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# **INTERROGATING COMMUNITY DANCE PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE IN AFRICAN CONTEXTS –**

**CASE STUDIES OF A NEW YORK UNIVERSITY AND MAKERERE UNIVERSITY  
COLLABORATION IN KAMPALA, UGANDA (2010) AND A COLLABORATION  
BETWEEN THE EOAN GROUP AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
SCHOOL OF DANCE IN CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA (2009)**

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of Master of Music (Dance)

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation aims to interrogate community dance practice and performance in Cape Town, South Africa and Kampala, Uganda through the interrogation of two dance projects: a collaboration between New York University and Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda which took place in January 2010 and a collaboration between the University of Cape Town School of Dance and the Eoan Group, a community-based dance school, in Cape Town, South Africa in August 2009.

Community dance forms part of the larger umbrella term culture. To guide its argument, this dissertation draws from the notion that culture is a site of struggle (Grossberg, 1996), characterised by the interplay of power relations. Within this field of power, this dissertation argues that some forms of dance are positioned as 'culturally central' and other forms of dance as 'culturally marginal', a notion which is often expressed in terms of a high art/low art dichotomy. This dissertation notes that community dance practice and performance is a marginalised area of dance in the broader sphere of theatre/concert dance, just as its participants are often marginalised or devalued by society.

Chapter 1 discusses the concept of community, how 'community' feeds into 'community dance' and identifies some issues associated with community dance, such as disadvantage, development and empowerment that will fuel the discussions in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 focuses on culture and cultural formation, particularly in the context of postcolonialism in Uganda and South Africa, and attempts to clarify how community dance is part of a larger 'cultural politics'. In order to interrogate the topic through the selected research samples, this chapter also considers the notion of 'cultural exchange' through a discussion of terms such as interculturalism, intraculturalism and multiculturalism derived from, amongst others, cultural theorist Rustom Bharucha's (2000) theoretical framework.

Chapters 3 and 4 analyse and discuss the two collaborative dance projects in Kampala, Uganda and Cape Town, South Africa respectively. These chapters also provide an overview of the performing arts and dance in Uganda and South Africa in order to contextualise the arguments and the dance projects. A central question is to

what extent these collaborative dance projects sustain or subvert what this dissertation considers the 'marginalised' or low art position of community dance.

The final chapter will draw together this dissertation's key findings and recommendations for future practices, as well as suggest future areas of research that emerge from this study.

Recognising a common context of struggle (Mohanty, 1991), this dissertation aims to search for the parallels and divergences in the context of two postcolonial African nations, Uganda and South Africa. In so doing, this dissertation aims to provide an argument to support the notion that community dance is a valuable area of dance that can contribute to the emergence and further development of new forms of contemporary dance and of culture in African contexts.

University of Cape Town

## **DECLARATION**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:

Date:

University of Cape Town

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## INTRODUCTION

### Overview of the study

This dissertation will attempt to interrogate community dance practice and performance in Cape Town, South Africa and Kampala, Uganda by focussing on two collaborative dance projects. The first project to be investigated is an exchange programme between the New York University's (NYU) Dance Education department and the Music, Dance and Drama department at Makerere University which took place in Kampala in 2010. The second is a collaborative performance initiated by the University of Cape Town (UCT) School of Dance and the Eoan Group, a community-based dance school, which took place in Cape Town, South Africa in 2009. This research is aimed at investigating larger issues of community, community dance, cultural-formation and -exchange. Though differing in their respective approaches to dance training and dance making, these research samples serve to illustrate and question some of my concerns regarding the place of community dance within the broader context of the performing arts and culture in Africa. In my view, several issues arise when community dance becomes a 'commodity' in 'cultural exchanges', especially between the 'north' and the 'south', Africa and the West (terms which will be expanded in later chapters).

This dissertation concurs with Indian cultural theorist Rustom Bharucha's idea that the concept of 'community' operates as a construct (Bharucha, 2000) and suggests that the term 'community dance' has become a label that serves to marginalise certain participants, facilitators and 'products' of dance. I will draw from Bharucha's notions to suggest that community dance sites

are not predetermined cultural realities but constructions that are held together not so much by what is 'given' in any culture, but by what is 'invented' through their negotiations of specific interventions, assaults, inputs and collaborations (2000:1).

Recognising that the construction of communities is subject to the interplay of power relations, which Bharucha vividly describes as 'interventions, assaults, inputs and collaborations' (ibid.), this dissertation intends to investigate the power relations at play in the practice and performance of community dance specifically in Kampala, Uganda and Cape Town, South Africa. This dissertation notes the complexity of communities and cultural identities in South Africa and Uganda and aims to interrogate the concepts of 'community arts' and 'culture', particularly in their use with reference to cultural formation, the

understanding of a South African and Ugandan culture and the notion of developing a contemporary African performance aesthetic.

Chapter 1 will provide a general overview of community dance, by exploring the concept of community and how the understanding of 'community' feeds into community dance practice and performance, and will locate these discussions in current scholarship on these topics. Also, some of the key issues, such as agency, ownership and transformation/empowerment that will be encountered in subsequent chapters, will be identified.

In order to consider how cultural politics is shaped in Uganda and South Africa, chapter 2 will attempt to define culture and consider cultural formation and its surrounding issues. This chapter draws on the notion that culture is a site of struggle (Grossberg, 1996), one that is characterised by the interplay of power relations. This chapter will suggest that in this site of struggle certain dominant power structures serve to position some forms of dance as 'central' and other forms of dance, like community dance, as 'culturally marginal' (Julien & Mercer, 1996). This argument will be related to the notion of a high art/low art dichotomy which this dissertation identifies as a field of dance that warrants problematising. In order to analyse and discuss the collaborative dance projects that have engaged with so-called community dancers, two research samples were chosen for scrutiny forming the basis of chapter 2. Chapter 2 will also consider the notion of 'cultural exchange' as well as the further issues of power arising from any site where two or more cultures meet. For this purpose, terms such as interculturalism, intraculturalism and multiculturalism will be accessed using Bharucha's (2000) and other cultural theories.

Chapters 3 and 4 will attempt to apply the theoretical framework expounded in the first 2 chapters in order to interrogate and evaluate the selected case studies in Kampala, Uganda and Cape Town, South Africa respectively. In order to contextualise this interrogation of community dance in South Africa and Uganda, chapters 3 and 4 will attempt to consider the role played by each partner as well as examine the macro socio-economic and political context. The impact on the larger field of culture, the performing arts and dance in both these societies is also commented upon.

The final chapter will attempt to draw together this dissertation's key findings from each of the research samples, as well as assess each collaborative project in terms of its achievements and challenges so that some recommendations for possible future practices and areas for future research might emerge.

## Research methodology

In order to interrogate community dance practice and performance in Kampala, Uganda and Cape Town, South Africa one research sample was selected from each institution (Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda and the University of Cape Town, South Africa), each located in a specific context. This dissertation applies a qualitative approach in the interpretation and analysis of the data collected. A series of personal interviews were conducted in Kampala and Cape Town with a view to test the questions and suppositions surrounding community dance practice and performance that have arisen in the process of writing this dissertation. At times, these conversations have led to more questions, which could provide new starting points for future research projects.

There are multiple parties that create the complex fields of power relations within each of the research samples. Van Maanen (2004), cited by Morris (2008), identifies three processes which underpin any form of cultural production, namely production, distribution and consumption (or reception). Loosely described, the production system organises the cooperation of all the people involved in the making of theatre or dance; distribution indicates the availability of theatre productions for people to see them as performances; and consumption or reception has to do with how these performances are received by an audience (Morris, 2008). Together, the systems of production, distribution and consumption determine the institutional arrangements, or the 'institutional context' for cultural production in a particular place. Morris adds that

Any system of cultural production is influenced not only by how it is arranged, in other words how it is institutionalised (or not) in any particular context, but also by the macro socio-political and economic forces impacting upon the theatre system from without (2008:102).

Morris adds that these macro forces include

a country's politics and policies, economy, law, socio-cultural and demographic factors as well as level of technological sophistication which all have their influence (ibid.).

Thus, this dissertation has attempted to pay attention to both the institutional context for community dance making and performance in Uganda and South Africa, as well as the abovementioned macro socio-political and economic forces. Data was collected through comparative reading of existing literature of which the works of Loomba (2005), Bharucha (2000), Morley & Chen (1996), Mohanty (1991) and Spivak (1990) are some of the seminal texts upon which the theoretical framework of this dissertation is founded. Media writings from Ugandan and East African newspapers between 2000 and 2009, and South African

newspapers from 2009 and 2010 were also examined in order to gain alternate insight into contemporary cultural debates in both Uganda and South Africa.

Finally, personal interviews were an important means of data collection and specific samples were identified for this research project. Interviewees included Jill Pribyl, lecturer at Makerere University and programme coordinator of the New York University/Makerere University collaboration; Alfdaniels Mabingo, lecturer at Makerere University; Susan Bamutenda, from In Movement: Art for Social Change; Julius Lugaaya from the Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School and founder of Dance Week Uganda; Jenny Brown and Deborah Damast, from New York University and coordinators of the New York University/Makerere University collaboration; Gerard Samuel, Director of the UCT School of Dance; Abeeda Medell, Principal of the Eoan Group's dance programme; Sasha Fourie, UCT School of Dance student and former Eoan Group student; Odile De Villiers, UCT School of Dance student; Wentzel April, graduate of the UCT School of Dance and teacher at the Eoan Group; Thabisa Sagela and Bernice Valentine, both graduates of the UCT School of Dance and dance teachers in Western Cape schools.

Although this dissertation recognises that several parties contribute to the overall process of cultural production, and that the interviewees could have included participants, choreographers, audience members and critics, this dissertation has chosen to limit its focus to unpack specifically the views expressed by the coordinators and teachers involved in each of the selected research samples. It should be noted that in the Ugandan sample some of the teachers who were interviewed were also participants in the New York University/Makerere University collaborative performance. Also, in the South African sample where the boundary between teacher/choreographer and performer seemed more defined, two of the interviewees were UCT School of Dance students (rather than teachers or coordinators) who collaborated with Eoan Group dancers in Ebrahim's Medell's work *Up The Down Stairs* (2009). Although this was not consciously decided, it is important to note that most interviewees were female. In total the research sample included nine female and four male interviewees. The role played by gender could thus become another area of inquiry into which community dance research could be expanded.

In addition, this interrogation cannot be conducted without being sensitive to issues of 'voice' and 'ownership' as suggested by David William Cohen (2001), professor of history and anthropology at the University of Michigan, who observes that

The rise of transnational organisations such as Amnesty have compounded the appropriation of “voices” through “speaking for” as opposed to just “speaking of”, and such organisations have claimed authority to speak for Africans within global and international forums (2001:51).

While this dissertation recognises that the issue of who has the right to speak or write for whom is multifaceted, this dissertation has chosen to favour sources within Africa or other postcolonial spaces. Indian postcolonial and feminist author, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak adds that ‘the question ‘who should speak’ is less crucial than ‘who will listen?’ (1990:59). The real demand, according to Spivak, is to say as ‘postcolonial critics’: ‘I should be listened to seriously’ (ibid.). Recognising that as a researcher one can never be wholly objective I have attempted to reflect the voices within both case studies conducted in this dissertation particularly from their source cultures within South Africa and Uganda.

In light of the fact that ‘Africa’ can be seen as a theoretical construct, often either spoken of or spoken for by non-Africans (Odhiambo, 2001), it is important to note the relative scarcity of contemporary scholarly writing on the specific subject of the loaded term ‘community dance’ and such dance from ‘Africa’. The stereotype of Africa as a continent of ‘song and dance’ and oral traditions rather than written records, has served to fuel the blatantly inaccurate notion that Africa does not have a recorded history or knowledge base before colonialism. While the renewed interest in the Timbuktu manuscripts<sup>1</sup>, which date back to the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, helps to refute the notion that Africa does not have a recorded history, it is noteworthy how the privileging of written records by the West above knowledge that is retained/transferred through oral traditions often still persists. Also, in various informal conversations held in January 2010 with faculty members of the Music, Dance and Drama department (MDD) at Makerere University in Kampala, it became clear that there is a general shortage of documentation and archiving of dance in Uganda, both traditional and contemporary, not in the least because of Uganda’s colonial history<sup>2</sup>. This dissertation has had to rely on numerous conversations since 2007, the memories of dancers and lecturers at MDD, and newspaper clippings in attempting to begin this important reflection.

Similarly, Sharon Friedman, senior lecturer at the UCT School of Dance, notes the scarcity of South African writing on the subject of dance and dance education ‘beyond a handful of articles and conference papers’ (2008:3). In order to interrogate the context of dance and the performing arts in both Uganda and South Africa, this dissertation has often adapted writing

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<sup>1</sup> The Timbuktu or Mali manuscripts are a collection of Arabic and African texts which date back to as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> century and were in circulation in Timbuktu, an important centre of trade and scholarship from about the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Since 2001, South Africa has been involved in a project helping to preserve the manuscripts initiated by former South African president Thabo Mbeki (<http://www.timbuktufoundation.org/>).

<sup>2</sup> For example, it is only in 2010 that a recently initiated repatriation project of Ugandan music is allowing the creation of a music archive at Makerere University.

situated in the field of theatre/drama<sup>3</sup>, rather than dance, with the understanding that the institutional context as well as the macro socio-political and economic context for theatre is comparable to the context for dance.

A qualitative approach was used for the analysis of the collected data. American sociologist, Jennifer Brayton (1997), writes that

At a basic level, qualitative research commonly refers to the collection and the analysis of material that seeks to uncover meaning and understanding of experience (1997:para.4).

Rather than focussing on identifying social facts and reproducing opinions or views that were voiced by interviewees, this dissertation has been concerned with uncovering veiled notions around issues of value in dance in an attempt to assess to what extent some of these notions are perpetuated or are in transition. A useful term is 'interpretive inquiry' as used by Stinson and Anijar (1993), cited in Friedman (2008). As a methodological approach, 'interpretive inquiry' aims to

Elicit meaning or enlarge understanding rather than to prove or disprove facts...One does not begin such a study with a hypothesis. Rather one starts with much more open questions...(1993 in Friedman, 2008:12-13).

This type of research implies an inherent subjectivity, requiring the researcher to acknowledge her/his own social location and starting point (Brayton, 1997). Sue Stinson (1993), professor of Dance at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, refers to 'connected knowing' as a means to recognise this subjectivity. 'Connected knowing', according to Stinson, is

Concerned with what I know about something from my relationship with it; all of my experiences with what I wish to study are relevant (Stinson and Anijar, 1993 in Friedman, 2008:12).

Thus, my personal involvement in 2007 and 2008 as a teacher at the Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School and dancer with Okulamba Dance Theatre in Kampala, and as a dancer and teacher in both collaborative projects discussed in this dissertation could be seen as valuable, given my proximity, to provide new understanding and interpretation of these projects' institutional contexts. I participated in the New York University/Makerere

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<sup>3</sup> This dissertation employs the distinction between drama and theatre as outlined by Zakes Mda (1990). Loosely, Mda describes 'theatre' as the production and communication of meaning in the performance itself and 'drama' as the literature on which performances are sometimes based (Mda, 1990:352).

University collaborative project in 2007, 2008 and 2010 and was one of the performers in the *Dynamix* collaborative performance between the Eoan Group and the UCT School of Dance. Most of the research was conducted in 2010. In January 2010, I travelled to Uganda for one month in order to observe and participate in the latest New York University/Makerere University collaborative workshop, interview the Ugandan and American project coordinators and teachers/participants, and speak with lecturers at Makerere University's Music, Dance and Drama department as well as members of the Ugandan dance community. The interviews with South African coordinators, teachers and participants were conducted in May and June 2010. Rather than trying to illuminate facts, these interviews were often read in search of broader themes that seemed relevant to the analysis of these projects as well as to identify new and further questions and areas of interrogation. Often the interviews were used to either confirm or question my own observations and preconceptions that arose out of my role as a participant in both case studies. In addition, during two years of dance teaching experience and involvement in the contemporary dance field in Kampala, and during my experiences since 2003 as an undergraduate and postgraduate student at the UCT School of Dance, many informal conversations took place which are inevitably brought to this discussion and have prompted many of the questions raised in subsequent chapters.

These particular research samples were selected for their similarities (for instance, both collaborations are located in postcolonial African nations and involve the interaction of community dance with tertiary education spaces) as well as their divergences/dissonances in order to begin to investigate what role community dance might serve in the broader context of Ugandan and South African society and performing arts.

Although Uganda and South Africa are two distinct postcolonial African nations with divergent contexts in terms of the performing arts and cultural formation, this dissertation supports what Mohanty (1991) refers to as a 'common context of struggle' for the interrogation of community dance in a postcolonial African, and in the case of South Africa, a postcolonial and post-apartheid nation.

Both research samples involve the interaction of community dance with tertiary education spaces. Bourdieu, cited in Friedman, argues that

Schools generate the cultural capital of the upper classes and in doing so 'teach' the dominated classes to devalue their own culture (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977 in Friedman, 2008:24).

This research grapples with education as a site of struggle. Furthermore, one could suggest that both samples take place at the boundary of what is considered culturally marginal and culturally central (Julien & Mercer, 1996) and thus have the potential to disrupt existing power structures.

This dissertation's starting point is the observation that community dance is often devalued, unable to transcend the 'professional' boundary and is thus not considered 'high art'. Through the interrogation of two sites of community dance, I will attempt to argue that community dance has the ability to play a significant role in the re-writing of the dominant narratives in dance that have positioned some dance forms as high art and other dance forms, like community dance, as 'low art'. I concur with Loots and Young-Jahangeer who identify a strong need to

get Africa to speak to Africa, in Africa, and so to develop a dialogue between dance practitioners and critics from our own continent (2006:1).

As such, this dissertation hopes to engage and contribute to broader issues of identity, culture and notions of performance practice and aesthetics in contemporary dance in Africa.

## CHAPTER 1: COMMUNITY DANCE AND THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY

This chapter will attempt to define and provide an overview of what this dissertation refers to as 'community dance'. In order to do so, the chapter will begin by questioning what is meant by the term 'community' and how this term informs what could be identified as a community dance philosophy. As the research samples discussed in this dissertation are located in the postcolonial African nations of South Africa and Uganda, attention will be paid to what 'community' might mean in terms of postcolonial identities. Finally, community dance will be discussed in light of a broader community arts movement with emphasis on this dissertation's main argument that community dance is often devalued and marginalised as an area of artistic activity. This chapter will attempt to clarify some terms (disadvantage, development, transformation and empowerment) that are often associated with community dance and will be problematised as the argument in this dissertation unfolds.

### **The concept of community: an overview**

In order to investigate community dance, it is necessary to consider how the concept of community informs and impacts on community dance practice and performance. In its most basic sense, the word 'community' can indicate either a group of people living together in one place or a group sharing a commonality such as religion, language, profession, attitudes, interests or beliefs (Soanes, 2002:165). The variety of contexts in which the word community appears makes it difficult to offer a precise definition.

A valuable starting point is provided by social theorist Zygmunt Bauman (2001) who observes that words, besides their meaning, possess a certain 'feel'. One can speak of 'bad company', 'the ills of society' or a 'bad neighbourhood', but whatever the word 'community' may mean, it is good 'to have community', 'to be in a community'...Community we feel is always a good thing' (Bauman, 2001:1).

Cultural anthropologist Victor Turner (1969) invokes the term *communitas* to identify a bonding of people 'over and above socially imposed units or formal ties' (1969 in Lomas, 1998:155). Community performance advocates, Petra Kupperts and Gwen Robertson, also draw from Turner's concept of *communitas* and describe it as a 'state of being with others that transcends differences' (2007:11). However, although community or *communitas* is evocative of ideas of safety, warmth and goodwill, Kupperts and Robertson qualify this statement by adding that

It is much harder to sustain this communality into political engagement, and into a serious reflection on the differences that need to stay visible and experiential if a community is to sustain itself and grow (ibid.).

The above statement begins to show some of the paradoxes inherent in the concept of community and community formation. While 'community' implies a level of connectedness, of shared understanding among its members, a community is also distinct, because of its division into 'us' and 'them'. Communities thus rely on homogeneity or sameness (Bauman, 2001). Bauman further argues that once boundaries between 'inside' and 'outside' the community become more blurred, this homogeneity must be 'hand-picked, from a tangled mass of variety through selection, separation and exclusion' (ibid.:14).

British community dance practitioner, Christopher Thomson (1989) similarly draws attention to community and the paradox of connectedness and separation, and alludes to its implied opposition to alienation, estrangement and powerlessness. According to Thomson, underlying the use of the word 'community' is 'the idea of a *loss of community* – a loss of the feeling of identity with others, of a sense of belonging' (1989:91).

Thomson suggests three central meanings of the term community:

Community as a geographical locality with boundaries that can be defined; community as a local social system – a set of relationships that take place primarily within a locality; and community as a sense of meaningful identity between individuals, in other words specifying a relationship (ibid.:92).

Although such basic meanings of 'community' may seem useful for analysing community dance programmes and their participants or target groups, to this researcher, they suggest a rather narrow understanding of community.

For example, several theorists, such as Joshua Meyrowitz (1985) and Doreen Massey (1991), cited in Morley and Chen (1996), have argued that there has been a shift in the relationship between community and place. Massey (1991) argues that

Places themselves should no longer be seen as internally homogenous, bounded areas, but as 'spaces of interaction' in which local identities are constructed out of resources (both material and symbolic) which may not be at all local in their origin but are nonetheless 'authentic' for all that (Massey in Morley & Chen, 1996:330).

Massey thus presents a more fluid and constructed approach to the concept of community. Noteworthy, in light of this dissertation, is the notion that theatre or dance can also be a place where community is constructed/created. The collaborative projects between New

York University and Makerere University, and the UCT School of Dance and the Eoan Group, as examined in this dissertation, can be likened to a constructed (and even temporary) community. Bharucha (1997) clarifies this using the analogy of pilgrims who gather at a sacred place. He writes that

What makes this moment so moving...is its capacity to dissolve differences, cutting across class, caste and community. But this "dissolution" is provisional. Once the pilgrims return to their respective homes, the hierarchies and violence of everyday life are reinstated (Bharucha, 1997:31).

Bharucha's observation links the concept of community with Thomson's aforementioned suggestion of community 'as a sense of meaningful identity with others' (1989:92). However, rather than presenting community as fixed, it suggests the transient nature of such a sense of identity and belonging.

Continuing the discussion with the suggestion that 'community' can be expressed in terms of a shared identity, as in a 'cultural identity' or an 'ethnic identity', it is important to note the complexities of identity formation (and thus community formation). Bharucha questions

what constitutes community in the first place through connections between 'local', 'regional' and 'national' identities. To what extent are these categories discreet and independent? Can they be collapsed into one identity? And what would that identity be? (2000:72).

One of Bharucha's central concerns is evidenced in this statement: can cultural identity, or community identity, be seen as an entity? Or rather, as Bharucha suggests: 'do we see it as a textured fabric made up of internal diversities and differences?' (ibid.). For example, Tope Omoniyi, Suzanne Scheld and Duro Oni, from Roehampton University (UK), California State University (US) and the University of Lagos (Nigeria) respectively, observe that expressions of 'cultural boundedness as a feature of national identity have come under regular critical interrogation' (2009:7-8). Writing about youth identity in a transnational context in Nigeria, these authors note that

In establishment discourses identity is often constructed in essentialist terms as internal and monolithic, leading to concepts such as Nigerian culture, Japanese culture, Mexican culture or British culture among others (ibid.:7).

According to Dutch social psychologist Maykel Verkuyten (1999), among others, from about the 1980s, the essentialist view of ethnic identity simply as the sum of cultural characteristics, shifted to an approach which considered identity as a process of social construction. The concept of identity was increasingly considered to be a process of meaning-making, which mediates between individual and society (Verkuyten, 1997).

Cultural theorist, Stuart Hall (1990), who writes from the perspective of the Caribbean diaspora, describes cultural identity as

Not something which is innate and which thus transcends time, history, location and context. It is in fact subject to a continuous interplay between culture and history and that these are themselves always discourses that negotiate power relations (1990 in Loots, 2006:89).

The notion of social formation as a complex interplay of power relations derives from Foucault<sup>4</sup>'s earlier theory of power/knowledge which defines power as the relation of forces (Morley & Chen: 1996). Hall (1996) describes social life as a field of power, a field of struggle, mediating race, class and gender differences. He argues that

These systems of power are organised upon contradictions, not only of class and capital, but of gender and race as well; these various equally fundamental contradictions may or may not be made to correspond – this is yet another site of articulation and power (1996 in Morley & Chen, 1996:156).

Cecilia Ridgeway (2009), professor of Social Science at Stanford University, identifies other sites such as gender, in addition to race, class and age as a primary frame for organising social relations. She emphasises that cultural beliefs about gender are deeply embedded in society and in the construction of social relations among people. Gender stereotypes or 'our beliefs about how most people view the typical man or woman' (Ridgeway, 2009:148) are, according to Ridgeway, cultural knowledge, 'whether or not we personally endorse them' (ibid.:149). These shared beliefs, she continues, 'act as rules for coordinating public behaviour on the basis of gender' (ibid.).

Supported by Ridgeway's statement, I wish to expand this argument for the purpose of this dissertation to suggest that cultural knowledge is, in addition to gender, also informed by other markers of identity such as race, class and age. This dissertation argues that community is constructed through the mediation of these various markers of identity and that community dance is a similar site of construction. These ideas will therefore feed into the analysis of the two research samples which are the focus of this research.

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<sup>4</sup> Michel Foucault (1926-1984) was a French philosopher and social historian whose work is associated with the structuralist and poststructuralist movements (Buchanan, 2010).

## Community and postcolonial identities

This section will draw on the writings of Bharucha (1997, 2000) and Indian postcolonial studies scholar, Ania Loomba<sup>5</sup> (2005), to suggest how colonialism and postcolonialism further serve to construct or deconstruct notions of identity and community. Loomba, notes that for

anti-colonial intellectuals, the Marxist understanding of class struggle as the motor of history had to be revised because in the colonial context the division between the haves and the have-nots was inflected by race (2005:24).

Thus, in seeking to understand the term 'community', one needs to consider how 'community' could be a negotiation of race, class and gender within dance and the performing arts, particularly for this argument, in South Africa and Uganda. Moreover, in order to reflect on the comparison of community dance practices in Africa, specifically Uganda and South Africa, it is necessary to consider the implications for the meaning of 'community' in terms of the profound effects of colonialism and postcolonialism in both these societies. Colonialism is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary (cited in Loomba, 2005) as:

A settlement in a new country...a new body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up (ibid.:7).

Postcolonialism therefore implies 'an aftermath' (ibid.:12) while the term neo-colonialism implies a continuation of the colonial relationship. Loomba notes that the term postcolonial is contested. She writes that

If the inequities of colonial rule have not been erased, it is perhaps premature to proclaim the demise of colonialism. A country may be postcolonial (in the sense of being formally independent) and neo-colonial (in the sense of remaining economically and/or culturally dependent) at the same time (ibid.).

The effects of colonialism are powerfully evoked by Martiniquan author and politician, Aimé Césaire<sup>6</sup> (1972), who describes colonialism as 'thingification' thereby highlighting the reduction of the colonised person into an object or into an 'Other' (in Loomba, 2005:114). In

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<sup>5</sup> Indian scholar and author Ania Loomba's writing has been influential in the fields of postcolonial studies, histories of race and colonialism, feminist theory, and contemporary Indian literature and society.

<sup>6</sup> Aimé Césaire (1913-2008) was a Martinican politician and author who was an important exponent of negritude, a literary movement which celebrates black cultural values and heritage (Kavanagh, 2009).

addition, I am aware of the observation made by South African theatre writer, Clare Craighead<sup>7</sup>, when she draws from Franz Fanon's<sup>8</sup> writing to suggest 'how social categories of others often themselves adopt and perpetuate this notion of 'othering' (Craighead, 2006:17). South African theatre practitioner Jay Pather<sup>9</sup> (2006), amongst others, makes extensive use of the metaphor of rape to describe the subjugation of colonised peoples and the impact of colonialism on African arts and culture. Pather notes that

Recent scholarship on contemporary African culture demonstrates that Africa's encounter with the West has been far more complex than previously thought (Pather, 2006:13).

Bearing in mind the complexity of Africa's relationship with the West, this dissertation intends to treat the idea that community dance is valid and valuable 'simply' because 'dance is universal' with caution. According to Loomba, notions of 'universal' 'can be deeply ethnocentric because they are formulated in the image of the dominant culture' (2005:121). These dominant colonial cultures were formed because of a 'clash with and a marginalisation of the knowledge and belief systems of those who were conquered' (ibid.:60).

Attitudes towards race, class and gender categories, which have historically shaped each other, have played a crucial role in this 'clash' of knowledge and belief systems. Loomba writes that

Colonial practices were nothing if not conscious of indigenous class, gender, caste or regional hierarchies which they manipulated, altered or entrenched (ibid.:141).

For example, in Uganda the British were able to extend their rule by granting certain population groups, like the *Baganda*, a higher status than others. The effects of this historical development were felt recently, when in September 2009, riots broke out in the capital Kampala and the central region of Uganda following a land dispute among different Ugandan population groups. This example illustrates the long-term and lasting impact of power structures created under colonialism.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the clash of cultures brought about by colonialism created complex, but also highly imbalanced relationships between Africa and the West.

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<sup>7</sup> Clare Craighead holds an MA in Drama and Performance Studies from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, where she currently lectures (<http://www.ukzn.ac.za/department>).

<sup>8</sup> Franz Fanon (1925-1961) was a psychiatrist, born in Martinique, whose work has been influential in the study of colonialism and racial subordination. One of his major works is *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) (Calhoun, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> Jay Pather is Associate Professor at the Drama Department at the University of Cape Town. He is also director of Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre and an influential choreographer and dance scholar in South Africa (<http://www.drama.uct.ac.za>).

Marie Louise Pratt (1992) employs the idea of 'transculturation' to illustrate this complexity and imbalance. Pratt uses 'transculturation'

to indicate intercultural negotiation that is a constant feature of what she calls the 'contact zone' or the social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination (1992 in Loomba, 2005:62).

These asymmetrical relations or imbalances are often articulated in terms of 'First' and 'Third World'. The term Third World, though somewhat outdated, has been used in the so-called three worlds theory which divides the world into sectors along economical, political and social lines, loosely assigning the term Third World to the world's poorest countries (McLean & McMillan, 2009). Common alternatives and euphemisms for this term include 'developing world' or 'Global South', as mentioned previously. Indian theorist and political commentator, Aijaz Ahmad, questions the generalising force of a term such as Third World and how 'widely divergent cultures, histories and narratives can be squeezed into a single formal pattern' (in Loomba, 2005:170). Drawing from Ahmad's standpoint, it is my view that terms such as the West, Global North, Global South, First and Third World are problematic precisely because of their generalising force. This dissertation continues to make use of these terms (rather than rejecting them all together) while being sensitive to the abovementioned issue. Consequently, this paper recognises that Uganda and South Africa, despite their similarities and their location in the Third World or Global South, are two divergent and very distinct African nations.

To support the above argument, this research draws on postcolonial theory which is preoccupied with fragmentation, hybridity and crossovers between ideas and identities. Loomba observes how

One of the most striking contradictions about colonialism is that it needs both to 'civilise' its 'others' and to fix them into perpetual 'otherness' (2005:145).

One of the tasks of this research will be to question to what extent this statement applies to the participants of community dance as 'dancing others' in the broader field of theatre/concert dance. This dissertation develops an argument that, especially in the South African context, community dance has really been a synonym for poor and black people's dance and is thus seen to have less value. The question whether a comparison can be found with what might be called such community dance in Uganda will be probed in coming chapters. Hall writes that the 'question of the black subject cannot be represented without reference to the dimensions of class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity' (in Morley & Chen,

1996:444). The term 'poor' is equally problematic yet of utmost importance if one considers that, as cultural studies scholar Kuan-Hsing Chen (1996) writes,

In the Third World countries, no one can deny that local class differences are an essential line of struggle. Poverty and the unequal distribution of wealth have intensified, explosively (1996:322).

Though colonialism was experienced differently in different parts of the world, it is acknowledged that the process

locked the original inhabitants and the newcomers into the most complex and traumatic relationships in human history' (Loomba, 2006:7-8).

While colonisation implies the formation of a community in a new land, Loomba notes that this 'necessarily meant un-forming or re-forming the communities that existed there already' (ibid.), a process more often than not accompanied by violence and injustice, as mentioned previously. Thus, in considering the concept of community in 'postcolonial' nations such as Uganda and South Africa this discussion has attempted to show that colonialism and postcolonialism are relevant themes. As Loomba observes,

We cannot dismiss either the importance of formal decolonisation or the fact that unequal relations of colonial rule are reinscribed in the contemporary imbalances between 'first' and 'third' world nations (ibid.).

In South Africa, the concept of community is further compounded by the segregation politics of the apartheid<sup>10</sup> regime. Writing about the legacy of colonial separation and the apartheid system in South Africa, South African dance practitioner and writer, Lliane Loots<sup>11</sup>, powerfully evokes the complexity of 'community' as a mediation of race, class, tradition, wealth, power and gender:

Of course, these policies are now all gone thanks to 1994 and democratic elections. But race has been superseded by class issues, where the rich (no longer just white) and the poor (still mostly black) try and mediate a world of shopping malls and the lure of global capital, with traditional customs and religious practices that pull like the echo of ancestral voices asking for the slaughter of a cow to give thanks in the way of the ancestors, for the celebration of a daughter graduating (the first ever in her family) from university (2006:90).

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<sup>10</sup> The term apartheid describes the official system of segregation or discrimination on the basis of race formerly in place in South Africa following the National Party's ascent to power in 1948. The apartheid legislation and systems that followed defined the country culturally and politically until the first fully democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 (Hutchison, 2004:332).

<sup>11</sup> Lliane Loots is a South African choreographer, dance scholar and artistic director of Flatfoot Dance Company. Flatfoot Dance Company has been active in Durban, South Africa since 2003. In addition to performing and training young artists, the Company runs a number of dance development and community outreach programmes in KwaZulu-Natal (<http://www.ukzn.ac.za/department>).

Recognising the complexities of the construction of 'community' specifically in Uganda and South Africa, it follows that defining and identifying the roles that community dance may serve in these societies is equally complex.

### **Community arts as a place of research**

This dissertation suggests that community dance could fall under the umbrella of community arts or community performance. Kupperts and Robertson (2007) state that community performance is inherently interdisciplinary. Community performance may include any of the arts such as music, theatre, visual art, or dance, but it 'is not bound by the arts' (Kupperts & Robertson, 2007:1). According to these authors, community performance frequently

crosses into other, less conventionally artistic practices, such as economic development, human rights politics, disability culture, community re-development and capacity building (ibid.).

In addition, there is a growing recognition of the potential contribution of cultural and artistic education in people's lives in terms of social inclusion, access to opportunities and the development of their physical, intellectual and emotional potential. The United Nations World Youth report of 2005 mentions the various social ills faced by young people, including drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, HIV/AIDS, and other threats to general well-being (2005:4). The report also observes that in the last decade there has been a shift in awareness of the value of leisure time activities including games, sports, cultural experiences and community service, in the general development of a young person (ibid.).

According to Richard Boon and Jane Plastow (2004), editors of *Theatre and Empowerment*, community arts share the potential to bring together divided communities as well as

to engage actively, productively and meaningfully with a wide range of issues from extreme poverty to AIDS, violence, human rights, sexual, racial and political intolerance and the power of the state (2004:1).

Writing about the community arts movement in the United Kingdom, Peter Brinson (1991) observes that increased demand for arts appreciation and arts practice during the 1950s and 1960s 'foreshadowed a further extension of community work to embrace the arts' (1991:122). Although there are earlier examples of community arts activity, the community arts movement of this period drew together an underpinning philosophy for community arts practice and began to establish cultural and artistic activity within the community as an area demanding, and worthy of, research and inquiry (Brinson, 1991).

Brinson identifies the primary aim of the community arts movement in the UK from its inception in the late 1960s and its further development from the 1970s onwards as: 'to provide opportunities which might stimulate and release the creativity of ordinary people through artistic experience' (1991:122). Community arts therefore build on the premise that creativity is a form of intelligence, which is latent in every person, and has the capacity to be nurtured and developed (Brinson, 1991; Simmonds, 1997). This notion makes community arts accessible to all and connects community arts to the notion of belonging and sharing with others which, as discussed earlier, is implied by the term community. Brinson also suggests that community arts offer an artistic democracy as opposed to cultural and artistic elitism. This statement suggests that community arts challenge 19<sup>th</sup> century western conceptions of art, when one had to 'earn' the title of artist. In Brinson's words, community arts pose the art interests of the many against art interests of the few and 'popular' or 'low' art against 'high art' (Brinson, 1991).

In addition, it is my proposition that community arts not only make visible the dichotomy between high and low art, but also challenge this distinction itself. This dissertation supports the ideas offered by cultural theorists Isaac Julien<sup>12</sup> and Kobena Mercer<sup>13</sup> (1996) who, in their discussion of film culture from about the 1980s, write:

One issue at stake, we suggest, is the potential break-up or deconstruction of structures which determine what is regarded as culturally central and what is regarded as culturally marginal (1996:453).

This potential break-up or shift corresponds to an increased scholarly interest in community arts and other cultural practices that were perhaps previously considered to be on the margins of culture. Interesting and relevant to my argument is also Julien and Mercer's observation that this shift of 'centre' and 'margin' parallels 'something of a shift within the boundaries that differentiated the First and Third Worlds (ibid.).

