisk uttrykk.

«Når noko rart blir naturleg» Ungdomsskuleelevar si oppleving med deltaking i eit kunstnarisk danseprosjekt.

Reidun Nerhus Fretland

Introduksjon

Å danse har vore ein viktig menneskeleg måte å uttrykke seg på og dans er i dag eit stort forskingsfelt med mange genre og uttryksformer, både innan det kunstnarlege og det pedagogiske feltet (Østern 2010, 2015). Dans har også vore ein del av norske læreplanar i snart 80 år. Først i kroppsøvningsfaget med Normalplanen i 1939 (Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet 1939) og seinare også i musikkfaget med Mønsterplanen i 1974 (Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet 1974). Dersom dagens læreplan blir realisert i skulen, vil det innebere at elevane opplever lærings situasjonar med dans både som kultur- og aktivitetsform, og dans som skapande og estetisk uttrykk (KD 2006; KD 2015). Forsking på kroppsøvningsfaget viser derimot at dette ikkje er tilfelle og at dans i skulen ikkje blir prioritert i tråd med læreplanen (Berggraf-Jacobsen 2003; Karlsen 2014; Moen et.al. 2015; Arnesen et.al. 2017; Rustad 2017). Dans blir sett på som lite viktig samanlikna med andre aktivitetar i faget. Ei forklaring som går att i forskinga er at lærarane har mangelfull kompetanse til å undervise elevar i dans. Moen et.al (2015) hevdar elevane, når dei får spørsmål om det, ynskjer meir dans enn det dei opplever å få. Elevane opplever dei kan kome med ynskjer, men at læraren i stor grad bestemmer innhaldet i kroppsøvingstimane. Ynskja og meiningane til elevane ser ut til å påverke lærarane sine val av undervisningsinnhald i liten grad, i følge Moen. Slike haldningar til elevars medbestemmelse er ikkje i tråd med opplærings verdigrunnlag, som mellom anna seiar at: «Skolen skal gi elevane mulighet til å medvirke og til å lære hva demokrati betyr i praksis.» I forhold til opplevd demokrati i

praksis står det vidare at: «Elevane skal erfare at de blir lyttet til i skolehverdagen, at de har reell innflytelse, og at de kan påvirke det som angår dem.» (KD 2017). Med andre ord indikerer funn hos Moen et.al (2015) at elevane opplever mangel på medbestemmelse i praksis.

Mangel på samsvar mellom læreplan og praksis, både når det gjeld undervisning i dans og elevars rett til medbestemmelse utgjør mitt springbrett for denne artikkelens tema som handlar om skapande dans i skulen, demokratisk undervisning og medbestemmelse. I følge Engelsrud (2010) og Rustad (2017) vil det å lære barn og unge om og i dans krevje at det blir gitt tid nok til å «vere i dansen» for at opplevinga også skal medføre læring og eigarskap. Vidare vil dansefagleg kompetanse hos underviseren vere viktig, slik Mattson (2016) tydeleg viser i si avhandling. I Mattsons prosjekt blir elevar undervist av lærarar som har gjennomgått opplæring av profesjonelle dansarar. Casen som denne artikkelen bygger på undersøker elevars erfaring frå danseprosjektet *UNG 2016* der profesjonelle, og ikkje lærarar, planla og gjennomførte undervisninga, men der samarbeidet med skulen og lærarane var vesentleg.

Presentasjon av UNG 2016

UNG 2016 er eit samarbeidsprosjekt mellom Sogn og Fjordane Teater (SoFT), Den Kulturelle Skulesekken (DKS) og norske grunnskular i fylket Sogn og Fjordane. Prosjektet vart gjennomført ved seks ulike skular våren 2016. I løpet av ei veke på kvar skule, skulle det utarbeidast seks ulike danseforestillingar med framsyning på det lokale kulturhuset laurdagen. Eit kunstnarisk team, leia av ein koreograf og fem profesjonelle dansekunstnarar, hadde ansvar

for innhaldet i prosjektet. Skulane la til rette for førebuingarbeidet på skulen, medan SoFt tok seg av det praktiske knytt til danseførestillinga. I invitasjonen til skulane skriv SoFt og DKS at dei gjennom prosjektet: «...ynsker at born og unge ikkje berre skal vere tilskodarar, men aktive deltakarar, at dei skal skape kunst og sjølve vere utøvarar og aktørar». Teamleiaren uttrykte at målet ikkje var å innstudere etterlikningar av koreograferte danserørsler, men oppmuntre elevane til å improvisere og utvikle sine individuelle og ekspressive rørsler. Når eleven hadde utvikla eit «dansemateriale» skulle uttrykka settast saman til ei ferdig danseførestilling i eit samarbeid mellom elevar og dei profesjonelle dansarane. Deltakarane i prosjektet var ungdomsskuleelvar og omfanget innebar mellom anna at ordinær undervisning vart erstatta med deltaking i danseprosjektet heile skuleveka. I tillegg skulle ein fridag nyttast. Det å ha berre dans på timeplanen seks dagar i strekk, var unikt i Sogn og Fjordane og kanskje i norsk skulesamheng for øvrig. Tilsvarende unikt var det at seks profesjonelle dansekunstnarar jobba saman med elevane heile tida.

Med dette som utgangspunkt vart det interessant å undersøke kva erfaringar ungdomsskuleelvar uttrykte ved å delta i eit danseprosjekt der dei var aktivt med for å skape ei danseførestilling. Eg var særleg interessert i å stille spørsmål ved kva elevane opplevde. Særleg har eg med meg omgrep som medbestemmelse (jfr. innleiinga), og om prosessen med å skape danseførestillinga, ut frå ei pedagogisk tilnærming, kan seiast å illustrere demokratisk undervisning. I tillegg er det interessant å finne ut meir om korleis elevane uttrykker seg om skapande dans og kva deltaking i danseprosjektet betydde for dei. Forskingsspørsmåla er:

- Korleis opplevde elevane det å delta i danseprosjektet UNG 2016?
- Kva kan elevanes læring fortelje om betydning av medbestemmelse?

Artikkelen er strukturert i fire delar. Først eit teoretisk rammeverk og forskning som omhandlar skapande dans i skulen, samt demokratisk undervisning og medbestemmelse. Andre del tek føre seg den kvalitative metoden som er nytta, før del tre presenterer og diskuterer resultatata opp mot den teoretisk tilnærming. Til slutt oppsummerar eg artikkelens svar på forskningsspørsmåla.

Skapande dans i skulen

Å skape dans, og ikkje kun reproducere andre sine (ferdige) dansar, er ein del av den grunnleggjande danseopplæringa i skulen, slik Glad (2012:65) formulerar at dans «...må være et bredt sammensatt kunst- og kulturfag...» der elevane skal få erfare og oppleve både det å skape og gjenskape dans. Sidan UNG 2016 er eit kunstnarisk prosjekt, er denne artikkel avgrensa til å omhandle det å skape dans.

Robinson (2006) hevdar at utdanningssystem jamt over er basert på det same hierarkiet av skulefag, der matematikk og språk er på toppen, så humaniora, før kunstfaga på botn. Han hevdar vidare at kunst og musikk vanlegvis har høgare status i skulen enn drama og dans. Bamford (2012) viser i sin rapport, som mellom anna har med ei kartlegging av situasjonen for kunst- og kulturoplæringa i Norge, at skulen si prioritering av basisfaga, matematikk og språk, har auka. Fokus på estetiske fag er redusert og dans er særleg dårleg ivaretatt i grunnskulen.

I følgje to internasjonale studiar som omtalar skapande dans i skulen (Mattsson 2016; Steinberg og Steinberg 2016) viser deira empiriske undersøkingar med fokus på skapande dans i kroppsøvingfaget i grunnskulen, at det eksisterer lite kunnskap om feltet både når det gjeld innhald og omfang. Begge har funn som viser at ei meir elevsentrert lærarrolle er vesentleg for at elevane skal føle seg trygge og våge å utforske og uttrykke seg gjennom dans. Når læraren underviser på ein måte der vedkomande er merksam på elevane sine meiningar og behov og tek omsyn



Foto: Frode Fretland

til desse i si danseundervisning, likar majoriteten av elevar det å skape dans. I deira forskning kjem ei pedagogisk tilnærming som praktiserer demokratisk undervisning til syne, noko som står i kontrast til det Moen et.al (2015) fann ut gjaldt norske forhold. I den demokratiske tilnærminga som ein kan sjå att hos Mattson (2016) vert betydninga av den sosiale konteksten og samhandling mellom individ og omgjevnad trekt fram. I forhold til betydninga av trygghet i rommet viste det seg for eksempel at det å dempe lyset var viktig for at eleven skulle våge å utfolde seg i dansen. Musikkbruk var ei anna erfaring. Her viste det seg at kjent musikk for elevane skapte reproduksjon av rørsler, medan ukjent musikk medførte større variasjon og utforskning. Ved å endre lærarrolla, vart lærarane i Mattsons pedagogiske intervensjon merksame på elevane som vanlegvis ikkje er så synlege i faget, noko som hadde stor betydning for læringsmiljøet. I Steinberg og Steinberg sin studie (2016) tok lærarane omsyn til elevanes følelsar i tilrettelegginga av undervisninga. For eksempel fungerte det best for elevane dersom dei fekk bestemme samarbeidspartnara sjølv og om dei fekk nytte eigne idear til rørsler ved visning for andre. Dette vart teke omsyn til og syner dermed ei demokratisk tilnærming i

den skapande danseundervisninga. Vidare vart det lagt vekt på å unngå negativ tilbakemelding frå medelevar, då det virka hemmande på elevanes skaparevne og vilje til å vise fram det dei hadde laga.

Sjølv om skapande dans er dårleg ivaretatt i grunnskulen er det likefullt noko elevane skal få opplæring i, ifølgje ulike deler av den nasjonale læreplanens intensjonar og mål. I den overordna delen av læreplanverket er ikkje dans spesifikt nemnt, men vil ha, slik eg ser det, nær samheng med opplæringas verdigrunnlag. Der står det mellom anna at: «Skolen skal la elevane utfolde skaperglede, engasjement og utforskertrang...» og «Vår estetiske sans utvikles i møte med ulike kulturelle uttrykk, og de bidrar til å løfte fram nye perspektiver. Kunst- og kulturuttrykk har også betydning for den enkeltes personlige utvikling.» (KD 2017). Den skapande dimensjonen kjem og fram i formåla i både læreplanen for musikk og i kroppsøving, der dans blir omtala som ein sentral del av faga. Medan den samla kompetansen i musikk skal «...utvikle skapende, samhandlende og integrerte mennesker...» står det i formålet til kroppsøving at faget skal «...

medverke til at mennesket sansar, opplever, lærer og skapar med kroppen.» og at faget «...stimulerer til eksperimentering og kreativ utfolding». Som eksempel på kompetansemål som inkluderer skapande dans i desse faga står det etter 10. trinn at «Mål for opplæringa er at elevane skal kunne...», «skape egne danseuttrykk med utgangspunkt i musikkens karakter» (i musikk) og «trene på og utøve dansar frå ungdomskulturar og andre kulturar, og saman med andre medelevar skape enkle dansekompisjonar» (i kroppsøving). I tillegg kan elevar som tek valfaget Sal og scene møte skapande dans også der (KD 2006; KD 2015). Skapande dans er altså noko alle elevar skal få opplæring i ut frå læreplanen, men den spesifiserer ikkje noko i høve omfang. Studien til Arnesen et.al. (2017) rangerer mellom anna tidsbruk til ulike aktivitetar i kroppsøving der det å lage sine egne dansar er ein av dei. Tidsbruken til denne aktiviteten er såpass liten (2,4 timar pr. år), at elevane ikkje får nok tid til å utvikle denne kompetansen. Rustad (2017) argumenterer for ein læreplan som er tydelegare og meir spesifikk både i innhald og omfang dersom danseinnhaldet skal bli mindre tilfeldig.

Utanom læreplanen er Den Kulturelle skulesekken (DKS) eit tiltak som bringer skapande dans inn i norsk skule. DKS har vore ein del av styresmaktene sin kulturelle politikk sidan 2001 og er ei nasjonal satsing der kultur- og utdanningssektoren samarbeider for at alle elevar skal få møte profesjonell kunst og kultur. I følgje Christophersen og Breivik (2013) skal DKS først og fremst vere for elevane og skal bidra til å realisere læringsmål i skulen. Samtidig har DKS mange aktørar som kan ha ulike oppfatningar og meiningar om kva DKS skal vere. Dette medfører utfordringar som krev samarbeid og forståing på tvers av pedagogiske og kunstnariske perspektiv (Heian, Haugsevje og Hylland 2016). Undersøkingar som belyser elevane sine reaksjonar og syn på DKS sine tilbod (Bamford 2012; Collard 2014; Heian, Haugsevje og Hylland 2016), syner mellom anna

at elevane er positive til besøk frå DKS, men mange synes opplegga kan vere «merkelege». Elevane ynskjer å vere meir deltakande og i større grad påverke innhaldet. Heian, Haugsevje og Hylland (2016:40) si brukarundersøking av DKS for ungdomstrinnet i Buskerud viser mellom anna at: «Flere elevgrupper etterlyser et scenekunsttilbud innenfor dans». I regi av DKS arrangerte Collard (2014) workshops for å finne ut ungdomars meiningar og reaksjonar på ulike kulturelle aktivitetar. DKS viser her vilje til å høyre på elevanes ynskjer for deira tilbod. Dette kan seiast å vere i tråd med ein demokratisk praksis som ein og ser att i danseprosjektet *UNG 2016*.

