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IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

**INTERROGATING THE NATURE, PROCESS AND POLITICS OF FEMALE-  
HEADED DANCE COLLABORATIONS: THE GROWTH PROJECT  
(SCENKONST SÖRMLAND, SWEDEN & BAXTER THEATRE CENTRE,  
CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA) 2012–2016**

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**Dissertation presented for the degree of MMus (Dance)**

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## **PLAGIARISM DECLARATION**

I declare that this dissertation [using the UCT Harvard 2015 referencing method] is my own work unless specifically stated otherwise in this text. It is submitted in fulfilment of the degree of Master of Music (Dance) at University of Cape Town School of Dance and has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university in South Africa or abroad.

Bernice Valentine

.....

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation seeks to investigate the nature of Contemporary Dance collaborations between some South African dancers in the Western Cape and Swedish musicians and dancers and their directors and producers. My study focusses on the impact of choreographic processes in such collaborations when these are led by women. In particular, I will examine a collaboration herein referred to as the *Growth Project* that was undertaken between the Baxter Theatre Centre in Cape Town, South Africa and Scenkonst Sörmland Theatre in Sweden between 2012-2016. The study aims to provide insight into such collaborative dance practices in order to highlight gendered practices in Dance in the Western Cape. It will outline all three parts of the *Growth Project* but focuses on the dance work *I hit the ground running* (2013), in which I performed. This dissertation considered the historical context, and political legacy of key individuals associated with the *Growth Project* in order to examine their views of the artistic world, their relationship to one another and what inform choreographic processes when working in Contemporary Dance in the Western Cape. When artists collaborate, there is an interplay between identity, culture and politics and issues of power and gender all add to the complexity of dance collaborations. This dissertation problematises the birth of Contemporary Dance in South Africa and focusses on the region of the Western Cape arguing that in the 2000s, colonial and apartheid history continues to support a gender inequality in South African Dance as well as in society in general.

Chapter One positions myself as an emic and etic researcher and provides an overview of the influences that impacted the development of Contemporary Dance in South Africa especially in the Western Cape. With this as background, I discuss my rationale for an interrogation of collaborative dance practices between some South Africans and certain foreigners. I highlight certain gaps such as analysis of contemporary dance works by women in South African Dance Literature.

Chapters Two and Three discuss the concept of collaboration and draw some distinctions between the genders, for example, when women collaborate. It focuses on economic and patriarchal modes of power in society and the manner in which these are perpetuated in dance. It acknowledges feminist theories found in Social Sciences and Humanities that are also extended in Dance Studies such as the work of Katrak (2006), Butler (1999) and Daly (2002). I

reflect on the response of some South African dancing bodies to collaborative practices in Contemporary Dance and add my comments to the views on this topic already expressed by Loots (2012), Craighead (2007) amongst others.

Chapter Four highlights the research methods used during this study and explains how the process of the interview was engaged with to collect data. This sourcing of data included my own reflections as a participant and observer, as well as an analysis of journalistic material (press reviews), and programme notes. I also critically unpack my own reflective journals. My unique etic and emic perspectives, as I am simultaneously the researcher as well as one of the dancers in *I hit the ground running* (2013), will be discussed. This research also gave rise to a number of findings which have been framed as challenges encountered by dancers, musicians, the choreographer and management teams involved in *I hit the ground running* (2013). The study reflects on the notion of femaleness in Contemporary Dance itself, and the impact that such femaleness has on dance making/Contemporary Dance choreography. The connections between femaleness as a form of discrimination and other forms of marginalisation such as race and cultural groups is explored. This is contested within South African and Swedish world views in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This dissertation suggests that a feminist notion of dance making is a useful tool to understand South African and Swedish Contemporary Dance. It may extend the work of other dance researchers wanting to write about other marginalised groups for example disability dance in South Africa and Sweden.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2012 I was invited by South African choreographer Ananda Fuchs to explore the idea of the power and impact of economic growth through Contemporary Dance in a collaboration with Swedish musicians called the *Growth Project*.<sup>1</sup> The history of my country, South Africa, has impacted on what I feel was the superficial way in which I approached the *Growth Project* in which I then performed in 2013. I now realise that the effect of apartheid and colonialism had influenced my life far more than I credited, an influence which I hope to investigate through this dissertation. The legacy of apartheid has left many questions. For example, I question whether my marginalisation as a black, South African, female challenged patriarchal ideology present in Dance? More importantly how has my experience, as a so called Coloured woman and the experience of women like me challenged such patriarchal ideology? Are South African women passive in dance collaborations? I embarked upon *I hit the ground running* (the first instalment of the Growth project) without considering what a vital ground-breaking event would be occurring in my life as a gendered dancer and dance educator, and the questions it would provoke around Contemporary Dance in South Africa today.