Julien and Mercer further suggest that the first step in deconstructing existing structures, must be to 'identify the relations of power/knowledge that determine which cultural issues are intellectually prioritised in the first place' (ibid.). Thus, in order to interrogate the specific community dance sites in chapters 3 and 4, it will be necessary to consider how culture and the performing arts in particular are formed and valued in Kampala, Uganda and Cape Town, South Africa respectively.

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<sup>12</sup> Isaac Julien is a film director and theorist who lectures at Santa Cruz University and New York University's Centre for Media Culture and History (US).

<sup>13</sup> Kobena Mercer is a writer, critic and former lecturer at the University of California (US).

This section has attempted to define community arts as a movement within the broader sphere of the arts that aligns itself with notions of connectedness, belonging/loss, access, and in- and exclusion that are inherent in the concept of community, as discussed at the start of this chapter. This dissertation argues that community arts sites, and in this case specifically community dance sites, are places/events where 'community' is constructed. Just as 'community' contains the paradox of inclusion and separation – of dividing people into 'us' and 'them', community arts (and dance) share this ability to emphasise access and inclusion as well as distinctiveness and exclusion.

### **Community dance: whose dance?**

Although the dance scholarship's position on 'community dance' does not appear as a homogenous theoretical movement, but rather one which embraces many varied approaches, it generally aligns itself with the idea that dance may be beneficial to all human beings. Bearing in mind the interdisciplinary nature of community performance as highlighted by Koppers and Robertson (2007), this dissertation intends to focus specifically on community arts practices that make use of dance as a primary medium. That is not to say that community dance projects do not include other art forms or that community dance practitioners are always in the first place trained dancers. For example, the participant teachers in the New York University/Makerere University collaborative dance project include not only dance education students but also students in drama therapy and 'international education'<sup>14</sup> who nonetheless participated in teaching a dance workshop to underprivileged children.

Jane Plastow, senior lecturer in Theatre Studies at the University of Leeds, observes that 'dance is still an unusual form in the area of development projects' (2004:127). This research therefore supports what Plastow sees as a need to

explore how dance works in a development context and what might be unique as well as generic to cultural development projects privileging dance (ibid.).

Because dance is still, as Plastow and abovementioned community dance researchers and practitioners suggest, a relatively new area of investigation in the area of development

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<sup>14</sup> The New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development offers a postgraduate programme called International Education, which aims to prepare 'professional educators who can work effectively in international and multinational settings' (<http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/humsocsci/international>: para.1).

projects and community performance the term 'community dance' needs to be clarified. In addition, Jacqueline Simmonds (1997), from the University of Western Sydney, Australia, notes that 'community dance' is often defined differently by practitioners in the field.

In this research, what is considered a 'community dance movement' in Western scholarship is generally thought to have found expression from about the 1970s. However, an early 20<sup>th</sup> century originator of 'community dance notions' was early German modern dancer Rudolf Von Laban who played a crucial role in the development of German Ausdruckstanz. Much of his early dance activity, in particular his development of the Movement Choir, was connected to dance within a community context and to the celebratory and healing nature of dance.

Carole Kew (1999), a contributing author to the *Dance Research Journal*, attributes Laban's movement philosophy to German philosopher Nietzsche's (1844-1900) earlier ideas surrounding a Festkultur or festive, celebratory culture. Kew writes that

In his perceived critique of contemporary civilisation and quest for personal, political and cultural recovery, Nietzsche became the touchstone for exploring concerns of individual and collective identity (1999:74).

Kew concludes that the development of German dance during the 1920s, in which Laban played a central role, became associated with the Dionysian inner reality and sense of unconscious ecstatic movement<sup>15</sup>. According to Nietzsche,

Singing and dancing, man expresses himself as a member of a higher community; he has forgotten how to walk and talk, and is about to fly dancing into the heavens. His gestures express enchantment (1993 in Kew, 1999:75).

The notion of dance as part of a festive, celebratory culture became a formative influence in Laban's work. During his youth in the German city of Munich, Laban began to develop his idea on Festkultur or festive culture. In 1913, Laban was appointed as director of the 'School of all the Arts of Life' at Monte Verita, a resort near Ascona in Switzerland. It was at Monte Verita that Laban began his experimentation with movement choirs, initiated by the school's principles of physical and spiritual renewal (Partsch-Bergsohn, 1994).

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<sup>15</sup> Nietzsche outlined two opposite forces in the arts, which he located within ancient Greek culture and worship of the gods Apollo and Dionysus. While he considered the Apollonian force to be one of reason, order and outer appearance, he saw the Dionysian force as 'a world of inner reality – a metaphysical world of 'blissful ecstasy' which pays no heed to the individual, but seeks to destroy individuality and redeem it with a mystical sense of unity' (Kew, 1999:75).

The movement choir, which Laban designed especially for amateur groups, relied on internal body rhythm as the impetus for group motion. Dance history author, Isa Partsch-Bergsohn (1994), describes Laban's movement choirs as

choral arrangements of Free Dance, in which people without formal training could celebrate the joy of moving in fresh air with a minimum of clothing (ibid.:15).

The immersion of the participants into a flow of movement served to create a sense of unity. Individual satisfaction and confidence was thus derived from the group, the social situation. Laban realised the value of movement as a therapeutic activity, whilst providing an emotional outlet, freeing the participants from what Laban considered the constraints of modern Western civilisation at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Laban spoke of the movement choir as

an independent organism, whose task is to mediate between true dance as an art and the joy of movement of the dance-loving amateur' (ibid.).

Laban also differentiated between his movement choir and the 'mechanism of the previous Corps de Ballet and the choral dance ensembles of Modern Dance' (ibid.), thereby eschewing elitist art forms, calling the movement choir the 'logical form of layman dance' (ibid.).

Although Laban's activities can be considered to have connections to the development of community dance principles, the above discussion certainly raises some important questions: Is community dance 'layman's dance' or dance for 'amateurs'? If community dance is a healing, celebratory activity for the participants, as Laban suggested, should it be performed for spectators? Who may dance and for whom? These and other questions will present some of the key issues surrounding the argument in this study.

### **Community dance: marginal art?**

As a starting point, Simmonds observes that one of the underlying principles of community dance includes:

the affirmation that dance belongs to everybody irrespective of age, body type, gender, cultural background or disability; the recognition that everybody has the potential to communicate through dance (1997:342).

Christine Lomas (1998), who works with a community dance company Jabadao based in the UK, confirms this principle when she writes that

Jabadao works with groups of people who do not belong to the community as defined by locality, economics, institution, and geography. Instead Jabadao works with 'threshold people' (Turner, 1969), 'liminal' people, on the margins (1998:155).

The above terms 'liminal' or 'marginal', used by Lomas, refer to groups of people who because of certain categorisations are positioned on the margins of society and are often not able to participate in society to the fullest extent; they are in some way excluded. Referring to 'marginalised' black artists in Britain, Hall (in Morley & Chen, 1996) identifies access and contestation of marginality as principle objects in countering such cultural politics. Julien and Mercer, as mentioned earlier, suggest that certain 'marginal' cultural practices are becoming de-marginalised and that ethnicity has emerged as a key issue within cultural politics. However, they remark that in critical discourses, race and ethnicity<sup>16</sup> are still placed on the margins conceptually (Julien & Mercer, 1996). These authors suggest that

The initial stage in any deconstructive project must be to examine and undermine the force of the binary relation that produces the marginal as a consequence of the authority invested in the centre (Julien & Mercer, 1996:451).

This binary relation between margin and centre is a power relation. Lomas suggests that in terms of what is considered 'art' or theatre dance, community dance is positioned on the margin, just as those who can benefit from community dance experience are often marginalised members of society.

In contrast, Laveen Naidu, South African-born dancer and executive director of the Dance Theatre of Harlem in New York, when asked who is targeted in the outreach programmes of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, responds:

Some of the areas [we work in] have the wealthiest people you'll ever meet...but I believe the experience for them is just as powerful as it is for a kid up in Harlem because in a weird way they actually suffer from the same issues. They also don't get to see anything else (Naidu 2006: interview, 9 August).

While recognising Naidu's statement that dance can make a positive contribution to people's lives no matter what their background is, this research intends to focus on community dance projects that target groups of people who do not ordinarily have access to dance or dance education in 'formal' settings because of their socio-economic and/or cultural background and who are in some way 'marginalised' or 'excluded'.

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<sup>16</sup> Race and Ethnicity are closely linked markers of identity. Race distinguishes individuals and social groupings on the basis of biological characteristics, of which skin colour is the most visible marker. Cornelissen and Horstmeier suggest that 'the biological basis for 'race' as a category does not exist' (2002:65) and is thus a social construction. Ethnicity as a category of identity refers to a group's belief in common descent. According to Cornelissen and Horstmeier, 'ethnicity, in many ways, represents the academic successor to the concept 'race'' (ibid.).

## **Some terms associated with community dance: disadvantage, development, transformation and empowerment**

A key issue to unpack in the examination of the Ugandan and South African case studies is: 'Who is being empowered by whom, and to what end?' (Boon & Plastow, 2004:5). This dissertation notes that the community dance discourse is frequently associated with terms such as disadvantage, development, transformation and empowerment, which in my view need to be problematised. Community dance facilitator, Jill Green (2000), identifies this problematic use of labels such as 'disadvantaged' or 'at-risk' when she writes:

By naming students 'at-risk', am I not perpetuating the myth that they need special services because they are lacking in some way? Does this term connote a superiority above those who we are 'kind enough' to 'help'? (2000:63-64).

The term disadvantaged needs some clarification, particularly in a South African context where disadvantage has for a long time been understood in terms of race, despite the fact that there are other lenses, such as class, gender or disability, through which to consider disadvantage.

Because of the segregation politics of the former apartheid regime (cf. p16, note 10) South Africa faces ongoing challenges of transformation towards an equitable society. If the term 'poor' denotes socio-economic disadvantage then in South Africa, 'black' has frequently been synonymous with the term 'poor'. Recalling Loomba's observation that 'in the colonial context the division between the haves and the have-nots was inflected by race' (2005:24), it follows that any thinking around disadvantage in South Africa and Uganda needs to be sensitive to ongoing questions of race. The ongoing admissions policy debate at the University of Cape Town (cf. Appendix A) is but one example of how colonial inheritances and, in the case of South Africa, the legacy of apartheid, have linked issues of race and disadvantage to virtual inseparability. This dissertation supports the notion that 'race' is a construct (Alexander: 2010:n.p.) and its use as a criterion needs to be problematised when viewing a practice or a performance. This research notes that the use of race as a criterion for disadvantage and the use of the label 'disadvantaged' itself are increasingly being problematised in South Africa in the arena of education (cf. Appendix A). These same issues need to be problematised in the sphere of dance.

Community arts seek to democratise arts experience, by addressing populations who enjoy little or no access to the arts. Specific community-based arts projects are often aimed at specific target groups. What the individuals or groups of people addressed by community

arts practitioners have in common, is that they are generally untouched by art or arts education and are considered to live on the margins of society; they are in some way excluded from 'community' and therefore 'disadvantaged' or 'disempowered'. Through this study, I wish to question the notion that community dance programmes are somehow inherently valuable because they create access and include those who are ordinarily excluded from dance experiences. Rather, I argue that it is necessary to question to what extent existing notions of race and disadvantage are perpetuated by community dance programmes and what the implications are of labelling an individual or an entire community as disadvantaged in the first place.

In addition, terms such as 'disempowered', 'disadvantaged' or 'arts for development' which often accompany community dance discourse, are frequently considered purely in political-economic terms and these labels are traps often serving to devalue the communities in question. Lomas comments how

First-world attitudes, actions and reactions towards the third world disenfranchise self and community. The very use of the expression, 'third world', devalues and dismisses the nature and culture of those who are its members (1998:152).

Boon and Plastow comment that

It is assumed far too often that development is something which needs to be 'done' (economically and/or ideologically) to the South, whereas the West has already achieved some higher level of enlightenment (2004:1).

This notion of Western 'enlightenment' is also present in the writing of Zakes Mda (1993), a South African Theatre for Development practitioner who has located much of his work and research in Lesotho<sup>17</sup>. Mda is concerned that 'development' is still frequently confused with economic growth and states that 'clearly, the Western notion of development prevails in Africa today' (1993:39). He makes a valuable suggestion towards realigning this view by suggesting that

Development should indeed be a process of social transformation...through development a society should achieve a greater control of its social, economic and political destiny. This of course means that the individual members of the community should have increased control of their institutions (ibid.:40).

What is implied in this statement is that simply providing access to those who have not had it before is not enough; it is not development. It follows that creating a community dance programme, a dance 'development' or outreach programme does not constitute

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<sup>17</sup>Lesotho is a low-income developing nation. Lesotho is landlocked and surrounded by South Africa, which is the country's main trading partner and thus dominates its economy. Lesotho also has one of the highest rates of HIV/AIDS infection in the world (A Dictionary of World History, 2000).

development (as defined by Mda) in and of itself. As a 2008 report of the Rural Education Access programme<sup>18</sup> (REAP) suggests, to truly widen participation, access *and* success have to be considered essential components. The words of former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, Dr. Mamphela Ramphele, at her installation address in 1996 are appropriate when she said:

Contrary to popular myth on both the left and the right, poor people in this country did not struggle for liberation in order to have equal access to mediocrity...policies and practices which lead to mediocrity are a betrayal of their aspirations (in Friedman, 1997:132).

In addition, in my view, there is a need to question the criteria that define notions of 'excellence' and 'mediocrity'. I agree with Kuppers (2000) when she writes that there is a need to

challenge and query the knowledge that governs how we see art work, and to analyse the norms that underlie our conceptions of artistic excellence (Kuppers, 2000:122).

This would not be possible without participation and expression at all levels of society, including the so-called 'grassroots' level (Kuppers, 2000; Green, 2000). Several community dance practitioners at this 'grassroots' level have highlighted the transformative potential of community dance. Sara Houston (2005), lecturer at the Department of Dance Studies at the University of Surrey, identifies inclusion through participation and empowerment of participants as key features of community dance.

Naidu, discussing the community-based activities of the Dance Theatre of Harlem, refers to this notion of empowerment in simple terms. He says:

There's one fundamental question that people ask themselves all the time, either consciously or unconsciously – This affects me how? What has what you're doing got to do with my life? (Naidu 2006: interview, 9 August).

As a dance teacher, I support Naidu's suggestion that dance and the promotion of creativity and imagination can affect one's life and make a positive, transformative contribution to one's own and other people's lives. However, Houston cautions that

In trying to adhere to the Romantic notion of art as the means to self-discovery there is a danger in formulating a transformation framework to create meaning about community dance that stifles the inherent fluidity of art and the transformative experience, as well as overlooking other experiences (2005:172).

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<sup>18</sup>The Rural Education Access Programme (REAP) is a South African organisation which aims to provide higher education opportunities to marginalised rural youth in South Africa. REAP published a report in June 2008 investigating the factors that facilitate success for disadvantaged higher education students (cf. Appendix A).

Importantly, Houston emphasises that empowerment is strongly tied to the feeling of ownership of the process and product. This question of ownership and agency is inextricably connected to the issue of power. As Bharucha writes, 'who is speaking for whom? And in what circumstances? At what cost?' (2000:111).

Bharucha's questions are crucial when interrogating the notion of empowerment within community dance as well as the issues of power inherent in cultural exchanges that are part of the focus of this study. Writing about theatre practice in the Third World, postcolonial nation of India, Bharucha provides a valuable framework for the interrogation of cultural exchange between various cultural groups, ethnicities and communities in Africa. Bharucha's work is also sensitive to the force of globalisation and its effect on contemporary theatre practice within India itself and in intercultural exchanges.

Acknowledging differences and mediating the politics of cultural exchange is not a simple act and will be further discussed in chapter 2. Also, interrogating the role of community dance in relation to cultural formation in Uganda and South Africa intersects with some of the complex questions concerning the emergence of a contemporary performance aesthetic for the 'developing' (sic.) continent of Africa. Pather questions this issue and mentions some of the 'pressing conundrums' faced by the contemporary artist<sup>19</sup> (2006:13-14). Amongst others, he writes:

Why are most contemporary African performances that are not of the canon of Western aesthetics relegated to the 'community theatre' category? On that score, is it not strange that the dominant contemporary performance in Africa almost always seems to be development theatre or community theatre? (ibid.).

He adds that

The set of standards that divide community and mainstream may actually still be dependent on European festival models, and that many of these festivals continue to be dominated by a white infrastructure (ibid.).

Bharucha, and other intercultural theorists, similarly recognise the need to question the standards of excellence that are employed in intercultural exchange and critical dialogue. Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor (1994) identifies a need for an

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<sup>19</sup> Pather's writing demonstrates a discomfort with the 'implication that there is something particularly, fundamentally African about our contemporary culture and that identifying what this is, in contemporary African dance, would inspire a body of independent and free aesthetics' (2006:11). He applies the notion of contemporary African performance aesthetics as a 'response' (Pather, 2006) to dominant, Western structures and aesthetic criteria.

adequate set of criteria in order to evaluate the relative worth of other cultures. To assume equality of cultures without knowing anything about them amounts, in his view, to another kind of patronisation (1994 in Bharucha, 2000:39).

Bharucha observes that, in reality, cultural exchange is frequently characterised by failures of communication and propensities to misunderstand which often lead to the demeaning of 'the less articulate and the less privileged' (2000:161). According to Bharucha there is a vital condition for a viable future of

interculturalism as a cross-border phenomenon of human exchange and dialogue: the cognition of the social and economic predicament of underprivileged communities and indigenous peoples in the Third World, without which the recognition of their cultural identity and heritage becomes somewhat redundant, if not fatuous – yet another variation on the neo-orientalist fascination for the Other (ibid.:162).

However, as cultural discourse emanating from the perspective of the 'south' or the 'Third World' demonstrates, 'we are living today with the most acute disequilibrium of cultures' (Bharucha, 1997: 32). Miranda Young-Jahangeer and Liane Loots, questioning how contemporary African artists 'negotiate the involvement of northern NGOs and agencies in the creative productivity of Africa', comment that 'the new scramble for Africa, often in the guise of 'exchange', frequently smacks of exploitation' (2006:3).

Similarly, Bharucha observes critically how through the patronage of First World economies, infrastructures, capital and technology, the routes or available pathways of cultural exchange have already been mapped out for Third World participants (Bharucha, 1997). Such negotiations of power are ever-present in community dance settings and become complex in cultural exchanges. If community dance performance is most at home in a festival setting, as suggested by Laban's notion of Festkultur, where art is made accessible for lower-than-usual fees and which provides a platform for 'sharing' (sic.) arts experience, then one is led to consider how organisers of dance festivals are *facilitating* as well as *controlling* the products, performances and performers (Pather, 2006). However, certain prevailing notions of 'Third World dependency' or some kind of 'one-way cultural trajectory' between north and south are in need of critical interrogation and, in my view, need to be subverted.

This chapter has attempted to reach an understanding of the concept of community and to provide a broad overview of community arts and community dance. Community was thus revealed as a fluid and transient construction which is constantly shaped and reshaped through the interplay of power relations. Similarly, such power relations are present in cultural practices. The value of community dance was examined and connections were made to postcolonial and, in the case of South Africa, post-apartheid influences. This

chapter has also attempted to unpack some of the issues of language and the use of terms such as empowerment, transformation, development and disadvantage to reveal loaded references which aid in the stereotyping of community dance and the undervaluation of possible contributions of this area of dance within the performing arts. Recognising that community dance has been placed on the margins of cultural practice, the following chapter will attempt to unpack some the forces that lie at the root of this dilemma.

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## **CHAPTER 2: CULTURAL FORMATION AND POSTCOLONIAL SPACES**

This dissertation argues that community dance is often devalued, unable to transcend the 'professional' boundary and is thus not considered 'high art'. Having become aware of these profound divisions within the broader performing arts field, it is necessary to consider how cultural politics in Uganda and South Africa have been shaped. As mentioned in chapter 1, Julien and Mercer state that

The initial stage in any deconstructive project must be to examine and undermine the force of the binary relation that produces the marginal as a consequence of the authority invested in the centre (1996:453).

The first half of this chapter will therefore attempt to unpack a 'centralised' notion of concert/theatre dance, as well as offer a consideration of how these existing (centralised) structures determine what is regarded as culturally marginal and how the 'culture' of marginalised groupings is thus undervalued or ignored. This dissertation aims to problematise the existing value systems in dance that position theatre/concert dance or so-called 'professional' dance as high art and community dance as low art. An attempt will be made to arrive at a deeper understanding of what may constitute 'cultural politics'.

In addition, both research samples (which will be discussed in chapters 3 and 4) involve some kind of cultural exchange and collaboration between New York University and Makerere University on one hand and the University of Cape Town School of Dance and the Eoan Group on the other. Also, both dance projects involve the interaction of so-called high art dance and low art or marginalised 'community' dance. Thus, the second half of the chapter will shift towards considering issues surrounding the notion of cultural exchange or cultural collaboration which will be applied to the analysis of the two research samples in chapters 3 and 4. In this process, terms and concepts such as multiculturalism, intraculturalism and interculturalism (Bharucha, 1997, 2000) will be accessed to begin to identify the complexities contained in any form of cultural exchange or collaboration.

### **Defining the umbrella term culture**

As mentioned in chapter 1, Thomson (1989) suggests that 'community' can evoke a sense of belonging, a feeling of identity with others (cf. p10). This research rejects any static or essentialised notion of identity, but rather supports the idea that the concept of identity is a process of meaning-making, which mediates between individual and society (Verkuyten,

1997). One can argue that 'culture' is partly what allows this process of meaning-making, as is suggested by American cultural anthropologist, Clifford Geertz (1973). He defines culture as

a system of symbols by which man (sic) confers significance upon his own experience. Symbol systems, man-created (sic), shared, conventional, ordered, and indeed learned, provide human beings with a meaningful framework for orientating themselves to one another, to the world around them and to themselves (Geertz in Samuel, 2001:48).

Culture is thus considered part of the make-up of social identities. As Verkuyten (1997) argues, it is important to realise that the construction of social identity is relational. Citing social psychologists, Gecas and Burke (1995), he writes that social identity is about positioning: 'it locates a person in a social space by virtue of the relationships and memberships that it implies' (Gecas and Burke, 1995 in Verkuyten, 1997:24).

Applying this reasoning, the idea of multiple identities becomes accessible. Depending on how groups of people are structured socially as well as how people conceive of themselves in relation to others, certain markers of (cultural) identity such as gender, age, nationality, sexuality, language, or religion, can appear more in the foreground than others. The weight of these organising principles that divide people into 'same' and 'other' can vary over time and place. For example, in my own experience in Belgium<sup>20</sup>, where there are three linguistic regions (Flemish/Dutch, French and German), language acts as a strong indicator of cultural and social identity, with language laws enforcing these bonds and barriers among Belgians and countering the historical dominance of the French language in this country. In other words, in Belgium, language could be seen to confer identity. In another simplified example, within so-called Coloured<sup>21</sup> identity in Cape Town, South Africa, language (Afrikaans or English) or religion (Islam or Christianity) can serve to further deconstruct South African identity and culture. Yet historically, in South Africa, racial and ethnic differences have been the primary criteria to construct and categorise different peoples.

The different frameworks through which identities acquire meaning are referred to by Stuart Hall (1996), cited in Morley and Chen (1996), as ideology. Ideology, he writes, consists of

The mental frameworks –the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought and systems of representation – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works (1996:26).

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<sup>20</sup> I was born and lived in Belgium, in the Flemish region of the country, from 1984 to 2002.

<sup>21</sup> In the South African context, 'coloured' refers to people of mixed racial descent. Under apartheid, these people were treated as a racial group distinct from the 'white', 'black' and 'Indian' groups. In the 1950s coloureds were removed from the voters roll, meaning that, from that point on, only whites had a vote. Historically many coloured people identified themselves more strongly with the white population than black Africans, something which was reflected in fashion and lifestyle.

According to Marxist theory, these ideologies are dependent on the ruling class. The views of the dominant class are thus the dominant views in society. Social and cultural construction differ therefore not only according to place, as in the above examples, but they may also change over time. Hall adds that

Language is the medium par excellence through which things are represented in thought and thus the medium in which ideology is generated and transformed (ibid.).

To illustrate this, one can consider how expressions such as 'rainbow nation' or 'proudly South African' have become common usage in South African language. While the above attempts to show that culture is constituted by various facets of identity, generally, culture is understood as an umbrella term to include the arts (performing and creative), customs, institutions and heritage of a nation, people or group (Soanes, 2002:199). What is conceived of as 'culture' has been expanded over centuries. Thus culture may include visual and performing arts, crafts, music, language and literature, food, religion and accepted/correct (sic.) codes of conduct (Samuel, 2001).

The above examples begin to indicate the fact that culture is strongly associated with identity and belonging, which as identified in chapter 1, are significant aspects of 'community'. British professor and author, David Lowenthal (1998), notes how heritage and tradition are, one could say, almost concretised in terms of cultural 'property'. Describing the origin of 'culture', South African dance academic, Gerard Samuel (2001), notes that the

earliest use of the word 'culture' dates to around the sixteenth century in Europe and emanated from society's cultivating practices (Holloway, 1999 in Samuel, 2001). Culture in this period referred to whether a society grew crops, practised animal farming or pursued nomadic lifestyles. The definition of 'culture' has evolved over the centuries to include references to society's acceptance of specific behaviours, especially in relation to art (2001:49).

Samuel also draws attention to the association of the word 'culture' with elitism and exclusivity. He writes that 'the connotation for culture has thus come to mean civilised behaviour that is inextricably linked with the arts' (ibid.). This connotation is evident in the 1969 edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, which defines culture as the 'trained and *refined* state of the understanding of manners and tastes, phase of this prevalent time and place' [Fowler, 1969 in Samuel, 2001:49 (own emphasis)]. This definition is rather limited and problematic as will become evident later. In order to consider how community dance relates and contributes to the formation of culture, it is necessary to arrive at a deeper understanding of the concept of 'culture' and explore how understandings of 'culture' impact on the value and evaluation of community dance.

Samuel problematises this basic definition of culture when he states that

The probing question of whose tastes and whose manner is acceptable and to whom is more the issue. In the South African context, this problem of whose manners and tastes and definitions of civilised art become more complex when one begins to define culture (2001:49).

Samuel is writing here in the context of early post-apartheid South Africa and it is important to notice the political overtones that accompany these views on cultural formation. South African dance writer, Lynn Maree (2008), who writes more than ten years after South Africa's first democratic election, is similarly aware of the politics involved in redressing South Africa's past. She highlights the ambiguity of 'culture' and its relation to 'art', referring to 'culture' in the South African context, as that 'overused and catchall term' (Maree, 2008:118). She writes:

In South Africa there is a Ministry of Arts and Culture, and for a time after the arrival of democracy in 1994, it seemed that the phrase *arts and culture* was being used as a rolled-together phrase: *artsandculture*. Included in arts and culture were such things as the circumcision of adolescent boys in the Xhosa culture, hut painting and face painting, and a cappella singing (like that of Ladysmith Black Mambazo) (ibid.).

There are instances when one needs to question what fits under the umbrella of culture, for example when certain cultural practices, e.g. female genital mutilation, conflict with modern laws or are oppressive to people. The persistence of such 'cultural' practices has 'led some people to regard culture as retrogressive' (Uganda National Culture Policy, 2006:8). In my opinion, what is contained in Maree's words above is not a value judgement of what may or may not be considered part of culture, but rather, that in the attempt to redress past inequalities, there exists in South Africa a kind of superficial tolerance towards culture. In this sense, this kind of all-inclusive tolerance can be viewed, in some way, as a testament of the language of the 'rainbow nation', the new South Africa: an 'all-inclusive community' (Lomba, 2005:175). Thus the use of a 'rolled-together phrase: *artsandculture*' (Maree, 2008:118) can be seen as a shallow attempt to bypass tensions between understandings of 'culture' and 'art'.

Pather's (1999) words similarly express the tension in understandings of 'culture' and 'art' in South Africa. He writes that

In KwaZulu-Natal especially, the development of new work is continually arrested by a need by State subsidised Arts Administrations to create large spectacles of cultural products. While this is an essential aspect of development, the reclaiming of indigenous culture, the exercise is often without form and vision and ends up being patronising and self-serving (Pather, 1999:132).

This seeming opposition between art and culture is interesting both in the Ugandan and South African context, as both these societies have undergone a deliberate embedding of Eurocentric notions regarding art and culture. Samuel notes that 'often the term 'culture' in the South African context was a euphemism for cultural practices by black and indigenous African peoples' (Samuel, 2001:52). 'Art' or the inherent culture from the 'motherland of Europe' (Loots, 2001 in Samuel, 2001:51), Samuel writes,

was more highly prized and promoted as 'high art' with art forms such as classical ballet, opera, and western classical music enjoying a privileged position (2001:51).

Thus, one could argue that just as ideologies are informed by the dominant views of society, the value systems that operate within culture and the performing arts are also formed by the dominant views/narratives of a society. This dissertation argues that community dance is often considered to be a lesser form of art and seeks to question existing notions and categorisations of 'high' and 'low' art. Similarly, there is a need to question the particular distinction between art and culture as described above, which as Samuel writes, is

made at national levels in South Africa where the development of culture was controlled through the manipulation of funding and of race (ibid.).

Just like 'community' has been revealed as a fluid, transient and manipulated construction, culture too is not static. Lawrence Grossberg, who discusses Stuart Hall's seminal treatment of 'culture', writes that

Culture is never merely a set of practices, technologies or messages, objects whose meaning and identity can be guaranteed by their origin or their intrinsic essences (1996:157).

Hall argues that

The meaning of a cultural symbol is given in part by the social field into which it is incorporated, the practices with which it articulates and is made to resonate. What matters is not the intrinsic or historically fixed objects of culture, but the state of play in cultural relations (1981 in Grossberg, 1996:157).

Grossberg summarises Hall's position which defines culture as a site of struggle, a 'struggle over meaning, a struggle that takes place over and within the sign' (1996:157). By adopting this more precise understanding of culture as a site of struggle, cultural interactions or 'exchanges' become available to more subtle interpretation of slippages of meaning. This dissertation identifies dance as a form of cultural production and draws from the notion that

The field of cultural production is characterised by a struggle about the nature of art and who are entitled to call themselves artists (Bourdieu in Morris, 2008:106).

It is my suggestion that in the field of concert/theatre dance it is so-called community dancers who are not considered 'artists'.

### **Cultural formation: the implications of colonialism/postcolonialism**

It has been suggested by some postcolonial and feminist theorists that Foucault's notion of power as a relation of forces (mentioned in chapter 1) has the ability to produce a way of thinking that locks postcolonial and cultural theories in a strictly binary relationship of 'oppressor' and 'oppressed'. Such a binary viewpoint may be problematic as it can cause a static way of reasoning. In the case of colonialism, if the main way of 'othering' is by emphasising racial differences, then other social hierarchies such as class and gender may be overlooked and 'the other' can become represented as an undifferentiated mass against a monolithic 'West'. Also, Foucault's notion is more subtle: power is *always* relational. The oppressed can at times assume a role of oppressor. For instance, in Uganda, the Baganda people became answerable to the British colonisers, but continued to exert power and influence over other tribes within the Protectorate<sup>22</sup>. Or, Ugandan men may be the 'other' in relation to the British or white Westerners and thus 'oppressed', yet continue to enforce gender inequalities in Uganda<sup>23</sup>, casting them in the role of 'oppressors'. There is a danger of viewing contemporary issues of culture purely in terms of colonial legacy, as this may lead to a failure to recognise the multiplicity and complexity of identities. For instance, Loomba observes that

The food, music, languages or arts of any culture we think of as postcolonial evoke earlier histories or shades of culture that elude the term 'colonial' (2005:21).

On the contrary, it needs to be recognised that

The inequities of colonial rule still structure wages and opportunities for migrants from once colonised countries or communities, the racial stereotypes that we identified earlier still circulate and contemporary global imbalances are built upon those inequities that were consolidated during the colonial era (ibid.:111).

What is evident from the above discussion is that although colonialism did not inscribe itself on a clean slate,

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<sup>22</sup>Uganda, located in East Africa with capital city Kampala, became a British Protectorate in 1894 and gained independence in 1962 (Mutibwa, 1992).

<sup>23</sup>The Ugandan government's Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) for 2004/5-2007/8 recognises gender inequality as one of the major obstacles of development. The PEAP states that recent participatory research in Uganda concludes that 'lack of control over productive resources by women remains one of the root causes of poverty' (PEAP 2004).

The impact of colonialism on culture is intimately tied up with its economic processes but the relationship between them cannot be fully understood unless cultural processes are theorised as fully and as deeply as economic ones (ibid.:26).

Loomba's point is that theorising postcolonial identities is a complex and manifold issue. She further suggests that the construction and consequently the representation of the 'other' depends on the encounter, and is thus not always a one-way process. She writes that

Construction should not be understood as a process which totally excludes those who were being represented, though this does not mean that vast populations that were stereotyped in colonial discourses were responsible for their own images (ibid.:96).

Loomba's suggestion that the 'other' is not wholly excluded from their own representation is interesting in terms of dance study which frequently deals with issues of representation and the body. In this idea is contained that as much as a dancer on stage is a construction or a representation, the dancer him or herself is never completely absent in this process. Thus, one could question to what extent both parties involved in the collaborative performances (discussed in chapters 3 and 4) perpetuate, enforce or subvert existing representations of 'community dancers'. In terms of dance study, one also needs to consider who these 'other' dancing bodies might be. For instance, the female body in dance has been constructed in a very particular way to render the female body an object to be gazed at. Or, some bodies do not fit the concert dance mould of the 'normal' dancing body, such as black bodies, or disabled bodies (Daly, 2002; Loots, 1999; Shapiro, 1998, 1999, 2008).

Yet, Loomba's emphasis on hybridity and fragmentation as significant characteristics of postcolonial identity is noteworthy. Community dance as part of culture and as a place of research, can reveal these fragmentations in societies as well as demonstrate its value in assisting to build communal identities. Both postcolonial and feminist theory will be accessed in order to investigate existing power structures within Ugandan and South African culture and the performing arts since firstly, as Loomba writes, 'postcolonial and feminist struggles emphasised culture as a site of conflict between oppressors and the oppressed' (2005:39), and secondly since, in terms of a study of dance practice and performance, one needs to consider what the notion of a 'colonised body' may mean and therefore how bodies may be shaped by culture.

## Cultural formation and the body

US-based dance academic, Ann Daly (2002), notes how the application of feminist analysis, which seeks to understand how the body is shaped and acquires meaning, is highly appropriate to the study of dance. According to Daly, the study of dance is

after all, a kind of living laboratory for the study of the body – its training, its stories, its way of being and being seen in the world (2002:298).

Western philosophical traditions have tended to separate body and mind in what is called the Cartesian duality. Dr. Sherry Shapiro, professor of Dance and director of Women's Studies at Meredith College in North Carolina in the US, writes that

In this, the body is seen as the site of epistemological limitation – which must be overcome if one is to understand things as they really are, undistorted by human experience or perspective (1999:142).

Shapiro adds that 'the influence of Augustinian Christianity with its disdain for the flesh, and the bourgeois masculinist desire to distance and control nature' (ibid.:148) have added to the undervaluing of the body in processes of knowing. Feminism, however, has been groundbreaking in the quest to re-examine the body's place in cultural, social, economic and political spaces. Carol Brown, author of *Re-tracing our Steps: the Possibility for Feminist Dance Histories* (1983), as cited by Loots, observes that 'both feminism, as a politics, and dance, as a cultural practice, share a concern for the body' (1983 in Loots, 1999:107).

By re-looking at the female body and the body in general as a constructed personal space, feminists have argued that the body, far from being a neutral site, comes to dance 'already inscribed by discourses and ideology whether these be gendered, racial, or cultural' (Loots, 1999:107). Moreover, the body is increasingly becoming a focus for the study of culture, power, and resistance (Shapiro: 1999). Shapiro accesses postmodern as well as feminist scholarship, not only to understand 'how [the body] is inscribed by culture, mediates power, and expresses resistance to the normalising practices of society', but also to formulate a pedagogy 'where the body/subject as a lived medium becomes part of the curriculum' (1999:141). The terms embodied knowledge, or embodiment, describe 'the processes by which cultural values are internalised and represented by social bodies' (Cooper Albright, 2003:177). For the purpose of interrogating community dance practice and performance, it is not only important to realise that bodies are culturally and socially inscribed but also to ultimately offer some suggestion of how the understanding of embodiment might feed positively into the understanding of community dance.

To refer back to the notion of 'other dancing bodies', Lucia Matos (2008), who investigates access and inclusion in connection with disability arts in Brazil, identifies social spaces that demarcate bodies into either 'the same' or 'different'. In Matos' case, she is investigating the disabled versus the non-disabled body. However, the body is inscribed in many ways that are perceptible in different ways, through skin colour, gender, language, religion and age. These inscriptions extend beyond what is visible on the immediate surface of the body. The way the body moves, or waits, or gestures, reveals embodied experiences and multiple identities. Matos writes that

It is through the body, with its specific cultural, physical, and historical marks, that identity is exposed and recognised (or not), and it is through this recognition that we perceive the limits distinguishing the subject, the world, the other (2008:79).

Matos adds that

Although contemporary dance favours diversity and polysemy, questioning the body that creates and dances, many restrictions can be noticed in the dance milieu when the dancing body itself does not fit within the expected standard of normality and goes against the canons of the aesthetically correct (ibid.).