Demokratisk undervisning og medbestemmelse

Demokratiet står sterkt som politisk styresett i Noreg og vert også sett på som ein fundamental verdi både i samfunnet og skulen. Det er forankra i nasjonale styringsdokument og kjem til uttrykk i ulike former og på ulike nivå. I skulesamheng kan det i følgje Arneberg og Overland (2013) vere ein undervisningsmåte eller eit emne i seg sjølv. Det kan også vere ein forpliktande måte å styre og utvikle skulen på som organisasjon og synleggjere skulen sin plass i demokratiet. Kva betyr det å realisere demokrati som ein undervisningsmåte? Ei slik pedagogisk tilnærming som skal fungere demokratisk er sentralt i John Dewey sin filosofi (1916/1944). Han framhevar at demokrati er ein måte å leve og erfare verda på snarare enn ei styreform. Ut frå eit elevperspektiv må eleven dermed få høve til å leve og lære gjennom egne erfaringar. Samfunnet og fellesskapet er også viktig, ikkje berre som utgangspunkt for personlig utvikling, men for utvikling av demokratiske haldningar og verdier i skulekvardagen.

Danseundervisning kan bidra til utvikling av demokrati, fordi demokratiske ideal involverer eit mangfald av ulike røyster og ulikskapar (Blumenfeld-Jones 2009).

Kahlich (2001:94) hevdar:

«...perhaps more than any discipline dance can define and support the democratic process at the deepest level. Argument for this is that the body is a social phenomenon and that one of the principles of democracy is the rights and necessity, for groups and individuals to communicate and work together.»

Leaf og Ngo (2017) argumenterer for ei demokratisk tilnærming til danseundervisning og hevdar elevar har mykje å lære av kvarandre dersom ein løysar opp den tradisjonelle lærarstyrte undervisningspraksisen. I forhold til danseundervisning framhevar deira studie viktigheita av å anerkjenne ulike meiningar og den levde erfaringa som kjem til syne i undervisningssituasjonen. Frichtel (2017:44) fremjar i tillegg ei aktiv lærarrolle ved at læraren dansar saman med elevane, stiller spørsmål og legg til rette for at også elevane tek på seg ansvar og leiarskap. «Such a teaching practice embodies constructivist, critical and transformative pedagogical values of democracy, individual empowerment, and community participation...».

Medbestemmelse er slik sett ein sentral komponent i demokratisk undervisning der det at elevane deltek aktivt er viktig for deira læringsutbytte. Aktiv deltaking inneber å involvere og engasjere seg for å oppleve meining i læringsprosessen og for å oppleve eigarskap til eiga deltaking og læring. Slik fleire forskarar peikar på krev dette ein støttande og akseptierende lærar som anerkjenner elevar sine tankar og idear (Solhaug 2005; Christensen og Ulleberg 2013). Det å skape god dialog og kompetent klasseleiing vil bidra til opplevd medbestemmelse og opplevinga av å påverke lærings situasjonen, noko som i praksis ikkje alltid er enkelt å oppnå. Solhaug (2005:225) hevdar det er frustrasjon blant lærarar fordi dei opplever at: «...elevmedvirkning kommer

i konflikt med deres oppfatning av lærerrollen, læreplanenes krav og elevenes manglende interesse for å delta.» Når det gjeld elevane si oppfatning, viser det seg at dei i liten grad opplever å få vere med og bestemme innhald og arbeidsformer, men at dei ynskjer å bestemme meir (Arneberg og Overland 2013; Moen et.al 2015). Christensen og Ulleberg (2013:16) hevdar at elevane sine bidrag og deltaking er «... undervurdert og utnyttet.» Med andre ord må både elevar og lærarar ta ansvar om ein skal oppnå god demokratisk undervisning.

Dersom både lærar og medelevar anerkjenner kvarandre sine idear, tankar, følelsar og meiningar, kan det hjelpe elevane si evne til å forstå seg sjølv og andre (Solhaug 2005; Christensen og Ulleberg 2013; Leaf og Ngo 2017). Gjennom medbestemmelse i skapande dansearbeid kan dette gi elevane muligheit til å utvikle sjølvtilitt både som skapar og dansar. Cone (2009) hevdar at det å gi barn muligheit til å utforske og oppdage korleis dei kan skape ut frå egne idear er noko av det viktigaste ein kan lære vekk. Ho poengterer at barn treng fridom til å kunne bevege seg på sin eigen måte og det krev ein lærar og eit læringsmiljø som klarer å gi støtte utan å kome med unødvendige kommentarar som går på person framfor det danseriske. Det vil i tilfelle kunne gå utover sjølvtilitt og lysta til å vise fram, slik Steinberg og Steinberg påpeikar (2017). I følgje Leonard (2014) opplever elevar eigarskap i eiga deltaking når dei får fridom til å skape egne bevegelsar i staden for å repetere andre sine handlingar, eller bli instruert i kva og korleis. Interaksjon med andre i skapande dansearbeid er ifølgje Leonard (ibid) ein nøkkel til utvikling av ferdigheiter og auke fellesskapsfølelsen mellom elevar. Desse perspektiva tek eg med vidare til dei metodiske vala i undersøkinga.

Metode

For å få belyse problemstillinga valte eg ei kvalitativ tilnærming med personlege intervju. Informantane

var ungdomsskulelevar frå ein av skulane som deltok i «UNG 2016». Val av skule hadde primært praktiske grunnar og elevane vart kontakta via ein lærar. Totalt 43 elevar, som hadde «Sal og scene» som valfag, hadde takka ja til å delta i prosjektet og 17 av desse stilte til intervju. Det var 12 jenter og seks gutar frå 8.-10. trinn (13-16 år).

Eg la vekt på å skape samspel og dialog i intervjusituasjonen og opplevde det som ein viktig føresetnad for elevens muligheter til å uttrykke seg om si oppleving av deltaking i danseprosjektet, (Kvale og Brinkmann 2015). Eg var oppteken av å gi deira oppleving størst mogleg merksemd og på førehand vere godt informert om prosjektets intensjon og prosess. Både ut frå intervjusituasjonen og det transkriberte materialet vurderte eg stemninga under intervjuet som god. Dei fleste elevane fortalte ivrig om si oppleving og gav uttrykk for at dei hadde mykje å seie, og at deltaking i prosjektet var meningsfullt for dei.

Intervjuet vart gjennomført omkring ein månad etter prosjektlutt. Digital lydopptakar vart nytta. Studien er godkjent av Norsk senter for forskningsdata (NSD) og forskningsetiske retningslinjer som informert samtykke, konfidensialitet, konsekvens er blitt overheldt gjennomgåande i alle ledd av studien (Kvale og Brinkmann 2015). Alle intervjuet er gjennomført og transkribert av artikkelforfattar.

Analysearbeidet er forankra i ein hermeneutisk forskingsstradisjon, der enkelte elevutsegn er tolka i lys av materialet som heilskap. Empirien vart organisert tematisk og kronologisk i tråd med forskingsspørsmåla. Analysen tok utgangspunkt i tre hovudperspektiv: 1) elevane sine utsegn om eige forhold til dans før prosjektet, 2) oppleving av deltaking i prosjektet med fokus på demokratisk undervisning og medbestemmelse, og 3) elevane si erfaring etter prosjektet. Med utgangspunkt i desse vart det gjort ei tematisk analyse av intervjuet, der ulike utsegn innafor kvart tema vart samanlikna, sortert og vurdert ut frå relevans for problemstilling.

Ei avgrensing ved utvalet er at det kun var elevar frå ein skule og elevane valte sjølv å delta i prosjektet. Det er såleis grunn til å tru at dei som deltok likte dans frå før av. Resultata ville kunne representert større variasjon og breidde dersom deltakinga ikkje var valfri, eller om eg hadde gjennomført intervju med elevar frå fleire skular. Eg nyttar den same tematiske tredelinga i resultat og diskusjonsdelen under. Alle sitat er tilpassa eit nynorsk skriftspråk. Kvar sitatet er henta frå kjem fram i parentes. For eksempel betyr (10J9) intervju nummer10, jente, 9.trinn. «G» betyr gut.

Resultat og diskusjon

Elevenes danseerfaring før prosjektet

Alle elevane svarte positivt på spørsmål om deltaking i prosjektet og dei fleste likte å danse. Mange hadde danseerfaring frå den lokale danseverkstaden der instruktørane var ungdomar som hadde gått på dansekurs. Mange dansa heime og då for det meste på romma sine. På spørsmål om kva type dans dei hadde erfaring med og likte best, vart hiphop ofte nemnt. Mange elevar gav uttrykk for at dei først og fremst herma etter andre når dei dansa. Nokre elevar lagde dansar sjølv, men då handla det mest om å finne på trinn og meiste desse. Det å uttrykke seg gjennom dans hadde liten fokus og berre nokre få hadde erfaring med dans som uttrykksform. Det same inntrykket ga dei som sa dei hadde vore med å lage dans i kroppsøving- eller musikktilmar. Ingen uttrykte noko som kan tolkast som at der var nokon dansefagleg fokus. I det heile sa dei fleste at dei berre hadde hatt «litt dans på skulen». Elevens svar om omfanget av dans på skulen samsvarar med forskning som viser dansen sin svake posisjon i skulen og at læreplanens mål i liten grad blir nådd (Berggraf-Jacobsen 2003; Bamford 2012; Karlson 2014; Moen et.al. 2015; Arnesen et.al. 2017; Rustad 2017). Når det gjeld erfaring med å vere publikum såg mange på dans i ulike samanhengar, men svært få kunne hugse

å ha sett dans som kunstform. Med andre ord var danseforma i prosjektet noko nytt for dei fleste elevane.

Elevenes erfaring frå deltaking i sjølve gjennomføringa av prosjektet

Elevane uttrykte at dei hadde fått mange nye erfaringar med måten å jobbe med dans på og dei brukte ord som; «rart», «spesielt», «merkelig», «ukjent», «snålt» for å beskrive korleis dei opplevde den første dagen. Her er elevanes svar på linje med forskning knytt til elevar sine reaksjonar på møte med DKS sine tilbod der dei opplevde ein del DKS-tilbod som «sære» og framande (Heian, Haugseve og Hylland 2016). Fyrsteintrykket til elevane i prosjektet vart derimot moderert, slik ei av jentene sa: «...det blei meir og meir naturleg å gjere det utover i veka, sant.» (3J10). Ein gut uttrykte det slik:

«Eg tenkte at dette her var den raraste dansen eg nokosinne hadde sett. Det var liksom rare bevegelser og stillinga og alt sånt, men til slutt blei det gøy då. Eg likte at det blei normalisert og at liksom ingen kritiserte rare bevegelser og sånn.» (4G10).

Det kan sjå ut til prosjektet sitt omfang gav elevane tid til å venje seg til bevegelser og uttrykk som først verka uvante, slik, som fleire sa «at noko rart vart naturleg». Vidare kjem det fram, både i sitatet ovanfor og i andre utsegn, at elevane hadde mange positive opplevingar denne veka og at dei følte seg trygge i møte med dansarane og opplevde støtte for eigne val. Cone (2009) er inne på noko av det same i sin studie når ho vektlegg det støttande læringsmiljøet som viktig i skapande dansearbeid.

I det skapande dansearbeidet jobba elevane av og til aleine, men oftast saman to eller tre. Dei fekk oppgåver som hadde retningslinjer, men vart oppmoda om å eksperimentere, utforske og danse på sin eigen måte. «Vi lagde det på en måte sjølv utan at vi egentleg visste det. Vi fekk berre beskjed om kva

vi skulle bruke og kva vi skulle gjere og så lagde vi liksom koreografien.» (11J8). «Spennande» var ei mykje nytta beskriving på denne måten å jobbe på. Rørslene måtte ikkje utførast heilt likt kvar gong og elevane vart fortalt det var viktig «å late som at det dei gjorde var det riktige uansett». Dette kom fram hos ei jente som etter å ha gjort ein feil «..følte at det som vart feil, vart betre enn det originale» (1J10) og ho sa «...det var ei veldig god oppleving, for då følte eg at eg lærte noko samtidig som eg hadde meistra noko.».

Ei anna jente sa at: «Viss du gjer litt feil så gjer jo ikkje det så veldig masse, for publikum veit jo ikkje kva du skal gjere liksom.» (15J8). Ho opplevde dette som ein fridom, noko ho likte godt. Dette viser at fridomen til å gjere eigne val kan utvikle sjølvtilitt når ein skaper og utøver dans (Steinberg og Steinberg 2016).