I began to think about the manner in which the anti-apartheid movement in Sweden was one of the international movements that assisted in establishing social justice, inclusion and democracy in South Africa and to consider how these engagements informed the aesthetic and culture in both of these countries. How does a dance collaboration such as the *Growth Project* set up a relationship of power and dependency? The political friendship between these countries stretches beyond the exchanges of The South African–Sweden Binational Commission.<sup>2</sup> It is also embodied in the experience of a dancer from Charlesville, a middle-class community surrounded by the Cape Flats<sup>3</sup> areas of Bonteheuwel, Kalksteenfontein and Guguletu, in Cape Town, South Africa, who found herself dancing on the stage of the Stockholm State Theatre. This huge, red, glass building overlooking Sergel Square, Stockholm,

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<sup>1</sup> The *Growth Project* refers the dance collaboration project between Baxter Theatre, in Cape Town South Africa and Scenkost Sörmland theatre in Sweden (which I introduce later in this chapter). I use this name throughout this dissertation when referring to the collaboration.

<sup>2</sup> This Commission is a platform where Sweden and South Africa come together to discuss common social, economic and political interests that may exist between them in order to promote the two countries and strengthen the relationship between them

<sup>3</sup> The Cape Flats is defined by many as the dumping ground of the apartheid system. After the institution of the Group Areas Act (1950), people in Cape Town designated as black were forced into informal settlements on the Flats. The Flats have since then been home to much of the population of Greater Cape Town.

opened in 1960 and here I was in these hallowed halls. By this I mean, I noticed how I had placed this theatre and theatres in Europe as being superior to what I have seen or experienced in South Africa.

This performance, of which I was part, marked the beginning of an artistic partnership, a historic exchange and collaboration that was seeking a common goal; that of creating a dance production together. The performance of *I hit the ground running* on 14 September 2013 was imbued with a particular energy. Perhaps this was because the Stockholm State Theatre was expecting a curious audience who were coming to see what was headlined as the best of Cape Town's Contemporary Dance talent. The performance received a standing ovation. In the distance, I heard chanting in the familiar accent of a South African black man,<sup>4</sup> the crying out of the word "Amandla", "Amandla", "Amandla" (which translates to "Power" in isiXhosa). Soon afterwards the dancers responded "Awethu" (which translates to, 'To Us').

When this reaction hit home in my euphoric and adrenalin soaked state, my body burst with emotion and more questions. I realised for the first time the silent boundaries existing in me. The Swedish audience was meeting a product of South African culture – its performing arts. *I hit the ground running*, as a dance product was an embodiment of post-apartheid and democratic new South Africa and its relationship with the rest of the world. It was a dance product that both South Africa and Sweden had created together.

It was at this point that I became interested in theorising the nature of Contemporary Dance collaboration<sup>5</sup> and to see how these collaborations have the possibility to transform social inequalities in South Africa, and for South Africans living and working abroad. This dissertation will examine the nature of collaboration in Contemporary Dance, with particular reference to

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<sup>4</sup> The man shouting was Graham Tainton. Born in South Africa in 1927, he came to Sweden in 1959 after being imprisoned under apartheid. He is known in Sweden as choreographer for the musical group ABBA and is the cousin of world famous singer and activist Miriam Makeba. Makeba was a Black South African jazz singer and song writer.

<sup>5</sup>The Concise Oxford English dictionary defines the word 'collaboration' as work jointly on an activity or project (1999:280). Collaboration in an artistic practice such as dance involves co-operation between two or more performing artists or performing arts organisations (Theatres, dance companies, dance councils, promotion agencies). It requires teamwork, synergy, partnership and a shared philosophy to achieve a common goal.

the collaboration between the Baxter Theatre Centre,<sup>6</sup> in Cape Town and Sckenkost Sörmland<sup>7</sup> Theatre in Sweden that began in 2013.

Before I commence I will consider and unpack key terms like collaboration, intraculturalism and interculturalism. Collaboration as mentioned in the footnote earlier, is defined as to work jointly on an activity or project (Van Niekerk, 2010: 288). Collaboration in an artistic practice such as dance involves co-operation between two or more performing artists or performing arts organisations (theatres, dance companies, dance councils, promotion agencies). It requires teamwork, synergy, partnership and a shared philosophy to achieve a common goal. This notion of collaboration is most often found in business ventures e.g. when corporations invest jointly to achieve a measure of financial gain. When looking at it from a business model, a sceptical attitude may arise around profit sharing as many business collaborations involve negotiation of accumulated wealth, but perhaps underhanded methods are at play where one collaborator stands to profit in an unequal manner (Ashman, 2001). However, artistic dance collaborations tend to strive for a nature of equal gain and shared philosophy. Cheryl Stock<sup>8</sup> explained that collaboration in artistic practice is an event in which mutual understanding and a co-creation of a production occurs. She argued about a Vietnamese-Australian collaboration noting that,

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<sup>6</sup> The Baxter Theatre Centre, based at the University of Cape Town (UCT) was founded and opened on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 1977. It is named after Dr William Duncan Baxter who bequeathed money to UCT to establish a theatre with its main purpose to cultivate arts in Cape Town and be a 'theatre for all'. It was this increasingly turbulent time that drove Dr Baxter to build this theatre that would become a light and beacon of hope in these dark times. It would be a theatre that questioned the *status quo* of South Africa's politics and be a place where everyone in Cape Town and South Africa could produce art and engage in artistic experiences. The Arts were primarily used as medium for protest against the oppression and apartheid regime. *District Six the musical*, named after one of the communities affected by the Groups Areas Act mentioned above was created in 1987, to do exactly that; protest against apartheid and particularly that Act. It was the Theatre's record of the longest running production of it remake in 2003. Today the Baxter Theatre Centre can boast of being one of the largest performing arts centres in Cape Town and still produces work in all performing art genres which aims to celebrate the rich culture of South Africa through performing arts and in doing so cultivate relationships and present repertoire of local, international and the broader university communities.