It can be argued that this 'difference' in dance is first perceived through the body itself. Returning to a point made earlier by Pather (2006) that the divide between community (low art) and mainstream (high art) is often defined by Western criteria and standards of excellence, one needs to query the role of the body and the complex notion of the ideal body within this particular framework. One needs to question the fact that in dance 'difference' is often equated with 'inferiority'. This dissertation argues that community dance has the capacity to go against the normative position for concert dance and seeks to problematise the notion that community dance is considered 'inferior' or 'low art' precisely because it challenges norms by embracing bodies that are 'different'. However, one could also question to what extent community dance can, and often does, assist in the perpetuation or the enforcement of normative dancing bodies. For example, the idea that ballet is only for tall, white, skinny (mostly female) bodies is echoed in a statement made by Philip Boyd, founder of community dance programme Dance for All<sup>24</sup>, when he says that 'many believe that blacks are the wrong shape for classical ballet' (Willis, 2002/03:65). However, by adding 'we are proving that shape can change with exercise and the right diet' (ibid.), Boyd is enforcing

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<sup>24</sup> Dance for All (DFA) is a non-profit organisation that has been teaching dance to children and youth from disadvantaged communities in Cape Town since 1991. The organisation was founded by former ballet dancers Philip Boyd and Phyllis Spira. DFA has a Youth Company founded in 2005 and a professional dance company (InSPIRations Dance Company) founded in 2009 (<http://www.danceforall.co.za>).

the stereotypical notion of 'a ballet body', rather than actually challenging what this body might look like.

Similarly, Matos (2008) cautions against a kind of superficial resistance to dominant structures or narratives. Even if community dance is inclusive of people who do not fit the mould, the excluded and the marginalised, Matos notes that often the social environment can be limiting (2008:74). She suggests one of the methods to counter a limiting social environment is to adopt certain affirmative action policies, which involve 'questions of accessibility, equal rights, the labour market, and social and cultural differences' (ibid.).

She notes, however, how in the Brazilian educational system,

Most of the efforts for inclusion apply to spatial occupation only, as if in the daily functioning of the schools all students were already free from ideologies and contradictions (ibid.: 75).

She adds that inclusive policies can in fact become 'a politics of intention' rather than a real attempt to subvert marginalising and objectifying practices. The question arises: to what extent does a separate community dance platform or 'fringe programme' affirm the status quo? Another question that follows is whether works that are created for a separate platform can be accepted and appreciated in mainstream, integrated cultural spaces? Or, are some works not fit for mainstream consumption? These and other questions will feed into the discussion of the collaborative dance projects in subsequent chapters. One of the tasks of this interrogation will be to assess to what extent these dance projects challenge existing norms (for instance, in terms of the body, choreography or performance). And, to what extent does community dance represent a 'politics intention'? (Matos, 2008).

### **Culture: conflict, resistance and power**

The above discussion attempts to clarify that bodies are not only inscribed by culture, but can also become vehicles of oppression and/or resistance. As mentioned earlier, both 'postcolonial and feminist struggles emphasised culture as a site of conflict between oppressors and the oppressed' (Lomba, 2005:39). In the context of this dissertation, I argue that community dance has the potential to represent such a site of conflict by accessing postcolonial, cultural studies and feminist theories.

As discussed in chapter 1, community dance deals with preconceived notions of art and thus inherently deals with challenging a status quo. What is understood in this objective is the

notion that dominant operations of power create the visible accounts of history and culture and thus determine what dance is 'seen' and valued. A re-writing of dominant narratives is concerned with the invisible threads of historical accounts and cultural formation. This challenge calls for a re-narrating of existing power structures, an idea which aligns itself with the project of poststructuralism<sup>25</sup>. Spivak (1990), speaking about the concerns of poststructuralist and deconstructivist<sup>26</sup> theorists, clarifies this position:

The point is not to recover a lost consciousness, but to see, to quote Macherey, the itinerary of the silencing. You see, that's what one looks at. So from that point of view, our view of history is a very different view. It is also cumulative, but it's a view where we see the way in which narratives compete with each other, which one rises, which one falls, who is silent, and the itinerary of the silencing rather than the retrieval (1990:31).

One could argue that within the dominant narratives of dance in South Africa and Uganda, community dance has remained largely silent. By noticing this relative silence/absence, one can begin to interrogate the power structures that have positioned community dance as low art. For instance, as a feminist dance writer Loots (1999) accesses poststructuralist theory to critically interrogate dance and cultural formation in South Africa. She writes that

In order to subvert the economically privileged discourses of our society, poststructuralism advocated the need to speak/to voice/to articulate those discourses which are unspoken but always implicit as an alternative to hegemonic discourse. By 'implicit' I refer to the notion that an articulated idea or discourse always contains its opposite, its point of resistance within it (Loots, 1999:105).

Loots provides a useful example that relates to the South African context:

To watch white dancers performing ballet in the social construction of this being 'high art' and therefore valuable, contains the point of resistance within it that this is a construction created and normalised to support certain racial, gendered and social constructs of dance history and dance practice in South Africa that support a specific economic and racial privileging (ibid.).

A useful term to introduce at this point could be the term 'counter-culture' or a culture of struggle or resistance. This research, however, suggests that there ought to be a more subtle reading of the term culture by dance practitioners, critics and academics, and supports the notion that 'culture' itself is a site of struggle and thus contains resistance and agreement within itself. To use a term like 'counter-culture' enforces a binary opposition,

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<sup>25</sup> Poststructuralism emerged in reaction to the structuralist movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Significant writers who contributed to the poststructuralist movement are Derrida, Foucault and Kristeva. Poststructuralism, is applied in critical textual analysis and supports 'the view that words mean what they do through their relations with each other rather than through their relationship to an extra-linguistic reality'. Central to poststructuralism is a concern with relationships of power (Blackburn, 2008).

<sup>26</sup> Deconstructivism or deconstruction is linked to the theories of French philosopher Jacques Derrida. Deconstruction suggests that 'every philosophical position, irrespective of how coherent it seems on the surface, contains within it the means of its own self-undermining' (Buchanan, 2010).

which in this case precisely produces a high art/low art dichotomy and which this dissertation fundamentally opposes. Loots, appropriating Foucault, writes that,

This understanding of power generates what Foucault would call, mobile and transitory points of resistance, producing cleavages in a society that shifts about fracturing unities and effecting re-groupings' (ibid.).

Recognising that structures of cultural (re-)formation are fluid and multiple, rather than static and singular, it is not to say that cultural formation does not at times present a direct oppositional axis, which may be both natural and necessary. Morley writes that the

conventional model of cultural imperialism presumes the existence of a pure, internally homogenous, authentic, indigenous culture, which then becomes subverted by foreign influence (1996:330).

Moreover, Loomba observes that

Turning away from colonial culture is often a necessary precondition for paying serious attention to literatures and cultures devalued under colonialism (2005:81).

One may add that 'under apartheid' in the case of South Africa, the need to turn away from colonial culture becomes paramount. As Lowenthal (1998) observes, although the revaluation of heritage and tradition is a global trend, it could be suggested that in relatively young democracies like Uganda and South Africa, the role of heritage and tradition in cultural formation perhaps takes on a more acute form. Social anthropologists John and Jean Comaroff, based at the University of Cape Town, take this investigation even further in their book *Ethnicity, Inc.* (2009) by exploring the commodification of ethnicity. Their study offers insight into how ethnic populations are remaking themselves in the image of the corporation – while corporations co-opt ethnic practices to open up new markets and regimes of consumption (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009). Significant is the merging of cultural and economic capital, a distinction made by Bourdieu<sup>27</sup> (1977 cited in Comaroff & Comaroff: 2009). This distinction between cultural and economic can no longer be sustained as Comaroff and Comaroff suggest,

When culture is objectified by those who inhabit it; thence to be deployed as a brute economic asset, a commodity with the intrinsic capacity to compound wealth of its own accord (2009:32).

It is clear that a lively scholarly interest in the (re-)conceptualisation of culture and issues surrounding culture, such as ownership, authenticity and value exists. It is important to note

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<sup>27</sup> Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) was a French cultural anthropologist and sociologist. His theories address issues of value and he suggests that value, aside from economic, has a social and cultural dimension (Buchanan, 2010).

that the idea of authenticity is questionable as is the notion that the construct of Africa represents a homogenous whole. Professor Kwame Anthony Appiah, whose work interrogates African and African-American literature and cultural studies, summarises this thought powerfully by stating that 'there are no African truths, only truths –some of them about Africa' (in Morley & Chen, 1996:341).

Considering that the dominant narratives in dance in both South Africa and Uganda have often been informed by western aesthetic criteria, it follows that any attempt to conceptualise a contemporary performance aesthetic that is relevant in Africa is pertinent to the interrogation of dance in Africa. As a part of the umbrella term culture, community dance, locates itself at the point of resistance that is at times latently yet always inherently, present in culture. It can therefore be argued that community dance contributes to cultural formation. This dissertation argues that community dance is an area that has the potential to be subversive, by emphasising access and inclusion and rejecting the norms that enforce high art/low art constructions. Thus, it is my proposition that through community dance as an area of conflict and resistance, new forms of contemporary African dance could emerge.

### **Cultural formation in South Africa and Uganda: a common context of struggle**

It has been mentioned earlier that community dance is not a homogenous movement and any attempt to interrogate community dance within different contexts might at times seem like an exercise in comparing apples and oranges. In addition, this dissertation locates its sites of interrogation specifically in different postcolonial African societies which therefore cannot be viewed through a single or static lens. In order to make a case for the comparative study of community dance in the two divergent and distinct contexts of Uganda and South Africa, it is worth accessing thought surrounding Third World women's experiences of feminism, which allows access to the notion of a common context of struggle (Mohanty, 1991). It is my suggestion that the notion that Third World women undergo a double oppression can be applied to community dance seen as a marginalised area of dance and performed by marginalised members of society.

Feminism is generally understood to be a movement that through the deconstruction of gender and gendered identities, seeks to 'redress women's oppression' (Mohanty, 1991:319). This is a somewhat narrow understanding and it is necessary to realise that feminism does not have a static agenda. Looft accesses thought articulated by the Second Wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s. She writes that

It was in America in the 1960s and 1970s when the Second Wave of feminism began to articulate that 'the personal is political', that women (and men) began to seriously explore the female body (a constructed personal space) as being profoundly gender political in the way in which social discourse articulate and prescribe it (Loots, 1999:106).

From a postcolonial, Third World perspective, Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1991), whose work focuses on transnational feminist theory and studies of colonialism, imperialism and culture, writes that the term feminism

has been questioned by many third world women. Feminist movements have been challenged on the grounds of cultural imperialism, and of short-sightedness in defining the meaning of gender in terms of middle-class, white experiences, and in terms of internal racism, classism, and homophobia (1991:7).

Mohanty (1991) also questions on what basis Third World women form any constituency or coherent group. She suggests that

What seems to constitute "women of colour" or "third world women" as a viable political alliance is a *common context of struggle* rather than colour or racial identifications. Similarly, it is third world women's oppositional political relation to sexist, racist, and imperialist structures that constitutes our potential commonality (ibid.).

Based on this common context of struggle and the fact that western feminist movements have been challenged on the grounds of cultural imperialism, Mohanty notes that

third world feminists have argued for the re-writing of history based on specific locations and histories of struggle of people of colour and postcolonial peoples (ibid.:10).

This dissertation suggests an application of 'third world' women's writings on feminism to the more specific context of culture and specifically, the performing arts and dance unfolding in Uganda and South Africa. It is therefore helpful to consider some broad themes that have occupied Third World women's treatment of feminism, as outlined by Mohanty:

- 1) The idea of simultaneity of oppressions as fundamental to the experience of social and political marginality and the grounding of feminist politics in the histories of racism and imperialism;
- 2) The crucial role of a hegemonic state in circumscribing their/our daily lives and survival struggles;
- 3) The significance of memory and writing in the creation of oppositional agency; and
- 4) The differences, conflicts, and contradictions internal to third world women's organisations and communities (ibid.)

In addition, Mohanty observes that third world feminist writers 'have insisted on the complex interrelationships between feminist, antiracist, and nationalist struggles' (ibid.). The

recognition of these complex interrelationships of struggle, not only create a common context, as stated earlier, but also give rise to what Mohanty refers to as 'oppositional agency'. Simply described, it is the subject's positioning at the point of resistance that creates the potential to exercise oppositional agency. Within this common context it is important to note that racial, gendered and class domination 'do not have *identical* effects on women in third world contexts' (ibid.:13). The argument of this dissertation can benefit from Mohanty's suggestion that

It is possible to retain the idea of multiple, fluid structures of domination which intersect to locate women differently at particular historical conjunctures, while at the same time insisting on the dynamic oppositional agency of individuals and collectives and their engagement in "daily life" (ibid.).

Mohanty's treatment of multiple and fluid structures of domination provide a more nuanced reading of power relations that are at times reduced to binary oppositions or oppressor/oppressed relations (mentioned previously). It is within this framework that this dissertation attempts to understand cultural formation in Uganda and South Africa. In addition, Mohanty's notion of oppositional agency allows existing and dominant narratives to be contested and may thus produce a subversive narrative of culture and dance.

### **Cultural exchange**

Bharucha (2000) has questioned emergent cultural practices in terms of concepts such as interculturalism, intraculturalism and multiculturalism. These concepts will be clarified in order to broaden understanding of the notion of 'cultural exchange' in South Africa and Uganda. Bharucha is overtly critical of some Western approaches towards intercultural theatre. He writes that

It is naive to assume that interculturalism is an overriding global phenomenon that transcends the differences of class, race, and history...the implications of interculturalism are very different for people in impoverished, 'developing' countries like India, and for people in technologically advanced, capitalist societies like America (Bharucha, 1984:255).

Bearing in mind this dissertation's similar concern with so-called 'developing' countries, Bharucha's work therefore provides a valuable framework for the interrogation of cultural exchange between various cultural groups, ethnicities and communities which can be appropriated/adapted to contexts in South Africa and Uganda. The case studies in this work are concerned with interrogating the spaces that become illuminated in exchanges between different cultures. Intercultural theatre practitioner and theorist Richard Schechner (1991),

who is professor of Performance Studies at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University (US), offers a useful definition of interculturalism when he writes that

Interculturalism is a shared space between two or more colliding cultures wherein the interactive nature of this cultural exchange within a no man's (sic) land challenges the old ways of seeing (in Berger, 1992 in Samuel, 2001:69).

Samuel, appropriating Schechner, argues that this collision is characterised by a cultural uneasiness and a tendency towards universalist solutions (Samuel, 2001), a notion this chapter will return to. Schechner sets up a model for critically questioning intercultural practices by arguing that

Interculturalists probe the confrontations, ambivalences, disruptions, fears, disturbances and difficulties when and where cultures collide, overlap, or pull away from each other (Schechner, 1991:30 in Samuel, 2001:70).

In addition, within the particular contexts and case studies conducted in this study, this dissertation is cognisant of cultures that may not necessarily meet on equal ground as well as of what Bharucha describes as different levels of cultural imbalance. He observes that

Those of us located in the so-called 'Third World' find that the routes of cultural exchange are already mapped for us, even before we enter them (if of course we are invited to do so in the first place). Invariably, we meet through the patronage of First World economies, which have the necessary capital, infrastructure and technology to 'map' the world in the first place (Bharucha, 1997:33).

Thus, questioning how trajectories of cultural exchange are indeed mapped out and interrogating their role in dance and dance exchanges, is of the utmost importance to dance scholars since as Bharucha writes:

The number of workshops and papers and dance demonstrations does not prove that something truly meaningful is being exchanged between performers and scholars in Europe, America, and India. It is all very well to support the idea of workshops (as I do), but one needs to question what actually goes on within them (1984:259).

As will become clear from the analysis of the research samples, this study identifies a similar need to critically interrogate the collaborative dance projects between New York University and Makerere University in 2010 and UCT School of Dance and the Eoan Group in 2009, rather than accept them as inherently valuable simply because they are a site of cultural exchange. In addition, this dissertation strongly agrees with Loots when she writes:

When First World governments and artists make noises about helping Africa 'develop' its art and cultural sphere, and about investing aid through setting up cultural exchange programmes, I remain vigilantly suspicious (1996:98).

In this light, it is interesting to note how Susan Bamutenda<sup>28</sup>, one of the Ugandan mentors in the New York University/Makerere University collaboration, emphasised 'African solutions for African problems', having just completed a two-week intercultural exchange programme (Bamutenda 2010: interview, 27 January). She highlights some of the complexities of cultural exchange when she says:

We can get all these people coming and telling us what to do, but they do not understand the culture. And until you understand the culture...there's knowing the culture and there is understanding it (Bamutenda 2010: interview, 27 January).

The question arises: What is the value of intercultural practices and who gains from them? Can intercultural exchange take place on equal terms? In my view as an observer of both case studies interrogated here, there is an urgent need to constantly question 'who is using whom' and 'who is speaking for whom' in any given situation of exchange where two or more cultures come together in a shared space or a shared performance.

Bharucha describes his personal shift as a theatre practitioner and theorist whilst a student at Yale School of Drama in the late 1970s, from questions of authentic representations in intercultural work to questions of ethics. He asks: 'how does one begin to respect – and not just tolerate – cultural differences?' (Bharucha, 2000:2). He raises a further point when he questions whether 'economic inequalities can be included in one's respect for cultural difference?' (ibid.). By acutely examining the reality of the economic imbalances, between so-called First and Third World countries (which is the case in the New York University/Makerere University collaborative project) but also among communities within one nation or one city (which is the case in the UCT School of Dance/Eoan Group project) this last question seems to deliver an outright attack on any romanticised notions of interculturalism.

To clarify the concept of interculturalism and to find a working understanding of interculturalism in Ugandan and South African contexts, it is helpful to begin by referring to Schechner's use of this term. Schechner has made use of the term interculturalism since the 1970s to emphasise that

The real exchange of importance to artists was not that among nations, which really suggests official exchanges and artificial kinds of boundaries, but the exchange among cultures, something which could be done by individuals or by non-official groupings, and it doesn't obey national boundaries (in Bharucha, 2000:4).

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<sup>28</sup> Susan Bamutenda passed away in 2010. Bamutenda was a graduate of the Music, Dance and Drama department of Makerere University, a prominent performer in Kampala, and coordinator and teacher with In Movement: Art for Social Change.

Bharucha, however, opposes the distinction that Schechner makes between nations, which Schechner considers official, and cultures, which are assumedly free (ibid.). Bharucha questions this notion of 'free cultures' and cautions against 'false euphoria in the celebration of autonomy in interculturalism' (ibid.) and adds that

The autonomy exists, but I believe it has to be negotiated, tested, and protected against any number of censoring, administrative, and funding agencies that circumscribe the ostensibly good faith of cultural exchange itself (ibid.).

What is evident from the above statement and will become clear in the case studies of intercultural practices in this dissertation is that although cultural exchange takes place among individuals, there is a context surrounding the exchange which needs to be interrogated. The inherent benefits and/or positive outcomes are not necessarily free and need to be weighed against a larger context of cultural politics. As discussed in chapter 1, community dance, though not a homogenous movement, generally aligns itself with the idea that dance may be beneficial to all human beings. It is therefore all too easy to leap to, as Shapiro describes, 'assumptions that we have about dance and its ability to speak across cultures using movement as common language' (2008:253).

Such assumptions of universality obscure the complexities of intercultural exchange, as is evident in Shapiro's words when she observes that

Housed in this assumption is the notion that when dance is experienced as a cross-cultural event we have created some form of positive partnership between differing peoples (ibid.:254).

Bharucha further highlights the difficulties of achieving positive partnerships between different peoples and cultures within the same nation-state as well as the effects of globalisation on contemporary theatre practice in India. As a working proposition, Bharucha invokes the term 'intracultural', a term he was

compelled to invent as a critical shorthand to differentiate intercultural relations *across* national boundaries, and the intracultural dynamics between and across specific communities and regions *within* the boundaries of the nation-state (2000:6).

Samuel adds that 'intraculturalism' refers to

'Intra' cultural groups or groups that desire to maintain a separate identity whilst holding onto a parallel identity of the 'mother-culture' (2001:66).

An example of such an intracultural group in Uganda can be found in the people who are culturally self-defined as Baganda, many of whom feel a strong affinity with the Buganda

kingdom *within* the larger nation of Uganda<sup>29</sup>. Much of this predicament can be traced to Africa's colonial history. When the map of Africa was drawn by the colonial powers in 1884-5 in Berlin, it led to an arbitrary division of Africa into states, without taking into account cultures or ethnicities (Mutibwa, 1992). Phares Mutibwa, author of *Uganda Since Independence* (1992), writes that

By the end of this exercise people who belonged to the same ethnic group or even clan found themselves in separate colonies, soon to be further separated by the introduction of new foreign languages and cultures (1992:3).

To illustrate this, Dr. Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza, an ethnomusicologist connected to the Music, Dance and Drama department at Makerere University in Uganda, questions whether in Uganda, a country with over 50 ethnic groups, one can really speak of 'Ugandan music', let alone 'African music' (2010: lecture notes, 8 January).

A further example could be communities in South Africa or Uganda who identify themselves and/or are labelled as a homogenous Indian community. Such labelling of groups as homogenous is problematic as it encourages stereotyping and gives rise to sub-cultures that are then set against/in competition with the dominant or 'mother' culture. Samuel remarks that 'the risk which intracultural groups often face is an insecure need to be 'as good as' the dominant/target culture' (2001:69). In addition, a narrow view of diaspora cultures or other sub-cultures could perpetuate the notion that culture is static, and fails to take into account the inevitable changes cultures undergo through shifts in space, time and context (Crosby, 2007).

These shifts in cultures often lead to questions of authenticity, tradition and ownership. Jill Flanders Crosby, who has conducted dance research in Cuba and Ghana, is aware of these issues when she writes that

It often becomes necessary for individuals to claim the 'authenticity' of 'their traditions' to ensure the survival of unique ethnic, individual, and/or national identities in the face of globalisation (2007:24).

This was evident in a post-performance discussion with faculty members of the Music, Dance and Drama department of Makerere University (MDD). The discussion concerned a performance by a youth traditional dance troupe called *Spirit of Uganda* who regularly tour in the US. Despite the energetic and flawless running of the performance by youth ranged

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<sup>29</sup> Some of the Ugandan mentors in the recent New York University/Makerere University collaborative dance project which took place in Kampala, Uganda, in January 2010, expressed that, in their view, tribal affiliations often take precedence over national identity.

between the ages of 9 and 20 years, the MDD faculty members faulted the performance for the arbitrary blending of dances from different regions and ethnic groups and the costume designs that did not reflect 'traditional' wear.

Perhaps it would be interesting to consider Shapiro's advocacy for 'a global aesthetic of dance' alongside Crosby's noteworthy comment that

Whether we as dancers and scholars want to dismiss authenticity as irrelevant does not change the fact that authenticity is a topic of discussion (ibid.:28).

Similar issues feed into the understanding of multiculturalism. Loots' scepticism towards the idea of 'multicultural' performances is apparent. 'Multiculturalism', Loots writes,

became a buzz word in South Africa at the time of our first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994. Endlessly paraded on the stage was a 'melting pot' where all cultural groups keep their own distinct qualities of cultural dance styles all embracing the adage of a 'new' South Africa and its 'one nation many cultures' philosophy of tolerance' (2006:93).

Evident from Loots' above statement is that multiculturalism as a concept implies the interaction of cultures alongside each other, rather than any attempt to find intersections where these cultures could merge. In addition, multiculturalism in colloquial terms is often thought to refer to race or nationality, yet it is noteworthy that multiculturalism also refers to 'the politics of identity relating to gays, lesbians and other minorities' (Bharucha, 2000:2). It is significant to realise the importance of civil rights movements in the recognition of these minorities. Whereas South Africa, through overcoming the struggle of apartheid now has arguably one of the world's most liberal constitutions, many Ugandans are still labouring under an oppressive regime<sup>30</sup>. Thus, in terms of this dissertation, for example, one could say that the New York University/Makerere University collaborative dance project 'celebrates' multiculturalism in terms of race and nationality by bringing to together American and Ugandan dancers onto the same stage. However (as will become evident in the discussions in chapter 3), one could question the multiculturalism of this project since it seems that little interrogation is offered by the project's coordinators in terms of the gender, age, sexuality, religion or class of the participants.

Moreover, the 'melting pot' referred to by Loots (2006) presents its own conundrums. Just as one cannot assume that there is equity within the 'melting pot', Bharucha writes that

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<sup>30</sup> For example, since the end of 2009 discussions in the Ugandan government have flared up once again to raise the 14-year prison sentence for homosexuality to life imprisonment and even bring back the death penalty (Mmali, 2009:n.p.).

The sense of belonging to a larger entity called the nation cannot be assumed. It has to be nurtured through processes of communication across different ethnicities and cultural groups (2000:131).

These processes of communication are far from simple as evidenced in the study of Smitha Radhakrishnan, author of *"African Dream": The Imaginary of Nation, Race, and Gender in South African Intercultural Dance* (2003). Radhakrishnan's investigation offers one an idea of some of the complexities surrounding issues of identity, culture and belonging in what may be considered an Indian diaspora community in South Africa (some of which may also be applicable to Indian communities in Uganda<sup>31</sup>). Specifically in the South African context, Radhakrishnan (2003) considers some of the issues affecting African-Indian relations born out the historic divide and rule tactics of South Africa's former apartheid regime. She wrote in 2003:

Although there have been symbolic attempts at reconciliation since 1994, the relationship between Indians and Africans in general remains at best ambivalent; African bitterness about the relative upward mobility Indians have enjoyed in South Africa coexists alongside Indian discomfort with losing the privileges maintained by apartheid (Radhakrishnan, 2003:531).

Radhakrishnan thrashes out some of these conflicts of culture and identity in her analysis of the work of Durban-based 'intercultural' dance company, Surialanga<sup>32</sup> that debuted at Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first democratically elected president's inauguration on May 10, 1994.

As opposed to remaining as part of sub-culture or working within an intracultural form which remains distinct from the dominant or mother culture, Surialanga's work searches for the intersection, the interculturalism between classical Indian dance Bharatanatyam on the one hand, and traditional Zulu dance on the other. Surialanga Dance Company's work is controversial for some because it shows Zulu men performing classical Indian dance with Indian women, thereby going against existing stereotypes of Bharatanatyam for Indian women only. The Surialanga Dance Company thus provocatively resists race and gender stereotypes. Radhakrishnan, however, observes a lack of integration in the company's work and thus questions its very interculturalism. Such cultural interactions, she argues 'consist of exchanges that are ultimately laced with contradictions' (2003:530).

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<sup>31</sup> The first influx of Indians to arrive in Uganda was labourers contracted for the construction of the Uganda Railway at the end of the nineteenth century. The Asian population was used by the British to establish and consolidate their rule by positioning them economically and politically as 'middle men' between the British and the African 'subjects' (Mutibwa, 1992). This historical role contributed to the expulsion of all Asian citizens and residents by Ugandan dictator Idi Amin Dada in 1972. Although they have since been allowed to return (which some have), the Indian population in Uganda frequently continues to bare the brunt of political tensions.

<sup>32</sup> Surialanga Dance Company is based in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and was founded by Suria Govender. The company is known for its unique fusion of Bharatanatyam, a form of classical Indian dance, and traditional African dance (<http://www.kzndancelink.co.za/ListSuria.asp>).

Glasser<sup>33</sup> (1997), founder of Moving Into Dance Mophatong in Johannesburg, South Africa, tackles similar issues in her company's choreographic work as well as in her writing. A number of her papers specifically confront these issues arising from 'fusion' work in dance. Fusion, as a form of interculturalism, occurs, as described by Schechner,

when elements of two or more cultures mix to such a degree that a new society, language or art emerges (1991:30 in Samuel, 2001:56).

Glasser writes that

Communities are becoming less homogenous with improved communication and media, and cultural fusion has been accelerated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1997:81).

While this is undoubtedly true, it is also noteworthy that, fusion has always taken place in the form of borrowing from and blending with other cultures. A clear example of this is *Gaze*, a children's dance which today is found in several regions in Uganda. The roots of this dance can be traced to the Democratic Republic of Congo, but the dance has travelled through Uganda's West Nile region to the central part of country. While the song lyrics still include languages from outside Uganda, the movement vocabulary has adopted elements characteristic to dances found in the West Nile region. As the dance has moved to the stage through national school dance competitions it has continued to evolve with contemporary vocabulary, such as Toyota cars, making its entry into the traditional songs. Christianity and colonialism have also played a role in the popularisation of the dance, with Sunday school functioning as an important meeting point for children (Ibanda 2010: lecture notes, 9 January)<sup>34</sup>. Thus, the very idea of 'tradition' can constantly be called into question.

When the roles are reversed with elements of 'African dance'<sup>35</sup> being fused with Western dance forms, Glasser notes that 'there are still moral and ethical problems relating to fusion, some being appropriation without appreciation' (1997:83).

While this study does not have the space to address these issues such as the role of tradition and appropriation in depth, it highlights the complexities surrounding these issues in any space shared by two or more cultures. Samuel (2001), drawing from Spivak (1990),

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<sup>33</sup> Sylvia Glasser is a South African choreographer, dance teacher, and academic. In 1978 Glasser founded Moving Into Dance Mophatong in Johannesburg as a non-racial dance company.

<sup>34</sup> Another example of cross-cultural 'borrowing' cited by Dr. Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza is the *adungu*, a typical Ugandan string instrument, which currently is used frequently to accompany 'traditional' Ugandan dances. While in many ways integral to Ugandan music and dances, the *adungu* in fact makes use of a diatonic scale which was adopted from Western music (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2010: lecture notes, 8 January).

<sup>35</sup> This dissertation problematises the notion that Africa represents a homogenous whole (cf. p.41). Similarly, the term 'African dance' can be problematised by being unspecific and too generalising (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2010: lecture notes, 8 January).

writes that 'the arguments within cultural politics around ownership and the voice of the authentic speaker as cultures meet and boundaries blend becomes more difficult' (2001:57).

These difficulties are similarly found within power relations operating within community dance sites and are therefore pertinent to the re-narrating of dance in contemporary South Africa and Uganda. Loots (1999), referring to the process of re-narrating or re-writing (Spivak, 1990; Mohanty, 1991) as 'articulating the unspoken', writes that this process

implies a host of issues relating to power and how we have constructed our (dancing) histories to either support or subvert historical power operations in our South African society (1999:105).

As Loots implies, both South African and Ugandan choreographers play a role in subverting the historical power relations in their respective nations through their work, either by introducing subversive subject matter in choreography or by questioning the dance genre itself. An example of a choreographer who frequently introduces controversial subject matter on stage is American choreographer Jill Pribyl, artistic director of Okulamba Dance Theatre, based in Kampala, Uganda. In her latest work *Real Men Pay School Fees* (2010), Pribyl reverses gender roles by putting a pregnant man on stage. As the pregnant man manoeuvres several jerry cans (that are generally used by women to carry water) the other dancers keep pushing them over till he finally falls flat from exhaustion. Through the subtle use of humour Pribyl's work remains accessible to local as well as international audiences, yet probes the everyday issue of gender inequality which is cited by the Ugandan Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP 2004) as one of the main constraints to the country's economic and social development.

Another Ugandan choreographer whose work attempts to grapple with Uganda's histories of oppression and current social issues faced by the country is Jonas Byaruhanga, artistic director of Keiga Dance Company. Byaruhanga's work *We Are Still There* (2005) tackles issues of neo-colonialism and *The Visa Section* (2007) questions the bureaucracy faced by so many Africans, in search of greener pastures, trying to acquire visas to gain entry into First World countries.

Several South African choreographers have similar political agendas in their work. Lliane Loots, for instance, who is artistic director of Flatfoot Dance Company, based in Durban, South Africa deals with

her feminism, her environmental radicalism, and her Whiteness in her performances. She believes that the more personal you get, the more universal you get (Maree, 2008:428).

Another 'radical' dance company is Jazzart Dance Theatre based in Cape Town. Jazzart subverts what through the paradigm of classical ballet is often considered the 'ideal' dancing body (tall, skinny, white and female), by deliberately working with bodies that defy the stereotypical classification of race, size, shape and gender. Since opening its doors in 1973 and since the leadership of Alfred Hinkel from 1986, Jazzart has been concerned with the political in dance:

Throughout the apartheid regime's declaration of successive states of political emergency from 1985 to 1989, and on into the socio-political upheavals of the early 1990s, Jazzart's place in the South African performing arts scene was marked by an increasing politicisation and outspoken opposition to the status quo (<http://www.jazzart.co.za>, History: para.4).

Like Jazzart's work, subversive choreography in South Africa has strong connections with the use of art as a protest medium in the struggle for liberation during the apartheid era (which will be discussed further in chapter 4).

The examples cited above of Ugandan and South African choreographers, dance companies and dance works begin to suggest the potential of the performing arts to subvert existing norms and power structures in dance.

### **Factors affecting cultural exchange: funding and resources**

While recognising the necessity to redress past imbalances in South Africa and the potential subversive role the performing arts can play in Uganda, it is necessary to consider whether these 'choreographic statements' could ever be completely free when artists are faced with the reality of needing funds, resources and infrastructure to carry out their work. Moreover, it is important to consider the influence of policy makers and funders not only on national or regional levels, but also on international levels. For instance, in Kampala, one of the major supporters of contemporary dance is the French government through the Alliance française, which has led to Ugandan contemporary dancers being exposed mainly to dance companies from Francophone Africa who have assimilated a French aesthetic influence, but have rarely had the opportunity to host dance companies from Anglophone Africa. In a conversation which took place in Kampala in January 2010 with Julius Lugaaya, a former colleague and founder/director of an annual dance festival in Kampala called Dance Week Uganda, he emphasises the impact French funding, and consequently Francophone Africa, has had on the landscape of, in particular, Ugandan contemporary dance. When asked about links with Anglophone African countries such as South Africa, he says:

We don't have any links there...And when you apply for funds to one of those French speaking countries, they will not consider you. They first consider French speaking countries, then they consider these other regions (Lugaaya 2010: interview, 27 January).

Once again, Bharucha's point, which was mentioned earlier, supports the view that the routes of cultural exchange are already mapped out (Bharucha, 1997). These routes imply issues of power and ownership. Whose culture is being promoted? Who benefits from the cultural exchange? Writing as a South African artist, Pather suggests that often 'we come up with manufactured responses in an attempt to integrate into the world of euros and dollars' (2006:14).

In my view, it seems that cultural exchange and in this case the support of African artists is used to appease a sense of colonial guilt and a (neo-orientalist) fascination for the Other (Said in Bharucha, 2000) and this research aims to question whether (and to what extent) African artists are complicit in their acceptance of this kind of support. Young-Jahangeer and Loots's observe that 'many African artists are entirely dependent on foreign funding for their livelihood and grateful for it' (2006:3). For instance, young contemporary Ugandan dance companies frequently seem to show an interest in incorporating community dance projects into their activities. One cannot be sure whether this is because of a genuine commitment to the uplifting of communities or whether it is considered as a means to access foreign funding and gain exposure for their companies (preferably outside Africa), or a bit of both.

Similarly, Lugaaya describes his constant battle as director of Dance Week Uganda with Alliance française funders when he says,

They said the project was theirs. Because they were doing the payment so they thought it was theirs. And also, the directors (of Alliance française) keep changing. So with each new director who comes, he finds stuff and wants to take over things that he thinks is 'Alliance dot com' (Lugaaya 2010: interview, 27 January).

Lugaaya makes a connection between issues of ownership and access to technology, and hints at the power and dominance which is assumed in this access to technology. This view is articulated by Ali Mazrui (2002), a leading scholar in the field of Third World studies, who notes Africa's marginalisation in the globalisation of technology. He writes:

There are universities in the United States which have more computers than the computers available in an African country of twenty million people. This has been the great *digital divide*. The distinction between the Haves and the Have-nots has now coincided with the distinction between the Digitised and the '*Digi-privied*' (Mazrui, 2002:13).

According to Bharucha this distinction is carried through into issues surrounding intellectual property rights. He questions the imbalances he perceives in the protection of knowledge and creative processes emanating from the North versus the South, and asks:

When does the 'fair use' of resources from other cultures, even in the least commercial of endeavours like academic research in the non-western performing arts, for instance, become an alibi for the production of a new expertise at the expense of acknowledging local knowledge? (Bharucha, 2000:24).

In conclusion, this dissertation will attempt to interrogate to what extent community dance, and specifically the selected research samples, contribute to the project of re-imagining and re-writing the dominant power structures and narratives in dance, that have positioned some forms of dance as high art and 'other' forms of dance as low art. By investigating the interaction/cultural exchange of community dance as low art, with high art institutions, this dissertation suggest that this site of exchange represents the possibility to challenge binary distinctions and to revalue community dance. While absolute freedom is perhaps not attainable, any power structure that casts artists in Africa as 'poor recipients of aid' (Loots, 2006), is to be regarded as highly problematic. Africa's position as a world leader in terms of, for example, mineral wealth or the export of raw materials, is often forgotten as the continent remains at the bottom of the economic food chain.

The focus of the next chapters will be to interrogate these power structures within the case studies in this dissertation. In addition, the aim will be to specifically clarify what power relations arise in the intersections where cultures overlap.

### **CHAPTER 3: HOW THE CRANE GOT ITS CROWN- A COLLABORATIVE DANCE PROJECT BETWEEN NEW YORK UNIVERSITY AND MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, UGANDA (2010)**

This next chapter will attempt to examine community dance practice and performance in Kampala, Uganda with a view to investigate its role and value to the broader society. The chapter will include an overview of the performing arts and dance in Uganda, with emphasis on the central region and specifically the capital, Kampala. The main focus of the chapter will be a case study of a collaborative dance project between New York University, Makerere University (Kampala) and the Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School, which takes place annually in Kampala since 2007.

This study will concentrate specifically on the dance project which took place in January 2010. The dance project takes the form of a New York University Study Abroad Programme, which took place at Makerere University. The project consisted of, amongst other things, a dance workshop taught at the Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School to approximately 30 children, mostly from disadvantaged backgrounds and culminated in a performance entitled *How the Crane Got its Crown* and performed at the National Theatre in Kampala. This case study will describe the project in terms of its participants, project design, aims and objectives and analyse the final performance/'product'. The aim of this investigation will be to both analyse and evaluate the findings in relation to community dance/arts philosophy, high art/low art constructs, and multi-, intra- and intercultural theories, the major themes outlined in previous chapters.