Som allereie nemnt var elevane sin medverknad som aktive og medskapande aktørar eit uttalt mål for danseprosjektet. På spørsmåla om elevane opplevde at dei fekk vere med å bestemme i prosessen og om dei hadde vore med å lage danseførestillinga svara alle eit klart JA. Majoriteten var tydelige i si verdsetjing av å medverke og ein gut uttrykte: «Eg meiner heile denne danseførestillinga eigentleg er ei blanding av alle meningane til alle.» (4G10). Då ei jente sette ord på kva det var ho likte med å få lov til å bestemme så mykje sjølv, svara ho: «Det var kjekt og det var befriande» (8J9). Elevane uttrykte at dei opplevde seg som aktive aktørar gjennom heile prosessen og at dei opplevde eigarskap til deltakinga, slik også andre studiar viser at er vesentlig for ungdoms oppleving av å danse (Leonard 2014). Eg vil hevda at materialet indikerer at elevane opplevde ei demokratisk tilnærming til undervisninga, lik den Leaf og Ngo argumenterer for (2017).

Danseinstruktørane spelte ei sentral rolle og elevane gav dei mykje skryt. «Ho som instruerte var veldig flink instruktør og gjorde det på en måte som gjorde at det vart interessant for oss andre.» (2J10). Her kjem det fram at instruktørane klarte å involvere

og engasjere elevane. Dei vart i tillegg opplevd som morosame og konstruktive rettleiarar som gjekk aktivt inn i prosessen saman med elevane. Instruktørane vart med andre ord opplevd som gode pedagogar og formidlarar. Frichtel (2017) understøttar dette poenget når ho særleg er oppteken av å skape god danseundervisning gjennom ei aktiv lærarolle som involverer elevane ved å stille spørsmål og gi dei ansvar. Ei aktiv lærarolle kan med andre ord styrke både den enkelte elevs innflytelse og oppleving av deltaking i eit fellesskap og med det sjå elevane som ressursar i læringsarbeidet.

Rett etter danseførestillinga følte dei fleste elevane seg fornøgd, stolte og glade. Samtidig var det fleire som sa dei og syntes det var trist. Det var trist både fordi noko som hadde vore kjekt var over og fordi dei ikkje lenger fekk vere saman med instruktørane som dei likte så godt.

Elevanes erfaringar etter prosjektet

Ingen av elevane angra på at dei vart med på *UNG 2016*, snarare tvert om. Kun ein elev sa han ikkje ville vore med dersom sjansen bydde seg igjen. Dei andre gav uttrykk for at deltaking i prosjektet hadde utvikla seg til meningsfull erfaring og hadde influert deira haldning til dans som kunstform. Ein gut påstod at han fekk betre forståing for kva dans som kunstform kan vere. Kort tid etter prosjektet såg han dans på TV og tenkte:

«...det likna egentlig på den dansen vi gjorde. Sånne rare bevegelser som skulle formidle noko. Eg trur eg skjønnte litt meir kva dei gjorde i staden for berre å syns dei var rare.» (5G10).

Fleire uttrykte at det dei opplevde og lærte gjennom deltaking i prosjektet gav dei eit utvida syn på dans. Dette framhevar også Mattson (2016) i sin pedagogiske intervensjon når ho peikar på korleis elevane sitt syn på skapande dans endra seg i løpet av

ein kort intervensjonsperiode.

Elevane si endring dreiar seg ikkje berre om syn på dans. Den kan og dreie seg om opplevinga av seg sjølv. Mange sa dei nytta det dei lærte i andre samanhengar, enten på skulen eller danseverkstaden. Ei jente som dansar aktivt på fritida fortalte:

«Eg lærte meg sjølv litt betre å kjenne liksom. Eg lærte korleis kroppen min fungerer, korleis eg kan gjere bevegelser og sånne ting. Vi har hatt moderne i dansegruppa no og den er liksom litt annleis fordi eg tenkjer det er så mykje meir ein kan gjere enn det ein skulle tru.» (10J9)

Det at dans kunne vere noko meir enn det dei tidlegare hadde opplevd og erfart, vart nemnt av fleire. Ei anna jente sitt utsegn var ikkje berre på individnivå, men kan oppfattast som læring som oppstår i eit sosialt fellesskap med andre når ho sa «Det var ei veldig lærerik oppleving og så var det kjekt å vere med på eit litt større fellesskap.» (9J9). Fellesskapet vart og vektlagt som svært positivt av ein gut som begeistra uttalte: «Eg blei meir kjent med folk frå skulen min, frå forskjellige trinn.» (5G10). Utsegna speglar demokratiske ideal (Blumenfeld-Jones 2009) der individuell utvikling har skjedd i samhandling med andre (Kahlich 2011; Leonard 2014). Det var rom for at den enkelte elevs unike danseuttrykk fekk utvikle seg i ein sosial kontekst.

Oppsummering og konklusjon

DKS hevdar det kan vere utfordrande å produsere kunstmøter som tilfredsstillar både dei profesjonelle kunstnarane sine krav og involvere individuell aktivitet og dialog med barn og unge. Eksempla mine frå *UNG 2016* verkar å ha lykkast med å skape erfaring av det å «kunne danse» eller å ha stimulert til å danse som noko kroppen kan, for å referere til dansaren og filosofen Maxime Sheet-Johnstone (2009). Ho hevdar at alle kroppar har spesifikke

muligheter til bevegelse, som er lett mobiliserbare, slik elevane som deltok her har uttrykt. Sjølv om elevane som deltok hadde eit positivt forhold til dans og såg på opplegget som spennande også på førehand, gav sjølve gjennomføringa og prosessen med å vere saman nye innsikter i å vere skapande saman med medelevar og profesjonelle dansarar. Frå at dei brukte ord som «rart og uvanleg» i starten, vart det etterkvart «naturleg, kjekt og lærerikt». Resultata syner at alle opplevde medbestemmelse og eigarskap til eiga deltaking. Elevane følte seg fri til å danse på sin eigen måte i prosessen og dei var med å skape danseførestillinga i fellesskap med andre. Opplevinga av mening, og haldning til dans som kunstform, vart forsterka ifølgje elevane. Danseprosjektet kan dermed seiast å vere eit eksempel på korleis demokratisk undervisning kan gjerast og er ei synleggjering av at både elevar og danseinstruktørar tok ansvar. Det er slik sett eit døme på eit prosjekt som bidreg til å realisera læreplanens mål og intensjonar med dans. Framgangsmåten gav muligheter og rom for eksperimentering og praktisering av demokratiske ideal. Elevane lærte gjennom egne erfaringar, noko som også eksemplifiserer Dewey (1916/1944) sin filosofi om å ikkje lære kun *om* demokratisk praksis, men *gjennom*!

Prosjektet belyser korleis eit større danseprosjekt som dette kan bidra til at elevar utviklar si forståing for skapande dans og dei lærer gjennom deltaking og samhandling. Ved hjelp av rettleiing frå kyndig dansefagleg kompetanse kunne elevane oppleve kvaliteten i og variasjonane i egne uttrykk og rørslemønster, og var sjølve med på å utvikle dette til ei førestilling. Med andre ord uttrykte elevane læring både *om og i* dans ved å delta i eit danseprosjekt, der dei erfarte ein demokratisk undervisningspraksis.

Eit spørsmål er korleis lærarar og skulen kan bygge vidare på slike erfaringar. Vil dans i skulen kunne tene på å drive i bolkar framfor små drypp no og då? Ei utfordring er fortsatt den dansefagleg

kompetanse til lærarane om ein tenkjer seg noko i den retninga. Her er det fleire spennande spørsmål som spring ut av denne forteljinga frå *UNG 2016*, og som stimulerer til framtidig forskning med tanke på dans i skulen.

Etterord

Til slutt ynskjer eg å rette ein stor takk til læraren som velvillig stilte opp for å rekruttere informantar og la til rette for logistikken i sjølve gjennomføringa av intervjuet.

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BIOGRAPHY

Reidun Nerhus Fretland is an assistant professor at the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Teacher Education, Culture and Sport, where she mainly teaches dance and didactics in physical education. Her master's degree from The Norwegian School of Sport Science in Oslo discusses dance in school following the implementation of the new curriculum

in 1997 (L-97). In addition to the investigation in this study, her most recent research has been in the field of physical education in general and fair play in physical education in particular.

«Get in Your Theatres; the Street is Not Yours»: The Struggle for the Character of Public Space in Tunisia

Heather Harrington

ABSTRACT

How people move and appear in public spaces is a reflection of the cultural, religious and socio-political forces in a society. This article, built on an earlier work titled 'Site-Specific Dance: Women in the Middle East' (2016), addresses the ways in which dance in a public space can support the principles of freedom of expression and gender equality in Tunisia. I explore the character of public space before, during, and after the Arab Spring uprisings. Adopting an ethnographic and phenomenological approach, I focus on the efforts of two Tunisian dancers – Bahri Ben Yahmed (a dancer, choreographer and filmmaker based in Tunis, who has trained in ballet, modern dance and hip hop) and Ahmed Guerfel (a dancer based in Gabès, who has trained in hip hop) – to examine movement in a public space to address political issues facing the society. An analysis of data obtained from Yahmed and Guerfel, including structured interviews, videos, photos, articles and e-mail correspondence, supports the argument that dance performed in public spaces is more effective in shaping the politics of the society than dance performed on the proscenium stage. Definitions and properties of everyday choreography, site and the proscenium stage are analysed, along with examples of site-specific political protest choreography in Egypt, Turkey and Tunisia. I engage with the theories of social scientist Erving Goffman, which propose that a public space can serve as a stage, where people both embody politics and can embody a protest against those politics.

«Get in Your Theatres; the Street is Not Yours»: The Struggle for the Character of Public Space in Tunisia

Heather Harrington

I have conducted this research through the lens of being a woman, a Westerner, a dancer and a former Catholic, whose father has been a Catholic monk for over 30 years. As a dancer, I know the power of the body as a source of information and expression, and as a former Catholic, I recognise the efforts of the Catholic Church to control a woman's body. As a Westerner looking at the Middle East, I defer to the words of the dancers from the selected countries, realising that I am 'the other', from a culture that has been a coloniser. However, while I acknowledge a cultural divide and a colonist history, I do not shy away from the belief that there exists a human right to be treated equally regardless of gender, recognising that this position flies in opposition to the postmodern and poststructuralist perspectives. I have encountered through my research the view that human rights, secular humanism and feminism are Western concepts, and the application of these concepts is a form of imperialism, justifying gender-based oppression in the name of anti-imperial resistance (Phipps 2014). Navigating this moral minefield has been daunting, and issues of being culturally insensitive, imperialistic, xenophobic or Islamophobic have surfaced.

As a choreographer, I saw my own work expanding from the proscenium stage to public spaces, away from aesthetic/artistic concerns to social issues. When I embarked on my master's thesis at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2015, I focused on site-specific protest dance. As I delved deeper into my research, I was struck by the urgency of the protest dances coming out of the Middle East and North Africa (the MENA region). My research methodology

consisted of first reading about the efforts of Tunisian dancer Bahri Ben Yahmed to use dance in public spaces as political protest. Next, I contacted him via e-mail, sharing my research and artistic work, and then conducted structured interviews via Skype. The interviews comprised set questions, and answers were recorded into transcripts that were shared with Yahmed, giving him the opportunity to make any corrections. Yahmed connected me with Ahmed Guerfel, who directs a dance theatre school in Gabès (southern Tunisia) that is under Yahmed's direction. My research data comprise their words, their artistic work (viewed through photos and videos) and articles about their work. Guerfel invited me to work with his school in Gabès on a new dance theatre project, but I unfortunately had to decline. However, we are still in conversation. In addition to this project, Guerfel is working on a project chronicling hip hop in Tunisia.

Throughout my research, I have been building additional relationships with dancers in the MENA region including a female dancer from Iran, Tanin Torabi (we have engaged in Skype interviews); a male dancer and academic from Egypt, Adham Hafez (we met in New York City for an interview, I have attended performances of his in New York City and we have continued an e-mail correspondence); and my closest collaborator, Lebanese dancer, educator and choreographer Nadra Assaf. Assaf and I have been examining the embodiment of feminism in the twenty-first century through the lens of our respective countries – Lebanon and the United States. We gave a performance/lecture on this topic at the Nordic Forum for Dance Research's conference, *Dance and*



Democracy, on 16 June 2017 at the University of Gothenburg. Assaf and I performed this same piece at the Lebanese American University in Beirut as part of the *Next Festival* on 28 August 2017. During my time in Beirut and throughout my research, my inability to speak Arabic has not yet posed a problem, since the people with whom I have been in contact speak English.

Bahri Ben Yahmed's dance in public spaces

In 2010, a 26-year-old vegetable seller, Mohamed Bouazizi from Sidi Bouzid, set himself on fire in response to his frustration and desperation of living under the 23-year autocratic rule of President Ben Ali (Gardner 2011). Since this moment, Tunisia has undergone a new awakening in the occupation of public space. This one physical act of desperation in a public space sent waves of protest throughout the MENA region, galvanizing people to challenge

«Get in your Theaters»—Courtesy of Danseurs–Citoyens with Bahri Ben Yahmed and Ahmed Guerfel in Gabès June 2015.
Photographer: Mohamed Haydar

autocratic governments. If this act of desperation had occurred in the privacy of Bouazizi's home, would it have had the same powerful effect? Twenty-eight days of public protest after Bouazizi's death led to the resignation of Ben Ali (Gardner 2011).