<sup>7</sup> Scenkonst Sörmland Theatre in Sweden is the regional performing art producer in Sörmland and houses dance, music, theatre and film under one roof. Much of the work produced here is interdisciplinary collaborations between genres and art forms. With particular reference to dance, Scenkost Sörmland dance discipline has aims to promote dance through education. It attempts to achieve this mission by offering dance projects to pre-school, primary schools and high school learners. An example of a project offer by Scenkost Sörmland is called Dance Maths, which seeks collaboration between dance and mathematics teachers to promote dance, teach mathematics and achieve skills through an alternative way of teaching and learning. Furthermore, Sörmland Theatre aims to develop long lasting partnerships with artists and organisations that share the need for social development, transformation that is relevant for a 21st century society.

<sup>8</sup> Cheryl Stock is an Australian performer and choreographer. Her field of interest lies in collaboration and making intercultural dance in Vietnam.

Collaboration in artistic practice ideally embraces ideals of cooperation, teamwork and symbiosis amongst like-minded people with common goals and a shared philosophy. However, when one is working collaboratively with another culture, training, creative processes, expectation, relationships and aesthetics may not only contain differences but in some cases may appear to be directly in conflict with one's own experiences and beliefs (1998:1).

The literature of collaboration and collaborative practice prompts my writing and discussion of power relations and the very nature of exchanges amongst different cultures which come together. Artistic productions, where individuals come together, especially when working collaboratively with one another's traditions and practices, can be called a multi-cultural exchange; these conflicts may give rise to different expectations and values and aesthetics may be questioned. Located within this is theory of Intraculturalism and Interculturalism Rustom Bharucha,<sup>9</sup> considers intraculturalism when he discussed the effects of global collaboration when different cultures come together. These collaborations he refers to as points of exchange. Bharucha used the metaphor of river to examine this notion and argued:

I would like to reflect on the river as a metaphor of cultural exchanges in the larger context of intracultural interactions and interventions in theatre. By the "intracultural" I mean those exchanges within, between and across regions in larger framework of a nation. In our search for "other culture" we often forget the culture within our own boundaries, the differences which are marginalised and occasionally silenced in our imagined homogeneities (1997:31).

According to Schechner, "Searches related to interculturalism probe the confrontations, ambivalence, disruptions, fears, disturbances and difficulties when and where cultures collide, overlap or pull apart from each other. Interculturalism explores misunderstandings, broken messages and failed translations-what is not pure and what cannot successfully fuse" (1991:30).

The collaborative project mentioned above, has provided a basis to critically analyse and evaluate key research questions which are:

- What is gained or lost in a collaborative endeavour when it is artistic in nature?
- What happens when South African dancers and Swedish musicians attempt to work together?

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<sup>9</sup> Rustom Bharucha is a renowned theatre maker based in India, and a renowned inter-cultural critic. Bharucha is author of *Theatre of the World: performance and politics of culture* (1990) and most recently *Terror and Performance* (2014) amongst many other scholarly articles and papers.

- How does dance leadership differ when it is conducted by women and/ or men? Will gender affect the process of the dance making?

In the context of this dissertation I will attempt to establish the complexity that impacts on collaborations when women want to work towards a common goal. Investigate whether in the *Growth Project* collaboration is neutral. The above terms and questions are perhaps essential ideas when attempting to understand the multiple negotiations occurring in a dance collaboration, like the *Growth Project*. This dissertation needs to consider the global position of the various partners involved in the *Growth Project* and in so doing question whether a shared philosophy existed for the *Growth Project* and question whether it was achieved or not.

### **Examining the nature of dance collaborations in South Africa**

In collaborative projects partners are negotiating concepts of autonomy, respect, self-expression and power. In these practices, it is important to note that these dynamics may or may not occur in every collaboration. It is essential that we examine whether all cultures in a multicultural and intercultural collaboration demand equal respect from one another. Are different partners, able to exercise autonomy, practice self-expression and own sense of power? I will be examining whether a dependency on finances, validation or artistic benchmarking may have existed from South African dancers or the developing country South Africa, or whether Swedish musicians exhibited a postcolonial guilt or arrogance (these terms will be clarified below). In addition, I reflect on whether any of these roles operate in reverse. In my view then, there is a need to examine when a collision of cultures (Bharucha, 1997) take place in terms of what is being exchanged, fused or what is simply being placed alongside each other.