To assist in clarifying some of the issues arising within this community dance site, this chapter will begin by identifying and attempting to analyse some of the socio-economic and political factors at play and how these may contribute and/or adversely affect the kind of dance being made by those involved, such as dancers, teachers and audiences.

In considering these socio-political factors, the words of Phares Mutibwa, author of *Uganda since Independence* (1992), are thought-provoking when he states that

The real danger facing black Africa today lies less in foreign interference than in the growing conflicts within the continent itself (1992:ix).

Mutibwa refers here to the fact that many African leaders themselves have been the cause of political conflict and economic crises on the continent. He writes that

The irony of our recent history is that the agonies to which people have been subjected often did not start with the *arrival* of the European colonisers but with their *departure* in the 1960s... Ordinary Africans, the governed, are perplexed and angry when, having helped to achieve independence, they see around them oppression, coercion and mass-murder (ibid.:ix-x).

In a similar sense, it is tempting to view the performing arts and dance in Uganda strictly in terms of Uganda's colonial inheritance and to view global cultural exchanges as a perpetuation of the colonial relationship of African dependency on the global north. Loomba (2005) (referred to earlier) cautions that colonialism is not the only history of postcolonial societies. However, it is important to recognise that, prior to the 1950s and 1960s,

In the study of the continent's past, as in the realm of power, Europeans replaced Africans as the agents of knowledge that would circulate beyond the continent itself (Odhiambo, 2001:49).

Recognising that Africa as a continent is often either 'spoken of' or 'spoken for' (Odhiambo, 2001), an attempt will be made to reveal the power relations between the global north and the global south as binary forces. This will question Ugandan arts practitioners' own 'ownership' of the issues within the performing arts and dance field which they encounter. For this purpose, it is necessary to consider how Ugandan communities and divisions are informed by socio-political factors (cf. Appendix B) in order to examine what form community dance might be taking in Uganda.

The Uganda National Culture Policy (2006) finds that Uganda's great cultural diversity causes tensions among indigenous communities as well as between indigenous and non-indigenous communities, such as the Asian community, living in Uganda. The document states that the non-indigenous communities are

not fully accepted by the indigenous communities and in some cases they are not recognised. This leads to social tensions (ibid.).

In addition, while the country is considered to be relatively peaceful and stable, Uganda faces many political, socio-economic and 'developmental'<sup>36</sup> challenges. The Uganda Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) states that key to achieving goals is 'removing the constraints caused by HIV/AIDS, environment and above all gender inequalities' (PEAP 2004).

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<sup>36</sup> The term development needs to be problematised. As mentioned in chapter 1, development is frequently confused with economic growth or considered in terms of Western models (Mda: 1993). I support South African Theatre for Development practitioner, Zakes Mda's suggestion that through development a community 'should achieve greater control of its social, economic and political reality' (Mda: 1993: 40) as well as its institutions, rather than remaining dependent on foreign aid.

Such political and socio-economic factors (which are more fully discussed in Appendix B) have an impact on social in- or exclusion and thus the functioning of and expression that emanates from communities. Such factors are relevant when interrogating community dance practice which is rooted in access and inclusion: who is denied access to art, creativity, learning? How are some forms of dance excluded from a society? And why is this significant as answers for the role of community dance as a social leveller are being investigated?

## **Culture and the performing arts in Uganda**

The Uganda National Culture Policy 2006 states that

Participation by artists in the performing arts is limited because of inadequate capacity. The available opportunities in capacity building are limited to apprenticeship and are within formal institutions, which are few. The training focuses on acquisition of skills in the art and seldom includes marketing and promotion of the art. In addition, capacity building is limited to the modern performing arts (2006:6-7).

In order to locate community dance in the wider field of the performing arts in Uganda, it is necessary to consider the role of culture and the arts in Uganda. The Uganda National Culture Policy (2006), as formulated by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and aligning itself with the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (2004), acknowledges that

Culture is intrinsically valuable and an important dimension of identity and a form of capital with the potential to move people out of income poverty (Uganda National Culture Policy: 2006: 2).

The Policy, however, stresses that

There is a general lack of appreciation of the significance and value of Uganda's cultural heritage towards the realisation of Uganda's development goals (ibid.).

And, that 'culture as a crosscutting issue is not yet adequately reflected in other sectoral plans and Policies' (ibid.).

It is evident in the Uganda National Culture Policy's mission 'to promote culture and enhance its contribution to community empowerment' that cultural activities including the performing arts, are valued primarily in terms of their educational and developmental potential, their 'crosscutting' ability to foster national unity and their potential contribution in areas related to socio-economic concerns.

The performing arts in Uganda have a history of dealing with socio-political concerns of Ugandans, though artists have not always been free to do this, as suggested by Rose Mbowa (1996), a former lecturer at Makerere University Music Dance and Drama department, who notes that

Modern political repression of the artistic spirit has a long history in Uganda going back to colonial rule (1996:87).

The years leading towards Ugandan independence in 1962, saw a renewed interest in the arts, in line with a broader trend of cultural revival and African nationalism at the time (Schauert, 2007; Begho, 1996; Mbowa, 2001). The opening of the Ugandan National Theatre in Kampala in 1959, made possible through government support, is evidence of this. It is noteworthy that at this time the audience consisted mainly of British and Asian nationals (Mbowa, 2001).

However, in the postcolonial period from 1967 to 1985, Ugandan arts underwent another wave of repression through a succession of dictators. Mbowa notes that

These dictatorships effectively ruined the country both politically and economically, cost Uganda significant human resources and saw the widespread repression of the country's leading artists' (2001:322).

During his dictatorship, Idi Amin<sup>37</sup> went as far as closing all cinemas in 1975 and banning football matches and closing Heartbeat of Africa, a resident dance group (founded in 1967) at the National Theatre (Mbowa, 2001). Music, dance and drama productions were subjected to government censorship<sup>38</sup>. Mbowa writes that in 1978, Makerere University's Department of Music, Dance and Drama was banned from the National Theatre. Artists that did challenge the political regime through their work risked their lives in doing so. Reports that Byron Kawaddwa, playwright and alumnus of Makerere University Music, Dance and Drama department, was murdered in 1977 by agents of Amin's regime are widely known (Mbowa, 1996, 2001).

However, by being an important source of social commentary, the Ugandan performing arts have played a significant role in Uganda's liberation movements (Kasule: 1998). For example, Ugandan author Samuel Kasule, who teaches at the School of European/International Studies at the University of Derby (UK), writes that

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<sup>37</sup> Idi Amin Dada was Uganda's military dictator from 1971 to 1979.

<sup>38</sup> The play to be performed, written by Ugandan playwright John Ruganda, was censored because it seemingly referred to Amin's many wives and girlfriends.

Museveni's guerrilla movement –active between 1980-85 –adapted popular cultural performance idioms as a means of politicising society at the grass-roots level (1998:41).

Ugandan popular cultural performances as seen in play-houses, on television and heard on radio include theatre, dance and music, often simultaneously making use of English and indigenous languages (Kasule, 1998). Kasule observes that

Popular performance, and specifically, musical theatre, while offering people –performers and the audience – the opportunity to celebrate their tragedies and sing their protests against the state, has been important in the formation and articulation of public opinion in Uganda (1998:41).

Kasule drives this point home when he states that although

Performance critics tend to dismiss this type of popular theatre as irrelevant, it must be emphasised that in the Ugandan context, it is a most viable form for entertainment, education, and conscientisation<sup>39</sup> (ibid.).

Kasule who pays specific attention to musical theatre groups, who merge dance, music and multi-lingual drama into their performances, travelling musicians, and drama for radio, begins to reveal some of the roles played by the performing arts in Ugandan culture. The Uganda National Culture Policy further outlines this role as follows:

There are traditional and modern performing arts. Traditional performing arts are used for social activities while the modern performing arts such as Theatre for Development are usually geared towards mobilisation and sensitisation of communities for community development (2006:21-22).

It is interesting to note the categorisation of the performing arts into 'traditional' on one hand, and 'modern' on the other, as well as the suggestion that each of these categories serve different purposes, and perhaps hold a different value in relation to culture.

The above quotation suggests that the traditional performing arts are more closely associated with an expression of cultural identity, while the modern performing arts are valued in terms of their educational or didactic purpose, but are seen by some as not necessarily being part of Ugandans' cultural expression. Julius Lugaaya, director of Dance Week Uganda<sup>40</sup>, voiced the opinion that, for example, contemporary dance is largely regarded as a western form of art, although he recognises Ugandan choreographers' attempts to personalise their work (Lugaaya 2010: interview, 27 January). This sense of

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<sup>39</sup> Conscientisation can be loosely described as a process of 'consciousness raising'. The term has been employed by Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire (Wallace, 2009). Zakes Mda (1993) also makes use of the concept of conscientisation in his works on Theatre for Development.

<sup>40</sup> Dance Week Uganda is an annual dance festival which takes place in Kampala since 2005.

cultural ownership of a dance form was similarly expressed during the New York University – Makerere University exchange programme by Jenny Brown, one of the New York University coordinators, who describes the Ugandan children’s reaction to the New York students performing Ugandan traditional dance:

[We’re] valuing their cultural roots by showing them Gaze and Kizino. You saw their faces when we did that, right? They loved that. I don’t think that they would articulate it in this way, but I think that they appreciated the fact that we had taken the time and made the effort to learn dances that are *theirs* [(Brown & Damast 2010: interview, 17 January (own emphasis)).

Both the Uganda National Culture Policy and the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (2004) highlight the value of culture as

an important dimension of identity and as a form of capital which, when well harnessed, can help to move people out of poverty (Uganda National Culture Policy, 2006:2).

However, interviews with Ugandan arts practitioners suggest that, as indeed the Uganda Culture Policy acknowledges, arts institutions, practitioners and activities are ‘hampered by inadequate appreciation of culture and its role in development’ (ibid.:10).

### **The performing arts and dance in Uganda**

In order to investigate dance in Uganda, the whole spectrum of performing arts needs to be taken into account, particularly since dance performances

can be found everywhere as social celebrations, as concerts or even included as part of western-style plays...[And] Ugandan theatre tends to be a mixture of music, dance and drama along with ritual, mime and folk elements (Mbowa, 2001:325).

Since 1986, when the National Resistance Movement led by current president Yoweri Museveni came to power, the arts ‘have enjoyed a period of unprecedented growth and freedom’ (Mbowa, 2001:322). Although this freedom and growth should be seen to be relative, since as Mbowa observes, that

Although there is a Ministry of Culture, none of the companies receives any type of subsidy. Though there is a National Theatre building, there is no National Theatre company, and local groups utilise the National Theatre space on a first-come, first-served basis’ (Mbowa, 2001:324).

Because of such restrictions and challenges, companies, most of which are found in and around the capital Kampala, generally operate on an ad hoc or 'amateur'<sup>41</sup> basis:

Performances take place almost exclusively on weekends because actors and other company members are generally unavailable because of their work during the week...With artists having other jobs, rehearsals must take place at night (Mbowa, 2001:324).

While the National Theatre has a proscenium arch stage that is relatively well equipped, Mbowa writes that most 'other indoor stages are simply raised platforms' (Mbowa, 2001:329). Other theatre spaces in Kampala include the Ndere Centre, which has an indoor auditorium as well as an outdoor amphitheatre housing the Ndere Troupe, a prominent traditional dance group, and La Bonita Theatre, an indoor proscenium arch theatre and home to drama and musical group The Ebonies. Outside of Kampala, theatre spaces are often located in 'hotels, resorts, lodges and schools' (ibid.).

Jessica A. Kaahwa, a Drama scholar at Makerere University, observes that the 'western distinction between formal theatre and other kinds of performances...did not exist in Uganda's culture' (2004:82). This is noteworthy since often in a western context formal theatre is valued higher than other kinds of performances (Morris, 2008)<sup>42</sup>. The notion that such a distinction may not be applicable in the Ugandan context indicates that there is a different value system attached to Ugandan experiences of arts and culture.

In addition, Mbowa writes that so-called

Traditional theatre events always take place outdoors and the borderline between performer and audience, and between public space and audience space is quite fluid (Mbowa, 2001:329).

It may be worth noting that even in what may be considered a 'formal' theatre space, such as the National Theatre, theatre often remains, as Kasule describes,

An informal occasion, more like a dance festival, where people come to watch but may walk out for a drink at any point of the performance only to rejoin it later (1998:41-42).

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<sup>41</sup> Mbowa (2001) draws a distinction between 'professionalised' and 'amateur' dance or theatre companies. When using the term 'amateur' she refers to the fact that most Ugandan dance companies at present are unable to employ full-time dancers on a salaried basis, due to lack of funds, resources and governmental support. Most dance companies, especially contemporary dance companies, operate on a shoe-string budget and pay their artists project to project.

<sup>42</sup> Morris (2008) describes and analyses the tensions between so-called urban theatre and township theatre in Cape Town. She suggests that township theatre is considered 'informal' and less than urban theatre not only because of how resources are divided but also in terms of audience reception. For example, urban theatre is characterised by 'attendees sitting quietly in a darkened auditorium' while township theatre is characterised by a 'social, audible and active reception' by the audience members (2008:110).

Bearing in mind that often from a western perspective the formal theatre spaces are usually associated with certain theatre etiquette, one needs to question why a western standpoint at times has a problem with this kind of informality. Is there a presumption that dance is somehow being valued as less 'professional' and if so, by whom? This research would argue that its own findings in Uganda do not corroborate the western viewpoint.

### **Attempting to unpack traditional versus modern dance in Uganda**

From interactions with Ugandan dancers and non-dancers such as critics, producers and audience members, it became clear that while 'traditional dance' refers to those dances that belong to the cultural groups of Uganda, for certain groups of people almost every other form of dance was drawn together under umbrella terms such as 'modern dance', or 'ballet dance', or 'creative dance', which were used interchangeably. Thus, the so-called 'modern dances' included a variety of dance genres such as contemporary dance, ballet, hip hop, breakdance and dances associated with Latin America, whilst traditional dance was understood to be dances that form part of the cultural expression of the various ethnic groups in Uganda only, and can often be traced to pre-colonial times.

Lugaaya's comments on the different dance genres that constitute the Ugandan performing arts field are insightful. In an interview, he states:

We just used to dance to nice music and enjoy...That was the thing, I never used to know about the difference and all that. But of course there was a difference of traditional, *our* traditional dance and the so-called modern and creative dance (Lugaaya 2010: interview, 27 January).

Evident from this statement is the distinction of which dance he considers Ugandan and which dance that is not, an opinion that was shared by others. Alfdaniels Mabingo, a lecturer at Makerere University's Music Dance and Drama department comments that the value that individuals attach to either traditional or modern dance is dependent on their age and level of education (Mabingo 2010: interview, 22 January). He suggests that youth, for example, are drawn to 'modern' dances such as ballroom, Latin American dances, hip hop or breakdance, through effects of media such as music videos seen on the internet or on television in dance competition programmes in the style of '*So You Think You Can Dance?*' (ibid.). In terms of education, he suggests that because of Uganda's largely British colonial inherited education system, 'educated' individuals are more inclined towards western forms of art. This statement echoes Kasozi (1979) when he writes that the education at the time

created a ruling class that honoured individuals with European modern tastes (1979:58 in Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2003:98).

Consequently, Margaret McPherson, a former lecturer at Makerere's English department noted in 1946 that some 'young educated men and women tended to despise their own languages and culture' (in Breitinger, 1999 in Kaahwa, 2004:109).

It is evident that Uganda's colonial inheritance has strongly impacted on cultural perceptions and practices. Kaahwa draws attention to some of the contradictions consequently embedded in Ugandan arts and culture. She writes that

Some of the elite rejected the embrace of foreign culture at the expense of their own, while others embraced the foreign cultures and rejected their own as primitive (Kaahwa, 2004:96).

Mabingo identifies similar contradictions when he suggests that even if youth are less inclined to practice 'traditional dance', he observes that the appreciation of 'traditional dance' when it is performed, cuts across age or educational barriers (Mabingo 2010: interview, 22 January). Mabingo, who conducted his Master's research at Makerere University observes:

I paid the price for researching about so-called modern dance. I was saying that there is not a great popularity for modern dance, yet the panellists I met at Makerere, they did not agree. They didn't understand, because they think of modern dance as breakdance, hip hop, jazz, funky, moonwalk. All of these are very popular especially with youth (ibid.).

Given this comment, it is noteworthy that in 2010 there is still a general lack of scholarly writing on this specific subject of modern or contemporary dance and its role and practices in Uganda, and that further investigation hereof is necessary.

### **Access to dance training in Uganda: an example of dance in Ugandan schools**

It has become clear, from the above discussion, that the first wave of repression of the arts in Uganda has its roots in Uganda's history of British rule (Mbowa, 1996). This colonial inheritance has had a profound effect on the position of the arts, and dance within the Ugandan education system. Mbowa writes that in the schools, which

Aimed to civilise natives...playing the traditional drums and dancing were punishable with manual labour such as cutting grass, fetching water, and digging: it was also forbidden to communicate in native languages, which were derogatorily called 'vernaculars' (1996:88).

Thus, the establishment of colonial education has had significant consequences for the development of culture and the performing arts in Uganda. Nannyonga-Tamusuza, who discusses specifically *Kiganda*<sup>43</sup> culture, writes that

Until the 1960s, European education (both Christian and colonial) introduced at the beginning of the twentieth century resulted in the erasing of many aspects of Kiganda expressive culture, including their music and dancing (2003:98)

Uganda's inherited colonial system of education, which began with missionary stations, has thus largely been viewed as flawed by being Eurocentric, outdated and irrelevant. However, also evident in the counter-statement of W. Senteza Kajubi (1992), former Vice-Chancellor of Makerere University, is that over the years of independence, 'no fundamental transformation has occurred in relating education to the social and cultural realities of Uganda' (1992:322).

It still holds true today that the Ugandan curriculum and most of Ugandan formal schooling is not compatible with the country's socio-cultural realities and is focused

Mainly on academic learning for passing examinations *per se* to the neglect of knowledge, [discovery, life skills], values and attitudes needed to function efficiently in the real world of work (ibid.).

The high value placed on academic learning by parents, implying that dance is not an academic pursuit, was clear to Jill Pribyl, a lecturer in dance at Makerere University, when she decided to promote the teaching of creative dance<sup>44</sup> by renaming it 'intelligent movement' and highlighting its benefits specifically in teaching and learning areas such as literacy and numeracy.

Although visual arts are taught at Ugandan schools, the performing arts do not feature in the Ugandan classroom as part of an 'official' school curriculum. Ugandan dances and music were devalued in relation to their western counterparts. Specifically discussing the development of *baakisimba*, a form of *Kiganda* dance, Nannyonga-Tamusuza writes:

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<sup>43</sup> *Buganda* is one of Uganda's oldest kingdoms as well the country's largest ethnic group. The *Baganda* people (*Muganda* for individuals) refers to the people who belong to this group and *Luganda* denotes their language. The term *Kiganda* denotes 'that which belongs to the *Baganda* people, for example *Kiganda* music and *Kiganda* culture. Sometimes *Ganda* is used as synonymous with *Kiganda* (Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2002:134).

<sup>44</sup> What is described here as 'creative dance' is, amongst other terms, sometimes referred to as creative movement, educational dance or expressive movement. Friedman and Van Papendorp define creative dance as 'a dance form based on natural movement rather than a particular style or technique' (Friedman and Van Papendorp, 1997:preface). They add that creative dance is expressive, non-prescriptive and based on laws of bodily movement and Laban's movement principles.

The early teachers regarded Kiganda music and dance as pagan and profane. As such, the performance of baakisimba and other Kiganda dance in schools was not acceptable (2003:98).

However, Nannyonga-Tamusuza observes that the first competitions that included music and some dance took place as early as 1929 till 1955 and were known as the Namirembe Church Music Festivals<sup>45</sup>. The first entry made by dance into the Ugandan education system was after Uganda's independence in 1962 when the Ministry replaced the Namirembe Church Music Festivals with annual Uganda Schools' Music and Dance competitions. The high value placed on these competitions is evident in Nannyonga-Tamusuza's statement. She writes that

Since the 1990s, the inter-school music and dance competitions in primary and secondary schools and colleges became compulsory. The Ministry of Education appoints a council responsible for setting the syllabus, organising the venue for the competition, as well as appointing the jury. The schools compete at different levels: sub-county, county, district, and national levels...many schools that are unable to participate in the inter-school competitions at least organise competitions locally within the school (Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2003:98-99).

Thus, as part of efforts to foster national unity through culture as evidenced in the Ministry of Education's drive to support dance and music, many schools currently take part in national dance competitions or festivals. As such, dance may be said to occupy a place within the larger school curriculum and Nannyonga-Tamusuza's treatment of this subject demonstrates the role these school competitions play in contributing to innovation within dance in Uganda. Citing a trainer and jury member of these competitions, Arthur Kayizzi, she writes:

Because of competition, we have changed the whole trend of the dance and its music, in fact, it is as if we are in a revolution (2002 in Nannyonga-Tamusuza: 2003:97).

However, through informal conversations with dancers and teachers in Kampala in January 2010, it was suggested that these competitions do not hold the same prestige as perhaps in previous years when the prize money that schools could win was considerably higher. For these festivals, schools rehearse traditional dances as well as a 'creative dance'<sup>46</sup> which centres on a predetermined theme that acts as a form of edutainment<sup>47</sup>, to build awareness typically on issues such as the environment or HIV/AIDS. The best schools are selected to perform for the Uganda Schools' Music and Dance Competition finals at the National

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<sup>45</sup> The Namirembe Church Music Festivals focused mainly on church music. Nannyonga-Tamusuza notes that 'by 1955, these competitions included 'traditional folksongs' and original compositions, but dancing was not acceptable for a liturgical festival' (2003:98).

<sup>46</sup> 'Creative dance' here should not be confused with the use of the same term above. In Ugandan schools, creative dance refers to the component of the national dance competition which allows schools to create a dance with a storyline that deals with a particular theme. The vocabulary used in this 'creative dance' still draws mostly from traditional Ugandan dances. It is for this reason also that Pribyl employs the term 'intelligent movement'.

<sup>47</sup> The term edutainment was coined in the 1980s to describe programmes, games, or other materials that are intended to be simultaneously enjoyable/recreational and educational/didactic (Soanes & Stevenson, 2005).

Theatre in Kampala. These lively performances sometimes take up an entire day and some school children travel for over five hours, often arriving in full costume to get onto the stage. It would seem that there is a sense of cultural and national pride when these young performers come to the National Theatre in the capital city, Kampala. This raises more questions as to why national dance competitions are seen to be valuable, but performances by contemporary theatre dance companies is seen as less valuable.

This discussion has focused mainly on dance as part of education in Uganda. However, a more exhaustive investigation would be needed to include, for example, the role of dance within Christianity and the Church in Uganda, where other performing arts pageants and competitions continue to be found. The next section will offer a background of the Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School, one of the parties involved in the New York University/Makerere University collaborative dance project.

### **The Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School**

Outside of the little dance training that exists within the Ugandan schools, there are few opportunities for extracurricular or 'formal' dance training for children or adults. There are a number of expatriates (mostly white women) who teach ballet to children and adults in small studios mainly in the capital city of Kampala as well as a number of small dance schools that offer classes in mostly hip hop, ballroom dancing and salsa. Classes in African contemporary dance and salsa are also conducted at the National Theatre. Most of these dance schools and classes are noticeably geared towards adults.

In August 2004, the Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School (KBMDs) was established by the *Nnabagereka*, Sylvia Nagginda Luswata<sup>48</sup>, who is the queen of the Buganda kingdom, the largest of the traditional kingdoms in Uganda. From 2004 to 2009 the school was able to offer dance classes to over 300 students. Classes included Ballet and Creative Dance (as defined above) for children from the age of three and classes for adults in Ballet, Modern Dance (what is generally known as Contemporary Dance in South Africa), Pilates and Ballroom. Most of the school's students are taught through a School Programme, whereby

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<sup>48</sup> The *Nnabagereka*, Sylvia Nagginda Luswata is the wife of the king, Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, the cultural and ceremonial leader of the *Baganda* people, also known as the *Kabaka*. The *Nnabagereka* studied and worked in the US before returning to Uganda. In 2000, she founded the *Nnabagereka* Development Foundation (NDF), an organisation which seeks to empower youth, children and women through running projects in education, health and community empowerment. She is also the founder, patron and acting director of the Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School.

instructors either go to schools to teach dance or classes are bussed or taxied in from schools to the KBMDS studios to participate in dance classes. The School's vision is to offer dance to

school children regardless of age, financial status and gender, who are interested in pursuing classical dance as an extra-curricular activity or in preparation for a professional dance career (<http://www.nabagereka.org>).

However, this vision of making dance training accessible to all is a far cry from the reality. The School faces increasing challenges and since 2010, this has led to the closing down of the School Programme and the limiting of the number of classes being offered to Saturdays only. The fact that the School's focus is mainly ballet has not helped to draw students to the School. From the field research conducted, one notes that as ballet as a dance form is not well known by most Ugandans other than that it is another western dance form, mostly done by girls, and is not for boys and not for most Ugandan girls. A number of newspaper articles and short television documentaries have appeared between 2007 and 2010, asking 'what is ballet?', prompted by both the novelty of ballet in Uganda as well as the interest expressed in the latest venture of a public figure such as the *Nnabagereka*. Also, since there is virtually no history of ballet in Uganda, the Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School has had to rely mainly on expatriate instructors to develop a presence for this art form. However, most of these expatriates have not stayed at the School for more than two years and the lack of continuity of instruction and visibility is felt by the School.

Moreover, Julius Lugaaya, an instructor at the Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School, describes some of the School's challenges when he says:

The prices, I believe, are still high for people to pay. (And,) if people could stop using the *Nnabagereka*, I think [the School] could be (more successful). Because not all people will welcome certain people, being in a country where we speak 52 languages (Lugaaya 2010: interview, 27 January).

This suggests that the high cost of classes and the prominence of the *Nnabagereka* as a royal, cultural leader of the *Baganda* (as opposed to all Ugandan citizens) have made the school relatively inaccessible to most Ugandans, unless they are of a particular financial status, social class and belong to a certain tribe.

The *Nnabagereka's* interest in the teaching of ballet emanates from the West. Arguably, she considers ballet as a high art form, according to western ideals and aesthetic criteria. However, this view does not correspond with Ugandan experiences and Ugandan notions of artistic criteria, since Uganda has virtually no history of ballet of its own. Also, it is interesting

to note the seemingly contradictory role of the *Nnabagereka*. As a *Muganda* royal, she fulfils a ceremonial function in the promotion of *Kiganda* culture and is thus perceived as a cultural leader of her people, who at the same time has chosen to promote ballet, a western high art form that has a historical association with European royal courts. Why not start not a 'royal academy' for training in *Kiganda* dances, one might ask? One could also speculate whether this would have, firstly, allowed the school to sustain itself, and secondly, if it would have positioned traditional *Kiganda* dance as high art.

To add to these sensitive issues, the School has found it challenging to retain students beyond approximately the age of nine. A commonly heard explanation from parents and school teachers is that from this age group onwards children's workload increases at school, school days become longer and consequently, there is less time for extra-curricular activities. Again, this seems to indicate that, in terms of Ugandan attitudes to education, academic development with the concerted aim to pass exams is valued highly (Kajubi, 1992) to the detriment of, for example, educational approaches that aim to develop both mind and body. This advances the view, articulated by Brown, that

Education is a cultural construct, so that the way that we teach is very much so dictated by the culture that you're living in and what is appropriate there (Brown & Damast 2010: interview, 17 January).

There are a number of NGOs and outreach projects that offer dance and performing arts classes to street children and children living in orphanages and challenge the existing Ugandan educational model through their work, such as Uganda Heritage Roots<sup>49</sup>, Breakdance Project Uganda<sup>50</sup> and In Movement: Art for Social Change. In Movement: Art for Social Change<sup>51</sup> is an NGO that has been implementing a successful arts education

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<sup>49</sup> Uganda Heritage Roots is an organisation based in Kampala which provides a home and schooling to orphaned and street children. The organisation was founded and is run by Milton Wabyona, a graduate from Makerere University Department of Music, Dance and Drama. Children living at Uganda Heritage Roots receive training in traditional Ugandan dances and music. The organisation also has successful performing group. (<http://ugheritageroots.blogspot.com>).

<sup>50</sup> Breakdance Project Uganda has been offering dance classes to over 300 children and young adults, mostly from disadvantaged circumstances since 2003. The organisation is mainly active in Kampala, but has extended its work to other regions in Uganda. Breakdance Project Uganda also organises regular performances (<http://www.musicuganda.com/Breakdance%20project%20Uganda.html>).

<sup>51</sup> In Movement: Art for Social Change is an NGO that implements an arts education programme with disadvantaged children and youth in Kampala. The organisation was founded by Spanish national Begoña Caparros, who trained in Laban Movement Analysis. In Movement provides weekly classes in music, dance, visual art, crafts and drama to children from various orphanages and communities in Kampala. The classes are taught by Ugandan artists and a large number of graduates from Makerere University Department of Music, Dance and Drama are involved with the organisation. Each school year, the organisation develops a theme which is carried across into the various arts disciplines and is developed into a performance. In the dance classes (which include traditional Ugandan dance and creative dance) body awareness and confidence building play a large role. In Movement began in 2003 as a pilot project in two orphanages. The organisation now works with over 250 children and owns its own arts centre where all classes and performances take place in a large well-equipped studio that converts into a performance space

programme with disadvantaged children and youth in Kampala since 2003. Susan Bamutenda, the former programme coordinator of In Movement, aptly describes how In Movement's teaching/facilitation approach differs from a conventional Ugandan school setting when she says:

Unfortunately the education system [in Uganda] is school: sit, listen, look at the blackboard and that's it. Whereas in [our] culture, education was never sit [and listen]...We were being taught through songs...I had to be with my grandmother and my dad's aunt to learn how girls behave, how to wash stuff. We were learning science, biology and all these things in this way. So we are going back to that way [of teaching] at In Movement, where we are talking about health but we are using dance (Bamutenda 2010: interview, 27 January).

This dissertation begins to explore the need to identify (as mentioned in chapter 1)

How dance works in a development context and what might be unique as well as generic to cultural development projects privileging dance' (Boon & Plastow, 2004:127).

The above statements suggest that community dance sites, such as the collaborative programme between New York University and Makerere University, which will be investigated in this chapter, have the potential to challenge the role and status of Dance within broader Ugandan society.

### **Understanding contemporary theatre dance in Ugandan contexts**

Many interviewees confirm that a significant contribution to the development of contemporary dance was made by Fr. Damian Grimes, a (Mill Hill) Catholic priest from England who was headmaster (from 1968 to 2000) of Namasagali College, a secondary school approximately 200 km from Kampala (Lugaaya 2010: interview, 27 January; Nalumansi, 2002). Contrary to what was shown in the above discussion as the norm in terms of dance education in Ugandan schools, Fr. Grimes introduced dance classes into Namasagali College as a valuable activity for both boys and girls. This deviation could be seen as groundbreaking. There were classes in what was known as 'modern' or 'creative' dance and ballroom. Namasagali College became known as 'a top performing arts school' (Serugo, 2008:n.p.) through its annual, highly acclaimed music, dance and drama productions that took place at the National Theatre in Kampala. Lugaaya, a former student of Fr. Grimes, attests to this when he says:

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(<http://www.inmovement.org/en/index.html>).

Fr. Grimes is the backbone to modern dance in Uganda...Fr. Grimes identified talent and he gave us the knowledge and access to performing by bringing us to the National Theatre (in Nalumansi, 2002:n.p.).

According to Lugaaya and other Ugandan dancers, a large number of alumni from Namasagali College are involved and successful in arts related businesses. A number of Fr. Grimes' former students have also become Uganda's first generation of African contemporary dancers, choreographers and dance teachers in schools and at Makerere University's MDD department. Lugaaya together with Ugandan dancer and choreographer, Roger Masaba, founded Footsteps Dance Company in 1996, which is described as 'the first Afro-contemporary dance company in Uganda' (Wainaina, 2002:n.p.). Although the Footsteps style of dancing still exhibits some of Namasagali's dated American modern dance mixed with elements of variety shows and dance as entertainment, the choreography also explored political themes. Works such as *Things Fall Apart* (2000), which dealt with Chinua Achebe's seminal novel, or *Slave Trade* (2002) are evidence of this. Footsteps Dance Company also became a seedbed for the nurturing of young contemporary dancers<sup>52</sup>.

To date, there is no fully written account that traces the lineage of Ugandan contemporary dance and the contribution made by Fr. Grimes. For the writing of this dissertation, I have had to rely on conversations and the memories of dancers and lecturers at MDD, and a dusty stack of newspaper clippings in attempting to begin this important reflection. Despite this absence of scholarly writing, there is some evidence which suggests that Fr. Grimes played a key role in the development of a philosophy of dance for all. He introduced daily dance classes at Namasagali College in a genre other than traditional dance, he lectured in dance history at Makerere University, and served on the Uganda Dance Council (Lugaaya 2010: interview, 27 January). Particularly evident from the conversations with his former students is the way in which the performing arts were valued as a viable occupation which was considered a radical approach<sup>53</sup> in terms of the Ugandan education system at that time.

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<sup>52</sup>Another Namasagali graduate, who passed through Footsteps Dance Company is Jonas Byaruhanga who continues to advance the development of African contemporary dance in Uganda through his work with Keiga Dance Company.

<sup>53</sup> As headmaster of Namasagali College, Fr. Grimes was also known for his unique and radical approach towards discipline within the school. He introduced a system of power-sharing between students, teachers and the headmaster, with a student government, including reeves, ministers and judges (Lugaaya 2010: interview, 27 January).

## Makerere University Department of Music, Dance and Drama

Kaahwa states that

Despite its undisputed centrality to the development of Ugandan theatre and drama, to which one could add music and dance, 'Makerere University's specific role has remained unexplored (2004:88).

To date, the only tertiary institution offering a dance programme in Uganda is the Music, Dance and Drama Department at Makerere University in Kampala. Makerere University was first established in 1922 as a technical high school<sup>54</sup>. Kaahwa writes that

By the late 1950s Makerere University had cemented its role as an intellectual centre in Uganda and, incidentally, as home of nascent interest in drama and theatre (2004:88).

However, Carol Sicherman (1995), through an analysis of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's<sup>55</sup> literary education at Makerere, writes that the programmes offered at Makerere had a strong Eurocentric base<sup>56</sup>. Guided by the prevailing European norms and under the guise of 'universality' there was little space for the study of East African subjects and therefore Ugandan dance. Sicherman (1995) writes that

Only after Independence was there a Department of Music, Dance and Drama for the serious study of these intertwined aspects of African cultures (1995:25).

Drama had been offered at Makerere in the English department in the Faculty of Arts (<http://mak.ac.ug>). However, in 1971 Margaret McPherson, head of the English department played an important role in establishing a specialised Department of Music, Dance and Drama (MDD), which remains and currently offers a range of courses in the performing arts, employing 'an integrated approach to the performing arts of music, dance, drama, story telling, song, mime, and ritual' (<http://www.mdd.mak.ac.ug>: Background: para.2). Although the course offers contemporary dance, which is a western originated theatre dance form, the

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<sup>54</sup> From about 1937, Makerere began to develop as an institution for higher education and, in 1949 it became a university college, affiliated to the University of London. There was considerable growth from the 1950s and in 1970 Makerere University became an independent institution of higher education. It has been considered one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in Africa.

<sup>55</sup> Ngugi wa Thiong'o, born in 1938 in Kenya, is a novelist and theorist of postcolonial literature. He received his tertiary education at Makerere University (Uganda) and Leeds University (UK). Although Ngugi's early works were in English, he stopped writing in English in favour of Gikuyu in the 'belief that writing in the language of the coloniser alienated Africans from their own culture' (Birch, n.d.). One of his influential works that deals with this subject matter is *Decolonising the Mind* (1986).

<sup>56</sup> This view is echoed in a telling comment, by Peter Nazareth, Ugandan-born writer and critic. He describes the racial structure at Makerere University: 'There was a heavy colonial pall over the place which made it quite hard to be creative instead of imitative, to challenge the norms...We were not European. It fitted into the racial structure at Makerere University: nearly all the lecturers were Europeans, like the rulers of the country' (in Lindfors, 1980:84 in Kaahwa, 2004:88).

focus of the academic programme is on traditional Ugandan dance and other African dance forms.

The number of students majoring in dance is generally small (sometimes less than ten), with students at times not even selecting dance as a course themselves, but rather being assigned to the course by the university. This suggests that unlike individual scholars such as Rose Mbowa, Dr. Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza, Carol Sicherman and others who are cited in this dissertation and who value the performing arts, the broader society in Uganda does not yet recognise Music, Dance and Drama as an area worthy of study and investigation at the tertiary level. The acronym MDD is still at times used derogatorily to refer to students of this department as '*Musiru Ddala Ddala*' (very, very stupid). The department also suffers from a lack of facilities and resources. Lugaaya comments that

I don't think anybody will choose [to study at] the Music, Dance and Drama department...It looks very, very bad...not just a bit! [It's] very shabby. When you look at those two houses, nobody can be inspired to do dance or do drama [at Makerere] (Lugaaya 2010: interview, 27 January).

It needs to be noted that this undervaluing of dance as a viable course of study in tertiary education is not unique to Uganda. Deborah Damast, dance education lecturer at New York University who leads the Study Abroad Programme that visits Makerere University, observes:

We're the same thing at NYU, we're always the underdog. Dance Education is always the last to get anything. We're always having things cut, we're always fighting, fighting, fighting. We just lost a studio to music technology! (Brown & Damast 2010: interview, 17 January).