During the 23-year rule of Ben Ali, all forms of expression that were not sanctioned by the government were banned from public spaces. Visual artist Selima Karoui (2014) explains, 'before, we couldn't speak or do anything in the public space: it was used as a space for propaganda'. Portraits of Ben Ali covered public spaces; buildings and billboards were wallpapered with pictures of his face. When Ali stepped down in 2011 due to the revolt, public spaces were opened for citizens to fill them with their messages. Journalist Rachel Shabi (2013) of *Aeon* magazine explains,

'Here in Tunisia, artists of all types are asserting public ownership of spaces once controlled by the state, reclaiming the streets, reasserting the significance of protest as a political ideal'. Along with artists, religious voices that had been silenced during the Ben Ali regime also sought expression in public spaces to make their messages known.

Dancer, film director and choreographer Bahri Ben Yahmed, who has created *Art Solution* (2011), *Danseurs-Citoyens* (2014) and the theatre, music and dance school, *Underground Lang'Art* (2015), explores how dance can fill a public space and uphold democratic values of freedom of expression and equality. The school, *Underground Lang'Art*, has two locations – one in Tunis that is run by Yahmed and one in the south of Tunisia, in Gabès, run by Ahmed Guerfel. Yahmed graduated from the Higher Institute of Arts and Multimedia in 2006. Yahmed devoted himself to studying dance, contemporary, ballet and hip hop, but never found professional success. He turned his focus to film, but then found himself directing his attention back to movement. As Yahmed states, 'For 23 years, we lived under a dictator. The best way for me to participate in the revolution was through dance as a *danseur-citoyen*' (Personal interview, 2017). Yahmed also explained the following to Karoui (2014):

We must first know that our concept of the body in public space is driven by a philosophy that wants to go against the 'establishment' controlled by the state. The actions of 'citizen dancers' are neither 'happenings' in a spirit of provocation only nor a 'flash mob' just to make the 'buzz'. We deeply believe in the idea of changing things with dance...

Along with artists wanting to fill public spaces with their expression, religious voices wanted to disseminate their messages. Religious groups, such as the Islamist *Ennahda* (a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood) and *Salafist* (a fundamentalist approach to Islam)

movements, had been banned during the rule of Ben Ali. Tunisian historian and Professor Mohamed Talbi (2011) has described the *Salafists* as being intolerant of anyone who does not interpret Islam according to strict orthodox interpretations. The strict adherence to orthodox Islamic teachings has ramifications specifically for women, limiting their freedom of movement and appearance in public spaces.

With all religious expression banned, no distinction was made between the expressions. As Rafika Zahrouni (2013) describes, the repressive regime of Ben Ali did not distinguish between spiritual people and Islamists; all forms of religious expression were restricted, combining *Sufism* (mystical Islam), *pan-Islamist* (political movement uniting Muslims under one Islamic State) and Islamic terrorism into one category. This oversight bred resentment at the inability to freely express religious views, confusing religious expression with extremism.

The public space can be a stage for the expression of a plurality of voices, but a problem arises when one voice endeavours to silence others. This silencing can be seen in many different contexts and countries, either enforced by law or societal expectations. For example, in order to perform in a public space in New York City, many permits must be secured, and in Iran, according to dancer Tanin Torabi (Personal interview, 2016), dance is outlawed in public spaces. These are different cultures, different countries and different kinds of restrictions, but in the end, they are all restrictions of movement in public space.

When the public space of Tunisia was opened up to the people, the element of religious expression was inserted into the space, since it had been denied during the regime of Ben Ali. Mohamed-Salah Omri (2013) reports, 'In addition to growing prominence of hijabs, niqabs, long shirts and skull caps, Tunisians have also seen an increase of black banners, public prayers and speeches on beaches, avenues and in parks'. This appearance should not be problematic if it does not



«Get in your Theaters»—Courtesy of Danseurs-Citoyens, March 28, 2015 with Atef Hamdani and Asma Kaouech at Avenue Habib Bourguiba. The piece is '3 Points' Photographer: Mona Jmal Sialla

include efforts to shut down voices expressing differing views. However, it does seem as though a struggle for the colour and feel of public space in Tunisia is being fought. Omri (2013) further explains,

Post-revolutionary Tunisia is not only about speeches, strikes and debates. It has been about colours and bodies as well – particularly the female body, which has become the most prominent site of conflict, with two opposing sets of views on how to dress, deal with, talk about and police it.

Professor Nouri Ghana (2013) states, 'Islamists, secularists, leftists, Arab nationalists, and salafis, among others, have variably contributed as socio political actors to the toppling of Ben Ali, (yet) their combined histories of victimhood, resistance, and struggle has hardly resulted in a common agenda in post authorities Tunisia'. Secularists and artists, like Yahmed, contrast fundamentalist religious expressions by infusing the space with artistic free expression – movement, music and colour. Yahmed has created his own version of a flash mob that encourages members of the public to join in the dancing, depicts men and women dancing together and touching and shows

female dancers unveiled (Harrington 2016). The dancers evince varied dance backgrounds – ballet, modern, traditional and street dance. Folk music is played by live musicians, helping to facilitate a connection. The forms of ballet, contemporary dance and hip hop are of Western origins and may produce a disconnect, but the blending with traditional dance may create a fluidity between the different styles of dance and offer an invitation into the movement.

As Yahmed explains, Tunisia is a multicultural society where women are equal; however, the Islamists want to change that and force women out of public spaces and into their homes (Personal interview, 2016). Yahmed's public dances are about a multiplicity of voices – dancers, non-dancers and people of varying religious affiliations, based on the outward appearance of their dress – a mixture of movement styles, ranging from Western forms to traditional forms, and traditional music. His dance in public spaces reaches back to the pre-colonial roots of performance in Tunisian society (Banham 2004).

Yahmed does not want to perform in a theatre; the public space provides the stage and the public is the audience. Yahmed wants to affect people, not the governing forces, in the hope that this can lead to change. 'We don't need the system to recognise us. We need the people to recognise us' (Yahmed quoted in Shabi 2013). He aims for a transformative experience for the viewer by asking for participation. Yahmed explains, 'The audience cannot passively watch; they have to be a part of the performance in order for a difference to be made. The audience joins in playing the music and dances' (Personal interview, 2016). Barriers are broken down between the performer and audience, creating a democratic experience. Yahmed realised that his dance in a theatre would only affect those who agree with him, whereas if he danced in a public space, he would have the opportunity to interact with all types of people and awaken them to another staging of the space. Maybe a person is caught by this restaging and the micro moment of the day triggers

another thought or way of acting.

The public space takes on a character based on the appearance and movement of the people in it. Yahmed is attempting to push the dial towards democratic principles with his dances in public spaces. As he explains, 'The best democratic way to develop art and culture in some desert places' is to bring dance to the public site (E-mail correspondence, 2016). He believes that dance should not be only for those who have money to pay for performances but for those who are poor and forgotten about by the governing elite. Yahmed's school Underground Lang'Art is geared towards youth from the poor regions, who might have a criminal background, whether it be drugs or violence (E-mail correspondence, 2016). Yahmed describes the

«Get in your Theater»—Courtesy of Danseurs-Citoyens Sud, Project LEBLAD, August 2017 with Adam Baccar, Atef Achour, May Ghabbom, Sirine Harabi, Nabelh Moumni, Yassine Ben Ali, Maher Msadak, Kbalil Hriz, Souhayer Abdjlil, and Islem Ajimi Photographer: Mohamed Hayder.





mission of Underground Lang'Art as follows: 'I do not want these young people to be a group of future lost generation, which has neither dream nor hope. My fight, my fight is to not allow chaos to settle in the life of this generation' (quoted in Karoui 2014).

Yahmed's partner in the running of Underground Lang'Art in Southern Tunisia, Ahmed Guerfel, learned to dance hip hop from an uncle and would often dance with his cousins and friends (Personal interview, 2017). Hip hop dance is social protest and expression for him. He sees dance as 'a method of expression that is absolutely free and you enjoy all respect [he speaks Arabic and French with a little English]. It is one of the most important stations that seek to establish democracy' (Personal interview, 2017). Guerfel hopes to spread hip hop dance to the south of Tunisia and provide a haven for the youth to pursue artistic expression even when their families are not supportive. He has taken ownership of the dance form that originated in the West, adopting and adapting it to fit the life and existence in Tunisia, and has spoken about social issues affecting Tunisian youth.

«Get in Your Theater»—Courtesy of Danseurs—Citoyen. August 30, 2014, Downtown Tunis 'Pour ne pas Oublier'
Photographer: Mona Jmal Sialla.

Yahmed wants to give his students a focus, structure, purpose and power through art. The aim of Underground Lang'Art is to enable students to be positive and creative through their artistic expression, and give back to their communities with free performances in a large public space (E-mail correspondence, 2016). This objective is critical due to Tunisia's poor economy, with little upward mobility for the youth. Journalist George Packer (2016) explains that based on the number of people who have waged jihad worldwide, Tunisia is a leading producer of jihadism. Quoting Nabil Selliti, an unemployed telecommunications engineer from Tunisia, Packer (2016) states, 'I can't build anything in this country. But the Islamic State gives us the chance to create, to build bombs, to use technology'. Selliti blew himself up in a suicide bombing in Iraq in July 2013. The Islamic State gave him a purpose; it gave him something to do. Structure can be a lifeline

Students from Underground Lang'Art performed a 43-minute dance theatre piece, 'Le noir est une valeur', at various public locations in Tunis from 8 to 20 August 2016. The piece was for nine men and four women dressed in red costumes with one leg bare and spaghetti straps, eight men with no shirts and black pants, and one man in a white slip. The dancers were fully committed both physically and mentally to the performance, even though it was the first time many of them had performed (Yahmed, personal interview, 2016). The score comprised spoken word alternating with silence, traditional music, soundscapes and a man rapping in Arabic while he stood on a man's back. There were moments of submission with dancers on their knees bobbing their heads up and down, feigned violence between men and a suggested assault of a woman. Yahmed's message was direct, and because of its directness, it was politically dangerous. He put his performers and himself in a perilous position, especially since they were performing in a public space.

Social media has allowed Yahmed to spread his message. He states, 'Through social media I am able to

connect to people in Egypt, Libya and Turkey' (Personal interview, 2016). His group has set an example for other people to follow, and they share performance clips on social media. Although the sharing occurs online, the protests are live performances in public spaces. Because of *Art Solution's* presence in the public space of Tunisia, Yahmed believes that this has given people the courage to stand up to Islamists and the police (Personal interview, 2016).

Several of *Art Solution's* YouTube clips begin with the words of Stéphane Hessel (1917–2013), the German-born writer, diplomat, concentration camp survivor and French Resistance fighter: 'Créer, c'est résister. Résister, c'est créer' («To create is to resist. To resist is to create»; Shabi 2013). To create is to tap into a power, and this power can spread through movement; movement that is seen in public spaces, not the insular

«Get in Your Theater»—Courtesy of Danseurs—Citoyen. August 3, 2016, "Le Noir est une Valeur Lang'Art with Naoufel G'r, Dâ Li, Kais Harbaoui, Zied Sllimi, Fdbil Mouadb, Chaber Wafi, AD Aymen, Oumaima Slti, رانية البرهومي and Saif Hliwa.
Photographer: Achref Brabem.





environment of the theatre, and invites the public to participate. If Yahmed's dances were performed in the theatre, they would lose their power to influence the social and political fabric of society.

Everyday choreography

The city space is a place of negotiation due to the close proximity of people and the inherent differences among populations. Professor of sociology David Jacobson (2013) states, «where «personal space» is accentuated, the rules of etiquette governing exchanges need to be (for an orderly society) more elaborate, and markers need to be defined» (154). These rules are both written and unwritten, affecting how people appear and move, contributing to the everyday choreography of the space. Social scientist Erving Goffman (1972) believed that once people step out of their private domain into the public one, all movement becomes performative, because people were aware of being watched and judged by religious, cultural and socio-political forces. Jacobson (2013) cites Goffman in speaking about 'territories', which

«Get in Your Theater»—Courtesy of Danseurs—Citoyen. May 2016 in Gabes, the dancers are: Zied Sellimi, Amine Koudbai, Seif allab Makri, Aymen Amdouni.

encompass all physical borders including architecture, clothes and dietary laws (153). How people dress, how people move, where they move to and what people say can be controlled by the government or influenced by societal expectations. In Turkey, in July 2014, Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç spoke of 'moral corruption' and warned that women should 'not laugh in public'. He said, 'Where are our girls, who slightly blush, lower their heads and turn their eyes away when we look at their face, becoming the symbol of chastity?' (*Hurriyet Daily News* 2014). Control of bodies, specifically female bodies, in public space is not specific to Turkey. Bryan Turner (1984), a leading sociologist of religion, explains, 'Societies have traditionally been organized under the combination of gerontocracy/patriarchy in which the sexual behavior of subordinates is regulated by the phalanx of God, king, priest and husband' (59). Turner (1984) engages with Goffman's work, seeing

'the performance of the self through the medium of the socially interpreted body' (40). The body, its movement and appearance, is on stage when it is in a public space, with the public as its audience. Thus, the individual body becomes part of the societal body.