My dissertation will begin by reflecting on the historical past of South Africa – specifically colonialism and apartheid in order to assess how this impacted on the development of South African dance, particularly the Contemporary Dance that is prevalent in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. I will unpack what some dance and dance educators notice as gaps in the development of Contemporary Dance in South Africa, particularly in the Western Cape. I reflect on some of

what is discussed in Andile Sotiya's<sup>10</sup> paper entitled *Where are the concerts?* (2001) He concerned himself with the lack of funding being allocated to dance and numerous dance companies struggling to meet their financial commitments. He lamented their being forced to close down. In an interview with Elizabeth Triegaardt<sup>11</sup> Artistic Director of Cape Town City Ballet, she explained "we are expected to produce and stage full Classical Ballet programmes on half the budget" (Personal communication Triegaardt, 2015). Sotiya went on to explain that many of South Africa's talented dancers and choreographers are opting to work abroad as a result of the fragile state in which the dance and performing arts industry finds itself (2001:94). Fourteen years after Sotiya's conference paper, the state of Dance in South Africa has not changed. I suggest that South African Contemporary Dance at the same time is undergoing a new packaging in South Africa. For whom is it being repackaged and does this matter? What are some of the new directions new South African Contemporary Dance will take? These questions need to be reflected upon given South African post-apartheid arts policy and legislation. Documents such as the White Paper<sup>12</sup> of 1996 was especially designed to encourage Dance and the Performing Arts to engage with issues of social transformation in South Africa. Is the lack of attention given to the performing arts discussed through projects such as the *Growth Project* by the above dance makers and directors pre-mature for South African government and policy makers? Has South Africa achieved social transformation through the arts as was encouraged by documents like the White Paper? These complex issues are further challenged by political events like Rhodes Must Fall protests in 2015 an ongoing debate of which languages should be used in higher education institutes.

Given the historical contexts in South Africa, how can we understand the political legacies of individuals participating in exchanges? How do they shape the world and the multiplicity of aesthetic frames of cultural partners? How can artistic and creative processes be approached that may conflict with one's own experiences and belief systems? Therefore, when people collaborate on an artistic project, one could argue that there exists an interplay of identity, culture and politics and that issues of power occur which will need interrogating. This scenario makes dance collaborations a complex terrain to analyse. The notion of collaboration through

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<sup>10</sup> Andile Sotiya is South African born dancer and choreographer and teacher who currently teaches at the Northern Contemporary Dance School in Leeds, United Kingdom.

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Triegaardt is a South African ballet dancer who became a Principal dancer for CAPAB in 1967. She was the Director of UCT school of Dance until 2007 and currently is the Executive Director of Cape Town City Ballet.

<sup>12</sup> The White Paper is a framework that informs legislation and provides guidance and information on specific societal issues; for example the White Paper 5 which deals with early childhood education.

the example of the *Growth Project*, will be examined through the writings of cultural theorist Richard Schechner (1991), feminist literary scholar Gayatri Spivak (2006) and Theatre Scholar Professor Ketu Katrak (2006). This is deliberate so as not to claim that all collaborations will suffer the same misfortune. Furthermore, this study will investigate how females from so called developed countries collaborate with females from so called developing countries. How do they negotiate their political, cultural and colonial heritage when undertaking collaborative dance production such as the *Growth Project*?

This study hopes to deepen arguments in subject areas such as Social Science, Cultural Studies, Postcolonial studies and Feminist studies and will strengthen South African Dance scholarship through insights offered. This it hopes to achieve by expanding investigations already explored in the above-mentioned disciplines. Mark Fleishman suggests

the possibility that performance constitutes an alternative way of knowing-both in respect of its representations but also with regard to its embodied practice. He suggests that performance as a knowledge paradigm is particularly appropriate to Africa and argues that it capitalises on our historical legacies and our particular niche advantage in the humanities (2009:116).

My research project has been motivated by the limited amount of scholarly research in the study of South African Dance itself. I noticed a multitude of writing in journalistic manner for example, programme notes, newspaper articles and biographical books to mention a few, which has been written by South Africans. However, I acknowledge a growing interest in Dance scholarship written particularly by South African dance scholars. More analysis of South African Contemporary Dance particularly in Contemporary Dance in the Western Cape needs to be undertaken. This study may therefore be able to address some of the gaps that may exist in knowledge of South African Dance. In addition, it wishes to provide an understanding of the very nature of collaboration through the lenses of my experiences, learning and participation in the *Growth Project*.

### **Positionality of the researcher**

After a brief career as a professional classical ballet dancer in the Western Cape, South Africa from 2007 to 2009, I embarked on the journey of teaching and dance education in the same province. In the past 10 years, I have taught learners and students in all three levels of the education systems: primary, secondary and tertiary represented in South Africa. My classroom is one that ensures an active exchange between teacher and learner and approaches the study

of Contemporary Dance with various pedagogical methods. I understand Contemporary Dance to be ever changing in nature and mirrored by life, politics and experience. Contemporary Dance can be powerful, healing and exhilarating. It is a physical and mental experience that should not separate the body and mind which in my opinion, is the basis from which creation takes place. It is therefore from the perspective of a gendered dancer and teacher that I engage in feminist and constructivist pedagogic approaches. In doing so I hope to assist in decolonising the South African dance classroom and dancing body. I deliberately question the way in which I was trained and should perform. This interrogation, I believe, ignited my curiosity about how teaching, learning and the dancing of and from the body are manifested.