One could argue that the University of Cape Town's School of Dance and its students occupy a similar status at UCT. For instance, while dance was first linked to the university in 1934 when Dulcie Howes founded the Ballet School at UCT, Elizabeth Triegaardt, the former director of the School, writes that it was not until 1997 that the dance programme at UCT was accorded degree status by the Department of Education (Triegaardt, 2009:103).

From the mid-1980s, as part of a more general spirit of artists' desire to speak about social issues, Mbowa writes that

A Theatre-for-Development movement also began in 1986 at Makerere University's Department of Music, Dance and Drama. The movement was aimed at sensitising communities to issues of empowerment and community health (Mbowa, 2001:324).

Before this time, and before the establishment of a specialised Music, Dance and Drama department, the Makerere Travelling Theatre was formed in 1966 and has travelled across East Africa with the aim to make theatre accessible to communities outside the capital city and rural areas (Cook, 1966). David Cook, former lecturer at Makerere University and founder of the Makerere Travelling Theatre, writes:

We wanted to introduce drama to people who had no chance of seeing it, and didn't know whether they would like it, let alone whether they would be prepared to pay even the most nominal sum to see it, in advance. We called ourselves The Makerere Free Travelling Theatre (1966:28).

This tradition is continued by the current Music, Dance and Drama department through an annual event called People's Theatre that travels to different towns and villages in Uganda and serves as the students' practical examinations in all three disciplines of music, dance and drama.

Alumni from the Music, Dance and Drama department have made and continue to make significant contributions to the Ugandan arts and culture field. Several graduates are currently active in teaching and leadership roles in dance settings in Kampala such as Uganda Heritage Roots and In Movement: Art for Social Change. Both these organisations are also involved in New York University's Study Abroad Programme in Kampala which is discussed in depth in the next section of this chapter.

### **Interrogating *How the Crane Got its Crown*- a collaborative dance project between New York University and Makerere University**

In January 2010, a group of fifteen postgraduate and undergraduate students from New York University, along with two faculty members, travelled to Kampala, Uganda, to participate, with thirteen Ugandan undergraduate students and six mentors, in a collaborative programme between New York University's Dance Education department<sup>57</sup> and the Makerere University Music, Dance and Drama department. The programme is one of an extensive range of Study Abroad Programmes offered by New York University and is a 'dance-making cultural exchange programme focused on fostering community building through the arts' (Appendix D). According to the course outline, the outcomes of the programme include learning traditional Ugandan dances, studying the pedagogic practices

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<sup>57</sup> The Dance in Education department is part of the New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development. The department offers graduate programmes in dance education for school, higher education, private, conservatory and community outreach settings (<http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/>).

of the region, and learning about the arts and culture of Uganda and East Africa (Appendix D).

The idea for the programme, which first took place in 2007, was formed in 2006 when Jill Pribyl, lecturer in dance at Makerere University and at the time artistic director of the Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School (KBMDs) travelled to New York with the *Nnabagereka*, queen of the Buganda kingdom and founder of KBMDs, and met Deborah Damast, professor in Dance Education at New York University. The initial idea was to create a collaboration between the Dance Education department at New York University and the Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School. The project grew to include the Makerere University Music, Dance and Drama department which could be seen as a deliberate act to validate the project as a Study Abroad Programme at New York University. Also, Pribyl says in an interview:

It was my idea that we could make this into something bigger that could benefit a wider population of Ugandans (Pribyl 2010: interview, 25 January).

The format of the project in Uganda has been mostly unchanged and is conducted in two phases. During the first week, which takes place at Makerere University, all the students learn and teach each other their dances. The New York University students learn traditional Ugandan dances and teach the Makerere students a contemporary dance work, they attend a number of lectures on teaching methodology and some aspects of Ugandan dance and culture and they form teaching partnerships with a Makerere student to develop a lesson plan.

During the second week, a series of creative dance workshops is taught by the New York University and Makerere University students to approximately twenty-five to thirty mostly Ugandan children between the ages of six and sixteen at the Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School. This four-day collaboration which takes the form of a series of workshops culminates in a collaborative performance which, in 2010, took place at the National Theatre in Kampala.

### **Exploring the demographics of the programme**

The participants in the 2010 exchange programme consisted of fourteen postgraduate and one undergraduate student from New York University, accompanied by two faculty

members, Deborah Damast and Jenny Brown<sup>58</sup>. Only one male NYU student participated. Thirteen students were from the Dance Education department, one was a drama therapy student and one was studying International Education<sup>59</sup>. The participants from Makerere University included thirteen undergraduates dance students from the Music, Dance and Drama department. Only three female students participated. There were also six Ugandan mentors, three men, three women, all of whom are graduates of MDD and Jill Pribyl<sup>60</sup>, the programme coordinator.

The imbalance between female and male dance students is striking when one considers that the field of concert/theatre dance generally, in terms of numbers is frequently dominated by female dancers. This significant difference may be evidence of the larger context of gender inequity in Ugandan education, a trend which starts at the primary school level of education. The Ugandan Poverty Eradication Action Plan (2004) states that 'the incidence of tertiary education is highly unequal both by income group and gender (PEAP, 2004:161). It is noteworthy that many traditional Ugandan dances have clearly defined gender roles<sup>61</sup>, as for example in the traditional performance of *baakisimba* where the women's role is to dance, while the men beat the drums (Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2002, 2003, 2005). However, the so-called 'professional' contemporary dance theatre scene in Kampala is currently dominated by male dancers. An investigation as to why this is so is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

The third group in the cultural exchange programme consists of approximately thirty participants, with an equal number of girls and boys between the ages of six and sixteen years. These children come to the Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School in week two of the programme to participate in the dance workshops taught by the American and Ugandan student teachers.

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<sup>58</sup> Deborah Damast is professor in Dance Education at New York University. She also teaches dance at a New York City elementary school and artistically directs Kaleidoscope Dancers, an educational dance company that performs dance work and teaches dance workshops to school children at New York University. Jenny Brown is a dance teacher in New York, performs and choreographs with Kaleidoscope Dancers and assists Damast in the running of the company and the coordination of the Study Abroad Programme in Kampala.

<sup>59</sup> The New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development offers a postgraduate programme called International Education, which aims to prepare 'professional educators who can work effectively in international and multinational settings'. (<http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/humsocsci/international>).

<sup>60</sup> Jill Pribyl has an MA in Choreography from the University of New Mexico where she also lectured. After an extensive performing and teaching career in the US, Pribyl received a Fulbright Scholarship to conduct research at Makerere University. Pribyl lectures in dance at Makerere University and artistically co-directs Okulamba Dance Theatre, based in Kampala.

<sup>61</sup> Nannyonga-Tamusuza (2003, 2005) discusses how the reinvention of *baakisimba*, through for example school competitions has recreated new meanings of gender in performance of this traditional court dance of the *Baganda* people.

In 2010, the participating children came from various orphanages and NGO's, including Life in Africa<sup>62</sup>, Uganda Heritage Roots and In Movement: Art for Social Change, and were sponsored by New York University to attend the programme. A small group of children registered for the programme through the Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School and paid a fee in order to participate. This resulted in a very diverse group of participants. The children from Life in Africa are from a predominantly Acholi background, from the war-torn northern region of Uganda. The children from Uganda Heritage Roots and In Movement are mostly from central Uganda and the Ballet School students came from Ugandan, Indian and European backgrounds. Each group carried its own socio-economic and socio-political position which is a complex amalgam of issues including financial, educational and cultural (Brown & Damast 2010: interview, 17 January).

Pribyl also indicates the significance of including children from different backgrounds in Uganda when she says:

Because I think, culturally, Ugandans are so tribal, I think that they need to be mixed with other tribes (Pribyl 2010: interview, 25 January).

This deliberate inclusion of children from such diverse backgrounds suggests that the notion of dance as a social leveller is inherent in the conceptualisation of this dance exchange programme. Although the children participated jointly in the dance activities, despite language barriers, one needs to question to what extent the interaction/exchange or collaboration between different groups was able to take place. The strongest divider seemed to be class. Whereas the children from Life in Africa, Uganda Heritage Roots and In Movement received snacks and lunches, the Ballet School enrolled participants were asked to provide their own meals and consequently often sat separately during meal times. Lugaaya, an adult participant of the workshop in 2007, 2008 and 2009 says: 'I'm sure kids notice these things, only they don't say it out [loud]' (Bamutenda 2010: interview, 27 January).

As the above discussion indicates, the extent to which integration was really able to take place in this 'collaborative' programme is constantly called into question.

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<sup>62</sup> Life in Africa is a Washington (US) based non-profit organisation that aims to support families from war-affected regions in northern Uganda. The organisation was originally started in 1999 by an American expatriate woman living in Uganda. One of the sub-organisations, called Life in Africa Kireka, is based in Kampala. The organisation houses families in Kampala who have been displaced by the war in the north and also runs a children's programme. Most of the children in this programme who are invited to participate in the workshop are from an Acholi background, from northern Uganda (<http://lifeinafrica2.com>).

## **The difficulties of collaboration**

Chapter 2 of this dissertation has attempted to demonstrate that any form of cultural exchange confronts complex issues of power and ownership. The interrogation and evaluation of this New York University Study Abroad Programme at Makerere University's Music, Dance and Drama department and the ensuing collaborative performance will attempt to identify and discuss some of these issues at play in this specific situation.

As mentioned previously, Bharucha states that

The implications of interculturalism are very different for people in impoverished, "developing" countries like India, and for people in technologically advanced, capitalist societies like America (1984:255).

Thus, Bharucha's consequent question whether 'economic inequalities can be included in one's respect for cultural difference' (2000:2) is pertinent in this case study. A certain unease caused by economic differences appeared on multiple levels during the Study Abroad Programme. Notice Damast's comment:

[Our students] are going into debt for this trip, which I think our Ugandan teachers didn't realise...NYU doesn't pay for any of it. The students have to pay for it and I do think that's something our counterparts and our teachers don't think of here (Brown & Damast 2010: interview, 17 January).

However, while some of the Ugandan students may not have been aware of this, one could simultaneously argue that the possibility to access funds is far greater for a university student in the US than one in Uganda. Pribyl, the programme coordinator in Uganda, supports this viewpoint when she says:

If you're buying me dinner at the Fang Fang restaurant, I can't believe that you're a poor student in the US. I don't believe you! You've paid for your ticket over here...If the opportunity came to any Ugandan to go to New York if they could raise the money, they wouldn't be able to do it! (Pribyl 2010: interview, 25 January).

This discussion begins to suggest some of the imbalances within the New York University/Makerere University exchange programme. In addition, further complexities within the nature of the programme will enforce the argument that 'exchange' is not simply both groups of participants being able to be in one another's countries as Bharucha indicates when he writes (cited earlier) that

The number of workshops and papers and dance demonstrations does not prove that something truly meaningful is being exchanged (1984:259).

Other observations and interviews with participants suggest that this cultural imbalance and the power relations at play in the exchange programme are not only economically determined, but also historically and socio-politically. Some of the language in the interviews suggests certain naïve assumptions of intercultural exchange as ‘an overriding global phenomenon that transcends class, race and history’ (ibid.:255). Just as Bharucha contests the notion of ‘free cultures’ (Bharucha, 2000), it can be argued that Makerere University’s position as a university in a ‘Third World’, ‘developing’, ‘postcolonial’ nation constructs a particular relationship of power in relation to New York University, a private, affluent university from the ‘First World’, ‘superpower’, the United States of America.

In addition, chapter 2 highlights the need to consider the role and influence of funders and policy makers in any form of cultural exchange. Similarly, the fact that this exchange programme is a New York University Study Abroad Programme makes the project accountable to New York University, both in terms of content and realisation. In 2007, Pribyl was able to raise a significant amount of sponsorship through the US Embassy in Uganda and Irish Aid. However, since 2008, the programme has had to rely almost completely on funds from the New York University Study Abroad Budget Office. Damast draws attention to some of the difficulties Pribyl faces in coordinating the programme on the Ugandan side, when she says:

She’s dealing within the constraints of the NYU Study Abroad Budget Office. They’re cutting our budget and then [in Kampala] they’re charging her more. The meat in the middle of the sandwich is getting smaller and smaller, but she made it work...Also, NYU wants every dime accounted for and they want it all documented and everything should be the same from year to year and every exchange rate from one place to another, because they look on the website and they see, oh, national exchange rate and two hours later...it changes (Brown & Damast 2010: interview, 17 January).

This above example illustrates some of the challenges arising from trying to impose a static set of criteria to a volatile and dynamic situation in Uganda, where virtually every price is negotiable and *bazungu*<sup>63</sup> are often charged more as a rule rather than as an exception.

Moreover, it became clear from numerous conversations with Pribyl between 2008 and 2010, that when she was no longer able to raise funds in Uganda she experienced a loss of control over the project. Pribyl also identifies the issue of tenure as another factor when considering exchange between universities. She says:

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<sup>63</sup> *Mzungu* is a term employed by various languages found in Uganda and means European or ‘white person’. *Bazungu* is the plural form.

In the whole hierarchy of academia, once you're tenured things become easier, when I was working at [the University of] New Mexico, I could always find money. There are always pools of money to tap into and it's ridiculous to think that NYU doesn't have any money (Pribyl 2010: interview, 25 January).

The above discussion begins to demonstrate to what extent this exchange programme was experienced as one-sided by both Pribyl and the Ugandan participants. Mabingo, a participant in the project since its inception, says:

NYU take the lion's share of the benefits...They go back, they teach the dances they have learnt, they teach the songs, the choreography. They have dances to perform...The teachers from MDD are paid. So, we become employees, not partners (Mabingo 2010: interview, 22 January).

Other significant contributors to this imbalance of power include the fact that whereas the New York University students are generally postgraduate students, the Makerere students are mostly at an undergraduate level. Also, as the Programme is a New York University accredited Study Abroad Programme, the New York University students receive course credits and are graded for their work and the classes they teach. While the Makerere University students are required to submit a written report to their dance lecturer, the Programme does not count as a course per se and students are not marked for their participation and performance during the running of the two week collaboration. Pribyl who is aware of these multiple issues says in an interview that

It seems like the grade is high pressure for those New York students to take charge in the teaching and our students, they'll just back down, that's how they are. And maybe it's colonialism, maybe it's because [the New Yorkers] are louder, they talk faster and [the Ugandan students] think, ugh, you're at NYU, you must know more than me. You're a graduate student. I'm just an undergraduate student. I mean, I'm sure there's a lot of inferiority complex going on with the students as well (Pribyl 2010: interview, 25 January).

Susan Bamutenda, an arts facilitator with In Movement: Art for Social Change and one of the Ugandan mentors in the exchange programme, described how her mentoring process from the first time the programme took place to the latest 2010 exchange, has changed to counter some of this perceived inferiority:

I don't know whether it's a colonialist mentality, where [the Americans] say something and that's it, because this is the fourth NYU exchange I was part of. Before, there hasn't been a lot of discussing and planning together. [The Americans] will talk ...So this year the mentoring was more into 'look, we need to hear you [Ugandans] speak, we need to be part of the discussion (Bamutenda 2010: interview, 27 January).

All of the above mentioned issues contribute to some of the difficulties experienced in the lesson planning and teaching of the workshop phase. Pribyl, who originated the idea of

forming cross-cultural teaching partnerships when the programme first ran in 2007, conveys a different opinion after the 4<sup>th</sup> workshop in 2010 when she says:

I think that that whole idea of collaboration is great but I just don't think it works...I thought that at least it would take people out of their comfort zone...but it just doesn't quite seem to work. I think because their level of experience is so very different (Pribyl 2010: interview, 25 January).

To the contrary, both Damast and Brown seem to view this collaborative process positively. While recognising some challenges, Damast says:

[Our students] definitely learned so much from their partners and from collaborating. That's a whole other level of collaboration, designing a lesson plan with someone from a different cultural background and different concept of pedagogy...(Brown & Damast 2010: interview, 17 January).

The above discussion illustrates how the New York University/Makerere University collaborative programme is, like any form of cultural exchange, subject to the power relations between the partners involved, even in the face of good intentions. Bharucha's point of view, that 'in the so-called 'Third World'...the routes of cultural exchange are already mapped for us' (1997:33), in this context is a chilling reminder of global inequities.

### **Collaborative dance-making: *How the Crane got its Crown***

The collaboration in 2010 culminated in a performance entitled *How the Crane got its Crown*. This consisted of twelve dances created and performed collaboratively by the children and workshop facilitators (students of New York University and Makerere University), two traditional Ugandan dances performed by the NYU and Makerere students, and one modern dance work, also danced by the NYU and Makerere students. The New York University and Makerere students formed teaching partnerships and each group collaboratively developed a creative dance lesson plan and taught a one hour and fifteen minute workshop. The Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School has two dance studios which meant that two workshops were able to run simultaneously. Thus, each group of approximately fifteen children learnt six dances for the performance. The last fifteen minutes of every workshop session was used to draw together the explored movement material and create a short dance for the final performance. The dances were created loosely around a Ugandan folktale *How the Crane Got its Crown* and the performance was strung together with excerpts from this story. Most of the dances were performed to live, improvised music by

Ugandan musicians on drums, xylophone, *adungu*<sup>64</sup> and other African instruments and was performed at the National Theatre in Kampala.

The National Theatre, established in 1959, is part of the Uganda National Cultural Centre that currently falls under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, which includes arts and culture in its portfolio and suggests once more the undervaluing of the arts in terms of their 'place' in Ugandan government. Present director of the National Theatre<sup>65</sup>, Joseph Walugembe, notes that as a government body the Theatre has been affected by the politics, economics and social transformations in every phase of Uganda's tumultuous history, at times resulting in censorship of works presented at the National Theatre (<http://ugandanationalculturalcentre.org>). Although the National Theatre is at present the best equipped theatre in Kampala and in Uganda, the facilities are meagre compared to the some of the main theatres, such as the Baxter Theatre or Artscape, in Cape Town, South Africa.

For the 2010 New York University – Makerere University collaborative performance, the National Theatre was hired for one day to stage, rehearse and perform the show in the early evening as the stage had to be vacated for another company's performance that same evening. There was no scenery and the only available black traverse was used as a backdrop to the dances. Lighting was basic as the Theatre only has a small range of lights that are in working order. The adult participants (Makerere and New York University students) wore their own black pants and colourful tops with some items from the Music, Dance and Drama department's wardrobe. The children were costumed in white or black pants and white tops. Although this is still quite a generic costume, Pribyl and several of the Ugandan mentors expressed in informal conversations that they felt it was an improvement on dressing the children in New York University T-shirts which was the case in previous collaborative performances. This notion can have a significant impact on how the performance and the performers are viewed and evaluated. Pribyl's insistence on the importance of the children having a dance costume, which became evident in several conversations between 2007 and 2010, allows the children to be perceived, viewed and *valued* as performers rather than as mere recipients of aid when they are wearing T-shirts with their sponsor's name in large print.

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<sup>64</sup> *Adungu* is a Ugandan string instrument which resembles a harp.

<sup>65</sup> Currently, regular events at the National Theatre include annual festivals such as Dance Week Uganda and the Amakula Kampala film festival. On a weekly basis the theatre offers a number of music and theatre shows as well as a weekly bonfire and story-telling evening, amongst others (<http://ugandanationalculturalcentre.org>). A number of dancers and choreographers offer classes and conduct rehearsals at the Theatre and the outside grounds are home to a daily craft market.

The performance, which was advertised through posters and flyers, was free of charge in order to attract an audience, whose members included friends and acquaintances of some of the performers, mentors and organisers, dancers from some of Kampala's dance companies, and passers-by at the theatre who noticed a free show was happening. The performance was also attended by Patrick Mangeni, the head of department of Makerere University's Music, Dance and Drama department, which could be seen as a validation of the programme and the performance as a valuable annual event at the Music, Dance and Drama department. The decision not to charge an entrance fee begins to reflect some of the difficulties dance companies in general face in Kampala in terms of drawing audiences to the National Theatre to view their works. Mbowa (2001) notes that (cf. p.58) when the National Theatre was established in 1959, audiences consisted mainly of British and Asian nationals who were at that time considered to be Uganda's upper and middle class citizens (Mbowa, 2001; Mutibwa, 1992). More investigation would be needed to determine to what extent the National Theatre can be considered a 'democratic space' or 'everyman's' space in terms of its audiences. It would seem that currently performances that have entrance fees often attract a largely expatriate audience. Bamutenda's comment on this issue is insightful:

If you get an audience, I'm happy with that. If it's your family and friends, well [that means] they've supported you. Because, the biggest crowds we get here [at the National Theatre] are these embassies and people who've sponsored and it's because they've asked their members to come and watch (Bamutenda 2010: interview, 27 January).

Further investigation would be required to determine whether performances that charge entrance fees are valued more and by whom. However, it is noteworthy that Bamutenda, Pribyl and other Ugandan interviewees do not identify a clear-cut distinction between community dance performance and theatre/concert dance. This could be because the same platform, the National Theatre stage, is used by both.

Mabingo also notes that one of the main contributions of the collaborative project is that

Every January we [residents in Kampala] are ensured a performance at the theatre, an audience is invited, which contributes to the overall presence of dance (Mabingo 2010: interview, 22 January).

Damast shares this view and adds that the inclusion of performance is an important aspect of the overall programme. Writing from a dance education background, she comments on the format of the programme:

I think it's very important in our format here that we span the spectrum of creating dance, performing dance and observing dance – that the children have the opportunity to do all three. They're participating in the dance-making process, whereas I know also in our country, most

community dance –we call it outreach or community-service based programmes– but in the community dance format, most often, kids either sit and watch dance or a teacher has them come in and create some creative movement exploration that never really goes anywhere (Brown & Damast 2010: interview, 17 January).

Damast's observation, may suggest that while community based teaching of dance is valued and practiced even within a university setting, the performance of this type of dance does not hold the same value. This seems to suggest a separation of educational versus artistic value in the inclusion of community dance, particularly within tertiary dance institutions.

This separation of educational versus artistic value is also evident in the dance-making process, the staging and the final performance of *How the Crane Got its Crown*. During the two-week collaboration more time was spent on teaching and rehearsing the three adult dances than the twelve children's dances that were composed out of creative dance material developed in each of the twelve workshops that were taught over four days. Damast comments on some of the difficulties of creating dances with the children within these time constraints:

Jill [Pribyl] was very adamant in the beginning that we do have a stage performance. And we thought, oh my god, how are we going to put it together in two weeks? Are the classes going to be too geared towards product if we have a performance? (ibid.).

The above statement also suggests the difficulty of balancing the importance of product versus process in the dance-making. The creative dance format used in the workshops incorporates a lot of group work, collaboration and problem-solving, which seems to indicate an emphasis on the *process* of dance-making. Damast highlights this when she says:

The process/product aspect, that's the one thing that I think is really tricky, that's one of the challenges that I find, how to direct what the teachers' focus should be. Because they do have to come up with a *thing*, some-*thing* to put on stage (ibid.).

In the performance, the adults' dances looked better rehearsed and displayed high energy, whereas the children's dances (which were performed by both the children and adults) were generally monotonous and lacking in energy and dynamics. Considering that most of the children are in fact skilled performers of traditional Ugandan dance, through the various organisations who work with them, it raises questions as to why when they were performing creative dance, the movement tended to look non-descript and 'murky' (ibid.). Also, as the children are not divided into age groups, most of the dances did not seem at all challenging for the older participants. Authors of *Teaching Creative Dance*, Sharon Friedman and Jennifer Van Papendorp note that

Unless there is a growth in strength, flexibility and command of the body, the sense of fulfilment from creative dance will be short-lived and incomplete. ...As students become more proficient in creative movement, they will find they need greater technical skill in order to fully express their ideas (1997:41).

While one needs to be wary of the notion that the children performing *How the Crane Got its Crown* should have *looked* a certain way, nonetheless the fact that they seemed insufficiently *challenged* is significant. While some of these issues may stem from the fact that the student teachers were not experienced enough to be specific in their instructions and to create a sound class structure, it is worrying that the children did not seem to acquire and practice many new dance skills and concepts that were challenging. If, as it would seem, teaching dance is not the main objective one could question: what is the role of dance as a medium in this cross-cultural exchange?

### **New York University/Makerere University collaboration: Empowering whom through dance?**

Describing what she sees as the role of dance as a tool for cross-cultural exchange, Damast observes:

It's ultimately dance. So that's already something...where we can start at a place where we're all at the same table (Brown & Damast 2010: interview, 17 January).

While this statement echoes some of the key characteristics of community dance, such as inclusiveness and the notion that dance is accessible to all as identified in chapter 1, one needs to question whether this idea of 'neutral beginnings' is entirely possible. Secondly, this statement portrays a rather romanticised notion of art (Houston, 2005), and one needs to consider that any interaction or collaborative effort is subject to a balance of power. Once again, it is clear that who is being used by whom; who is being empowered by whom; and to what end are some of the critical questions needing answers.

Several participants in the collaborative programme between the two universities voiced the notion that dance has transformative potential on a societal level. Damast expresses some of the pros as:

Learning about the world and others through dance. So dance becomes a conduit. And I do think that 'social change' is this big thrown around term and sometimes people believe it to be something that is *creating* social change. What is that? What is social change? ...Our students didn't know anything about Uganda, these children didn't know anything about New York. Now

they know something about each other. And you know, there's just that simple making dances together (Brown & Damast 2010: interview, 17 January).

However, one could question what 'that simple making dances together' really means? What is it about the dance-making process that is meant to be empowering and for whom?

Damast's response was:

Collaboration and problem-solving in a group, because that's the way that our new society is working. Job requirements now are not that you sit in your cubby and punch numbers. So you're going to be in a boardroom, you're going to be sitting with six or seven other people and be given a problem and you have to collaboratively solve it and if they don't have that...(ibid.).

One could argue that this statement represents a contemporary western point of view of how to best equip children for future challenges. While, as a teacher of dance, I support teaching approaches that emphasise collaboration, team building and the ability to problem-solve, one could equally argue that preparing for a future in 'the boardroom' does not represent a universal experience. Several Ugandan interviewees and Pribyl, the coordinator of the programme at Makerere University, voiced concerns about the dance programme's outcomes in terms of the participating children. Mabingo, for instance, while identifying several benefits in the programme in terms of the New York University and Makerere students, feels that his main concern is that, in his view,

The kids get a raw deal. Yet, they are the third party without whom the project cannot run. My concern is, there is no clear objective towards the kids (Mabingo 2010: interview, 22 January).

Pribyl echoes this sentiment when she says:

Out of all this mix, the people that get the most out of [the collaboration] are the grown-ups [the New York University students] that learn the Ugandan dance and the grown-ups [the Makerere University students] that learn Deborah [Damast]'s dance. Why? Because I think that when you do movement that is not your own style, you learn a lot about yourself...[With] the kids it's just like 'oh, you're so cute, let's take a picture' and we don't really get to know them, see what they can really do or push them in any particular way (Pribyl 2010: interview, 25 January).

Evident from the above statement is a particular kind of patronising attitude towards the children, whereby little is expected from them in terms of learning because of their so-called 'disadvantaged' position. One could argue that setting low expectations and not creating suitable challenges devalues the workshop participants as much as labelling them 'disadvantaged' does, and thus perpetuates a problematic view of development as

something which needs to be 'done' (economically and/or ideologically) to the South, whereas the West has already achieved some higher level of enlightenment (Boon & Plastow, 2004:1).

The adults' experiences of the collaborative programme, however, seem quite different. Pribyl suggests that this is because the New York University and Makerere University students are more challenged to learn each others dances. She notes that

Deborah [Damast] is pushing our students to learn [her] movement and we're pushing her students to learn [the Ugandan] movement. And I think that just that kind of learning dances is really beneficial. It's like this kinaesthetic experience of, wow, I can do that or wow, that feels really comfortable or that feels really awkward and why is that? ...It's all these multiple levels of intelligences that are going on in this learning experience (Pribyl 2010: interview, 25 January).

Thus, this is not to say that this collaboration is wholly unsuccessful. Other positive contributions include the view that the programme aids in demystifying university by letting children learn from and collaborate with university students. Damast's comment illustrates this:

[If] their [the children's] families have never gone to university, they have no concept of [university] or it's for other people, it's for rich people, it's for white people, it's not for us, we don't belong there (Brown & Damast 2010: interview, 17 January).

In addition, the programme validates dance as a viable course of study at a tertiary level. The value of the programme in terms of both universities is similarly expressed by Pribyl and Damast, the two main project coordinators. Pribyl and Damast identify several benefits of such a collaborative programme and performance. Not only do their students gain from the experience, but also, in their view, the programme adds value to their departments as a whole. Pribyl articulates the view that a partnership with New York University adds credibility to the Music, Dance and Drama department's position within the larger structure of Makerere University. In an interview in January 2010 she says:

The reason to get Makerere involved was to help sustain the dance programme. To say that we have this project going on, you [Makerere] shouldn't really get rid of us...That's always a threat and so to have a real collaboration or partnership, whatever you want to call it, I thought would help us (Pribyl 2010: interview, 25 January).

Similarly Damast describes the positive reaction of Patrick Mangeni, head of the Music, Dance and Drama department at Makerere University, to the performance:

[Mangeni] was at the performance and he was like wow, all these people seem to really respect this department that they spent all this money and travelled across the world with these students and to study with the teachers at MDD, this must be valuable... So I think on both ends we're helping each other create value to our programmes...I think this programme is mutually helping each other (Brown & Damast 2010: interview, 17 January).

Moreover, Mabingo notes that one of the key contributions of this exchange between the two universities is that it guarantees an annual dance performance at the National Theatre. Dance performances at the National Theatre are rare and often companies who are forced

to operate on an 'amateur' basis (cf. p.61, note 41) do not have the funds or resources to stage their works at the Theatre. As the above discussion illustrates, the performance of *How the Crane Got its Crown* could be considered a community dance performance as previously defined in this dissertation. Community dance performance in Cape Town, South Africa, is frequently confined to its own performance spaces or to so-called 'fringe' programmes, as will be discussed in the next chapter. However, it would seem that in Kampala, Uganda community dance performances like *How the Crane Got its Crown* and other 'mainstream' dance performances share the very same National Theatre stage. Therefore, the question is how this so-called community dance performance fits into the broader picture of dance performance in Kampala; and whether there is even a distinction between 'mainstream' dance and 'community dance'.

### **Dance performances in Kampala: high art/low art?**

An overview of the performing arts and dance practice in Kampala, Uganda needs to be sensitive to the issues of high and low art constructs, as well as question what may be considered to be 'community dance' and what its value is in the Ugandan context. It is equally important for the argument of this dissertation to bear in mind that the binary construction of high art versus low art, which was identified in the South African context, cannot simply be used uniformly in the Ugandan context. In a conversation in Kampala in 2008, Pribyl commented: 'But isn't all Ugandan dance somehow community dance?' This question certainly shows the complexity in attempting to define Ugandan community dance and locate it as either a low or high art form, which as a western construct may not be applicable in the Ugandan example as the following discussion will illustrate.

Since 2005, Kampala also hosts an annual event called Dance Week Uganda, under the direction of Julius Lugaaya<sup>66</sup>. The main sponsors have been the Uganda German Cultural Centre and Alliance française, who have assisted in providing performance and rehearsal venues, transportation and offering costume fees for dance companies. The sponsorship also made it possible for international choreographers to facilitate and conduct workshops with Ugandan dancers. For many of Kampala's contemporary dance companies, Dance

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<sup>66</sup> The idea to develop a platform for dance came to Lugaaya after attending a dance festival and workshop in Moscow, Russia, in 2002. The first Dance Week Uganda took place in 2005 and the participating companies have included Footsteps Dance Company, Keiga Dance Company, Okulamba Dance Theatre (under direction of Jill Pribyl), and MDD department of Makerere University as well as visiting companies from neighbouring countries the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania and Kenya.

Week Uganda is, to date, the only available platform at which to present their works at a relatively low cost and to interact with other dancers and groups. The Dance Week is also significant in that it provides a free performance space, the opportunity to join workshops and have one's work seen by an audience in the National Theatre. In addition, a dance company presenting work on its own at the National Theatre is often unable to draw large enough audiences to cover the costs through box office returns.

Like the performance of *How the Crane Got its Crown*, the Dance Week performances that are advertised through festival sponsorship have been free of charge to the public until 2007, in a bid to create an audience for contemporary dance. Whilst this makes the festival more accessible to the public, the lack of monetary value attached to the performance could also explain the devaluing of dance by Ugandan society in general, an area which would require further investigation.

Moreover, Moses Serugo, arts writer for Ugandan newspaper *The Daily Monitor*, acknowledges the significant role Dance Week plays in affirming the value of dance among the performing arts. In an article in 2008 Serugo stated that

There is a concerted effort to put contemporary dance at par with other performing arts this year. Music and drama tower over this motion art form but 2008 should see contemporary dance claim a slot on the performing arts podium (Serugo, 2008:n.p.).

Bearing in mind a point made earlier that distinctions among different dance genres in the Ugandan performing arts scene are not clear cut, one may ask what Serugo means by 'contemporary dance'. Whereas 'contemporary' can be taken to simply mean 'of the times', the discussion below once again demonstrates the divide of 'traditional' dance, which is 'truly' Ugandan; and 'modern' or 'contemporary', which is not.

Moreover, certain forms of cultural imperialism suggest a disregard for the popularity, which exists especially among youth, of 'contemporary' dance styles such as hip hop, breakdance and salsa, all of which also feature in the Dance Week. Lugaaya, in describing what he perceives as the tastes of the Dance Week audiences, says:

People are looking for something that is nice, that is well packaged. But the difference is now we have this new feeling of contemporary dance...We've had a chance to see those movies where there are those nice dances. So when people come, they compare those movies they see on television with a well packaged dance, which we see through television from South Africa (Lugaaya 2010: interview, 27 January).

Roberta Wagner, former director of Culture/Administration of the Uganda German Cultural Society (till 2009 one of the main sponsors of the Dance Week), makes the rather bold statement that

Ugandans need to know that there is more to dance than their traditional dances but most importantly, our aim is to see traditional dance routines infused into contemporary dance to create a hybrid that is unique to Uganda (in Serugo, 2008:n.p.).

One could view this statement as potentially problematic since firstly, it seems as if the project funders, who are not Ugandans, are determining what a Ugandan audience *should* see and *should* appreciate. Secondly, the statement seems to suggest that a linear progression from traditional dance to contemporary dance exists, which is questionable. Further, one needs to problematise the point of view that in order for contemporary dance to be Ugandan, it has to somehow draw from traditional Ugandan dances. As one of the interviewees states in the dance film *Movement (r)evolution Africa*: 'Is Merce Cunningham always asked about the court dances of the 16<sup>th</sup> century?' (*Movement (r)evolution Africa* 2009).

In conclusion, through the case study of the creation of *How the Crane Got its Crown*, this chapter has attempted to identify 'community dance' in the larger context of dance in Uganda. The above example as well as the case study of the New York University – Makerere University collaboration illustrate how contemporary Ugandan theatre dance often operates on an amateur basis, is performed for little or nothing and is often dependent on First World aid and defined/categorised by the West. As such, contemporary theatre dance in Uganda seems to fit, as Pribyl suggests, the western stereotype of community dance as a marginal, low art form.

This dissertation argues that community dance is often considered a low art form and is therefore devalued just as its participants are often marginalised and devalued (Lomas, 1998). In order to interrogate this statement in terms of a Ugandan context, it has been necessary to consider how culture and performing arts are valued in Uganda, as well as which dance forms are valued, by whom and why. Integral to these questions are notions of aesthetic criteria and so-called 'professionalism' in dance. If dance in Uganda, in Pribyl's words, never really 'gets to that level of professionalism' (Pribyl 2010: interview, 25 January), should it then be written off as community dance or dance which is considered lower on an imaginary evolutionary scale? Also, as traditional forms of dance seem to be more valued in Uganda, could it be that these should then be considered Uganda's high art? Similar questions will be taken forward into the next chapter which will investigate community dance in Cape Town, South Africa.

## CHAPTER 4: *DYNAMIX*- A DISCUSSION OF A UCT SCHOOL OF DANCE AND EOAN GROUP COLLABORATION, SOUTH AFRICA (2009)

The main focus of this chapter is an analysis and evaluation of Dance UCT 2009<sup>67</sup>-*Dynamix*, a short dance season which took place in 2009 at the Joseph Stone Auditorium in Cape Town, South Africa. *Dynamix* was created through a collaborative effort between the University of Cape Town (UCT) School of Dance and the Eoan Group, a community-based dance programme located in Athlone, Cape Town. As in the New York University/Makerere University sample, this chapter will interrogate the interaction of Dance within a tertiary institution with so-called 'community dance' and will be asking many of the same questions that were addressed in the previous chapter, but in the context of culture and the performing arts in South Africa.

In order to investigate the power relationships that emerge in such an interaction, it is necessary to consider the broader role of culture and the performing arts in South Africa and specifically Cape Town. Which dance genres are valued, by whom and why? And what place does community dance occupy in this broader sphere?

Chapter 1 of this dissertation argued that in the South African context, community dance has really been a synonym for poor and black people's dance and was thus seen to have less value. The term 'community dance' has thus become a label that serves to marginalise certain participants, facilitators and 'products' of dance. Because of the segregation politics of the former apartheid regime (discussed earlier), South Africa faces ongoing challenges of transformation towards an equitable society.

South African drama and performance studies lecturer, Clare Craighead, who problematises the notion of 'Black dance' within dance literature and criticism, observes that in South Africa,

Apartheid and its severe imposition of the notion of separateness meant that that the Black/White dichotomy was fuelled by an ideological discourse that violently placed White on a pedestal and Black at its base (2006:22).