In public spaces, decisions are made as to what is permissible behaviour, the everyday choreography, and what is not. Social scientist and geographer Doreen Massey (2005) notes, 'all spaces are socially regulated in some way, if not by explicit rules (no ball games, no loitering) then by the potentially more competitive (more market-like?) regulation which exists in the absence of explicit (collective? public? democratic? autocratic?) controls' (152). People who defy these norms put themselves in a potentially vulnerable position. Limitations to the types of movement and ways of appearing in public spaces may be based on class, race, age or gender. In 2011, Egyptian-American journalist Mona Eltahawy (2015) explained that in Tunisia, 'female university professors and students reported facing assaults and intimidation from Islamists for not wearing headscarves' (18). Women felt pressured in public spaces to adhere to an outward appearance that abided by Islamic morality and modesty in order not to be harassed. Eltahawy (2015) spoke to a Tunisian woman who said, 'Sometimes I have clients who come to the salon wearing hijab and take it off inside because they're worried about men outside who are Salafi (believers of an ultra-conservative interpretation of Islam) or from other fundamentalist groups who will look at them badly or force them to wear it' (74). As Eltahawy (2015) explains, 'In modern Tunisia, and throughout the region, wearing the hijab does not remain a real choice for women, and it cannot so long as this pervasive discrimination and violence flourishes' (75). The pressure from the Salafis to appear in a veil in public is forced on the female body. Each culture has its laws and social expectations that affect the body. Choreographer and dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster (1995) describes this process as culture

and societal expectations writing onto the body. She adds, 'The possibility of a body that is written upon but that also writes' (Foster 1995, 15). A Tunisian woman's body will be scripted by the religious expectation to veil, and she will also have the ability to resist this directive by writing her decision not to wear a veil onto the public space.

Even though people are aware of societal pressures to move and appear in a certain way, most people in their everyday choreography go about their routine without paying attention to their surroundings. Professor of performance studies Mike Pearson and British archaeologist Julian Thomas (1994) speak about the everyday receding from our notice. They cite philosopher Martin Heidegger in explaining how people want to 'get on with things' and state that the surroundings 'exist for us in a state of inconspicuous familiarity' (Pearson and Thomas 1994, 157). When an unexpected change occurs in the environment, it wakes people up from their obliviousness (Pearson and Thomas 1994). In Bahri Ben Yahmed's piece, 'Pour ne pas oublier' (Tunis 2014), dancers moved in a public space while daily life was going on; people walked down the sidewalks, crossed streets and cars whizzed by. One dancer lay on a car as it stopped, while another dancer did a headstand on the sidewalk – both movements that were not part of daily movement in the city. The dancers brought attention to themselves with their unanticipated movement and took this opportunity to reveal their message to the public; the dancers moved with a box which they opened up to reveal the Tunisian flag, expressing support for a secular state. Their message was inserted into, and thus reframed, the public space.

A choreographer examines and categorises the movements performed in a space and then decides which movements will complement or contrast this choreography of the space, just as Erdem Gündüz did in Taksim Gezi Square, Istanbul, Turkey on Monday, 17 June 2013. He stood still from 6 p.m. until 2 a.m., facing the Atatürk Cultural Centre, during a massive

protest. There had already been three weeks of protest in Taksim Gezi Square against the Turkish government's policies limiting personal freedoms and attacking secularism (Seymour 2013). Gunduz strategically placed himself in front of the Atatürk Cultural Centre facing the picture of Atatürk, supporter of a secular Turkey, making a statement about his preference for the secular government. Moreover, by standing still during a protest, he displayed a passive, peaceful resistance (Gunduz n.d.). There had been numerous clashes with the police, resulting in thousands injured and 11 dead (Seymour 2013). Gunduz's physicality was met with confusion from the police. As political activist Richard Seymour (2013) reports, 'Gunduz's protest was both an affront and a question for the authorities: beat him? Why? He's just standing there. Leave him alone? Then he wins, doesn't he?' The police would have been hurt politically for abusing a man who was only standing there. Gunduz's performance was tactical.

Pearson and Thomas (1994) highlight two approaches in the social sciences that help in the task of defining a site: Goffman's 'micro-sociology' of human interaction, and the Lund School's 'time geography'. The latter, in particular, considers the choreography of everyday life by establishing a notation which traces through time the paths utilised by individuals moving between places (Pearson and Thomas 1994). Professor of Sociology Thomas Scheff (1990) describes what Goffman was attempting to accomplish with his theory of micro-sociology. Scheff (1990) argues, «[Goffman] sought to understand social structure by observing small events in ordinary social interaction» (28). Many subtle interactions occur in the facial expressions of people. Goffman (2005) analyses these in *Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face-to-Face Behavior*. A glance, a smile or a frown may be small, but these gestures are direct and have resonance on the overall power play in the public sphere. Norwegian sociologists Inger Furseth and Pål Repstad (2006), who wrote *An Introduction to the Sociology of*

Religion: Classical and Contemporary Perspectives, see Goffman as 'seeing society as a theater stage' (56). They continue describing Goffman's theatrical everyday life proposition by stating, 'social interactions possess a dramaturgical quality where the individual act according to their roles... we show something different «back stage» than we do «front stage»' (Furseth and Repstad 2006, 56) and are guided by the responses of the public, which we perceive in facial expressions and movement.

The flash mob, 'I Will Dance Despite Everything', organised by Bahri Ben Yahmed in Tunis's old medina on December 2012, illustrates interaction in a public space between dancers and the people passing through the space. The movement style mixes modern dance, b-boying and breaking (a form of dance that originated in the Bronx, New York City, during the 1970s, predominantly among African American and Hispanic youth) and traditional folk dance with live percussion. The familiar folk elements create a common ground that encourages people to partake. At the 6:35 mark in the video clip, a man from the audience joins in the dancing. A cigarette dangles from his mouth as he moves his hips in a manner reminiscent of traditional Tunisian dance, while another man follows and dances a duet with Yahmed, each one copying one another's movements. The dancers encourage people to join in the dance by touching them; some join, others stay. At the 9:10 mark, a woman with a head covering and a long, modest, black dress, enthusiastically joins in, using her headscarf as an extension of her movement. A diversity of voices is seen in the dance forms and in the people participating. These exchanges in a shared activity reframe this public space with movement being the instigator for bonding and communication between diverse groups of people.

Site and the proscenium stage

Dance performed in a public space has the ability

to reach a wider audience than dance performed on a proscenium stage, which often requires a paid admission fee. In North Africa, traditional performances, games and ceremonies took place for centuries in public places, such as open-air markets (Banham 2004). Performance was a democratic activity that was open to all types of people, not requiring the exchange of money. As Western control of North Africa expanded, the proscenium stage became the established way to see performances (Banham 2004). The result of colonisation was that only people with a paid ticket would be able to view performances, and a clear delineation between performers and the audience would be enforced.

The proscenium stage, despite the variety of physical structures – an intimate 50-seat theatre will feel different from a 1,000-seat opera house for both the performers and the audience – is still designated as a place where performances occur, but not daily life. A site, however, holds specific information pertaining to its use and history outside of performance. Pearson and Shanks (2001) identify two basic sites of performance: perfected space and found space. They explain that perfected space is the proscenium stage, as it is 'delineated, designed, constructed, thus ensuring a continuity of performing conditions and quality of watching experience, and enabling detailed choreography and perfection of operation' (Pearson and Shanks 2001, 152). A choreographer and performer may have to make adjustments to a theatre due to its size and site lines, but they know that the main purpose of the space is to stage the performance, while a site's purpose is not solely for performance, and many more accommodations may be needed in order to perform the work. A site-specific piece submits to the multiple meanings of the space and is open to spontaneous intrusions that may stop the performance, such as weather events and obstructions by people. Journalist Selima Karoui (2014) of *Nawaat* quotes Yahmed concerning an intrusion on his performance:

The first citizen dance action in the public space, operated following the 'World Theatre Day' in March 2011, and Salafis invaded the space especially to attack the artists present. They literally said 'Get in your theatres; the street is not yours!' For me, the 'street' is the property of all citizens. . .

The Salafis ironically took the approach of the Western colonists that first imposed the proscenium stage onto the people of Tunisia by telling Yahmed to take his performance out of the public space and into a theatre. For Yahmed, the public space is an integral part of the performance, intersecting with a wide representation of people and inviting them to participate. This accessible format opens the door to the unknown, and thus, to the vulnerability of the body. Obviously, this is true of any site performance, but it was pronounced in Tunis because of the tensions between the Salafis and artistic voices. Rachid Benzine (2012), an academic in Islamic studies, explains the following:

The Muslim tradition accords an extremely important place to the body. It is the space of the veneration of God, the vehicle of prayer. But in order to be dignified for the Creator, the body needs to protect itself and be purified of all possible maculation/contamination that might afflict it. . . But this preoccupation with purity, pushed to an extreme, unfortunately comprises in itself the obsession of impurity. The result of this obsession? Behaviour of intolerance and of violence regarding individuals or groups who have a more relaxed relation to the body, especially the body in public space.

Yahmed explained in an interview in 2017 his interaction with the Salafis: 'They told members of *Art Solution* [the name of Yahmed's first dance group in 2011] to go to a theatre, but who would come when the Islamists are telling people not to go to theatres? I

will not be relegated to a room with four walls, while the Islamists take over the public space.' Yahmed also discussed the dangers facing him and his dancers: 'In 2012, it was almost lost to the Islamists. The Islamists say art is against religion, dance is forbidden. Islamists started to control the streets. Now it is better, but always dangerous. We need to dance; I will dance despite everything. It takes a lot of courage' (Personal interview, 2016). To dance in spite of overriding societal condemnation or fear of actual violence takes immense fortitude and a willingness to put one's body in a potentially dangerous position.

When Islamists have tried to stop a performance, Yahmed's strategy has been to have the performers passively resist (Personal interview, 2016). This strategy is similar to the ones used by the American Civil Rights activists in their sit-ins and die-ins and to the previous example of Erdem Gunduz's 'Standing Man'. Yahmed believes that he should not be arrested, because he is not a paid performer but a mere citizen who is dancing – dancing in the market, on the side of the street, on a bus, anywhere where daily life occurs (Personal interview, 2016). Citizens in Yahmed's vision of society should have the ability to freely express themselves; they do not work for the government. They move against limitations put on their bodies, in movement or appearance. Andre Lepecki (2013) states that one should search for 'confined or impoverished experiencing of mobility within the social space'; then one can experiment with the 'cartography of policed ground, mapping the situation...' (47). The choreographer can provide an alternative to the politics of the space that may be limiting, by revolting against the restrictions.

The site choreographer has many layers to dig into, including the animate and inanimate. All the physical attributes and events that occur at a site become relevant to the meaning of the site. Continuity of space, but not of time, exists at a site. The site is a single geographic location where many different narratives have occurred. According to Massey

(2005), 'we know then that the «presentness» of the horizontality of space is a product of a multitude of histories whose resonances are still there, if we would but see them, and which sometimes catch us with full force [unawares]' (118). A choreographer can tap into the layers of history and imagine the intersection of the different time periods coming together in the same place.

In her article, 'Dancing in the Spring: Dance Hegemony, and Change', Rosemary Martin (2016) reports, 'On January 25, 2011, a holiday in support of the national police force, tens of thousands of Egyptians poured into the streets, denouncing the Mubarak regime and calling for a «day of rage»' (207). The multiple narratives of Cairo's Tahrir Square – the people who pass through it, the actual structures (the national museum, the colossal Mogamma administrative building, the former headquarters of the ruling National Democratic Party), the history and what it has meant and continues to mean to the public – were crucial in its reframing. Tahrir Square encouraged participation by displaying a unity of will at an important site for the Egyptian government, which led to a transformation of the individual and society.

Martin (2016) notes that dance in public spaces was not encouraged before the revolution, and a person could be punished for dancing in public. In an interview, a dancer named Mounier (only first name given to protect identity) said, 'Before this, there was no performance in the street, no random art events. If there was a performance, it would be approved by the government' (Martin 2016, 215). Spontaneous movements did not occur. Yet the events that occurred in Tahrir Square shattered these restrictions. Martin (2015) quotes Amie (only first name given to protect identity), a dancer from the Cairo Opera Ballet Company, as follows:

Tahrir Square turned into a theater; people who

went down to the square were tired of being kept in the dark, and even if it was their last day on earth they wanted their chance to perform. For me this revolution was about respect for self-expression, and I think dance is part of this revolution. (210)

The space became borderless in order for all expressions to simultaneously happen. Adham Hafez, a choreographer and dancer from Cairo, who also participated in the protests at Tahrir Square said the following:

The street sellers helped to block the streets. The police did not want to shoot them. We were inspired by the die-ins and sit-ins. We had not had these kind of public demonstrations. There was hope in people's bodies. The movement of the body set a fire. Activists had a public showing. There was the pronouncement of the power of performance, the public display of bodies. (Personal interview, 2017)

The fact that these displays of protest movement occurred in a public space is crucial. A protest movement performed in a theatre cannot reach the wider population and display this kind of unity for all to see. Hafez conveyed to me in 2016 the frustrations of performing protest work in the theatre during the tumultuous time after the revolution:

Only people who could afford to see the performances could come. I felt disillusioned. Only Leftists were being affected. Was I only raising the consciousness of the choir? How could I continue when people were being jailed and when the audience were already believers? There was no change happening outside of the theatre. What was the purpose?