I started my dance training at Silverlea Primary School in Athlone at the age of 8 years, a training which functioned in the same way as that of a community dance programme. I was trained there in Classical Ballet by Rebecca Hoffman. The Western Cape Education Department offered jobs for dance teachers at various schools to offer learners ballet lessons after school hours in 1991. These schools were primarily situated in Coloured<sup>13</sup> communities in the Western Cape. These communities were established as a result of the *Group Areas Act*<sup>14</sup> implemented during the apartheid era. Anyone attending a particular school which offered Dance and who was willing to dance could learn about dance but this was mostly in ballet. In 1996, at the age of 15 years, I began formal dance training, at the University of Cape Town (UCT) Junior Ballet School. It is here where my first understanding of Dance, particularly about ballet was shaped. My training at the UCT Junior Ballet School was under Dianne Cheesman.<sup>15</sup> My earliest memories of ballet are connected with the magical fantasy world of children's literature. In this fiction, the down trodden Cinderella lived. Much like Cinderella, I was confronted with the quality of my earlier training and compared it to the high standard of

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<sup>13</sup> Coloured is one the four racial groups in which the apartheid government placed the South African population during the apartheid regime.

<sup>14</sup> *The Group Areas Act* of 1950 declared neighbourhoods and districts for those population groups designated as black. Residents within the black racial group were uprooted from their homes and removed to new zones in places like Tramway Road in Sea Point or District Six in Cape Town. Their homes were bulldozed and black families were forcefully moved to other area. My father Peter Valentine who resided in Tramway Road in Sea Point were forcefully removed from their home and moved to Bonteheuwel at the age of 11 years.

<sup>15</sup> Diane Cheesman was a ballet dancer in the Performing Arts Council of Transvaal-PACT based in Pretoria, South Africa and later the ballet company of the Cape Performing Arts Board- CAPAB based in Cape Town. CAPAB was one of four Performing Arts Councils which the Nationalist Government established in 1963 to fund and administer the promotion of opera, ballet, theatre and music in each province. She was the Principal of the Junior UCT Ballet School for over 16 years. In 2005 she founded the Cape Junior Ballet. Cape Junior Ballet also known as CJB is concerned with development and training of ballet dancers between the ages of 11 and 17 years in the Western Cape, South Africa.

training I was receiving at the UCT Junior Ballet School. I was confronted with state of the art training facilities, expertise and a deep knowledge of the classical ballet style. Understanding the gap in my training, I worked hard to succeed and performed briefly with Dance for All Youth Dance Company and I am now a qualified dance teacher in Western Cape Education Department. Learning about ballet I thought would be the highlight of my existence. It was only during my undergraduate studies in Dance at UCT that I noticed my narrow view. I began to question whether the dance form ballet was the ultimate method to learn about Dance and style of dance performance.

From the onset of my training in Contemporary Dance, I questioned the views of Dance that I had developed as a little girl. Many of my questions delved into the process of dance making and the emotional depth required from a dancer. I marvelled at the level of the research undertaken by a choreographer. I was also curious about the impact the final product may have on audiences. I noticed contrasting and conflicting dance training methods that were being used to create Classical Ballet and Contemporary Dance. I want to reflect on my own experience of the process of dance making in Ballet and Contemporary Dance and to analyse whether ballet is a linear approach. Looking back, my understanding of dance was developed while reflecting on the skill ballet dancers seem to have to learn repertoire from video footage. I noticed their speed in placing that very same movement material onto their own bodies. Nowadays, I view this process of dance learning as mechanistic and dehumanising for the dancers' bodies. In my current view, ballet and the process of making ballet as I have experienced it, is manufactured and formulaic as if bodies, and thus people, are just silent numbers with no meaning to offer. I find the whole ballet making process that I was exposed to by Cape Town City Ballet having viewed rehearsal processes over a 4-year period as dance student in 2001-2004, cyclical and repetitive as if dance could be simply transferred onto a new body.

Contemporary Dance began to confront my narrow understanding of the body's ability to learn movement and express itself. I began to wonder what happens when South African bodies make dance. What is being exchanged between bodies for example, black and white bodies; male and female bodies; adult and children's bodies; or disabled and abled bodies. And, through my experiences in the *Growth Project* the same question remained, ie what happens when South African and Swedish dancing bodies meet?

My later training and experience in Contemporary Dance and the process of making dance has allowed me greater interrogation and research into finding authentic movement. Like Martha Graham<sup>16</sup> I strive for a balance between dance technique and freedom of expression, w dancer Marléna Adendorff (2001) who discussed this as the connection made between the mind (technique) and the soul (freedom) maintained that:

The real people, the non-dancing audience, cannot identify with something like that. They want to be included in the beauty that they are drawn into—they want to become part of it. It is our responsibility to find that balance between technique (the mind) and freedom of expression (the soul) (2001:3).