This ideological discourse has similarly shaped South Africa's culture and the way in which art and dance are valued or not valued. Craighead adds that

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<sup>67</sup> Dance UCT is an annual showcase of the University of Cape Town School of Dance. A historical background of the School of Dance will be given further on in this chapter.

When one investigates the history of dance in this country, it emerges that the high art/low, popular art dichotomy is a reinvention of the abovementioned Black/White dichotomy (ibid.).

As mentioned in previous chapters, Loomba argues that viewing postcolonial nations, in this case South Africa, in strictly binary terms – as in the use of phraseology such as a ‘Black/White dichotomy’ – may be limiting and can cause a static way of reasoning. Furthermore, the discussion in chapter 1 attempted to show that identities and communities are not fixed or static, but rather fluid constructions. For instance, in a study of Western Cape identity conducted by Scarlett Cornelissen, lecturer at the Department of Political Science at the University of Stellenbosch and Steffen Horstmeier (2002), programme officer at World Vision International, some interviewees point out that

There is no single ‘coloured identity’, but that it was an apartheid construction. Furthermore, they [interviewees] argued, ‘coloured people differed in religion (Christianity and Islam), language (Afrikaans and English), ethnicity (Malay, Griqua, Khoisan), class and political ideology/opinion (2002:68-69).

Although the reliance on race as dividing factor among South Africans may obscure other socio-economic, political and cultural markers of social identity, one cannot deny the continued weight carried by these racial constructs in South African society. The discussion (cf. Appendix A) around the use of race in the admissions policy of the University of Cape Town is another example of this.

Consequently, it can be argued that these racial constructs that South Africa has inherited from the ideologies of colonialism and apartheid, cannot be sidelined in explorations of South African culture and dance. Sharon Friedman, senior lecturer at the University of Cape Town, writes that

South Africa’s cultural ethos was historically dominated first, by the colonial aesthetic and secondly, by the deliberate embedding of a Eurocentric, nationalist culture’ (1997:125).

This construction and evaluation of South African culture carries a long history of colonialism<sup>68</sup> and with it, the importation of Christianity and colonial education systems. Much like in the Ugandan cultural context, these systems served to systematically devalue indigenous culture and artistic practices. In addition, any development of South African arts

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<sup>68</sup> The colonisation of the region that became the Republic of South Africa began in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century with the arrival of Dutchman Jan Van Riebeeck in the Cape. The British colonists arrived towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and a struggle among the Dutch and British settlers to gain control over the region continued till the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The turn of the century saw the emergence of a South African State. South Africa became a republic in 1960 and left the Commonwealth in 1961. In 1948 the right-wing Nationalist Party came to power and instituted a strict system of apartheid or ‘seperateness’ (A Dictionary of World History, 2000).

and culture has been particularly affected by the policy of separate development and rhetoric utilised by the Nationalist Party, which came to power in 1948 in the political aftermath of World War II. There are many similarities in the Nazi promotion of an Aryan race and the way in which the Nationalist Party promoted the dominance of Whites in South Africa.

Carol A. Muller (2004), a South African ethnomusicologist based at the University of Pennsylvania, notes the profound impact this active form of segregation had in terms of redirecting the development of South African Music, which may also be applicable to Dance. She writes that

Where early South African history suggests far more racial and cultural mixing or creolisation, particularly after the arrival of Europeans in what became the city of Cape Town, the Nationalist government in the mid-twentieth century stressed racial purity and separation to divide South Africans (Muller, 2004:11).

The policies that were established to ensure this separateness as formulated by the apartheid regime, are described by Brent Meersman (2007), theatre critic for South African newspaper *The Mail and Guardian*, as 'an unpalatable neo-colonial mix of capitalism and National Socialism' (2007:292). The racial and racist dividers that were applied to the whole of South African society are, in my view, directly linked with how community dance becomes defined and positioned as 'low art' or 'marginal art' in South Africa.

On a societal level, segregation was effected through laws such as the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949, the Native Resettlement Act of 1954 and the creation of homelands<sup>69</sup> (Muller, 2004:12). In actual fact, only 13% of the land was allocated to 80% of the South Africa's population (Muller, 2004:12).

The above statistic is evidence of Glasser's observation that

In theory the amenities were separate and equal but this was not so in practice. European culture was perceived to be superior to African culture and the former received both moral and material support from the government at the expense of the latter (1999:81).

Thus, the inequalities of South African society can be said to be recreated in the domain of culture and the arts.

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<sup>69</sup> Homelands or 'Bantustans' were created by the Nationalist government as 'the "real" homes of people of African descent' (Muller: 2004: 12). The Bantu Self-governing Act of 1959 saw the establishment of ten homelands: Venda, Boputhatswana, Transkei, Ciskei, Gazankulu, KaNgwana, KwaNdebele, KwaZulu, Lebowa, Qwaqwa. The Bantu Homelands Constitution Act of 1971 was intended to move these homelands further towards independence. In 1994 the homelands were reincorporated into South Africa and South African nationality was restored to all their citizens (A Dictionary of World History, 2000).

## **Separate spaces for Dance and the performing arts**

The above discussion begins to suggest that race and ethnicity play a crucial role in the study of South African identities and communities (Cornelissen and Horstmeier, 2002). In addition, they argue that race and ethnicity in South Africa are interlocked with issues of territory or space. In my view as a dancer, dance teacher and audience member in Cape Town, this statement is highly applicable to the South African dance field as will become evident through the analysis of the UCT School of Dance/Eoan Group collaboration further on in this chapter. In a colonialist attempt to control labour, the movement and thus the spaces which Black South Africans could occupy, had been restricted through pass laws which date back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (and earlier slave history). Apartheid laws such as the Group Areas Act of 1952 declared specific segregated areas for different race and ethnic groups (Cornelissen and Horstmeier: 2002: 64). For instance, Lisa Baxter (2001) of the University of Cape Town writes that

The Group Areas Act of 1950 began to be implemented in earnest in inner-city Cape Town (District Six) from 1966, instigating the grand-scale removal of coloureds from the city centre to disparate new neighbourhoods in the Cape Flats (2001:90).

This forceful restructuring of communities had a profound effect on the development of a composite South African culture. The Eoan Group (which is one half of the collaboration investigated here), originally based in District Six, was also affected and was forced to move to its current location in Athlone, in the Cape Flats. The restructuring of Cape Town's urban geography during the 1960s and 1970s, meant that space and community activity, culture and issues of access became intricately linked (Baxter: 2001). Cornelissen and Horstmeier write that 'by the 1980s every race group resided in its own space' (2002:64). Moreover, in their post 1994 studies conducted on the social identity of residents in the Western Cape, these authors indicate that

Even more than a decade after the abolition of apartheid legislation that enforced spatial separation on the basis of race, the pace of desegregation and residential integration remains slow (ibid.:77).

Spatial segregation played a significant role in the implementation and entrenchment of apartheid ideology. Cornelissen and Horstmeier observe that besides maintaining and reinforcing race as a dividing factor, perhaps even more significantly, 'the separated spaces among population groups perpetuate ignorance about 'the others'' (ibid.). This ignorance about 'others' served the divide and rule tactics of the South African apartheid government to keep the apartheid system in place.

Spatial separation was similarly applied in the performing arts. Not only were the only officially sanctioned art forms Eurocentric, they also existed in a conservative and oppressive cultural climate. Meersman writes that the censorship of the performing arts, 'essentially started at the front door, as established theatres were for white people only' (2007:292). Most theatres prescribed to the cultural and artistic norms promulgated and imposed by apartheid, and only a handful of independent theatres such as the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, the Stable Theatre and Asoka Theatre in Durban, and The Space<sup>70</sup> and the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town made attempts to challenge the system (Meersman, 2007; Van Graan, 2006). During the apartheid years, the Baxter Theatre, founded in 1977 at the University of Cape Town, staged works (by artists such as Athol Fugard, David Kramer, Thoko Ntshinga, David Kramer and others) considered 'protest theatre' and provided a platform for artists whose work was often considered 'too political'. This was in stark contrast to Cape Town's other main theatre, the Nico Malan Theatre (currently Artscape), which was programmed and managed by the government-subsidised Cape Performing Arts Board (CAPAB). Similar protest work was taking place in the field of dance (cf. p.51-52) in the Cape Town region through, for instance, the efforts of dance teacher/choreographer Sonje Mayo (founder of what was to become Jazzart Dance Theatre in 1973), Alfred Hinkel with Jazzart Dance Theatre, Sharon Friedman with Silver Leaf<sup>71</sup> and Community Arts Project<sup>72</sup>, and others.

Despite the fact that the 'independent' Baxter Theatre may have represented an open or even a so-called 'democratic' space, it is useful to question to what extent 'access' was really possible for Cape Town's diverse population. Despite the Baxter's location at an intellectual centre, such as the University of Cape Town, which especially from 1980s saw a large increase in the numbers of Black students on its campus, it is still located in Rondebosch (a former Whites only suburb) outside and relatively far away from areas where the majority of the black population lives. Gay Morris (2008), from the Drama Department at the University of Cape Town, writes that, with respect to current theatre distribution, 'public transport for night-time theatre-going is nonexistent and in the daytime is patchy at best' (2008:106). The following comments made by South African theatre maker, Mike Van

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<sup>70</sup> The Space Theatre was established as a 'fringe theatre' and non-racial performance venue in 1972. The Theatre moved to its current location on Longstreet, Cape Town, in 1976 and was renamed the Peoples Space in 1979. In 2008, the Theatre was relaunched as the New Space Theatre (<http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/MediaReleases...>).

<sup>71</sup> The Silver Leaf Performing Arts Association was founded in 1973 by Amelia Du Toit and Kathleen Bartlett to provide dance classes to children from the coloured communities in Cape Town.

<sup>72</sup> Community Arts Project (CAP) was initiated in Cape Town in 1978 as a resource centre for learning in a variety of arts, such as music, dance, photography, film, painting and sculpture, and as a meeting place for informal discussions around the arts (Crouse, 2002:12). CAP ran a dance programme from 1984-1988 which was established by Sharon Friedman.

Graan, in effect question the issue of access and perhaps undermine the militancy of independent theatres such as the Baxter. He states that

For mainly white, liberal audiences of the 1970s and 1980s, going to the Space Theatre, Market Theatre and Baxter Theatre was like going to church. Watching protest theatre was like going to confession for their collective sin as beneficiaries of apartheid, and while it was painful to watch, the actors were essentially performing rituals that were uplifting for the soul of the audience (Van Graan, 2006:278-279).

Van Graan suggests that while reactions to and the reception of protest theatre have changed post 1994, the issue of who sits in the audience often still has a long way to go towards integration, when he writes that

Now we often hear that contemporary audiences – still overwhelmingly white and middle class –don't want to be reminded of those times (ibid.:279).

Observing that South Africa is one of the world's most unequal societies (Van Graan: 2006), Van Graan questions whether, in post-apartheid South Africa, it is still

useful to speak of protest theatre now? Or will it turn off audiences? Or make some critics reach for their vomit bags? (ibid.:282).

Craighead (2006) notes that much of the history of South African dance has been overshadowed by protest theatre. According to Van Graan 'protest theatre is not unique to South Africa' and his research shows that, as a theatre genre, protest theatre 'manifests itself in many situations of political conflict and social oppression' (2006:278). Somewhat similar to the Ugandan context where theatre played a role in some the country's liberation movements (Kasule, 1998; Mbowa, 2001), Van Graan notes that

If the arts, and theatre in particular, are reflections of the conditions in which they are created, then given the nature and impact of apartheid, the rise of protest theatre in our country was inevitable (2006:281).

Despite this role, Van Graan adds that 'while it is hardly articulated boldly, there is a sense that 'protest theatre' was regarded as inferior' (ibid.:279). He aptly points out that apartheid education denied black people access to arts at school and tertiary training level, and that it is therefore,

inevitable that, given apartheid education, that...generally, protest theatre would lack the theatrical sophistication of the privileged theatre establishment (ibid.:281).

The fact that in South Africa it has been historically and politically determined who has access to theatre or dance, suggests intersections between the protest theatre movement and what could be called community dance. As discussed in chapter 1, providing access to dance to those who are somehow excluded or marginalised by those who occupy the centre (Morley & Chen, 1996) always constitutes a political act. For example, Sylvia Glasser's Moving Into Dance Mophatong, founded in 1978, defied policies of separateness by deliberately setting out to be a non-racial dance company. In some cases, politics can be found to interfere with community arts practice. Graduate of the University of Cape Town School of Dance, Rebecca Crouse (2000), for instance, notes that the dance programme of the Community Arts Project (CAP) based in Cape Town, was dismantled in 1988 due to political disagreement amongst its leaders. Crouse writes that

Perhaps the most significant cause of the termination of the dance programme was the deeply rooted problem of conflicting ideologies and the lack of will to negotiate around such issues. The organisers of CAP at the time emphasised the politics of culture that used the arts as a weapon of struggle in campaigns to make short-term political gains (2002:27).

The Eoan Group was also not immune to the politics of the 1970s and 1980s. The Eoan Group's acceptance of support from government institutions led to the boycotting of the organisation by the very community it wished to serve.

This section has argued that in South African communities, issues of race, ethnicity and geographical separate locations are historically shaped and interlinked. It follows that theatre spaces which have been mediated through the same discourse, have come to represent complex fields of cultural contestation. This might begin to explain why the work emanating from the Joseph Stone Auditorium located in Athlone, Cape Town, a historically 'coloured' area, (where the UCT School of Dance and Eoan Group collaborative performance took place in 2009) is often not mentioned by theatre or dance critics and scholars as a theatre of much significance in Cape Town. Also, the socio-economic conditions of the area where the Joseph Stone is situated and its image of being in a 'poverty-stricken area' (Fourie & De Villiers 2010: interview, 3 May) might explain why the Joseph Stone is not a traditional performance choice for Cape Town's choreographers. The history of theatre and dance in this country confirms that

Theatre – like all art, education, the media and other institutions of socialisation – inhabits the realm of hegemonic conflict... What we choose to make theatre about, and what we decide to leave out, who we decide to do theatre for, which audiences and at which theatres or buildings we do theatre, are in essence politically strategic choices (Van Graan, 2006:286).

As such, the performance of *Dynamix* can be viewed as a similar site of 'hegemonic conflict' and this chapter will attempt to interrogate the 'strategic choices' that lie at the heart of its creation and this specific collaboration.

## **The performing arts, culture and policy in South Africa**

In Morris' view, policy in South Africa was being actively redefined from 1994. She comments that

In the first decade of the 'new South Africa' a widespread impulse to generate a culture that endorsed racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity, human rights and access for all to all the arts was entrenched by legislation (Morris, 2008:109)

With the collapse of apartheid and the birth of a democratic 'new South Africa' the imbalanced and segregationist structures of the past regime had to be undone. In 1996, the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (1996) found that

The current arts and culture dispensation still largely reflects the apartheid era in the distribution of skills, access to public resources, geographical location of arts infrastructure and the governance, management and staffing of publicly-funded arts institutions (White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage: 1996: Chapter 2, Inheritance, para.17).

It follows that redistribution of resources, such as funding, skills and access to theatre spaces, was a necessary measure to begin the process of redressing past inequalities. Dr. Fred Hagemann, from the School of Dramatic Art, University of Witwatersrand, writes that

In the past, the state not only funded arts works but also produced them under the auspices of the regional arts councils (1999:87).

These four Performing Arts Councils, which were 70% state subsidised and used to absorb 46% of the Department of Arts and Culture's budget, were the Cape Performing Arts Board - CAPAB; Performing Arts Council of the Orange Free State - PACOFS; Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal -PACT; and the Natal Performing Arts Council – NAPAC (which later became known as The Playhouse Company) (Hagemann, 1999; White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage 1996). According to the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, the restructuring of these Performing Arts Councils

is central to the equitable functioning of the arts...in order to free and reallocate public resources to other disciplines and areas in need of redress. (1996: Chapter 4, The PACs, para.2).

Another significant consequence of South Africa's past funding system was that

The kinds of artistic and cultural forms and institutions supported by public funds, determined the kinds of skills taught at the feeder educational institutions (ibid.: Chapter 2, Inheritance, para.13).

Much of art training was therefore geared towards European art forms like opera, and ballet, and music and drama departments concentrating on European classics. Ballet and Opera made up 30% of Performing Arts Councils' overall expenditure. In contrast, black artists existed on the periphery of 'official' culture without resources (Meersman, 2007). The White Paper (1996) further states that

Generally, tertiary institutions designed for blacks did not have training departments for the arts so that aspirant black artists would have had to apply to traditionally white universities to acquire skills and knowledge (ibid.).

To add to the challenges faced by the performing arts, the White Paper establishes that

If training as practitioners was biased in favour of whites, training as arts managers and administrators was almost completely absent for anyone in South Africa (ibid.: Chapter 2, Inheritance, para.15).

Resources and training are not the only factors to address. To counter the extreme divisions and inequalities left behind by apartheid, nation-building is cited by both the RDP (1994) and the Department of Arts and Culture, Science and Technology's White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (1996) as a crucial component in the reconstruction and redress of South African society and thus a sense of 'South African culture'.

The RDP stresses that nation-building is necessary in order to oppose the perpetuation of 'the separation of our society into a 'first world' and a 'third world' – another disguised way of preserving apartheid' (RDP, 1994). The Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology's White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (1996) argues that arts and culture are crucial in this reconstructive project and describes nation-building as the fostering of

a sense of pride and knowledge in all aspects of South African culture, heritage and arts (White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage: 1996: Chapter 3, Principles, para.9).

As stated in the 1996 document the Ministry also aims

to further encourage mutual respect and tolerance and inter-cultural exchange between the various cultures and forms of art to facilitate the emergence of a shared cultural identity constituted by diversity (ibid.).

To return to Hagemann's (1999) statement (mentioned earlier) that during the apartheid era, the state not only funded infrastructure and institutions but, through its Performing Arts Councils, it also produced art works, he adds that

Under the new structure the state is still responsible for some financial support of the arts but has relinquished its role as producer of the arts (Hagemann, 1999:87).

Thus, theatres that were previously managed by the government funded Performing Arts Councils were to make funds and resources accessible to artists who were previously excluded and in their new roles as 'receiving houses' (Meersman, 2007) a further challenge was to advance equal opportunities for artists not in resident companies. Meersman adds that

In other words, any artists anywhere in the country could apply to the NAC<sup>73</sup>, receive funds, then hire the opera house or theatre and perform their work there (2007:296).

Looking at the various visionary documents that accompanied South Africa's transition into democracy, such as the White Paper of Reconstruction and Development (RDP) of 1994 and the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (1996) which emerged out of the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG), established by government in 1994, Meersman argues that

Even though the nation had many desperate needs – there was massive poverty, a huge housing shortage, millions of citizens without medical care, poor education, no piped water or electricity – the Mandela-led ANC government grasped the important role that culture plays, not least in the reconciliation of black and white (ibid.:293).

The dismantling of the Performing Arts Councils, which were faulted for being inefficient, exclusive, elitist and Eurocentric (Meersman, 2007), saw a major shift in funding of the arts in general. To replace the regional Performing Arts Councils the South African government established the National Arts Council (NAC) in 1997. The NAC is currently the main funding body where artists can apply for funding. Business Arts South Africa<sup>74</sup> (BASA) is one of the few other complementary funding bodies alongside some trusts and financial institutions which are available to artists. The NAC's initial task was daunting as Meersman (2007) notes that even though the NAC was tasked with funding not only the performing arts, but also literature, visuals arts and crafts, its initial budget was lower than that of the former

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<sup>73</sup> The National Arts Council (NAC) was established by the South African government in 1997 as a conduit for all arts funding. The 4 regional Performing Arts Councils were transformed to cultural houses with funds for infrastructural support and not for artistic productions or companies. Thus, CAPAB (Cape Performing Arts Board) was disbanded and Cape Town City Ballet emerged as an independent dance company.

<sup>74</sup> Business Arts South Africa (BASA) is an organisation which aims to attract corporate sector support for the arts and artists in South Africa by linking artists and the business sector. BASA works with artists across the arts disciplines and aims to provide support through, for example, grant schemes and awards programmes (<http://www.basa.co.za>).

Performing Arts Councils. Observing that the NAC initially was only able to meet approximately 6% of the demand, Meersman astutely points out that

Unlike in other spheres, the government assumed that the budget allocation for the white culture of four million people was sufficient to extend to the cultural activities of now forty million people (ibid.:300).

Furthermore, the dismantling of the Performing Arts Councils and the restructuring of arts funding led to the axing of drama departments and ballet companies across the country, leaving the surviving and existing cultural institutions locked in a battle for legitimacy and, essentially, funding (ibid.). Furthermore, the NAC's own shaky ground given the internal wrangling and accusations of corruption and mismanagement at the highest office has compounded the national arts scene even more. Inordinate delays of up to three years to receive funds have seen many smaller, independent dance companies mushroom and then quickly disappear.

Thus, although South Africa's vision for transformation included a vision for the arts, these goals have often not materialised. It is noteworthy that only since 2002 has South Africa had a separate Department of Arts and Culture; prior to this, the performing arts were administered under the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology and thus struggling for own recognition and individualised support. Moreover, Meersman suggests that the programme of development for the arts, outlined in the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, may have been too based upon Western/European models and does not ensure sufficient arms-length state support. He points out that

South Africa does not have the strong culture of private funding for the arts by wealthy individuals and corporations that characterises the US. Given the sociological importance and relatively small sums involved in the arts (as compared to housing, health and social grants, for instance) some exception should have been made in case of arts funding by government (ibid.:298).

There seem to be few strategies in place that would ensure the long-term survival of individual artists, (dance) companies and the production of 'quality work'. According to Meersman, the NAC funds mostly on a project-to-project basis and in line with the 'receiving house' concept, which is supposed to increase artists' access to theatres, has 'actually produced the reverse of its intention' (ibid.:302). He writes that

The wealthy producers have the money to hire the theatre infrastructure, which is ironically maintained at the taxpayer's expense. Furthermore, the receiving house model encourages highly commercial work, much of it produced (or deriving inspiration) from outside of South Africa (ibid.:302).

Thus, despite arts and culture being hailed as potential social levellers in South Africa's unequal society, one needs to question whether, and to what extent the playing field is in fact becoming more level or whether 'the cultural status quo created by apartheid' is simply being further entrenched (Meersman: 2007; Morris: 2008). Questions such as these seem to have prompted an interrogation of the current performing arts in South Africa by artists, critics and scholars. For example, Morris has attempted to

consider the effects of the structural and social relations within Cape Town theatre – the interplay of policies, power, agents and distributory mechanisms (within and outside of state systems) – in order to investigate how and whether these contribute to the marginalisation of township theatre, even as government policies intend inclusion (2008:102).

Similarly, 'even as government policies intend inclusion' (ibid.), this dissertation argues that persisting power relations within the broader sphere of the performing arts in South Africa, and in this case study in Cape Town, continue to marginalise certain forms of dance as well as certain groups and participants in dance. Dr. John J. Williams (2001), lecturer in the School of Government at the University of the Western Cape, writes that in South Africa,

Unequal power relations have been inherited from the past; i.e. there has not been a clean and lasting break with the past (2001:28).

On a structural and institutional level, he adds that

Much of the 'new' in the so-called 'new South Africa' appears to be a structural continuity from the past into the present as borne out by the persistent race/class-cum-ethnic patterns, the multi-levelled rural/urban dichotomies, and so forth (ibid.:27).

These persistent race/class-cum-ethnic patterns, described by Williams, are evident when one considers that living standards in South Africa are closely correlated with race (Mubangizi: 2005). John C. Mubangizi and Betty C. Mubangizi (2005), from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, add that

Apart from its racial dimension, poverty has a gender component; a female-headed household has a 48 per cent chance of being poor. There is also a strong correlation between educational attainment and standard of living (2005:278).

However, although race/ethnicity and class have become connected in terms of South Africa's socio-economic realities, Cornelissen and Horstmeier note that the separated spaces (both geographical and conceptual) 'maintain the category 'race' in the foreground' (2002:77).

These authors suggest that not only have racial constructions not been replaced but also that

The search for, and self-construction of social and political identities in post-apartheid South Africa may entrench, rather than bridge existing cleavages (ibid.: 80).

These existing cleavages are articulated by a number of the interviewees in the research conducted for this dissertation. Wentzel April, for instance, who is a graduate from the UCT School of Dance and currently a teacher and performer at the Eoan Group, mentions more than once what he terms as a 'negative vibe' while he was a student at UCT in 2007 and elaborates that

We [the coloured and black students] still had this thing that the white children were being very snobbish...I don't know what it is, but I think it's just the nature of coloured and black people to be happy and funny and laugh and talk...So to them it was always 'you're making a noise. What's wrong with you?' (April, Sagela & Valentine 2010: interview, 16 June).

While this statement reflects an essentialised and static notion of (racial/ethnic) identity, its accuracy or inaccuracy is less significant than what it reveals about persisting patterns of behaviour within the UCT School of Dance in this case. It is in this context of South Africa's persisting societal inequalities, both real and perceived, as well as the national discourse of 'transformation', that the envisioning of *Dynamix* as a 'social leveller' will be interrogated.

### **Attempting to define community dance in South Africa**

In terms of the performing arts, during the apartheid era the majority of South Africa's population was excluded from formal arts training. Besides virtually no formal arts education being offered at black schools,

very few black children could afford private dance tuition,' which due to the Group Areas Act of 1950, was also geographically inaccessible to them' (Friedman: 1997: 125).

The little arts training accessible to black children was through community arts centres. When formal arts education was offered, which was the case in most 'white' and 'coloured' schools at least up to a junior level, arts and culture in many schools was not a priority. Thus, the majority of the population was denied access to what was essentially the art of the elite, while their own culture remained virtually invisible and unacknowledged. Community arts and community dance projects and organisation thus played a crucial role in providing

access to the performing arts when this was denied by formal structures and institutions. Friedman writes that

Outside of the Arts Councils, both small contemporary dance companies, many of which were attempting some redress of cultural bias, as well as a number of Arts Education projects<sup>75</sup> energetically promoted theatrical dance in the disadvantaged communities (2009:132).

The above sections in this chapter begin to clarify how the concept of 'community' was drastically altered by apartheid's ideology of separateness and what role the performing arts specifically played in order to emphasise differences among groups in South Africa. Glasser notes that

Cultural differences were used to justify their policy of separate development. Each group had to live, be educated, marry within their 'own' culture (1997:1).

It follows that in the post-apartheid era, reconstruction of culture and restructuring of communities recur as themes in South Africa's post apartheid discourse. Linda Chisholm (2005) of the Human Sciences Research Council based in Pretoria, argues that

The dominant discourse within the South African educational state has been one of rights, development, social justice and nation-building (2005:84).

One could argue that this discourse extends beyond education and into most of South Africa's major developmental areas. Williams explains that

If the lack of human rights (hence rights) in apartheid South Africa was a unifying cause of the struggle against institutionalised racism then, in the democratic order since 1994, the interpretation and safeguarding of such rights has become a cause célèbre (2001:25).

This is evident in South Africa's cultural policies. The newly formed South African Department of Arts and Culture White Paper on Arts Culture and Heritage of 1996 states

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<sup>75</sup>Some of these Arts Education Projects or community dance projects include Community Arts Project, Silver Leaf Performing Arts Association, and Zama Dance School in Cape Town, FUBA (Federated Union of Black Artists) and Sibikwa Arts Centre in Johannesburg and Flatfoot Dance Company, KZN Dancelink and Cato Manor vibe!!! in Durban. The Zama Dance School was founded by Arlene Westergaard in 1984. Zama Dance School offers dance classes to children from disadvantaged backgrounds in Gugulethu, in Cape Town (<http://www.zamadance.co.za>). FUBA (Federated Union of Black Artists) was founded in Johannesburg in 1978 with the aim to train and educate young black artists in music, drama, contemporary dance, fine art and creative writing. The Sibikwa Arts Centre was established in 1988 in Johannesburg by Smal Ndaba and Phyllis Klotz in Johannesburg. Sibikwa Arts Centre also has a dance company (<http://www.sibikwa.co.za>). Flatfoot Dance Company is contemporary dance company based in Durban, South Africa, directed by Lliane Loots, and which aims to create 'socially conscious dance theatre' (Castelyn: 2008: 62-63). KZN Dancelink is a South dance network based in KwaZulu-Natal and chaired by Lynn Maree that aims to support dance through for example, facilitating workshops, giving choreographic commissions, and organising the Durban Dance Awards (<http://www.kzndancelink.co.za/history>). Cato Manor vibe!!! is a workshop programme in contemporary dance based in Cato Manor, Durban (<http://www.kzndancelink.co.za>).

that as South Africa emerges from its troubled past, a new vision for the arts, culture and heritage is required in order to redress past inequalities and

Promote the arts, culture, heritage and literature in their own right, as significant and valuable areas of social and human endeavour in themselves (1996: Chapter 3, Vision, para.1).

This vision was informed by Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "everyone shall have the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community (and) to enjoy the arts ... " (ibid.). In addition, several parallels can be found in the philosophy underpinning community dance rhetoric which emphasises access, inclusion and proclaims dance as 'the birthright and the potential of all human beings' (Thomson in Green, 2000:54).

Recognising that the distribution of public funds in support of arts activities, the geographical location of physical infrastructure, the dissemination of skills, the staffing, management and governance of institutions all reflected a 'significant bias in favour of a highly selective slice of artistic expression', the Department of Arts and Culture White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage (1996) listed, among other areas, access and redress as important guiding principles. This vision aims to ensure unhindered access to the means of artistic and cultural activity in both financial and geographical senses and to set in motion the correction of historical and existing imbalances through development, education, training, and affirmative action with regard to race, gender, rural and urban considerations (White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage 1996).

Community based arts are mentioned with regard to the achievement of these goals. The White Paper refers to the need to develop arts infrastructure close to where people live, through community arts centres, so that they grow up with and have easy access to the arts. Alongside a vision of transforming arts education within the formal school system, the White Paper also emphasises the need for development and extension of community based arts education structures.

However, as mentioned earlier, Meersman (2007) observes that many of the goals outlined in the White Paper (1996) and the RDP (1994) have failed to materialise. He writes that

For black artists in the townships there remains a severe lack of performance, rehearsal and exhibition spaces. Those community art centres promised in the RDP have not got off the ground (Meersman, 2007:303).

However, one could argue that there is increased support for the performing arts and dance within the South African education system, especially in the Western Cape. However, it is noteworthy that several interviewees, who are also teachers of Dance Studies at Western

Cape Arts and Culture Focus Schools<sup>76</sup>, mention having to battle with the persisting notion that dance is not valued as a viable subject or career choice. For example, Bernice Valentine, a graduate (2004) from the UCT School of Dance and a teacher at Schoonspruit Secondary, an Arts and Culture Focus School, says:

Where I'm situated at school right now, you have to fight to make dance work...How am I going to explain to this mother that dancing isn't just taking off her clothes and [being] there with her body on stage. I struggle with that at my school (April, Sagela & Valentine 2010: interview, 16 June).

Valentine's statement suggests that, despite increasing access to Dance Education, the way in which dance is valued is more resistant to change.

Further, Friedman writes that

Current South African government policy is that every learner should have access to some kind of arts and culture education in every school grade and that the curriculum should reflect the polycultural diversity and plurality of South African society (Revised National Curriculum Statement in Friedman, 2009:133).

Although this clearly parallels the broader aims of reconstructing and the re-imagining of South African society and identity, scholars such as Friedman are increasingly prompted to question what this 'polycultural diversity' really entails. Friedman argues that although the dance curriculum aims to be all-inclusive, hegemonic notions of high art and low art still dictate what and whose dance form the foundation for what is taught in South African classrooms. Also, while Friedman advocates training 'in techniques that develop the maximum strength, flexibility and mobility the body requires' (2009:138) rather than any specific dance form or technique, she does not seem to question the fact that access to the UCT School of Dance is dependent on an audition in contemporary dance and ballet or African dance, the major and 'high art' forms of dance offered by the School. Questions of what is and is not considered theatre dance and who gets to decide are critical questions to keep asking in the attempt to redress South African education and particularly in this case Dance Education.

The National Curriculum Statement (2003) for Dance Studies (Grades 10-12) states that the purpose of Dance Studies is to build

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<sup>76</sup> In 2006, the Western Cape Education Department established the first of 10 Arts and Culture Focus Schools that offer specialised subjects, namely dance studies, design, dramatics, music and visual arts at a high school level. The Focus Schools were established in 'previously disadvantaged' communities to improve access to specialised education and promote career pathways. An in depth discussion of the challenges faced by Arts and Culture Focus Schools is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Values and attitudes of respect and inclusivity, providing access for learners facing physical and social barriers...Dance Studies provides both individual and interactive challenges, contributing to personal maturation, social development and spiritual enrichment (2003:9).

The above statement could read as a community dance manifesto. Therefore, this dissertation argues that in terms of South African arts, culture, education, and overall reconstructive policies, dance is valued for its inherent 'transformative' qualities (described in the above quotation) and thus its ability to act as a social leveller. If community dance, its philosophy and practice are indeed valued, it is necessary to question why community dance performance and its participants are still marginalised. In a recent article in the Mail and Guardian (2010) Georgina Thompson, artistic director of Dance Umbrella in Johannesburg says:

They must stop confusing development with professional companies – you can't put us all in the same basket and hand out the money equally (Schwartz, 2010:10).

This tension between 'professional' dance and dance as 'development' or, what one might call community dance, is noteworthy since it highlights the notion that in South Africa 'professional dance' is valued differently (and higher) than 'dance development'. This tension also seems to be linked to the economic aspect of dance, so that 'professionals' who are dancing for a living are valued more than community dancers or so-called 'amateurs'. In another example, the Baxter Dance Festival<sup>77</sup> distinguishes between a Main Programme to which 'established professional companies are invited to apply' and a Fringe Programme which includes 'work by youth groups, dance schools, school groups, traditional dance groups and others' (Baxter Dance Festival, 2010: application form). One could argue that this festival perpetuates this division between 'professional dance' and 'other dance' and how each of these is valued.

Also evident in these divisions is the treatment of community dance projects as construction sites/training grounds or a platform for 'something else'. It needs to be recognised that when, as in the case of South Africa, the majority of the population has historically not had access to arts education (and even today many South Africans are not in a financial position to enjoy the arts), community arts projects often serve as a training ground and a means of scouting for talent<sup>78</sup>. Yet, in my view, this platform or stepping stone 'to something else' is often where the value of community dance ends. This dissertation does not argue that once

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<sup>77</sup> The Baxter Dance Festival takes place annually at the Baxter Theatre in Cape Town since 2005 and aims to provide emerging and established dance companies and choreographers with a platform to present their work (Baxter Dance Festival, 2010: application form).

<sup>78</sup> Dance For All, in Cape Town as well as Johannesburg-based Moving Into Dance (established in 1978), to name but two examples, have successfully launched performing companies that have grown out of community projects and are composed of dancers who without these projects would probably never have had the opportunity to train in dance.

community dance projects become accepted within mainstream performance, they lose their subversive roles *per se*, but rather that one of the aims of this writing is to question the power relations and shifts of power within existing paradigms. I thus wish to question the dominant, over-arching 'artistic' standards that are defined by some but for all.

However, from my perspective as a teacher in both 'formal' and community dance settings in Cape Town, I agree with Morris' (2008) suggestion that festivals, like the abovementioned Baxter Dance Festival, play an important role in providing platforms for the performance of community dance or theatre<sup>79</sup>. Similar to Laban's notion of Festkultur<sup>80</sup>, Morris argues that

Festivals have porous boundaries, allow for popular and high cultural intersections, generate a sense of celebration which attracts audiences (at least in theory) and allows for the possibility of lots of generic publicity (2008:109).

Similarly, this chapter will attempt to investigate the creation and performance of *Dynamix* as a site of conflict where high and popular/low/marginal cultures intersect.

### **The University of Cape Town School of Dance**

As part of the University of Cape Town, this dissertation suggests that the history and development, as well as the race policies and practices of the School of Dance, need to be interrogated within the broader context and history of UCT and higher education in South Africa (cf. Appendix C). Also, current developments at the UCT school of Dance, as well as the UCT School of Dance's collaboration with the Eoan Group, might be seen in light of UCT's post-apartheid agenda of transformation.

The University of Cape Town (UCT) School of Dance<sup>81</sup>, which was established in 1934, is one of the few institutions<sup>82</sup> in Cape Town that offer dance training at a post-high school level and is the only institution in Cape Town that offers fully accredited programmes in Dance at a university level. In its early years, the programme offered at the Ballet School was largely, if not entirely Eurocentric. Besides classical ballet, an obvious representative of

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<sup>79</sup> Morris writes that the incidence of theatre festivals has burgeoned since 1994 in an attempt to 'both to redress shortages in physical resources and to focus attention on the performing and creative arts across a more broadly representative population' (2008:109)

<sup>80</sup> Not to be confused with the Nazi concepts of Festkultur.

<sup>81</sup> The University of Cape Town School of Dance itself was founded in 1934 as the 'Ballet School' by Dulcie Howes. Dulcie Howes, a former member of Anna Pavlova's Company, was invited in that year by Professor W.H.Bell, Dean of UCT's South African College of Music (SACM) to establish a ballet school at UCT. The School moved from its first location in a chapel at the SACM to a disused aeroplane hangar on UCT Lower Campus until its current structures were built in 1961.

<sup>82</sup> A number of dance companies offer training programmes, such as Jazzart Dance Theatre and La Rosa Spanish Dance Theatre. Other schools such as the Cape Academy of the Performing Arts (CAPA) and the Waterfront Theatre School also have vocational training programmes.