The question 'What is the purpose?' is pivotal in the discussion of what is the more persuasive tool – protest

dance in a theatre or protest dance in a public space? Is the goal to reach an audience that may not be open to the message?

Closing Thoughts

Tunisia is the only functioning democracy to come out of the Arab Spring, while other countries – namely, Syria, Libya, Egypt, Bahrain and Yemen – have fallen into varying degrees of violence, chaos and political instability. Tunisia is a country in the process of defining itself. Dance artists like Yahmed play a role in reminding people about equality and freedom of expression in public spaces, which feeds into how the society sees itself. Dance can change the meaning of a public space, and therefore, change the social dynamics that are played out in that space. The proscenium stage does not allow for such influence and exposure. The female dancers in *Art Solutions*' flash mobs invite audience members to dance with them, defying beliefs that women should not dance with strangers, dance in public or appear unveiled in public (Harrington 2016). The dancers in *Art Solution* are intersecting with the public and calling on the audience to share in a sense of community and freedom, no matter what gender, religion, race, class or political affiliation they are. The belief that a person owns their body and its movements permeates these public movement displays, which are seeping into the pores of the societal body.

Strength, tenacity and courage are exemplified by dance artists from the MENA region, who speak with their bodies about freedom of expression and gender equality. Hope exists in these bodies that a critical discussion of ideologies that restrict movement can be fostered instead of silenced, due to the discomfort of criticising cultural or religious beliefs. Silence leads to stagnation. Change and evolution cannot occur without critical discourse. Dancers know that stasis is not possible; movement is necessary. Movement flows into transformation.

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BIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

This article examines issues related to age and gender within the European contact improvisation community (ECIC). In particular, my research interest is to find out more about experiences related to values in the dance genre of contact improvisation (CI), and how they relate to the values associated with democracy understood to be embedded in CI. From 2014 to 2017, I conducted interviews with seven persons who are CI dancers and teachers from different European countries. The interview material shows that a double set of values is communicated in the ECIC: one that is taught, spoken, written and understood to be holding on to and embodying 'the social ideologies of the early '70s which rejected traditional gender roles and social hierarchies' (Novack, 1990, 11) and a second set in which traditional gender roles and social hierarchies are active and experienced by European CI dancer-teachers and dancers when participating in CI events.

SAMMENDRAG

Artikkelen undersøker Europeiske kontaktimprovisasjonsdanseres erfaringer relatert til alder og kjønn, og hvordan disse samsvarer med tradisjonelle kontaktimprovisasjonsverdier som vanligvis assosieres med demokrati og antihierarki, og forstås som iboende kontaktimprovisasjon som dansesjanger. Mellom 2014 og 2017 intervjuet jeg 7 personer som var både kontaktimprovisasjonsdansere og kontaktimprovisasjonslærere, fra forskjellige Europeiske land. Intervjuene viser at det parallelt eksisterer doble sett av verdier innenfor hva jeg kaller det Europeiske kontaktimprovisasjonssamfunnet: et som kommuniseres gjennom undervisning, litteratur og tale, som forholder seg til 'the social ideologies of the early '70s which rejected traditional gender roles and social hierarchies' (Novack 1990, 11), og et annet som kommuniseres gjennom kontaktimprovisasjon i praksissituasjoner i ulike former for kontaktimprovisasjonsarrangementer, hvor tradisjonelle kjønnsroller og sosiale hierarkier er aktive.

Introduction

This article examines issues related to age and gender within the European contact improvisation community (ECIC). In particular, my research interest is to find out more about experiences related to values in the dance genre of CI. For more than 15 years, I have participated in various contact events around Europe. Over these years, I have conducted interviews and compiled field notes based on my teaching work, as well as my direct participation. My own experience of becoming and being (defined as) an older CI dancer and teacher inspired my choice of research topic (I am now 54 years old). A female CI colleague first brought this phenomenon to my attention some years ago. She commented that she had noticed that younger dancers had started to look past her rather than at her.

By ECIC, I refer to what I understand as a hub of dancers who are involved in CI in Europe. That is, they dance not only in their own local and national venues but also in what they regard as a European community—an arena defined and constructed by CI dancers who have travelled and interacted over an extended period. These international gatherings include workshops, festivals, the European Contact Improvisation Teachers' Exchange international jams and research weeks. These events are organised almost exclusively by participating contact dancers. Some are informal, with an open invitation to anyone interested. Others might be invitation-only gatherings and workshops for which prospective attendees must submit short descriptions of their motivation for attending.

Experienced CI dancers consider their participation to be a strong part of their identity (Banes

1987, 68). Creating and maintaining this identity requires attending CI events. At these gatherings, in addition to dancing, participants not only practice CI and learn from peers outside their local community but also engage in alternative ways of living, dressing, eating, behaving and thinking. In other words, I understand CI identity as constituted through relations of participation (Wenger 1998, 56). As one person interviewed for this project states, the CI community 'is a place where I can behave in a way that I cannot learn or practice in mainstream culture'. I have found that this attitude is quite representative of how CI dancers regard CI as a separate community.

In this article, 'older' refers to someone older than age 40 years, 'dancer' to a CI practitioner, and 'dancer-teacher' to a person who is both a CI dancer and a CI teacher. It is from such a position that I have conducted this research project, which means I have had to consider the challenges of doing research in my own field. I have also run the risk of having blind spots as the persons interviewed and I belong to the same tradition. At the same time, my position has contributed insider knowledge, which gives an advantage in interpreting both context and material (Wadel 1991, 18).

The following section provides a brief history of CI and its values. I then describe my research methodology and the research context and present my analysis of the dancer-teacher experiences I have gathered. In the conclusion, I discuss my findings and offer suggestions for future action and research.

A brief history of CI

The term 'CI' is used to identify a practice arising from a movement presentation initiated by choreographer Steve Paxton and a group of co-investigators in the 1970s (Dey and Sarco-Thomas 2014 a, 120). It is often associated with postmodern dance, and according to Massaglia (2013, 258), this is correct as CI 'could only come out of a very analytical awareness of body functioning'.

When Paxton invented CI in the United States in 1972, he and his collaborators were quite young. Paxton himself was 33, Nancy Stark Smith was 20, and other early participants, including Daniel Lepkoff and Nita Little, were 'twenty-plus-year-olds' (Paxton 2008, 87). Over the past 45 years, many of these early practitioners have remained active participants (Little 2014, 248). Paxton, by virtue of his founding role and extensive teaching, writing and performing, is still considered the most important authority on the CI tradition (Novack 1990; Stark Smith, 2008, xi). Stark Smith, whom I consider to be an equally important CI leader, continues to write, teach and perform in Europe, the US and other parts of the world and is also the editor of *Contact Quarterly*. Several other first-generation American contact dancers and teachers, including Little and Lepkoff, remain active in the CI community.

Many CI dancers refer to these pioneers, all now more than 60 years old, and cite their written and spoken commentaries with great respect. Noting their age, one older CI dancer-teacher I interviewed comments, 'Seeing Andrew Harwood, Ray Chung and Nancy Stark Smith is always encouraging to me as they are much older than I am'¹. Remaining visibly impressive and continuing to teach on several continents give these early practitioners *power* within what might be described as the world-wide contact community. As authority figures, these first-generation teachers, whom I frame as *core persons*, define CI through what they do in their teaching and



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performances, say in their public appearances and write in their essays. Thus, the power to define CI continues to be almost exclusively American, with the ECIC playing a subordinate role².

CI values

In discussing CI, I refer to what can be termed traditional values, which continue to play a prominent role in CI literature (Novack 1990; Baner 1987). These values are often related to the concepts of equality and democracy. In the book *Sharing the dance* (1990), Novack (1990) writes that CI has 'embraced values of individualism, equality, and anti-hierarchical relationships' (Novack 1990, 208). She also discusses the tensions between equality and hierarchy that arose in early American CI:

What is particularly notable about the contact improvisation community during the '70s is not that hierarchies and differences existed but that many participants were so conscious of them and disturbed by them. (Novack 1990, 210)

In CI, equality may be understood to be related to gender, ethnicity and the body (shape, size and functionality), as well as other issues prominent in the US during the 1960s and '70s, including the

anti-(Vietnam) war movement, women's liberation, civil rights and flower power. Here is Novack's (1990) description of this formative period:

Many felt that the movement structure of contact improvisation literally embodied the social ideologies of the early '70s, which rejected traditional gender roles and social hierarchies. They viewed the experience of touching and sharing weight with a partner of either sex and any size as a way of constructing a new experience of the self—interacting with another person [...] The group with no director symbolized an egalitarian community in which everyone cooperated, and no one dominated. (Novack 1990, 11)

Gatherings known as jams where dancers come together to practice CI play an important role in the ECIC. A jam typically is a non-profit event where everyone contributes to covering expenses. It can be experienced as intergenerational (Martin 2017, 70) as dancers of different ages participate. By implementing principles of equality, a jam builds and reinforces a community that embodies traditional CI values.

In teachings and literature, CI is often presented as inclusive based on the premise that *every body* can dance with *every body*, regardless of gender, size, age and experience (Novack 1990, 11). CI consists primarily of duets, and in theory, anyone can invite anyone else as a partner and end the duet by leaving. All dancers may lift and be lifted by their partners. Experienced dancers and beginners may dance together. Men and women lift each other. Men dance with men, women with women, and men with women.

This is the context in which I investigate European CI dancer-teachers' experiences related to gender and becoming older. My research question is: what kind of experiences related to values do today's European CI dancer-teachers age 40 years and older have?

Method

The research material consists of transcripts of interviews with seven dancer-teachers from three European countries. All of these four women and three men were 40–55 years old and had been involved in CI for more than 15 years. To safeguard their anonymity, I refer to all of them as 'he/she', 'interviewee' or 'dancer-teacher'. In the cases where gender is relevant, I add the designation 'female' or 'male'. The article does not provide an analysis of all the interview material totalling 41 pages. I chose interview excerpts I interpreted through a selective reading approach, searching for passages connected to the themes of age and gender. Each participant received a transcript of the interview and had the opportunity to make corrections.

The interviews took place from 2014 to 2017 during CI events with crowded schedules and lasted 20–32 minutes. I participated in all of these events as both a dancer and a researcher. I described my research project in plenary sessions and subsequently approached individuals in my target age group to ask if they were willing to let me interview them. Everyone I asked immediately agreed. I informed all of the interviewees about the aim of the research project, and they all agreed to participate in writing. We were participating in the same event and were familiar with each other through dancing, so I did not have to start the interviews by engaging in small talk or offering a lengthy explanation. My interviewees and I shared mutual knowledge of CI and the ECIC. According to Cato Wadel (1991, 91), such mutual knowledge makes researchers working in their own field able to understand their material.

The interviews were semi-structured. Although I initially intended to have a research conversation and sometimes referred to my own experiences, none of the interviewees ever asked me a question. I believe they all experienced our encounters as interviews. I asked open-ended questions, such as 'As an older contact dancer in an environment with younger and older



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people, do you have any thoughts related to this—or have you had any experiences related to age?

I conducted the interviews, transcription and analysis in conformity with the work of Kvale and Brinkman (2015) and their principles of hermeneutic interpretation. Rather than a 'step-by-step' method or an analysis leading to the one possible interpretation, Kvale and Brinkmann (2015, 237–238) base their methodology on hermeneutic and post-modern ways of understanding, resulting in a plurality of possible interpretations. I entered the hermeneutic circle with a pre-understanding consisting of my experience as a CI dancer-teacher and as a dance researcher who had conducted prior research on dance improvisation and CI (Rustad 2013). I understood my research position as self-biographical, in the sense of being self-reflective concerning my social positioning and prior experience. This self-positioning influenced how I behaved while conducting the interviews; in this sense, my position was field-situated (Neuman and Neuman, 2012, 18–19).

My research methodology drew from the hermeneutic-phenomenological tradition. The phenomenon I researched was the experience of being and becoming an older CI practitioner within the ECIC, and I drew upon my own and other people's experiences and work to develop my interpretations. My pre-understanding of the phenomenon investigated was

closely linked with my self-biographical situatedness as it developed through my own participation in the field (Neuman and Neuman, 2012, 27). This means that I shared explicit and implicit understandings of what counted as values in CI with the persons I interviewed.

At some points in the analysis, I related the ECIC to Etienne Wenger's writing on his concept of 'community of practice', described as 'groups of agents interacting by doing in a historical and social context giving rise to structure and meaning in their activities' (Rouhiainen 2008, 55). My use of the terms 'participation' and 'gender' were consistent with common usage.