It is this connection that I feel is vital in creating dance. Contemporary Dance gave me an opportunity to explore and re-evaluate my understanding of Dance and the body and the way in which the body makes meaning and produces knowledge through the body. It is this journey that has ultimately allowed me to question why I do what I do, as a dance teacher and dancer of the Contemporary Dance form. The confrontation with how dance is made allowed me to further examine what is the relevance of ballet in South Africa today and how Contemporary Dance may be the tool to bring about social transformation. In this dissertation, I will attempt to untangle these questions through a re- assessment of the *Growth Project*. I do not wish to disregard my training and learning in the ballet class as I value my ballet training but, I still want to ask how that training has shaped my thinking about Dance. I hope to find these answers by firstly interrogating the nature of collaboration, particularly the *Growth Project* and then looking at my personal experience and involvement as one of the dancers in this project.

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<sup>16</sup> Martha Graham is regarded by many as the mother of American Modern Dance (Contemporary Dance in South Africa). She was born in 1894 in Pennsylvania and started her formal dance training at Denishawn at the age of 22



**Photo 1: Bernice Valentine and Grant van Ster in *I hit the ground running*. Photo credit: Oscar O’Ryan**

My continuous search for answers and understanding has enabled me to embark on postgraduate Studies in Dance Education at UCT since 2009. My curiosity as a young academic in Dance has shifted from Dance Education to Contemporary Dance. This journey of self-discovery has heightened my interest in dance research. This journey will be articulated in the next section where I will provide an overview of the history of Contemporary Dance in the Western Cape, through my lens as a female dancer trained in classical ballet in Cape Town.

## CHAPTER ONE: THE GROWTH PROJECT IN THE WESTERN CAPE AND SORMLAND SWEDEN

### Contemporary Dance in the Western Cape: a historical overview

This chapter will provide an overview of the history and development of Contemporary Dance in the Western Cape<sup>17</sup>, with some examples of Contemporary Dance development outside of this province, followed by a brief context of Contemporary Dance in Sweden. It is offered in order to contextualise the dance collaboration project undertaken by in South Africans and Swedish artists. I will also examine how South Africa's political history and Sweden's political history has shaped their Contemporary Dance and influenced the *Growth Project*.

At the time of the writing of this dissertation, South Africa is in its 22<sup>nd</sup> year of democracy and has had both successes and failures in its attempt to develop Dance and negotiate a distinctive South African Contemporary Dance. Dance and the arts in South Africa have been shaped by an apartheid and colonial history. Policies of separation based on race fuelled unequal development of certain groups of people as well as certain dance forms in South Africa. There are specific landmark years and events in South African politics. I will sketch a series of political and social events which have impacted on the development of Contemporary Dance in South Africa and the Western Cape in particular.

In 1948 the National Party came into power as the new government and its aim was to firmly establish apartheid ideology. Apartheid as I understand it, was a sophisticated and systematic approach to establish separate development. In order to entrench this system, the National Party propagated acts and established legislation that polarised South African people. For example, The *Population Registration Act* (1950) classified people into different racial groups according to their skin colour. The racial groups in South Africa were Whites, Coloured, Indians and Blacks. The last three groups I will refer to as black throughout this dissertation. The racial group black was on the lowest end of the hierarchical system and considered to be the most inferior group of all black racial groups compared with the Coloureds and Indians while whites

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<sup>17</sup> Western Cape is the largest province of the nine provinces in South Africa. It is the province famous for its port city Cape Town and the Winelands wherein historical towns like Stellenbosch, Paarl and Franchehoek can be found. It has a population of 5,822,734 of which 48.8% is coloured people.

were considered privileged and superior. Further polarisation was achieved with the implementation of The *Group Areas Act* (1950). Black racial group neighbourhoods and districts such as District 6 in the inner city or Tramway Road in Sea Point were declared White zones and people within the black racial group were uprooted from their homes and relocated to new zones in places like Athlone where Silverlea Primary is situated. Many homes were bulldozed and black families were forcefully moved to the Cape Flats. *District Six*, as mentioned above, situated on the edge of Cape Town's central business district (CBD) was a place which was both racially and culturally diverse. Within this diversity, music was an important part of the resident's sense of community despite their cultural, religious and racial differences. Forced removals enacted through the *Group Areas Act* encouraged the notion of Whites as the elitist group and disregarded that which would be considered African. This act not only segregated racial groups but also controlled where people could live and work and severely limited social interaction between races. For example, Durban<sup>18</sup> has one of the largest diasporic Indian populations outside of India in order for Indian families to travel overnight from Durban through Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State, they required a special permit to travel through this a kind of whites only province. This permit included a time constraint that controlled the time allowed to be spent in this city or province. This has bearing on how Indian dance could develop, where it could be performed, by whom and which audiences could view this form of dance. This example extends to multiple experiences of dance by all four race groups and the limits of social interaction will be discussed further in this dissertation.