Western dance culture, other dance forms studied at the School included 'Russian, Hungarian, Polish and Spanish Dance' (Grut, 2009:4). Academic courses consisted of subjects such as History of (Western theatre/concert) dance, music appreciation and dance teaching methodology (ibid.). This Eurocentric approach to the study of dance was maintained throughout the 1940s and 1950s and 'other' dance forms such as contemporary dance or South Africa's indigenous dances had no recognisable place in the School. Maxwell Xolani Rani, African dance lecturer at the University of Cape Town School of Dance in 2010, writes that

No other dance forms were considered a match for classical ballet in terms of 'high art' aesthetics or technical virtuosity, nor were they appreciated for their inherent value. This notion was supported and funded by government for the benefit of a white minority, a practice that changed only much later (2009:21).

It was not until the 1980s that African Dance and Contemporary Dance were introduced at the School by Associate Professor Elizabeth Triegaardt. Along with this diversifying of the dance genres that were being offered, the School was also strengthened academically when its programme was finally awarded degree status by the Department of Education in 1997.

Since the new directorship of Gerard Samuel since 2008, further transformation has been brought about in terms of the courses and dance forms that are offered at the School. For example, the introduction of modules of Indian Dance and the inclusion of an urban dance form such as hip hop under the umbrella of contemporary dance suggest shifting notions in terms of which dance forms are considered valuable in the context of dance study in South Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, some of the interviewees suggest that the perception of the UCT School of Dance as a Ballet School, where ballet is positioned as the higher art form, is slower to change. For example, Thabisa Sagela, who graduated in 2007, says 'everything [at the school] is about ballet' and Bernice Valentine who studied at the UCT School of Dance from 2001 to 2005 comments:

I was honestly torn between [studying ballet or studying contemporary], even though I wanted to do contemporary, I knew that if I had done ballet I would have been better or I would have been in the right stream, you know (April, Sagela & Valentine 2010: interview, 16 June).

One could argue that the UCT School of Dance both because of the historical preference of particular dance forms as well as its location under the umbrella of the University of Cape Town, acts as a representative of high art. One could also recognise that the UCT School of Dance's choice to collaborate with the Eoan Group, as a 'low art' community-based dance programme, represents a further aspect of 'transformation' within the UCT School of Dance.

To contextualise this dance project, it needs to be noted that already during the 1970s and 1980s students at the School of Dance were sent to townships and so-called disadvantaged areas in Cape Town as student teachers. Lindy Raizenberg, lecturer in choreography at the UCT School of Dance, writes that during the 1970s

students were required to teach in SHAWCO<sup>83</sup> community centres in Western Cape townships such as Manenberg and Gugulethu...(2009:76)

However, this practice was discontinued towards the end of the 1970s when South Africa's political turmoil reached a new peak with the 1976 Soweto student uprisings. According to Raizenberg, 'it was no longer advisable for students to travel into the townships to teach' (ibid.:77). She observes that thus 'an important link between the School and its socio-responsive work was reduced and eventually stopped' (ibid.). During the 1980s, teaching practice in community-based settings was reintroduced and students were once again bussed to the Uluntu Centre in Langa to give dance classes for SHAWCO (Samuel: 2009). Although some of the School's past and current lecturers have been involved in community dance teaching activities and student teaching in community-based settings has been sporadically encouraged, the School of Dance's interaction with community dance has not been uninterrupted. Since 2009, however, students of the School of Dance have been actively involved in student teaching with children from Jikeleza<sup>84</sup>, a community dance programme in Cape Town and following the 2009 collaboration with the Eoan Group, the UCT School of Dance has plans to collaborate next with CAFDA<sup>85</sup> in 2010.

### **The Eoan Group: historical background**

The Eoan Group was founded in 1933 by English woman Helen Southern-Holt to provide elocution (sic.) lessons to coloured children in Cape Town (which contains the problematic notion that coloureds needs to learn how to speak 'properly' and are therefore somehow inferior). These elocution lessons were extended to classes in physical education, elementary hygiene, physiology, anatomy, various dance forms such as ballet, folk and tap dancing, music, drama, and other recreational activities such as boxing, sewing and knitting

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<sup>83</sup> SHAWCO, the Student Health And Welfares Centres Organisation was founded in 1943 and is a student run NGO based at the University of Cape Town, which aims to provide health, welfare and social services. SHAWCO runs a number of Health and Education programmes in disadvantaged areas in Cape Town. (<http://www.uct.ac.za/students/services/community/SHAWCO>).

<sup>84</sup> The Jikeleza Dance Project was established in 2002 and offers dance classes to children and youth from informal settlements in Hout Bay and Nyanga township, in Cape Town.

<sup>85</sup> CAFDA, the Cape Flats Development Association is a community based, non-profit organisation that offers health, counselling and education programmes to communities in the Cape Flats. CAFDA has a school of dance directed by Wendi Abrahams (<http://www.cafda.org.za>).

(Teladia, 2003:9). Citing an article from *The Sun* (1947), Nazrina Teladia, a former dancer and teacher at the Eoan Group, writes that Southern-Holt's objective was to

improve the social and cultural conditions of the coloured community and its members must be fit for responsible citizenship (ibid.:9-10).

While the Eoan Group grew into one of Cape Town oldest performing arts institutions, one might wonder whether the above statement displays a certain patronising attitude towards coloured people, who were, both in the colonial and apartheid system, deemed 'lesser peoples', and thus in need of 'educating' and 'uplifting'<sup>86</sup>.

First situated in the Isaac Ochberg Hall in Cape Town's District Six, the Eoan Group was forced to move during the 1960s due to the Group Areas Act (1950) to its current location in Athlone in the Cape Flats<sup>87</sup>. Until today, the Eoan Group is based there at the Joseph Stone Auditorium, which was built in 1969. The Eoan Group has not been unaffected by politics, South Africa's apartheid legislation as well as internal politics. Teladia writes that the Eoan Group's new base, the Joseph Stone Auditorium, built as part of the government's policy of separate development, became regarded 'as a 'non-kosher' venue by the broader Cape Flats community' (2003:3).

The Eoan Group's acceptance of funds from the Department of Coloured Affairs after 1965, was regarded by the larger community as an endorsement of the apartheid regime and the Group's standing and support within the community suffered (Teladia, 2003)<sup>88</sup>. The Eoan Group's association with government funds and support has a profound effect on the organisation in terms of membership and teaching staff (Medell 2010: interview, 11 June). In addition, the political turmoil of the 1970s and 1980s had far-reaching effects on perceptions

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<sup>86</sup> The notion of the Eoan Group as a 'welfare' organisation is similarly evident in its name. 'Eoan' which derives from the Greek 'eos' means 'dawn' 'referring to the enlightenment it strove to bring to individuals (Teladia, 2003).

<sup>87</sup> Prior to this shift in location, the Eoan Group was particularly successful during the 1950s and 1960s. Teladia writes that 'during the late 1950s and early 1960s, there were about 2000 coloured children and young people attending the various branches of the Eoan Group in Brooklyn, Lansdowne, St. Georges Grammar School, Parow, Zonnebloem, Athlone, Grassy Park, Maitland and Langa' (2003:10). By the mid-1950s, 15 branches were established across greater Cape Town, including in Brooklyn, Lansdowne, St. Georges Grammar School, Parow, Zonnebloem, Athlone, Grassy Park, Maitland and Langa offering a wide range of activities (Teladia, 2003). The Eoan Group's musical section performed to great acclaim, particularly during these early years. Stanley E. Waren wrote in 1968: 'The Eoan group is a fine opera company with a repertoire that includes *La Traviata*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Carmen*' (1968:411). Thus, although some writing exists on the Eoan Group's contribution in terms of music and opera in Cape Town, little acknowledgment has been made of its role in the development of dance. However, more and more contributions of such invisible role players are being uncovered and recorded as is evidenced in the recent archiving of the Eoan Group's history by the Documentation Centre for Music at Stellenbosch University (Medell 2010: interview, 11 June).

<sup>88</sup> Hilde Roos, writer for the *Matieland Magazine*, writes that the Eoan Group's success 'came at a price...the stigma of association with the Apartheid government remained. As the revolt against the government grew, people began boycotting Eoan. The umbilical cord that made Eoan's opera performances possible also carried the seeds of their demise' (2009:16).

of the Eoan Group. In an interview in 2010 Abeeda Medell, current principal of the Eoan Group's dance programme, says that

A lot of people still think that the Eoan Group is dead and dying, and a lot of them think 'Oh, the Eoan Group's the same!'...I really made a vow that I wouldn't have the politics of 80s, you know with the boycotts...we went through bad stuff (ibid.).

Currently, Medell runs the Eoan Group's dance programme which offers dance classes to approximately 350 children. Most of the children come from Athlone and surrounding areas. The vast majority of students are so-called coloured or from 'previously disadvantaged areas'. The Eoan Group currently relies on the fees (which are very low compared to fees charged by private dance studios) which children pay for classes and box-office returns from Eoan Group performances. Medell's philosophy of inclusiveness is evident in the fact that children who are unable to afford classes are offered scholarships. Also, the Eoan Group cooperates with the South African Police Service (SAPS), drug-rehabilitation centres and NGOs in the vicinity of the Joseph Stone to offer classes to children when they are referred to the Eoan Group by these organisations. It is noteworthy that Abeeda Medell's words reveal a wariness of labels such as 'disadvantage' and 'development' that are so often connected with the devaluing of community dance participants. Her resistance towards labelling Eoan Group's participants as 'mere recipients of aid' (Young-Jahangeer and Loots, 2006) is evident when she says emphatically:

We don't have any funders! We're self-sustainable. We don't have any sponsors, no government funding, we don't! And I'm proud to say that from the little fees that we ask the children and we do have scholarships for the children that can't [pay]...(Medell 2010: interview, 11 June).

Medell is clearly aware of the potential devaluing of community dance participants, which is further illustrated by her inclusive teaching philosophy. She comments:

I believe: I don't want to know your problem. I don't want to judge you by 'oh, you're the one...' I'd rather have you heal through the arts. Don't tell me, I don't want to know. I will treat you exactly the same as one of the others. I will not single you out...[Because] it's easy to look at someone and ...to feel sorry for [them]...(ibid.).

Medell's words also indicate her belief in the 'transformative' potential of the performing arts, and in this case dance, which feeds into the way in which the Eoan Group's dance programme operates. Medell's words reveal almost a refusal to be devalued. She insists:

Just because we're a community-based organisation, I don't think we lack for the training, the standard of training (ibid.).

However, despite Medell's insistence on being valued no differently from any 'other' dance school and her obvious pride in the Eoan Group's community-based nature, observations suggests that the Eoan Group is not able to fully escape the connotations and the devaluing implications of being 'community dance'. For instance, Sasha Fourie, who trained in dance at the Eoan Group from a young age and who is currently (2010) a second-year student at the UCT School of Dance, comments that when South African choreographer Ebrahim Medell (Abeeda Medell's brother) started teaching classes at the Eoan Group, she felt that he added a sense of 'professionalism' to school because of his long-standing career as a 'professional' dancer and choreographer. When asked what exactly changed to make classes at the Eoan Group more 'professional', Fourie says:

[Before] we were allowed to faff around before class, class would start ten minutes late and, stupid things like, there's a specific time...when you can fill up your water bottles. He used to scold us a lot. And...the Eoan Group had a problem a couple of years ago with starting shows on time and when he came...everything changed, like the standard of professionalism, which is good (Fourie & De Villiers 2010: interview, 3 May).

As a teacher both in so-called formal and community dance settings, I support the idea that creating access to dance needs to include the notion of access to excellence, rather than mediocrity. The question is however, who defines excellence and so-called 'professionalism'? For example, in the above quotation, one could argue that punctuality is a reasonable value to teach children who will have to survive in environments dominated by western constructs. However, the direct connection Fourie makes between 'being professional' and 'being scolded' is problematic and suggests potential future research in the area of community dance teaching methodologies. This section has attempted to give a broad historical overview of the Eoan Group and its positioning as a community dance organisation in Cape Town. Particularly evident from the interview conducted with Abeeda Medell is her defensiveness when she says, for example:

Don't treat us like the orphans from the Cape Flats, we are part of the whole dance community and you will treat us like that (Medell 2010: interview, 11 June).

Medell is clearly aware that the Eoan Group's value is contested in the larger field of dance in Cape Town. This awareness and consequent defensive character feeds into the negotiations of power that took place in the Eoan Group and UCT School of Dance collaboration.

## Interrogating the Eoan Group and UCT School of Dance collaboration

In August 2009, the UCT School of Dance and the Eoan Group presented a joint/collaborative performance programme entitled *Dynamix* at the Joseph Stone Auditorium in Athlone, Cape Town. The collaboration was hailed by both the director of the UCT School of Dance, Gerard Samuel and the Chairperson of the Eoan Group, Shafiek Rajap, respectively as a 'collaborative dance season with the Eoan Group who also shared a proud 75 year history with the UCT School of Dance' and a 'historic rekindling of a friendship between our organisations' (Appendix D). This next section will attempt to interrogate some of the power relations that were at play in this 'shared platform' (Appendix D) as well as assess the significance of this performance in bringing together a tertiary dance institution and a community-based dance school in what was hoped to be a 'dynamic exchange' (Samuel 2010: interview, 7 May).

The collaborative performance was one of several celebratory performances of the UCT School of Dance in 2010 aimed to commemorate the School's 75 year existence. Gerard Samuel, newly appointed director of the School of Dance since 2008, and Abeeda Medell, principal of the Eoan Group's dance programme, both attended the UCT Ballet School from 1982 to 1984. Recognising a shared (if not always acknowledged) history with the Eoan Group, which was founded in 1933, a year before the School of Dance, the intention of the collaborative project, according to conversations with Samuel, was to foster integration and establish a connection between the UCT School of Dance as a tertiary space and the Eoan Group at the grassroots level as well as to disconnect the UCT School of Dance from its habitual formal performance space of the Baxter Theatre or Artscape (Samuel 2010: interview, 7 May). This analysis of the collaboration will attempt to question whether this integration was achieved and if so, among whom: the institutions, the participants/dancers, and/or audiences.

A number of interviewees, especially those who had a connection with the UCT School of Dance, admitted to having been surprised when hearing about the School's intention to collaborate with a so-called community-based dance school like the Eoan Group. Valentine, reflects that

That's a really strange collaboration, because they never ever in their lives ever collaborated with Eoan Group. It's weird. [UCT] they're an island on their own, so any collaboration is like, hey? (April, Sagela & Valentine 2010: interview, 16 June).

Valentine's comment is noteworthy since it reveals that the strong perception of a divide between these two institutions nullifies any historical connections that might exist. Also, it suggests that the UCT School of Dance as a so-called high art institution is perceived as inaccessible. Medell suggests that the collaboration was possible because of the recent change in the School of Dance's leadership. She says:

I think it came with the new director also, we studied together...I think he was also very community-based out in Durban...so, I think he was still inclined to go out and reach to the community and I think with knowing Ebie, my brother, and knowing me, from way back then, it was an easy thing to just come together and go, 'oh, okay, yeah, that will be great!' (Medell 2010: interview, 11 June).

Similarly, April suggests that perhaps the Eoan Group/UCT School of Dance collaboration is part of some kind of 'transition' or 'transformative phase' at the UCT School of Dance when he comments:

I think it's also, you know they say 'new brooms sweep clean'. So maybe [Samuel] is trying to change that...perception that people already have of UCT...[that] UCT is this snobbish, white people, who only just think about ballet and not the greater community, dance community (April, Sagela & Valentine 2010: interview, 16 June).

The above observations begin to reveal the complexities of this collaborative performance-making and reiterate the difficulty, if at all possible, of locating equal ground or equal partnerships within any form of cultural exchange.

### **Exploring the demographics of the programme**

Sixty performers participated in the *Dynamix* programme, with twenty-five performers from the Eoan Group, thirty UCT School of Dance undergraduate and postgraduate students and five guest performers from Black Noise<sup>89</sup>. Of the dancers from UCT, five were male. The Eoan Group's dancers were also predominantly female, with one male dancer who is also a recent graduate (2007) from UCT School of Dance and one or two younger boys who took part. Although the guest performers were also male, there were clearly more female dancers than male dancers. The disproportionate number of female and male dancers might also be indicative of senior lecturer at the UCT School of Dance, Danie Fourie's, observation when he problematises that in South Africa ballet, or one might add dance, is often still considered 'for girls and male softies (effeminate, passive, cowardly and probably homosexual males' (2009:7).

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<sup>89</sup> Black Noise is an urban dance crew based in Cape Town, established by Emile Jansen (Emile YX?).

Unlike the Ugandan context, where most students of dance at Makerere University's Music, Dance and Drama department were male, the South African sample of the Eoan Group and UCT suggests that dance is not considered a viable career path for males and only a last resort for females<sup>90</sup>. Medell's statement further illustrates this as well as the issue of Dance as a career when she says:

[...] We have a lot of parents who say...where's the money in the arts? That's not a career! ...A lot of them go 'oh ja, it's a hobby'. I say, when you parents have a son, first thing you go, 'he's going to be a soccer player, he's going to be a rugby player', and they see that the child attends training. ...But when it's a girl, then it's 'oh, you can miss [classes], it's fine! So you have a lot of gender issues (Medell 2010: interview, 11 June).

Further investigation would be required to determine whether this is the case across dance forms and population groups or whether this applies specifically to the UCT School of Dance and the Eoan Group collaboration and the coloured community, which the Eoan Group and UCT both serve. The large number of male dancers and trainees in a company such as Jazzart Dance Theatre might be a contraindication of the view that very few coloured males study dance, which suggests that answers lie elsewhere.

Medell also draws attention to the imbalances faced by different South African communities in terms of access to education. Although statistical evidence suggests that girls and boys enjoy equal access to education, this evidence from 1999 also shows that girls are affected by higher dropout rates and lower secondary school pass rates (National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, 2000). Similarly, Medell notes that rather than simply creating access to (dance) education, the real challenge might be creating strategies to ensure successful completion of this education, a notion which indicates Mda's (1993) understanding of 'development'. She says:

You have to arm them with advantages, give them the advantage, when they go [to UCT] so that they're not left [behind]. Because when you look at the ratio of coloured people going to UCT, the dropout is major. And I felt that they weren't armed enough, with I don't know, maybe it could be determination...(Medell 2010: interview, 11 June).

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<sup>90</sup> According to South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (2000), gender relations in South Africa have been historically affected by patriarchal dominance. It should also be noted that 'while women in general have been negatively affected by racism, African women have carried a disproportionate burden of the under-development caused by racism' (National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, 2000:2). Some challenges faced by women include economic challenges, HIV/AIDS, which affects women disproportionately to men, and South Africa's serious problem of violence against women. The Policy also observes that South African existing gender/race/class relations affect women's access to basic needs, one of which is education (ibid.).

The above statement re-iterates the fact that in South Africa issues of access are closely linked to inter-related issues of race, class and gender. Also, one could question to what extent this UCT School of Dance/Eoan Group collaboration addresses such issues of access. In chapter 3, it was suggested that part of the positive contribution made by the New York University/Makerere University exchange programme is that it aims to demystify university for children and youth and helps to promote dance as a viable course of study and career path. Similar aims can be identified in this South African case study of *Dynamix*. Two early matinee performances were scheduled to allow schools that offer dance as a subject to attend. These performances were followed by information sharing sessions and learners were given the opportunity to hear from current students at the UCT School of Dance and the Eoan Group.

One could argue that the UCT School of Dance/Eoan Group project successfully addresses issues of access by creating exposure to dance at a tertiary institution and by providing information sharing sessions to schools. However, if the 'real' issue is as Medell suggests high dropout rates, then a different kind of response would have to be envisioned to meet this particular need.

### **The *Dynamix* artistic programme: difficulties of collaboration and integration**

There were six performances of *Dynamix*, two for schools and the rest were open to the general public. The performance was presented by students from the UCT School of Dance and the Eoan Group and consisted of seven dance works. Medell observes that the original intention of *Dynamix* was to create two collaborative works that included a mixture of UCT School of Dance and Eoan Group dancers. Eventually only one of the dance works included students from both institutions. This joint work was choreographed by South African dancer and choreographer Ebrahim Medell, who also teaches and choreographs for the Eoan Group. According to Samuel, further choreographic collaboration was hampered by practical circumstances, such as travel and timetabling issues. Consequently, it was agreed that each group was to present independent works. Auditions were conducted at the UCT School of Dance for Ebrahim Medell's work entitled *Up The Down Stairs*, although only first-year students (it seems for practical and not artistic purposes) were invited to participate and out of a chosen six UCT students, only three eventually performed in the joint work *Up The Down Stairs*, which had a total cast of eight dancers.

The fact that only three UCT students were part of the only work which included performers from both institutions questions to what extent other UCT students, who were also part of the *Dynamix* cast, but who did not participate in *Up The Down Stairs*, were aware of or involved in the collaborative aspect the project. In addition, Samuel questions to what extent any connections were made between performers from UCT and the Eoan Group. He says that

In the cases where students from both bodies worked together, rehearsals were conducted jointly, only for students to return to their own existence (Samuel 2010: interview, 7 May).

Thus, the choreographic process was conducted separately in the UCT School of Dance/Eoan Group example, unlike the Ugandan sample, where the emphasis was on 'making dances together' (Brown & Damast 2010: interview, 17 January). Also, in the New York University/Makerere University project, teachers became participants as they performed together on stage. In the South African example, however, the barrier between teachers and performers was more clearly defined. Thabisa Sagela, a UCT School of Dance graduate, remarks that when community dance groups that she knows perform, teachers and students/participants often dance together. She comments:

According to the standard of who you are, if I'm performing with my kids, sharing a stage, there's nothing wrong with that (April, Sagela & Valentine 2010: interview, 16 June).

Sagela's comments contain the suggestion that 'according to some other standards' there is something wrong with teachers and children sharing a stage. In addition, before the actual staging of *Dynamix*, collaboration and interaction took place mainly at a management/staff level and hardly or not at all at the level of the performers, participants or students. Thus, although the collaboration could be seen to challenge existing power structures within the dance field in Cape Town, one could question whether the project would have benefited from a more deliberate integrated approach at the participant level and a deliberate application of the values articulated by community dance philosophy.

This lack of integration was further evidenced in the staging phase of *Dynamix*. The performance was staged in the course of two evenings at the Joseph Stone Auditorium. It is noteworthy that during the staging of the dance works, the running order of the programme caused some disagreement among the project's coordinators. Samuel's original decision to stage the hip hop work, featuring guest artists from Black Noise, last on the programme was contested by Abeeda Medell. Medell, who felt that the joint work *Up The Down Stairs* should close the performance, notes:

If this is about our collaboration, then our collaboration is about [Ebrahim Medell's] piece. Then, I think we should honour him by putting up that collaboration piece, because that's the finale, that's why we came together (Medell 2010: interview, 11 June).

This power struggle evidences a lack of shared expectations/goals on the part of the UCT School of Dance and the Eoan Group as well a defensive attitude on the part of Medell and almost an insistence on being acknowledged as an 'equal' partner in the collaboration. One could argue that this defensiveness stems from more than issues arising from this particular dance project, but rather speaks to Medell's longstanding experience in a community-based dance programme in Cape Town and of the need to 'fight' to be acknowledged and valued. Underlying this are notions of how (community) dance is judged and by whom. Medell's words reveal a challenging of dominant aesthetic criteria in dance as well as the defiance of any kind of 'traditional categorisation, when she says:

Just because I'm this colour, and I'm small and I come from the Cape Flats, don't underestimate that I can also stand up and say exactly what I think...don't treat us like the orphans from the Cape Flats, we are part of the whole community...dance community and you will treat us like that...And you don't have to tell my children that pointing their feet is wrong! (ibid.).

The lack of integration among the *Dynamix* participants further adds to perceived imbalances and notions of difference and inferiority. For instance, during the performance phase, UCT School of Dance students and Eoan Group dancers were invited to participate in warm-up classes together before each show. However, attendance at these classes was not enforced and dwindled as the performances progressed. Medell comments:

[...] what's important with a collaboration like that is the people in charge, I think they need to also take responsibility for how the rest of the people are going to be underneath them...The time that was given for [interaction] to happen was too little...I don't think you could expect: ha, happy! No! Because everybody was running around doing their own sheila. 'Ah, rehearsal at UCT', 'I've got this to do', 'I've still got to practice my ballet that I put in'. Remember, everyone was busy with their 'ballet' (ibid.).

In addition, despite the near even split of UCT School of Dance students and Eoan Group dancers, other than the six Eoan Group dancers in the collaborative work, few others joined in the classes and opted to watch outside the windows of the studio instead. This, as well as interviews with participants, gives the impression that only these six Eoan Group dancers were considered 'really involved' in the collaboration. Medell, for instance, says:

Five girls, six girls and the whole of UCT...So obviously you're going to find that um, okay, UCT is still UCT. You must remember, you work with CAFDA, you work with anybody, UCT girls are still UCT...Within UCT's group, there's still politics everywhere, because somebody said something about the blacks and the whites...(ibid.).

Medell's statement and those of other interviewees suggest that the UCT School of Dance is still viewed as a mostly white (and female) space. This raises the question to what extent such existing notions of racialised bodies are perpetuated by Medell and the staff, students and graduates of the UCT School of Dance. The notion that certain bodies are 'fit' for certain dance forms and other bodies are not, is reflected in a statement made by Wentzel April, a graduate from the UCT School of Dance, local high school teacher and regular performer with the Eoan Group. He says about the hip hop item included in *Dynamix* that

It just didn't fit into the programme...from my point of view at least it didn't fit in...it was kids from UCT, mostly white girls, no offence to anyone but...it just looked wrong (April, Sagela & Valentine 2010: interview, 16 June).

When prompted that the piece also featured some coloured female dancers from UCT, he adds that 'they were okay, the others just looked (wrong)' (ibid.). April's statement is problematic as it perpetuates the stereotypical and racially essentialised notion that hip hop is for either black or coloured people, and looks 'wrong' when performed by whites and perhaps even white girls. In addition, the artistic choice to include a hip hop work in the *Dynamix* programme is noteworthy and stems from Samuel and Friedman's view that hip hop is a relevant, though marginalised, urban dance form and has consequently been introduced at the UCT School of Dance since 2009 under the umbrella of the study of Contemporary Dance. One could suggest that the inclusion of hip hop in the UCT School of Dance's academic programme and the *Dynamix* collaborative project is one way of challenging what dance should be taught at a tertiary level. In light of *Dynamix* as a similar means to challenge who can dance with whom and who can dance what dance forms, the inclusion of hip hop, which is often regarded as 'low art', seems a fitting artistic choice. However, if as the comments of April and a number of the interviewees suggest, hip hop is viewed as a dance form for coloured and black people, then including hip hop in a programme for the Joseph Stone, with its predominantly coloured audience is a 'safer' choice than for example taking hip hop to the Baxter Theatre.

Further, it should be noted that the choice of the Joseph Stone Auditorium, as a performance space for choreographers and dancers in Cape Town, could be seen as unconventional and as such is significant, particularly since the value of performance spaces has been linked to the racial and geographic separation of South African communities. One could question whether this choice of performance space enhances audience integration in Cape Town. While entrance fees were charged, a large number of complimentary tickets were given to local schools and old age homes (Samuel 2010: interview, 7 May). From my own observations, as a dancer with the UCT School of Dance and warm-up teacher, it seemed

that the audience of *Dynamix* consisted mainly of the Eoan Group's habitual audience. Samuel remarks that

The audience seemed mostly from the Coloured community in and around Athlone...UCT's traditionally White audience were largely absent (ibid.).

Rather than fostering integration, it seems that the performance of *Dynamix* at the Joseph Stone brought about a different kind of exclusion. Thus, although this collaboration represents a challenging of historically created divisions in dance in Cape Town, it seems that the notion of integration was present on an institutional level and did not (or hardly) take place among participants and audiences.

### ***Up The Down Stairs: community dance versus 'professional' dance***

Medell notes that

The difference between the community-based companies or organisations and the professionals is mostly the money being afforded to the places. Just because we're at community-based organisations I don't think we lack for the training, the standard of training (ibid.).

Despite Medell's assertion that community-based dance schools are not lacking in so-called 'standard' or 'quality' of training, there appears, as mentioned previously, an underlying perception of inferiority, or of community dance being valued as lesser than so-called 'professional dance'. In some way, this feeling of inferiority suggested by a number of interviewees is similar to the inferiority perceived in some of the Ugandan participants in the New York University/Makerere University collaboration discussed in chapter 3. It is my suggestion that the UCT School of Dance/Eoan Group collaborative work *Up The Down Stairs* further illustrates tensions between notions of community dance performance and the performance of so-called 'professional' dance.

The previous chapter noted that in the New York University/Makerere University performance the dances performed by the children, who were the so-called community dancers, were under-rehearsed and did not challenge the children in terms of dance skills or concepts despite the fact that most of the children were skilled and experienced performers. The Ugandan performance seemed to 'dumb down' the children's dancing abilities in what could be seen as a patronising manner and thus perpetuates the notion of community dance as 'amateur' or 'baby-fied' performance.

In contrast, Ebrahim Medell's work *Up The Down Stairs*, could be viewed as challenging stereotypical notions of community dance performance. In *Up The Down Stairs*, Ebrahim Medell dressed the dancers provocatively in black and red underwear, transformed the performance space by placing a long raised platform at the back of the stage and included seductive imagery, by having the female dancers pour water over their half naked bodies. It would seem that Medell's artistic choices indicate a deliberate desire to create work that fits the mould of contemporary theatre/concert dance and not that of stereotypical, 'baby-fied' community dance performance. Several of the interviewees similarly revealed the notion that Medell was creating 'professional', even 'adult' work rather than 'amateur' or 'children's' dance. April's comments further illustrate the existing tension between what is considered community dance and what is seen as 'professional'. He says:

I think [Ebrahim Medell] doesn't think community, to him he's training professionals ...Professional as in not community-based, not young kids, where mummies and daddies come and watch them, because it's a klein konsertjie, not like that...If the choreographer wants you to be in your jockstrap on stage, you're just going to have to do that (April, Sagela & Valentine 2010: interview, 16 June).

The above statement suggests that community dance is further devalued through its association with children's theatre and children and youth who are often the primary recipients of community dance. In addition, the interviewees suggested that associated with this 'professionalism' is technique (based in classical ballet), stylised movement (based in particular dance technique rather than creative movement) and an emphasis on the product rather than choreographic process. For example, second-year UCT School of Dance student, Odile De Villiers, expresses this clearly:

He [Ebrahim Medell] will tell you exactly what he wants and then you give it to him...He gets straight to the point...he doesn't do any of that workshopping (Fourie & De Villiers 2010: interview, 3 May).

This is in stark contrast to the Ugandan case study which emphasised the dance-making process and creative movement rather than a performance product and technique-based movement. While this is not a critique of Medell's choice of choreographic method, it seems that April, Fourie and De Villiers, who performed in *Up The Down Stairs*, associate Medell's method of working with 'professionalism'<sup>91</sup>. Thus, in this South African research sample it seems that creative movement and collaborative or fluid choreographic processes, which are

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<sup>91</sup> I was surprised by this comment since workshopping techniques have been employed as part of contemporary dance choreography since at least the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and are employed by contemporary so-called 'professional' South African choreographers. Also as April, Fourie and De Villiers, have been exposed to such choreographic techniques in the course of their study at the UCT School of Dance, their comment is even more surprising and perhaps requires further interrogation.

often associated with community dance, are valued less than dance which displays a recognisable technique and produces a 'polished' performance product. Thus, a further area of investigation could be to question whether these conceptions of community dance and 'professional' dance are particular to this case study, whether they apply to the dance field in Cape Town or whether similarities exist within other dance spaces in South Africa. Also, one could question how different/alternate choreographic processes are valued, by whom and why.

One could argue that works like *Up The Down Stairs* could challenge stereotypical and problematic notions of community dance performance as dance which is dumbed down and less than theatre/concert dance. However, in my view, it seems that this work to some extent questions *who* can be considered a dancer/artist (by working with the Eoan Group) but falls short by rejecting the association with community dance performance on an artistic level and thus perpetuates existing notions of *what kind* of dance work is considered 'art', that is to say serious (sic.) contemporary dance.

In the previous chapter it became evident that in the Ugandan context, there is a lack of a marked distinction between community dance and theatre/concert dance, which was articulated by several Ugandan interviewees. Also, in terms of, for example, access to funds, one could argue that in Kampala, Uganda community dance is positioned as 'greater than' contemporary (Western) theatre dance. Through the interrogation of the UCT School of Dance and the Eoan Group collaboration, this chapter has shown the reverse of this situation in Cape Town, South Africa where community dance is positioned as low art in the broader field of theatre/concert dance. The analysis of this research sample serves as an example of tensions and power struggles that exist in Cape Town, South Africa, between 'professional' dance/high art and low art/community dance which is performed by and for those who have often historically been denied equal participation in dance.

## CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to assess to what extent the New York University/Makerere University and the UCT School of Dance/Eoan Group dance projects either subvert or enforce what is considered 'culturally marginal' and 'culturally central' (Morley & Chen: 1996), this chapter will attempt to identify and discuss some of the key findings from each research sample. Also, this chapter will attempt to indicate some recommendations for future practices and research in the area of community dance in Africa that have emerged from this research.

What became evident from observing and participating in the New York University/Makerere University collaborative project as well the Eoan Group/UCT School of Dance collaborative performance, was the complexity of arriving at a joint agreement or common understanding of cultural collaboration for the various stakeholders. In previous chapters it was noted that the idea of 'meeting on equal ground' in any collaborative context is often more a romanticised notion than a reality. In my view, this idea is confirmed by observations made in both collaborative projects discussed in this dissertation. The language used by the American coordinators in the New York University/Makerere University collaborative project in particular revealed almost naïve notions of 'bridging cultures'. Ugandan interviewees, on the contrary, often expressed dissatisfaction in terms of their own expectations of the programme being met (which included issues of appropriate classes for the participating children and sponsored travel to New York University). A recurring regret expressed by Jill Pribyl, one of the coordinators of the New York University (NYU) Study Abroad Programme in Kampala, Uganda, was the fact that after four years the workshop/project had not produced any joint publications between e.g. Makerere University and New York University (Pribyl 2010: interview, 25 January).

Similarly, Abeeda Medell's account of a disagreement regarding the running order of the *Dynamix* programme (cf. p.117-118) causes one to question whether this notion of shared expectations is achievable. While it appears that Abeeda Medell's expectations of collaboration was that as many as possible of the presented dance works be joint choreographic explorations integrating UCT School of Dance and Eoan Group students, Gerard Samuel's idea of collaboration seems to have been more about creating a

Clustered or global collaboration between institutions with some journey works and other pieces reflecting the unique identity of each institution (Samuel 2010: interview, 7 May).

This seems to stem from Samuel's need to address the divide between these two institutions which was historically created.

The above examples suggest that one cause of these difficulties of finding common ground was the lack of fully expressed shared expectations, goals or even agendas among the various stakeholders. In spite of this, it has become clear from earlier discussion and analysis that both collaborative projects were concerned with notions surrounding access and creating access to some form of dance experience. In this analysis, I have noticed that the notion of access is addressed differently, with differing levels of success in each of these collaborations.

The New York University/Makerere University collaborative programme emphasised interaction among participants and an interpersonal approach in the dance-making process, while in the UCT School of Dance/Eoan Group project, the notion of collaboration seemed present mostly on a management/staff level, rather than among the participating dancers. Also, in the Ugandan based programme, the performance 'product' and who has access to this product (the audience) seemed to be less important than the collaborative dance-making process in the overall conceptualisation of the New York University/Makerere University collaboration. To illustrate this further, the use of the National Theatre in Kampala, Uganda as a performance venue, according to Damast, has a 'level of professionalism that goes with it' (Brown & Damast 2010: interview, 17 January). However, while this venue is highly accessible to some, namely funders, Makerere University lecturers, expatriates and middle class Ugandans, one might question whether friends, family members, or the other children from the various orphanages who were not selected to participate in the programme would have been able to attend the performance. Several restrictive factors, including socio-economic and political factors, hamper the neutrality with regard to access in this venue.

On the contrary, the choice of the Joseph Stone Auditorium, which is situated in a former coloured township, as the performance venue for the UCT School of Dance/Eoan Group collaboration could in my view be seen as significant, as the value of performance spaces has been linked to racial and geographic separation in the South African context. By taking the performance closer to and thus increasing access for some of Cape Town's coloured community, one might question whether this physical move in reality brought about a political shift and different kind of exclusion? One notes that the University of Cape Town's traditionally white audience remained largely absent at *Dynamix*. Rather than encouraging integration of Cape Town's dance audiences, this performance location could have alienated white audiences. Creating opportunities for integration of audiences rather than performing once off outreach performances for so-called disadvantaged communities could be seen as a future challenge for any parties wishing to collaborate in the future.

Besides the question of performance spaces, it also needs to be noted that the marketing of dance plays a large role in the 'distribution' (Van Maanen: 2004 in Morris: 2008) or the availability of performances to audiences and thus, in determining who sees what particular performances. Morris appropriating Bourdieu argues that

The field of cultural production is characterised by a struggle about the nature of art and who are entitled to call themselves artists (2008:106).

Marketing activities, the final choice of performance spaces and whether or not entrance fees will or will not be charged are all connected to whether a dance performance or art becomes a valued (or value-less) product, or in Bourdieu's (1977 in Morris, 2008) terms, gains economic capital as well as cultural capital.

The strategies when marketing 'community dance' might indicate another potentially valuable area of inquiry. The evidence unearthed by this dissertation has shown that in the New York University/Makerere University collaborative performance entrance was free of charge. This becomes a significant site for future study. Observations suggest that although the performance was free, this did not seem to draw a particularly large crowd. In the UCT School of Dance/Eoan Group collaboration, entrance fees were charged although Samuel mentions

A large number of complimentary tickets were given away including some to old age homes in the spirit of both Eoan and our 75 years of Dance celebrations in 2008 and 2009 (Samuel 2010: interview, 7 May).