Research context

The scope of research on age and dance is growing and has addressed professional dance (Rustad 2017; Schwaiger 2012; Nakajima 2011; Schwaiger 2005; Wainwright and Turner 2004; Jowitt 1994), community dance (Østern 2015; Houston 2011), social dance forms (Thomas 2013; Lovatt 2011) and dance as a component of health care for the elderly (Zhang et al. 2008). In the comprehensive work *Aging, gender, embodiment and dance: finding a balance*, Elizabeth Schwaiger (2012) connects dance with age and gender studies. Susanne Martin (2017), in *Dancing age(ing): rethinking age(ing) in and through improvisation practice and performance*, includes research on CI and age. Martin (2017, 46) finds that researchers 'who analyze dominant views on age(ing) emphasize gender inequality, one in which women experience the marginalization of older people earlier than men do'.

Research on CI includes historical, anthropological and experience-based work (Banes 1987, Novack 1990, Bull 1997, Albright 2003, Engelsrud 2007, Little 2014, Rustad 2013), and one special issue of *Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices* (Dey & Sarco-Thomas 2014, b) focuses entirely on CI. Martin (2017), to my knowledge, is the only scholar who has investigated CI with a focus on age and gender.

Experiences of CI dancer-teachers

In this section, I present excerpts from the interviews and one personal experience in an effort to accurately convey dancer-teacher's experiences. I supplement these excerpts with my interpretations that are the result of the analysis of the interview material and the mutual knowledge and situations in which the interviews took place.

In one of the interviews when we talked about teaching and age, the dancer-teacher reflected:

[F]or me, it's also about trying to teach this form as inclusive and open for everybody and every sex or gender [. . .] And to have it be open from age zero till ninety-nine. I still think doing that is a learning process. (Excerpt 1)

In this excerpt, the dancer-teacher specifies a full age range and does not make any differentiation among ages or position her/his teaching in relation to age. Another interviewee offers a comment consistent with this perspective:

Older people sometimes come to me and ask if they are too old, if it's still possible for them to learn and dance contact [. . .] I just try to let them know that they are probably not the only one in this age group, that it's absolutely fine to come as you are. (Excerpt 2)

«To come as you are» assumes that age is not a barrier to full participation. Like the previous quotation, this one is consistent with traditional CI principles. Thus, both of these dancer-teachers negotiate meaning in relationship to traditional CI values and, in my estimation, withhold information that could indicate that older people might not necessarily experience CI as fully inclusive.

This personal experience related by a dancer-teacher provides a different perspective:

I taught at a festival some years ago and then came back as a participant, so people didn't know me [. . .] When everybody was choosing partners, I was left behind, and I am used to everybody choosing me because they want to work with a teacher [. . .] But, then, wow! *I wasn't chosen!* Usually, I can relax about choosing partners because *I always get chosen*. I don't have to be stressed about getting a partner. (Excerpt 3)

In this excerpt, the dancer-teacher emphasises her experience of 'not being chosen', which presents a sharp contrast with the teacher's assertion in Excerpt 2 that it is 'fine' to come as you are. This dancer-teacher's experience is that as a teacher, other dancers always choose her/him. She/he believes that this is due to the powerful status attached to being a CI teacher, which suggests that the ECIC has an implicit hierarchy at odds with CI's traditional rejection of hierarchy, status and power. Addressing the theme of 'how to get a partner in CI', Excerpt 3 reveals that teachers are aware that non-teachers might find getting partners stressful. In contrast, several dancer-teachers interviewed describe 'being chosen', with people queueing up to dance with a dancer-teacher on one occasion. In general, the dancer-teachers talk more about *being chosen* as partners than *actively choosing* partners. I interpret this as an indication of teachers' high status, which changes with the context: if a teacher's status is unknown to others, visible age may make the teacher less attractive as a dance partner.

Several other dancer-teachers brought up the topic of getting a partner during their interview, both regarding taking the initiative and being chosen by others. In CI, as well as in other dance contexts, something is always at risk in this situation: you might approach someone and feel rejected, an unpleasant

experience. In my experience, openly and more subtle exclusionary acts generally are silently accepted within the ECIC.

At one festival where I taught, the festival team specifically asked the teachers to dance with non-teachers in the evening jams. They made this request as the previous year, the participants had complained that the teachers danced only with their peers and other experienced dancers, avoiding beginning and intermediate dancers. The disappointed participants had expected to have opportunities to dance with experienced dancer-teachers and protested that the teachers' exclusivity conflicted with traditional CI values. This pattern was especially significant as at CI jams, skilled dancers dancing with other skilled dancers usually attract attention, establishing a visible hierarchy in the dance space. Interestingly, Novack (1990, 210) observed the same phenomenon in the CI community in the US during the 1970s and later described how participants were conscious of—and disturbed by—such hierarchies.

Another dancer-teacher, who relates that she/he became involved in CI in part as the participants communicated with each other 'in a clear, focused and open way that did not impose a lot of hierarchy', offers a different perspective:

[CI was] some sort of democratic meeting between two people. You could exchange experience and skills, *and you really can*. Somebody is so much more experienced than somebody else is, and you could meet in that relationship, find a meeting place, a common ground that you can share, and both of you learn something from that. (Excerpt 4)

This informant views the CI duet as a democratic encounter between dancers—quite a different perspective than the peer- and skills-oriented observations previously cited.

Gender and age

«Maybe I was left behind because people thought, 'I don't want to dance with an older woman'», a female dancer-teacher reflects in her interview. She then laughs, but her suggestion that her combination of age and gender might make her a less attractive dance partner to others remains powerful. I interpret her laughter as an attempt to mitigate the doubly negative content of what she has just said, as if not being chosen as she was both *older* and *a woman* is unthinkable. I interpret her resistance to believing this to the context of CI's traditional values, which hold that neither age nor gender is a reason not to be chosen.

Another dancer-teacher, in contrast, explicitly affirms that in her/his workshops, young people are not interested in dancing exclusively with other young people but happily participate in duets with people of all ages. However, a female dancer-teacher responds to the question, 'Do you think the process of choosing partners is different for older male contact dancers than for older female contact dancers [in the ECIC]?' with this observation:

Oh, yes, they [older men] are definitely treated differently [...] The men in general feel more appreciated as they get older; they are also more desired as teachers and even as dancers [...] Moreover, one [man] said: 'Now [that I'm older], I feel so comfortable as people take me so seriously. They really think that I have something to give, and that makes me feel wanted and proud'. (Excerpt 6)

A male interviewee corroborates this:

It's also me getting older [...] [W]hat I really appreciate observing is myself becoming a respected teacher [...] They listen to what I say, and this, of course, is nice [...] When I say something, it has more weight. (Excerpt 7)

These statements illustrate how a male dancer-teacher assumes that gaining greater respect is related to his increasing age, as well as his increasing experience, and thus, he regards becoming older as positive in this context. In contrast, a female interviewee complains, 'I feel that in the contact community, female older dance teachers need to struggle more to be seen'. She goes on to say that she observed one female teacher with very long experience who needed 'really to put herself in the centre to be seen'. Asked if this effort was successful, she replies, 'Yes', adding, 'I thought, «Wow, is that necessary?» And probably, it is'.

Another female dancer-teacher who participated in a CI event where age and gender were topics of discussion reflects that 'even the women [female teachers] who weren't 40 yet felt «I'm already too old; nobody wants me anymore». Not seen. Not taken seriously'. She then adds this comment:

I miss older female dancers or dancers my age. In jams and in many contexts, where are we all? Because I see the male dancers; they keep going; they keep dancing. Some of them keep going to the jams; they keep teaching. Somehow, all the women have dropped out. (Excerpt 8)

The dancer here addresses gender as central and expresses sadness about the gender imbalance that, for her, diminishes the value of practicing CI. At the same time, she observes that this process has occurred over time. When she was younger, more female dancers were around her age. Even more problematic is the possibility that the imbalance in numbers of older male and female dancers participating in CI events may influence younger dancers to develop CI values different from traditional ones. The observations regarding age and gender articulated in Excerpt 8, in my interpretation, reflect the power structures and hierarchies in Western society in general. Research generally has found that as people age, gender



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inequality becomes progressively more salient (Martin 2017, 46). Despite their expressions of disappointment, the women and the men interviewed, when asked to describe how they saw their future in CI, unanimously express a conviction that CI is a life-long practice.

Summary and discussion

In this article, my research question—what kind of experiences related to values do today's European CI dancer-teachers age 40 years and older have?—is answered in different ways. The American CI core group includes role models of both sexes. In the 1970s, they were not merely a 'community of practice' consisting of dancers 'interacting by doing' (Rouhiainen 2008, 55) but a 'community of thinkers' (Hustvedt 2016, xii), and today's CI communities in Europe and elsewhere are in touch with their values. Rather than ageless ideals, these founders are living proof that it is possible to continue dancing and teaching CI successfully throughout the aging process amid changing historical and social contexts.

However, the research material I obtained from interviews with European dancer-teachers often is *not consonant with* traditional CI values. Instead, it corresponds more closely to what Hambergren (2011, 175) describes as 'characteristic effects of democracy' related to 'different practices of inclusion

and exclusion'. As shown in this article, two conflicting sets of values are at play: *traditional values*, communicated through teaching, speaking and writing which I understand as embodying and upholding the social ideologies of the early 1970s, and *experienced values*, communicated in contemporary European CI practice. Whereas traditional CI values promote a type of ideal democratic practice, the experienced values are less inclusive and more exclusionary, reflecting the traditional gender roles and active social hierarchies prevalent in Western society. However, it is important to note that several interviewees provide evidence of at least a partial correspondence between traditional and experienced values. One example is an interviewee's positive characterisation of the CI duet as a democratic encounter.

This dichotomous messaging is problematic. CI is transmitted to beginners who uncritically receive the tradition to acquire the grips necessary to participate (Lindholm 1985, 110). Beginners are introduced to the traditional values, which raise their expectations, and then become disillusioned when their expectations are not met. Furthermore, the teaching practice of dancer-teachers depends on a constant influx of new beginners and novices, and hierarchical experiences do not support CI as an attractive community of practice. Today's CI dancers, like their counterparts in the 1970s, are conscious of—and disturbed by—the current hierarchies, especially as they are at odds with CI's traditional non-hierarchical and democratic values. Whereas hierarchies are a well-known component of other dance genres, experienced dancer-teachers tend to avoid discussing hierarchy and exclusion within CI as they contradict the traditional values. Consequently, the experienced values often remain concealed and unarticulated.

The material developed in this study reveals several different CI hierarchies associated with skill, age and gender. The skill hierarchy supports Wenger's (1998, 80) assertion that within communities of

practice, 'specific members have more power than others'. Visibly skilled dancers become such 'specific members' whose high level of skill gives them authority. Hierarchy is also involved when teachers always get chosen as dance partners, while other dancers find that getting partners becomes stressful. Again, this indicates the existence of a hierarchy contrary to traditional CI values. Another unwanted hierarchy revealed in this study is exclusionary behaviour during festivals, evident when dancer-teachers select skilled and experienced partners. This display of teacher status, possibly representing a social hierarchy but also indicating a sense of superiority and entitlement, is quite opposed to CI's origins as an egalitarian community in which no one dominated, and 'distinctions between amateur and professional dancers were consciously ignored' (Novack 1990, 11).

Finally, my findings reveal a hierarchy based on gender and age. The transcript extracts show that although teachers continue to propound the traditional CI ideal that age is irrelevant, older dancers may experience exclusion as other dancers avoid them as partners. Moreover, while female CI teachers may feel less appreciated as they age, older male teachers tend to feel more comfortable, wanted and appreciated. This indicates that, in Europe, among older CI teachers, men have higher status than women. In addition, older male teachers are invited to teach more frequently, but their female counterparts likely pay an economic price as they age. The evidence found here indicates that a disproportionate number of female dancers stop attending CI events as they age, perhaps in response to discrimination. This result is consistent with Lovatt's (2011) finding that older male dancers gain confidence, but older female dancers lose confidence, causing them to decrease their participation. The combination of being older and female appears to constitute an indirect exclusion marker, mirroring similar undemocratic prejudices in Western society. This is a sharp departure from

CI's traditional gender values, which convey a strong, positive political message.

I interpret the issues concerning the hierarchies that surfaced during my interviews as a critique coming from the inside and, therefore, a problem that dancer-teachers and dancers in the ECIC should address. What I refer to as traditional values can also be categorised as historic, idealistic and static, whereas the experienced values may differ according to the context. However, I believe the ambitious ideals constituted within the traditional values retain importance as reminders of CI's potential. CI still has the possibility to be experienced as an inclusive dance practice based on the principles of equality and democracy. To realise CI's potential, its practitioners must constantly be aware of, recognise and make visible current patterns of exclusion and take measures to eradicate them. Perhaps one way to accomplish this is to implement a post-modern analytical strategy based on transparency, information and discussion of experienced hierarchical values, along with a policy of communicating and consciously implementing the anti-hierarchical, traditional values.