Another one of apartheid's greatest tools was the control over black racial groups that was introduced by the *Separate Amenities Act* of 1950. This act demonstrated its power by prohibiting different racial groups to enjoy the same public spaces. In this way whites and black were not allowed to share the same beaches or cinemas. This law ultimately impacted negatively on the development of a unified South African culture and delayed the development of a cohesive South African identity. This in turn, stunted the growth of the performing arts and certain types of dance forms in South Africa. I will briefly discuss what may have impacted on this growth by firstly suggesting how the apartheid government drove

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<sup>18</sup> South African Indians are migrants from Colonial India. During the apartheid era, they were racially classified as black.

elitism and then comment on the international on-lookers who promoted change of the South African government's ideology.

The National Party ensured the provision and promotion of an elitist culture which was reserved for the white or Afrikaner.<sup>19</sup> White dance was classical ballet which was funded by the National Party and regarded as "high art". In my opinion high art is the type of art that is considered to be highly skilled, not a craft and associated with being cultured. It positions itself as superior. This had the effect of marginalising the indigenous dances of South Africa. This ideology is explained by Claire Craighead, when she wrote:

during the apartheid regime dance was under politicised and under problematised in relation to how it was used as a cultural weapon to denote racial ownership; so-called 'white forms' such as ballet were afforded much higher status than so-called 'black forms' such as *Ingoma* dancing (2006:22).

Ballet was the preferred dance form of the National Party government which was largely Afrikaner. It promoted this preference by providing ballet companies with huge budgets to promote an elitism and continue to separate itself from the black African cultures and indigenous dance forms. This ideology has flamed interesting debates about who is considered Black or who is considered African in today's South African society. This however is not being discussed in this dissertation.

Other events which stunted the growth of the performing arts was the cultural boycott which has its origins in the Anti-Apartheid Movement of the 1960s. This movement was established outside of South Africa by anti-apartheid activists and political leaders supportive of the banned African National Congress-ANC.<sup>20</sup> In an attempt to force change in South Africa, exiled leaders approached political leaders in Britain, The Netherlands and Sweden to refuse trade with South Africa. The de-investment in South Africa's economy was an attempt to squeeze South Africa and force political change in the country. Foreign countries were no longer prepared to import South African products. For example, Outspan Oranges were labelled "Beware products of Apartheid" (Samuel 2015). In addition, with the increased economic sanctions from all over the world, major companies like Volvo, a Swedish car manufacturer, withdrew their cars from the South African market. The Boycott which began in the economic

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<sup>19</sup> Afrikaner is an Afrikaans speaking White person living in South Africa with a possible Dutch heritage.

<sup>20</sup> The organisation was initially founded as the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) on 8 January 1912 in Bloemfontein, with the aim of fighting for the rights of black South Africans. The organisation was renamed the ANC in 1923.

sphere, eventually filtered into the performing arts. International artists began to refuse to visit or perform in South Africa to Whites only audiences depriving the South African society of performance. For example, Margot Fonteyn<sup>21</sup> demanded to perform to a mixed audience.

In addition, The *Separate Amenities Act* promoted the establishment of whites only theatres. In Cape Town, this was the Nico Malan Theatre which today is known as Artscape Theatre.<sup>22</sup> A whites only theatre permitted only white South Africans to attend its theatre and prohibited mixed audiences from attending theatre drama production, music production or dance productions. Black racial groups were accommodated in other theatres for example, the Luxurama in Wynberg, The Star in Central Cape Town, Alabama theatre in the Bo-Kaap<sup>23</sup> and Kismet in Athlone. Furthermore, the act restricted theatres and directors use of a mixed cast. Therefore, white and black dancers or artists were not able to perform on the same stage with some, notable exceptions such as the University of Cape Town <sup>24</sup>(UCT) Ballet.

Before I commence with a discussion of the development of ballet in South Africa, I wish to comment on how the above information may have informed Contemporary Dance and culture in the Western Cape in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In addition, I recognise that. Contemporary dance had partially developed as a response to ballet both in terms of the pioneers of Contemporary Dance and events of the 19th and 20th century. Further, in the South African context CD evolves as a movement to liberate the body from the strict forms of ballet and a context of apartheid. These notions will be further discussed as this chapter unfolds.

I have expressed in the writing above that ballet was the dominate concert theatre dance form and consequently the white dancing body was also perceived as the ideal. The training of dance and in particular ballet, was also deemed suitable for a selected body type, that is

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<sup>21</sup> Margot Fonteyn was born in 1919 and is regarded as one of the most famous of the English ballerinas of the Royal Ballet. She later received the title of Prima Ballerina Assoluta.

<sup>22</sup> Artscape Theatre first known as Nico Malan and opened in 1971. It was initially a whites-only theatre during the apartheid rule until South Africa became a democracy and was renamed Artscape in 2001.

<sup>23</sup> Bo-Kaap is known for its brightly coloured Cape Dutch style homes set along steep cobble stoned streets at the foot of Signal Hill in Cape Town. This township is home to those of the Muslim/Islamic community of Cape Town known as the Cape Malay. Cape Malay is the name given to this community of people as many of them are descendants of slave from Malaysia, Indonesia.