While one could argue that this makes the performance more accessible to more people, the lack of monetary value attached to the performance could actually devalue community dance as legitimate artistic work.

Despite the challenges and imbalances of power that were observed in both the New York University/Makerere University collaborative project and the UCT School of Dance/Eoan Group project, a number of achievements can be noted. One could suggest that both projects assist in advancing dance as a viable course of study at a tertiary level. In the UCT School of Dance/Eoan Group project this was achieved through special matinee performances, followed by information sharing session for schools. In the example of the New York University/Makerere University programme, the participating children's week-long interaction with university dance students could also be seen to validate this notion.

In addition, one could argue for the historical significance of the UCT School of Dance/Eoan Group collaboration in light of South Africa's history of apartheid. And, the UCT School of Dance's plans of future collaborations (with CAFDA in 2010), indicates a possible shift within this institution. Similarly, during its four years of operation, the New York University/Makerere University project coordinators have made several adjustments to the programme, and suggest in interviews the need and the intention to continue to evaluate the programme (Brown & Damast 2010: interview, 17 January; Pribyl 2010: interview, 25 January).

This chapter has attempted to identify some of the key findings from each research sample. These findings indicate possible areas for future investigation. It should also be noted that further research, for example to investigate media and audience reception, could have led to a more comparative analysis of the case studies interrogated in this dissertation. Rather than formulating clear-cut solutions, this dissertation has aimed to identify the urgent need to question dominant constructs of value in dance, how these constructs affect community dance as well as unearth the complexities of power that underlie the notion of cross-cultural exchange or collaboration. Also, the fact that since January 2010, when the New York University/Makerere University collaboration last took place, Makerere University has made the decision to phase out its dance degree indicates the pertinence of questions surrounding the value of dance and the ongoing need for such debates in the area of African performance practice.

## CONCLUSION

This dissertation has raised questions around the value of community dance and how its practice and performance is often not valued, not considered 'art' dance and its practitioners not 'artists' with specific reference to Kampala, Uganda and Cape Town, South Africa. Chapter 1 began by attempting to define the term 'community', suggesting what 'community' might mean in the postcolonial nations of South Africa and Uganda, and clarifying how the notion of 'community' feeds into what might be considered 'community dance'. Thus, community, which carries with it a sense of belonging among individuals relates to notions of access and inclusiveness that underpin community dance philosophy. Communities, however, also emphasise distinctiveness and differences among people, just as community dance participants become the 'marginalised other' in the broader field of contemporary concert/theatre dance. Thus, I have attempted to problematise the fact that often 'difference' is equated with 'inferiority' and that community dance, which emphasises difference by going against existing norms, is positioned as an 'inferior' area of dance. Through this research, I have noticed that community dance can either perpetuate existing norms in dance or subvert these norms (for instance, in terms of the body, choreography, performance venues and participants) and thus has the potential to displace the construct in dance of what is considered 'culturally central' and 'culturally marginal' (Morley & Chen, 1996).

Through my involvement as a dancer, dance teacher and dance researcher in both case studies presented here, I have come to recognise that the broader field of dance, like any part of cultural formation, is a complex field of struggle (Grossberg, 1996), which is subject to the interplay of power relations, as discussed in chapter 2. Chapter 2 also drew on and problematised the notion of a high art/low art dichotomy, which positions some forms of dance as 'central' and others on the margins of culture. However, drawing from Foucault's theories, it was suggested that these existing power structures contain within themselves points of resistance (Foucault in Loots: 1999). By appropriating Mohanty's (1991) notion of 'oppositional agency' it was argued that community dance practice and performance has the ability to re-position itself as a subversive art form e.g. by exploring new representations of the body, by creating access to those who are generally not considered 'artists' such as children, the elderly or the disabled, by using 'other' performance spaces, and by interacting with representatives and participants of so-called high art.

For this study, I have chosen to focus on this last example by analysing and evaluating two dance projects: a collaboration between New York University and Makerere University in Kampala in 2010 and a collaboration between the UCT School of Dance and the Eoan

Group in Cape Town in 2009. For the purpose of interrogating these cross-cultural exchange programmes, Bharucha's (2000) theoretical frame of interculturalism, intraculturalism and multiculturalism was accessed to identify some of the complex issues that underlie the notion of 'cultural exchange'. The notions of community, community dance and power were explored and shown to be problematic.

A critical question which arises throughout this dissertation is whether the New York University/Makerere University and the UCT School of Dance/Eoan Group collaborations serve in any way to lift community dance from its habitual marginalised position. Also, if community dance, as this dissertation has established, is the 'other' in the field of mainstream concert/theatre dance, one needs to question to what extent collaborative projects sustain or subvert the position of the 'other' in performance. In my view, both projects to some extent perpetuated this notion of 'othering'. In the case of the UCT School of Dance/Eoan Group collaboration this was evidenced in the lack of integration of the performers both on and off stage. In a different way, this was apparent in the New York University/Makerere University collaboration. There seemed to be a discrepancy between the adults' (New York University and Makerere University students) dances, which were energetic and well-rehearsed, and the children's dances, which appeared to be awkward, unrehearsed and to draw patronisingly on the children's cuteness-factor more than anything else.

Also, by interrogating the collaborations in this dissertation, one can be reminded of Bharucha's claim that such projects/workshop events have the

capacity to dissolve differences, cutting across class, caste and community. But this "dissolution" is provisional. Once the pilgrims return to their respective homes, the hierarchies and violence of everyday life are reinstated (Bharucha, 1997:31).

However, despite the temporary, transient and manipulated nature of the collaborations investigated here, I share Naidu's opinion when he states that creating

exposure [to dance] is just as important because that one experience can be so, so powerful to a young person...(Naidu 2006: interview, 9 August).

This research argues that community dance, which addresses those who are in some way excluded from dance training or experience, is a relevant area of contemporary concert/theatre dance in the similar yet divergent contexts of South Africa and Uganda. It is an area of investigation, which if valued, could make a significant contribution to the broader sphere of contemporary dance and the development of contemporary African performance.

Through an emphasis on inclusion, and a rejection and subversion of high and low art constructions that have often been imposed by western aesthetic criteria, one could see new forms of contemporary African dance emerge. This dissertation has chosen to focus on two examples where community dance as 'low art' or 'marginal art' meets and clashes with teaching and learning institutions associated with so-called high art through the medium of collaboration. This interaction or collaboration becomes a site where cultures and (dance) communities 'meet, clash and grapple with each other' (Pratt 1992 in Loomba: 2005: 62).

These research samples thus reveal how the tensions of the 'inter', which is described by Homi Bhabha, professor at Harvard University, as 'the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space' (Bhabha: 1994 in Bharucha: 2000: 38), positions community dance as 'less than' in South Africa and 'greater than' in Uganda for different reasons. Bharucha writes that whereas 'there is almost an in-built expectation in the 'multi' which assumes that we have to get along and live together' (2000:10), the in-between space, leaves 'greater room for difference, play, disagreement, counterpoint, breakdown' (ibid.).

Finally, there are many more questions and areas of investigation to further dissect and interrogate the complex hierarchies that determine who and what is valued among contemporary forms of dance. There are several areas which were beyond the scope of this interrogation of community dance such as the role played by gender, the investigation of community dance as a marketing product, and the representation of the dancing body in community dance. In addition, while this dissertation has focused mainly on the perspectives of the coordinators and teachers in each project, further insights could be gained by considering more carefully the views and experiences of children or youth participants and audience members of different ages and ethnicities. These are but some of the themes that indicate exciting new avenues of exploration of community dance in African contexts. In closing, Van Graan's words are appropriate when he writes that unlike in Africa's past histories

When the big narrative was pretty clear...Ours is a society in which the answers are not as clear-cut as before; where there is no single right way; where values and ideas are being keenly contested. And all of these have direct implications for the people who inhabit our society, for the story of each individual plays itself out against the backdrop of the bigger, unfolding narrative (2006:276).

It is thus hoped that this dissertation will make a contribution to the broader field of dance study in Africa.

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## **APPENDIX A: Admissions policy debate at the University of Cape Town**

This dissertation argues that in South Africa issues of race and disadvantage have become closely linked to virtual inseparability. The example of the admissions policy debate at the University of Cape Town illustrates how these issues are increasingly contested in the field of higher education in South Africa.

In 2009, in an open message to his staff, Dr. Max Price, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town (UCT) stated that the UCT admission's policy has recognised race as a broad indicator of past disadvantage and questions whether it should continue to do so. However, a report submitted to the UCT Council and Senate in 2006 by former Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Martin Hall, concludes that 'as South African society continues to normalise, the use of race as a proxy for disadvantage will become increasingly inappropriate' (Price 2009: Open message to staff, 9 April).

This debate on UCT's race-based admissions policy extends beyond the confines of UCT and has also caught attention in the South African press. A recent article (2009) in The Sunday Independent stated that while many academics argue that

Race-based criteria are no longer applicable 15 years into democracy...the policy is defended by the South African Students' Congress, the ANC Youth League and Jacob Zuma, the president elect (Ross, 2009:n.p.).

The ambivalence of the issue is evident in the differing opinions offered by academics. Also in the abovementioned article, Jean Baxen, associate professor of education at Rhodes University asks:

How can we ignore it [race] as an indicator, considering our history, when the primary factor for inclusionary and exclusionary purposes was racial categories? (Ross, 2009:n.p.).

She agrees, however, that 'using racial categories as the primary indicator obscures the real picture' (ibid.). Professor David Benatar, head of the Philosophy Department at UCT, argues that 'disadvantage' rather than race should be a qualifying factor. He notes that

Given South Africa's demographic profile and its history of racial discrimination, we should expect that the overwhelming majority of those who would be favoured by such a shift in policy would also be black (ibid.).

However, he adds an interesting qualification to this statement:

It would be much fairer to shift the focus to disadvantage rather than race...Such (race-based) judgements about how to categorise people are riddled with absurdities. During the apartheid era, opponents of apartheid took delight in the ridicule of racial classifications...The very classifications that were regarded as ludicrous then are now deemed vital to 'redress' (ibid.).

Neville Alexander, director of PRAESA (Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa) at the University of Cape Town, however, considers this a 'dangerous and misleading idea' (Alexander, 2010:n.p.). This dissertation supports the notion that 'race' is a construct and its use as a criterion needs to be problematised. Equally, this debate is relevant for any exercise in thinking around issues of access and disadvantage, particularly in South Africa. The shift away from the use of race as a proxy for disadvantage is increasingly evidenced in South African education policies. For example, a report commissioned by the Rural Education Access Programme (REAP) and published in June 2008 aimed to identify factors that facilitate success for disadvantaged higher education students. Although the report deals with issues concerning access to higher education, the disadvantaging factors identified in this document are useful for an understanding of access to dance experience or dance education. Factors that contribute to disadvantage as identified by the REAP report are:

- Geography
- Financial resources
- Schooling
- Language

As well as other socio-cultural factors which may prevent students from being adequately prepared for, and able to participate effectively in, tertiary studies (REAP report 2008:20-21). Moreover, the report also draws attention to the fact that disadvantaging factors are not only a result of poverty or impoverished early educational backgrounds but that such factors also arise as the result of 'perspectives, mindsets and institutional architectures of the dominant global society' (ibid.). An interesting note regarding the use of the term 'disadvantaged' is made right at the outset of the report which states that

We recognise that the use of the term 'disadvantaged students', and indeed other common terminology used, may be misleading insofar as it has the effect of placing the challenges explored in this study at the door of the individual students themselves, and does not give expression to the fact that we believe in the inherent value of human beings and their endeavours. As such, we are committed to continuing to grapple with the language used to talk and write about these issues, and to being more conscious of and alert to the need to address language in future research briefs (ibid.:4).

This discussion has attempted to show that colonial inheritances and, in the case of South Africa, the legacy of apartheid, have linked issues of race and disadvantage to virtual inseparability.

The above examples of UCT' admissions policy and the Rural Education Access Programme demonstrate that the use of race as a criterion for disadvantage and the use of the label disadvantaged itself are increasingly being problematised in the arena of education. It should be noted that the admissions policy debate at UCT is ongoing, with the next panel discussion scheduled for 2 September 2010. It is my suggestion that these same issues need to be problematised in the sphere of dance.

University of Cape Town

## APPENDIX B: A context for community dance in Uganda today

Uganda is currently under the leadership of president Yoweri Museveni, leader of the National Resistance Movement (NRM), which came to power in 1986 (Mutibwa: 1992). While the country is considered to be relatively peaceful and stable, Uganda faces many political, socio-economic and 'developmental'<sup>1</sup> challenges. The people living in the north continue to be victims of rebel uprisings and abductions, led by Joseph Kony, the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). According to a BBC World News Report,

The violence has displaced more than 1.6 million people and tens of thousands of civilians have been killed or kidnapped. The UN estimates that the group has abducted 20,000 children (<http://news.bbc.co.uk...>, overview: para.6).

Uganda has also, like the rest of the continent, been affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic<sup>2</sup>. Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP, 2004) shows that since the year 2000 the percentage of the population living under the poverty line has risen and was estimated at 37.7% in 2002/3. The PEAP states that key to achieving its goals is 'removing the constraints caused by HIV/AIDS, environment and above all gender inequalities' (PEAP, 2004). Ethnomusicologist Dr. Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza, who interrogates gender constructions in *baakisimba*, a court dance in the Buganda kingdom, echoes this view from a socio-cultural perspective. She acknowledges that there are some changes evident in women's position in relation to men<sup>3</sup>, which she writes has frequently been influenced by 'the constructed ideology of women as subordinate characters, and the men as the dominant actors'<sup>4</sup> (Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2005:231). However, she adds that the

Present sensitivity to 'gender equity' is critical not only for the achievement of economic development and genuine democracy, but also as a matter of social justice and social

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<sup>1</sup> The term development needs to be problematised. As mentioned in chapter 1, development is frequently confused with economic growth or considered in terms of western models (Mda: 1993). This dissertation concurs with Mda's suggestion through development a community 'should achieve greater control of its social, economic and political reality' (Mda: 1993: 40) as well as its institutions, rather than remaining dependent on foreign aid.

<sup>2</sup> Openness and vigorous campaigning from the early 1990s has meant that Uganda has helped to reduce the prevalence of the virus, which reached 30% in the 1990s, to 5.4% in 2007 according to statistics made available by UNICEF. The UNICEF 2007 report also estimates that of the 2.5 million orphaned children in Uganda, 1.2 million have been orphaned by AIDS ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country\\_profiles/1069166.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1069166.stm)).

<sup>3</sup> Nannyonga-Tamusuza is referring to the observation made by Anne Marie Goetz (1998) that 'Uganda...ranks above many developing countries in terms of women's numerical representation in the national legislature' (Goetz: 1998: 241 in Nannyonga-Tamusuza: 2005: 4).

<sup>4</sup> Nannyonga-Tamusuza is writing specifically about gender construction in *Buganda*, one of the many cultures in Uganda. The gender construction in *Buganda*, as described by Nannyonga-Tamusuza through *baakisimba*, is highly complex and beyond the scope of this dissertation. In addition, Nannyonga-Tamusuza observes that 'since gender studies are more developed in the Western world, no adequate cross-cultural concepts have yet been developed' (Nannyonga-Tamusuza: 2005: 18).

transformation aimed at redistributing resources and social values more equally between men and women (ibid.: 236).

In addition to issues of poverty eradication and gender inequality, historical factors have contributed to further divisions within Ugandan society. From the onset of his historical political account of Uganda, Mutibwa stresses the strong divisive forces at play in Ugandan contemporary society, when he observes that

The people watch a deteriorating situation in which the gap between the rulers in their mansions and the masses in their slums and huts is widening (1992:x).

The seeds of disunity in Uganda, and possibly the lack of a strong national identity, are found, according to Mutibwa, in Uganda's colonial history. He writes that

The diversity of peoples was used by the colonising power to divide and rule. This policy created societies which saw themselves as states within the state and others which were relegated to second-rate positions. The political, educational, economic and social policies that were pursued not only sharpened existing differences, but also introduced new class formations, stratifications and cleavages (ibid.:xiii).

Uganda is, like many other African countries, home to many different nationalities, religions and linguistic groups (Mutibwa, 1992). The name Uganda itself was adopted by the British in 1884 rather arbitrarily. Mutibwa writes that

When the imperial powers met in Berlin in 1884-5 to divide up Africa amongst themselves, they looked not at peoples but at mountains, rivers, and other physical features of our continent, which in fact united people rather than dividing them. By the end of this exercise people who belonged to the same ethnic group or even clan found themselves in separate colonies, soon to be further separated by the introduction of new foreign languages and cultures (ibid.:3).

Before a British Protectorate was established in 1894, first through the annexation of Buganda, which was extended to a larger region in 1906, the peoples living in the southern part of the country had 'for centuries been welded into centralised states with highly sophisticated political systems' (ibid.:1). One of these kingdoms, the Buganda kingdom (to which the name Uganda seemingly refers), was retained by the British and fashioned into a state within a state. The use of *Baganda* agents assisted the British in the extension of their rule outside Buganda. The northern and eastern parts of what became Uganda did not have such centralised states. Mutibwa concludes that:

The British Protectorate therefore consisted of many distinct regions, inhabited by people who were not only ethnically different but who were also at different stages of development (ibid.).

It was this difference in status inherited by the *Baganda*, and the developmental differences between north and south that continued to foster disunity, even after Ugandan independence (Mutibwa, 1992).

Since gaining independence in 1962, Uganda has suffered several dictatorial regimes, characterised by severe human rights abuses, most notably under Idi Amin (1971-1979) and Milton Obote's second regime (1980-1985). Among the many Ugandan deaths that occurred during these dictatorships, was also the expulsion of all Asian citizens and residents in 1972 by Amin. The first influx of Indians to arrive in Uganda were labourers contracted for the construction of the Uganda Railway at the end of the nineteenth century. It is important to note that

The British used the Indians to establish and later consolidate their rule, using them as middlemen – political as well as economic – between themselves and their African subjects. As such they became an essential part of the colonial infrastructure (ibid.:92).

The fact that the Asian population was thus cast into the role of a 'privileged middleclass' and that their economic activities prospered, had a divisive effect on the whole of Ugandan society (ibid.:93). Lack of cultural integration with Uganda's black population is also suggested by Mutibwa as a source of animosity. He writes that

Although some had taken Ugandan citizenship, the Asians remained – and were seen to be – foreigners in their country' (ibid.).

But, Uganda is made up of many cultural groups and the Uganda National Culture Policy (2006) counts 65 indigenous communities as well as a number of non-indigenous communities that represent Uganda's cultural heritage. The Policy states that

The interrelationships as a result of interactions in educational institutions, at work places, intermarriages enhance understanding of other cultures and enhance harmony and social cohesion (Uganda National Culture Policy, 2006:9).

The document adds that

On the other hand, the diversity can create tension between and within the indigenous groups. In addition, there exist indigenous minorities that are marginalised. Some of these are faced with loss of identity, which threatens their existence (ibid.).

The National Culture Policy (2006) finds that Uganda's great cultural diversity causes tensions among indigenous communities as well as between indigenous and non-indigenous communities. The document states that the non-indigenous communities are

Not fully accepted by the indigenous communities and in some cases they are not recognised. This leads to social tensions (ibid.).

The political and socio-economic factors discussed above have an impact on social in- or exclusion and thus the functioning of and expression that emanates from communities.

University of Cape Town

## APPENDIX C: The University of Cape Town

The University of Cape Town was established in 1829 as the South African College, a boys' high school. After 1880, a financial boost due to the discovery of gold and diamonds in the north of South Africa, allowed the College to develop a small tertiary education facility, which grew into a fully fledged university between 1880 and 1900. The University of Cape Town is currently considered among South Africa's and Africa's leading institutions of higher education (<http://www.uct.ac.za/about/intro/history>).

Marina Grut, who has written works on the history of ballet in South Africa, writes that 'throughout South Africa's turbulent history UCT remained multi-racial' (2009:3). However, the following discussion will attempt to clarify why this statement cannot remain unqualified as well as illustrate the necessity of interrogating race policies and practices at the School of Dance, as well as its history and development, within the broader context of the University of Cape Town.

During the apartheid era, the University of Cape Town, as an English medium university, operated independently from the segregationist apartheid state. However, Fred Hendricks, a Rhodes University scholar, questions the 'autonomy' of so-called liberal universities during the apartheid years. He argues that

It is widely accepted that university autonomy and academic freedom are unlikely to survive in oppressive environments where other freedoms are either limited or totally denied (Hendricks, 2008:423).

Hendricks cites the Mafeje Affair, which took place at the University of Cape Town in 1968 and in which a black South African, Archie Mafeje<sup>5</sup> was offered the post of senior lecturer in social anthropology at UCT, only to have the offer rescinded after pressure applied by the Ministry of Education. Despite the protests of students led by the Student Representative Council and some staff members, the Affair demonstrates, according to Hendricks

How close the liberal universities were to the apartheid regime, both in their thinking about race and in their policies and practices (Hendricks, 2008:423).

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<sup>5</sup> Mafeje was awarded an Honorary degree in 2009. Also, the Faculty of Humanities boardroom now bears his name.

Moreover, the apartheid government's interference with higher education became institutionalised with the 'ironically named Extension of University Education Act of 1959' (ibid.:424). This Act called for the establishment of separate colleges for black South Africans and prohibited black students from enrolling at white universities unless special ministerial permission was obtained. Furthermore, regular state security interventions are evidence of a

climate of surveillance and repression, with universities doing their bit to ensure conformity to racist policies in the sphere of higher education (Hendricks, 2008:425).

In addition, the Council of UCT adopted a policy of academic non-segregation, which meant White and Black students could take courses together but were separated in every other aspect of university campus life (Hendricks, 2008). Hendricks cites Mangcu (2006) to argue that

This separation of academic from social commitment...is a form of evasion, a literal academic/paying lip service to the social conditions that exist outside university environs (Mangcu, 2006:7 in Hendricks, 2008:426).

Despite this, during the 1970s and 1980s, the University of Cape Town was home to many student activists and not all teaching staff endorsed oppressive policies. Post 1994, the University has an extensive transformation agenda which aims to, amongst others, redress past injustices and promote equal opportunities for all. To meet these aims the University aims to continually review its curriculum as well as engage in activities which attempt to broaden student access (<http://www.uct.ac.za>). Thus, the development of the UCT school of Dance as well as the UCT School of Dance's collaboration with the Eoan Group might be seen in light of this larger agenda of transformation.

## APPENDIX D:

### 1. Course outline for NYU Study Abroad in Uganda (2010)

**Advanced Dance Practicum: Uganda  
E892077.095: Spring 2010  
Winter Intersession Study Abroad**

**Days:** January 1-18

**Points:** 3

**Instructor:** Professor Deborah Damast, B.F.A., M.A.

**Phone:** w.212. 998.5865; c. 917.371.0031

**e-mail:** Deborah.Damast@nyu.edu

office hours by appointment:

244 Greene Street, room 404

Course Description: Students from NYU will travel to Kampala, Uganda to work with students and teachers at the Kampala Ballet and Modern Dance School, Makerere University and children from several orphanages throughout Uganda in a dancemaking cultural exchange program focused on fostering community building through the arts. NYU students will **learn traditional Ugandan dances**, will **study the pedagogic practices of the region**, and **learn about the arts and culture of Uganda** and East Africa.

#### **Learning Indicators:**

As a result of this course, students will:

- Be able to perform a traditional Ugandan dance
- Have created and taught a lesson plan to children in Kampala
- Understand the healing properties of dance and drama
- Understand that teaching and learning happen simultaneously
- Develop relationships with students from Makerere University
- Know how to collaborate creatively with others

#### **Experiences/Activities**

Students will:

- keep a daily journal of experiences, ideas, questions
- take classes in traditional Ugandan dance and music
- take trips to the source of the Nile, nature walks in Jinja, the tombs, and dance performances
- teach classes and collaborate in dancemaking with children from 3 orphanages
- perform at the famous National Theatre and for the Queen

**Assignments:** Students will maintain a daily journal, design and implement lesson plans, learn traditional Ugandan dances, and develop a collaborative performance piece with Ugandan teachers and children. 2 short papers, one before the trip, the other after.

#### **Proposed Daily Schedule: (subject to change)**

***Friday January 1:*** Fly from JFK

**Saturday January 2:** arrive Entebbe, Uganda, drive to Kampala

**Sunday January 3:** orientation, change money, welcome dinner at Makerere

**Monday January 4:** first day workshop: class 9:00-12:00, lunch at Fang Fang 12:00-1:00, planning meeting 1:00-2:30, Uganda Museum

**Tues, January 5:** Full day workshop; (dance and music class from 9:00-12:30, lunch from 1:00-1:45, pedagogy and lesson planning from 2:00-3:00, Western repertory 3:00-4:30) visit to orphanage

**Wed, January 6:** Full day workshop (see above) Kasubi tombs

**Thurs, January 7:** Full day workshop (see above) visit to orphanage

**Fri, January 8:** Full day workshop (see above) dinner out in Kampala

**Sat, Jan 9:** Trip to Jinja, forest hike, boat trip at the source of the Nile River

**Sun, Jan 10:** church/shopping/Sheraton options, N'Dere Troupe performance in evening

**Mon, Jan 11:** meeting day with children, greeting games, discuss workshop LIA visit

**Tues, Jan 12:** children's dance workshop ( NYU students and Ugandan teachers co-teach lessons developed in prior week to children from orphanages in the morning, lunch with the children at the café ballet, rehearsal in afternoon), dinner party at Fang Fang

**Wed, Jan 13:** children's dance workshop, evening TBA

**Thurs, Jan 14:** children's dance workshop, Faculty dinner/meeting, students on own

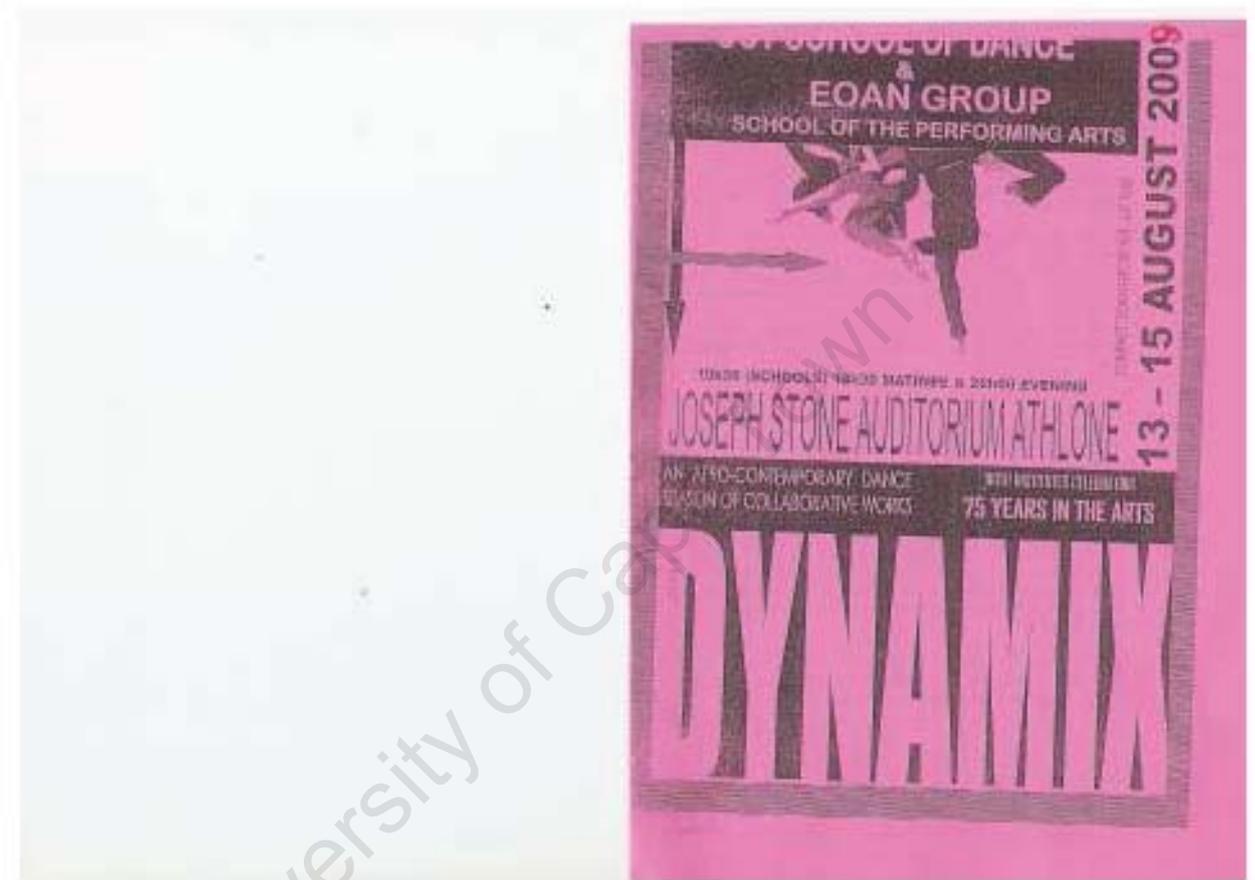
**Fri, Jan 15:** dress rehearsal at KBMDS for her Royal Highness, Nnabagereka, Queen of the Buganda Kingdom. Performance in evening at the National Theatre

**Sat, Jan 16:** Shopping at National Theatre, Dinner with the Queen, Storytelling Koi Koi

**Sun Jan 17:** reflection, final meeting, pack and go to Entebbe airport 10:55pm flight ☺

**Mon Jan 18:** arrive JFK 10:55am

2. Programme of Dynamix, Cape Town, 13-15 August 2009



**Message from the University of Cape Town's Director:  
School of Dance - Gerard Samuel**

In 1934 the world must have been a very different place - the astronaut Yuri Gagarin was only just born and thus the first human being had not even travelled into space, television was barely 6 years old (began in the US in 1928) and in South Africa, the influential Dula Howes had pioneered the first ever Ballet School located in a University. Our programme is intended to reflect aspects of the range that in the genre of Afro-contemporary dance in the Western Cape.

For many an ignorance and thus deprivation of new avenues of knowledge arises in the absence of empathy or understanding of how the other live/dances. As South African we have already lived through a culture of fear and denial which I feel as choreographers we must actively repurpose. Thus, DYNAMIX a collaborative dance season with the Eoan group who also share a proud 75 year history with the UCT School of Dance. Our collaborative season with the Eoan Group allows students in both institutions to explore working with different choreographers within the Afro-Contemporary dance space. My grateful thanks to Shafiek Rajar, Abeerah Medeli, Ibrahim Medeli, Emixxy?, Adnaan Lutefh (made possible through the Royal Medalsaleh Embassy), Celeste Botha, Abocda Xezell and Maxwell Xolani/Ram for your beautiful, generous work.

I am excited that this shared profform will extend the artistic boundaries of all participants and that this bridge will be a new path way for all our aspiring professional dancers.

**Message from Chairperson of the Eoan Group - Shafiek Rajar**

The historic rekindling of a friendship between our organizations Eoan and UCT is most welcome as we celebrate 75 years of our founding by Mrs H. Southern-Holt. I am happy to follow in the footsteps of my many predecessors and gladly extend my hands to the new director - Gerard Samuel and UCT School of Dance as we have done in the past to David Poole and Dulcie Howes. The community of Athlone, many friends, patrons and young and old people continue to support our efforts to bring the arts to as wide an audience as possible. I am very thankful to all of you and hope that your enthusiasm, love and support will continue for another 75 years.

Our achievement of 75 years is something which the Eoan Group School of the Performing Arts will continue to nurture as we strongly believe in the investment of our youth who are our dawn (or in Greek-ess) from where we take our name.

Thank you to our partners at UCT School of Dance and all the Eoan staff, teachers, parents and members of the Eoan Group.

## Programme

### \*Jungo

Choreographer: Adriaan Luteijn  
Singing by Sharon Fridman

Music: Chopin, Concerto no. 1 for piano and orchestra  
Cast: Bonginkosi Biyela, Simone Botha, Tania de Jongh, Christy Gesler, Lauren Hambly-Wise, Kristina Johnstone, Vulani Mdekazi, Ché Milani, Tebogo Mnguni, Mduzuzi Nyembe, Tegan Peacock, Louisa Prinsloo, Tulumella Shityuwete, Steven Van Wyk

People who work in cramped offices skyscraper cities have space and sunlight during their lunch hours. This spot in the sun becomes a precious piece of comfort that they are not always willing to share. When they return to work, they often wish to leave a piece of themselves behind.\* Jungo is made possible through the generosity of Adriaan Luteijn and the Intradans Company (Netherlands)

### Different Trains

Choreographer: Abeeda Medell  
Music: Snow Patrol, Michael Jackson, Damian Rice  
Cast: Thara Alcock, Wentzel April, Jade Carolissen, Leticia Fisher, Lisa Julies, Lucille Hendricks, Mishkaah Medell

### Missing

Choreographer: Celeste Botha  
Music: Augustine  
Cast: Simone Botha, Lauren McGeorge, Ché Milani, Louisa Prinsloo, Jessica Stanford, Nicola Van Straaten, Tebogo Mnguni, Steven van Wyk

### Urban Hip Hop

Choreographer: Leticia Fisher  
Music: from 'Chicago', Austin Powers, Michael Jackson, Madonna, Ru Paul

Cast: Stacey Adams, Thara Alcock, Amy Court, Jade Carolissen, Danielle De Klerk, Jade Hassen, Thandiswa Holtman, Lisa Julie, Melanie Kanasashi, Tarryn Lakey, Kyle Linde, Kezok Manook, Anoushka Nair, Nicole Osborn, Whitney Petersen, Kaylinn Titus, Kayla Trout, Tazynn Sylvester, Jade Williams, Taylor Williams,

### Making a Black Noise

Choreographer: EmilleYX?  
Music: Black Noise  
Cast: Janine Booysens, Angielika Heald, \*Emile Jansen, Tehani Kotze, Martine Klein, Lauren McGeorge, Aphile Mphaheni, \*Lester Philander, Angélique They's, \*Algerma Van Wyk, \*Angelo Van Wyk, \*Daniel Van Wyk \* appears by kind permission of Black Noise

### Coal Train

Choreographer: Maxwell Xolani Rani  
Music: Philip Thabane  
Cast: Bonginkosi Biyela, Janine Booysens, Tania de Jongh, Teagan De Marigny, Christy Gesler, Phumeza Mdekazi, Vulani Mdekazi, Natasha Rhoda, Daniela Scheepers, Tulumella Shityuwete, Steven van Wyk

This piece exemplifies the emotional and mental struggles many people in South Africa faced in the 1880's when they were allured to Johannesburg to seek their fortunes in the gold mines. Although the possibility of finding a better financial future was enticing, the difficulty of leaving their loved ones was often overwhelming. Some people felt that they could create their own Jo'burg and remained in the

rural areas. They realized that their wealth came from the support of people who they loved, and not from money or gold. These people made the difficult choice of trading in their train tickets and returning to their family. \* appear by kind permission of the Eoan Group.

#### **Up the down stairs**

Choreographer: Ebrahim Medel

Music: Bikram Gosh, Saffi Duo, Elvis Costello

Cast: Thara Alcock, Wenzel April, Jade Carlissen, \* Teagan de

Mairigny, \*Odile De Villiers \*Sasha Fourie, Lisa Julies, Lubile

Hendricks, Mishkoat Medell

\* appear by kind permission of UCT School of Dance

**Please note that there will be no interval.**

Kindly switch off your cellular phones for the duration of the performance. Photography and the use of any recording device are not permitted. Casting is subject to allocation without prior notification.

#### **PRODUCTION CREDITS**

*Artistic Directors:* Akeeda Medell (Principal of the Eoan Group's School of the Performing Arts) & Gerald Samuel (Director UCT School of Dance)

*Stage Manager:* Merle Gideon

*Assistant Stage Managers:* Alexandra Barros, Kathood Medell, Olive van Graen

*Stage Craft:* Sherman Smart

*Lighting Designer:* Ebrahim Lawrence

*Follow Spot Operator:* Silumko Silwana

*Sound:* Thalia Leric

*Video & Photography:* Waheed Ahmad, Ian Bennett & Dr. Eduard Greyling

*Makeup:* UCT School of Dance, Eoan Group, Cape Junior Ballet

*Front of House & Reception Liaison staff:* Remo Adonis, Elisabeth Dutton, Daniel Fourie, Sharon Friedman, Cassia Greenwood, Jamie Lee Hudson, Montal Medell, Elaine Langenhoven, Argie Pearson, Lindy Heizenberg, Zoe Townsend, Belinda Volentyne, Sherry Zeeqers.

**SPECIAL THANKS**

The Chairperson Eleni Goussis - Staffak Pappas, Director  
UCT School of Dance - cannot emphasize enough the general participation of all our staff and students.

Management and staff of The Baxter Theatre

Artze Memorial (Artze) (2010/11)

Parents and Friends (Cape)

**FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS**

- The final dance season of the Cape Group in 2010  
**Annual Dance Production, Joseph Stone, 8 - 11 December.**
- The final dance season of the UCT School of Dance in  
**Just a Dream - op die koppie** loosely based on A  
Midsummer Night's Dream, The Baxter Theatre, 11 - 15  
November.

All information was correct as at the time of going to press.

University of Cape Town

### 3. New York University/Makerere University collaboration 2007



**Workshop participants and teachers performing at the Ndere Centre, Kampala, January 12, 2007**  
Photo by Joseph Bukenya

In conversations with Pribyl between 2007 and 2010, she insisted on the importance of the children having a dance costume, which allows the children to be perceived, viewed and *valued* as performers rather than as mere recipients of aid, when they are wearing T-shirts with their sponsor's name in large print.