The number of dancer-teachers interviewed for this project is small. Research involving a larger European cohort would be extremely valuable. Similarly, interviews with CI dancers and dancer-teachers in countries such as Japan, Russia and India might illuminate how the traditional and experienced values in CI interact with the values and cultural norms in various non-Western cultures. Such research could also shed light on the relationship between CI values, both traditional and experienced, and democracy in general.

Notes

- 1 Harwood and Chung are renowned CI dancer-teachers who teach in the United States and Europe and on other continents.
- 2 This does not mean that American CI is not facing challenges. After attending a European Touch and Play festival, Keith Hennesy (2011) wrote: 'Daniel Hayes launched the festival with a provocative online statement challenging Steve Paxton's heavy-handed, decades-old directive that CI ought to focus on physics, not chemistry—that is, on bodily mechanics and not on emotional or sensual connections'.

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Beyond Tero Saarinen Technique: Method of Hybrid Pedagogy in Action.

Hanna Pohjola^{1,2,3}, Sini Länsivuori⁴

ABSTRACT

Current neurocognitive research on dance and motor learning recommends the use of hybrid teaching methods in which explicit and implicit learning complement each other. This article describes experiences of hybrid teaching and offers an overview of two Tero Saarinen technique–and–repertoire master classes pedagogically designed according to hybrid teaching and motor learning. This article discusses the participants' feedback and shares an encouraging example of hybrid teaching.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Nykyisen neurokognitiivisen tanssitutkimuksen mukaan hybridinen tanssinopettaminen, jossa yhdistyvät toisiaan täydentävät eksplisiittinen ja implisiittinen oppiminen on suositeltavaa. Tässä artikkelissa tarkastellaan kokemusta hybridiopettamisesta, joka toteutui kahdella Tero Saarisen tekniikka- ja repertuaarikurssilla, joiden pedagogisessa suunnittelussa tavoiteltiin hybridistä motorista opetusta ja oppimista. Artikkelin sisältönä on näille kahdelle kurssille osallistuneiden tanssijoiden palautteet ja niiden pohjalta muotoutunut kannustava esimerkki hybridisestä opettamisesta.

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Introduction

Tero Saarinen is a Finnish dance artist and choreographer and the artistic director of the Tero Saarinen Company, whose workshops are based on his movement technique. Displaying features of ballet, butoh, martial arts and contemporary dance, his style resembles organic, an inventive mixture of grotesqueness and beauty and like butoh with wings. The Tero Saarinen technique is based in his words on a holistic approach, and the aim is to activate every cell in the body to resonate and become 360-degrees alive. This goal leads to interpretations that are constantly vital and surprising, like flora and fauna (see <http://www.terosaarinen.com/en/>).

The fundamental elements of the Tero Saarinen technique are defined as awareness, alertness and attentiveness. In short, awareness is being present and aware when moving, being mindful of the moment. Alertness refers to an awakening of all the senses to enable them fully ready for action and attentiveness to being attentive to different layers of awareness and to learning new information. Paying attention to the various changes in the quality of movement is also essential. Altogether, Saarinen's technique concentrates on awakening the sensing of the feet, along with general alertness and focus. The goal is to make full use of already-learned techniques and to find, liberate and nourish the potential capacity of every dancer. In addition, the Tero Saarinen Company's workshops attempt to recognise the polarities of physical and mental existence and to make use of these bidirectional qualities, such as anima/animus, inherited/present, learned knowledge/

intuition and grounded/elevated. Dance classes in the workshop have varying different themes according to the fundamental elements, and structure of each class includes a warm-up and awakening of the senses, followed by basic exercises according to TSC style with focus on technique and improvisation, and expand to repertoire to conclude.

This article offers an overview on two Tero Saarinen technique–and–repertoire master classes (see <https://vimeo.com/154567489>) that we three teachers (Tero Saarinen, Sini Länsivuori and Hanna Pohjola) pedagogically designed to promote hybrid teaching (e.g. Raab 2015; Karin 2016) which is a novel approach on dance teaching to enhance motor learning. We collaborated throughout, prior and after the workshops and brought complementary perspectives within dance pedagogy: the perspectives of artists and choreographers (Tero Saarinen), the experiences of dancers (Sini Länsivuori) and the biomechanical principles of movement patterns (Hanna Pohjola). This article discusses hybrid teaching from the learners' perspective, and is based on feedback from the participants.

Hybrid teaching and workshops

Hybrid teaching ideally combines the benefits of both explicit and implicit learning and implements them during dance classes (e.g. Raab 2015; Karin 2016). In short, explicit learning consists of the conscious introduction and recollection of movements, is specified, uses declarative forms of control and depends on working memory (e.g. Lam et al. 2009; Kantak et al. 2012). In turn, implicit learning is more

welcoming of disruption, stresses working memory less and enables motor learning in cognitive stages of lower consciousness (e.g. Karabanov et al. 2009). According to current neurocognitive research on dance and motor learning, hybrid teaching and learning methods are beneficial for enhancing learning and, thus, are encouraged (Karin 2016).

In this article, we present participants' feedback of workshops, where we combined simultaneous explicit and implicit teaching during the workshops. The essence of both teaching methods was the Tero Saarinen technique and its fundamental principles. First, we analyzed the central patterns of movements that are essential in the TSC-technique. Then, we pursued to find a teaching method that would incorporate both explicit and implicit teaching. In practice the explicit teaching and learning were engaged through verbal instructions, visual clues, and use of biomechanical principles of the Tero Saarinen's dance technique. The implicit teaching and learning occurred via tactile information and by offering different imageries (e.g. sensory, visual, motor and kinaesthetic metaphors). Teachers were given specific orientation in the class: choreographer's (Tero Saarinen) viewpoint included artistic implementation to reach for TSC fundamental elements, dancer's perspective (Sini Lämsivuori) offered practical guidance on movements, and biomechanics (Hanna Pohjola) provided both general and individual knowledge on kinetic movement chains related to TSC/technique. We decided on this approach during prior pedagogical planning when we set the main goals, structure and themes for the workshops, synthesising philosophy, biomechanical modelling, artistic values and dance pedagogy. The hybrid teaching model was then pretested with the company's dancers, and their feedback was used to improve the teaching.

The master classes were held at the Kuopio Dance Festival (17–19th June 2016) and the Helsinki Festival (15–19th August 2016). The total duration of the first intensive workshop was three days (with three teachers),

and the second workshop five days (three teachers for three days, two teachers for two last days), with the sessions on each day lasting three to four hours. All the participants were emailed a structured feedback form, which was used primarily for pedagogical purposes. Consent for research and marketing purposes was requested and confirmed via email after sending the form. Fifteen participants attended the Kuopio Dance Festival workshop, and eleven gave feedback and consent for use for marketing and research purposes. The Helsinki Festival had 15 participants, and while thirteen gave feedback, only eleven gave consent, and two denied consent. Thus, there was a total of twenty-two responders (n=22). All the participants were dance professionals, dance students or active amateurs.

The participants in the Kuopio Dance Festival answered 11 questions. Six were closed questions with a Likert-type scale (1–3 or 1–5) and assessed the participants' workshop expectations and satisfaction generally and on teaching, applied biomechanics, repertoire and given concrete tools. Five open-ended questions addressed the participants' general impressions, collaboration of the three teachers, subjective importance of the workshop, future suggestions for workshop topics, ideas for further development and other comments.

The participants in the Helsinki Festival answered 14 questions. Seven were closed questions with a Likert scale (1–3 or 1–5) and assessed the participants' workshop expectations, satisfaction, the suitability of the amount of participation fee and the methods by which dancers received information about the course. Eight open-ended questions addressed the participants' general impressions, collaboration of the three teachers, subjective importance of the workshop, views of the participation fee, future suggestions for workshop topics, ideas for further development and other comments.

Not all the participants answered all the questions, and some comments could not be published or used for research purposes. This article focuses only

on questions that addressed a general overview of the workshop, the collaboration of the three teachers and used teaching method and perspectives and the subjective importance of the workshop. Content analysis was used to analyse the feedback forms; thus, conceptual groupings from the data were gathered according to the relevant questions as themes.

Feedback of the workshops

Based on the responses, it seems that the workshop participants found the collaboration of the three teachers and the three different ways of approaching the Tero Saarinen technique to be rewarding, enriching and inspiring. Many participants mentioned that attention was paid to every participant in the class, and that the three teachers could notice all the participants equally and personally, giving them corrections, adjustments and feedback. One participant questioned the value of intensive courses taught by only one teacher, because in his / her view such courses do not allow real possibilities for all participants to receive attention. Thus, it seems that for these participants collaborative teaching provided concrete, individual, professional dance technique related tools that they were able to integrate into their personal dance practice. In short, the participants stated that the combined teaching of the three professionals during the workshops enabled and enhanced the experience of efficient, in-depth learning and dance.

According to participants' responses, the chemistry between the teachers worked well, and although the participants saw different things and received diverse feedback, the teaching appeared coherent with the essence of the Tero Saarinen technique. Consequently, the participants commented that all the teachers and the teaching followed a common goal. In short, the participants reported that they perceived the collaboration among the three teachers as professional, informative, complementary, seamless and, specifically, well planned. For us, the model of three teachers raised

prior concerns about the possibility of overloading the participants' working memory, but this was generally not apparent in the comments.

The participants described the general atmosphere of the workshop in multiple ways using words such as safe, caring, warm, open, positive, excellent, very good, encouraging, awesome, happy, trustworthy, inspiring and positive. According to the feedback much attention and many helping hands were available, and that this gave room for personal insights. One participant commented that a special feature of the general atmosphere was the convenient balance between mental and physical ways of working, the connection of body and mind.

The subjective importance of the workshop emerges in two complementary themes: 1) the connection and continuity between technique and repertoire; and 2) the given time. The first of the themes refers to structure of the class where the technique and repertoire were intertwined: thus, technical aspects were preparing in detail for the repertoire. Participants appreciated proper assistance with biomechanical alignment, technical focus and awakened technical abilities throughout the classes, and noticed their essential connections to the repertoire. These aspects enabled connecting to a deeper part of one's self as participants described their sensation. In addition, they mentioned that flow of energy was present in the movements instead of just the shape of movement.

A special theme in the feedback was the concept of time. Much time in the workshops was devoted to the essence of being present and alive, and an in-depth focus was placed on basic, elementary things. Consequently, the participants reported that they had time to get acquainted with the technique with the aid of imaginary metaphors, the slow progression of the class and encouragement from the teachers to find the elementary aspects of their own bodies. This timeframe also permitted possibilities for technical discoveries and insights (e.g. feet, landing, fingers, back, space,

rooting). Thus, the workshop seemed to have helped the participants in understanding their own movement, acquiring a deeper personal experience of movement and discovering the quality of movement that arose from physiological aspects. Additionally, as participants reflected in their writings, the workshops enabled them to trust on one's own doing, and to seek the profound details of movement to strengthen one's own ideas and experiences. The participants found that this was empowering and increased their self-confidence.

Concluding comments

Based on our experiences and the previous literature (e.g. Raab 2015; Karin 2016), hybrid teaching can be regarded as a recommended method for dance teaching. As a summary, participants' responses were positive and encouraging concerning the implementation of different teaching methods in dance classes. The intensive days of the workshops saw the discovery of many valuable insights, such as in-depth learning, the empowerment of self-esteem, the profound quality of movement and the unity of the body–mind connection. Thus, the feedback presented in this article encourage for further implementation on hybrid teaching.

The teachers' prior concern about overloading the participants' working memory did not materialise in the feedback. This might be due to pedagogical decisions concerning the classes, which the participants noted and described as logical and progressive, particularly the relation of connection and continuity. The participants were also given time to reflect on their learning during the classes through daily orientation, summarisation and individual movement searching (i.e. taking time to 'inhabit' the movements individually). To conclude, our experiences indicate that hybrid teaching seems to require carefully conducted prior planning, goal setting and both reflective and reflexive pedagogy to fulfil its potential.

Notes

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BIOGRAPHIES

Hanna Pohjola (doctor of arts in dance) is a Finnish dance artist, teacher and choreographer. Her doctoral dissertation on the identity of the injured former contemporary dancer was published in 2012. In addition to a master's degree and doctorate in dance, Pohjola holds bachelor's and master's degrees in health sciences (exercise medicine). She has also graduated as a physiotherapist. Currently, Pohjola works as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Eastern Finland and teaches part time at the Theatre Academy in Helsinki, Finland.
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Sini Länsivuori is the head of artistic development for the Tero Saarinen Company and a Finnish dancer, dance artist and teacher. She started her career in 1984 at the Finnish National Ballet and has danced in contemporary works by artists such as Carolyn Carlson, William Forsythe, Jiri Kylian, Ohad Naharin and significant Finnish choreographers. Since joining the Tero Saarinen Company in 1998, Länsivuori has danced in many of Saarinen's creations and served as a choreographer's assistant. As a dance teacher, Länsivuori is the company's head of artistic development, responsible for the teaching and development of Saarinen's movement technique. In 2007, she received the Finland Prize, and in 2014, the Central Organization of Finnish Theatre Associations recognised her 30-year career with the Finnish dramatic arts Medal of Honour.

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