<sup>24</sup> University of Cape Town is South Africa's oldest university established in 1829 as the South African College School, a high school for boys. The University became a fully fledged university in 1918 when Albert Beit bequeathed money for further development of this university. Currently, the university has been struck, as have other SA universities, by student protest. Students are concerned about transformation of university policy with the #Rhodesmustfall protest and the affordability of university fees for so many impoverished students in the #feesmustfall campaigns.

the white skinned body and a skinny body shape. I then noticed how this aided the disempowering of the black dancing body and encouraged the objectification of black bodies. A typical ballet class at UCT in the early 1990s would have had little room for dialectic exchange in the process of dance making, and creative processes would have been instructive and authoritarian in style. This is all characteristic of an oppressive system.

Furthermore, I notice similar tensions surfacing when many students protested against what they see as oppressive colonial systems at universities during 2015. Amongst the concerns raised by the students is the issue of decolonisation; for example, the language of instruction by a university and the many symbols of colonialism displayed in higher education institutions such as architecture and art works. These offer evidence that even in South Africa there may still be a feelings of disempowerment experienced by some South Africans even as they live in a democratic and free South Africa.

The UCT Ballet School was established in 1934 under the leadership of Dulcie Howes,<sup>25</sup> when Prof W.H. Bell<sup>26</sup> provided her private dance school with rehearsal space at the South African College of Music.<sup>27</sup> This presented Howes and Bell with an opportunity for collaboration. Their very first collaboration with Bell as composer and Howes as choreographer was *The Enchanted Well* (Grut 1981). This was considered the founding performance of what was to become the UCT Ballet Company. The work was performed at the Little Theatre <sup>28</sup>on Hiddingh Campus<sup>29</sup> on 23 November 1934 (Greyling, 2011). The legacy of Howes' work, to produce performance of classical ballet of a high standard would give opportunities to talent, irrespective of race or colour. She proved to be formidable in this regard and throughout her leadership, both the ballet company and the UCT training programme earned the reputation for ensuring that opportunity for training and employment was open to all, despite the law of the time (Triegaardt, 2012:19).

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<sup>25</sup> Dulcie Howes was a ballet dancer, teacher and choreographer born in 1908 in Kleinbrak close to Mossel Bay in the Western Cape.

<sup>26</sup> Professor W. H. Bell was an English born musician and lecturer. He became the Dean of the Faculty of Music at the University of Cape Town in 1923. The SA College of Music library has been named after him.

<sup>27</sup> South African College of Music is situated on the Lower Campus and currently includes the School of Dance, and the Opera School.

<sup>28</sup> The Little Theatre is one of three theatres within the Hiddingh Campus of UCT and was established in 1931. This theatre seats 240 people.

<sup>29</sup> Hiddingh Hall Campus is where the Drama and Fine Arts departments of UCT are situated. The Campus includes the Hiddingh Hall Library which was the first library to serve the Drama and Fine arts students.

Marina Grut, author of *The History of Ballet in South Africa* (1981), celebrated Howes and wrote that, “Her organising ability has always been phenomenal and her achievements even after retirement amazing. To her, retirement meant working to have ballet accepted as a subject in Coloured schools, as well as travelling all over the country examining and lecturing” (1981:66).

The beginning of UCT Ballet was not as a professional company as dancers and staff were not paid for their public performance. During *The Sleeping Princess* season in the City Hall in 1962/3, UCT Ballet School announced the decision to become part of Cape Performing Arts Board (CABAP).

This tradition of employing black dancers initiated by Howes was continued under the directorship of David Poole.<sup>30</sup> CAPAB Ballet Company employed many dancers of colour including, Mzonke Jama, Kevin Muller, Sharon Paulsen, Christopher Kindo and Desiree Samai. In some instances, dancers of colour were granted reclassification of race or relocated after their training and found work overseas. According to Eduard Greyling:

It was through this special arrangement that the school was to some extent able to overcome the Apartheid restrictions imposed on South Africa at the time, and as UCT Ballet the company could perform to mixed audiences. Within this abnormal situation in which Ballet School and South Africa as a whole found themselves, students of all races were allowed to study at the School, but on completion of their training coloured dancers had to find work overseas. There were other instances where coloured dancers appealed to be reclassified as white in order to remain at home and work in South Africa (2011:4).

But, was this truly an attempt to eradicate racial segregation or an ongoing cover up of racial segregation? Some Coloured people could pass as white because they were lighter skinned or as dark skinned as some whites.

CAPAB Ballet Company received very extensive unlimited funding from the state to produce lavish productions at the Nico Malan Theatre. According to Jill Waterman:<sup>31</sup>

the audiences and artists were White with particular preference given to Afrikaners. Subsidies were large and ticket prices were low or free, so that houses could be filled with potential White voters who wished to build separatist aspiration towards European ‘high art’ theatre models-isolating people from valuing things African (2009:12).

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<sup>30</sup> David Pool was a South African Dancer, choreographer and company director in Cape Town. He started dancing at the age of 18 years and received his initial training at UCT Ballet School under Dulcie Howes. He was reclassified as white by the Nationalist government to assume leadership of the School and Company.

<sup>31</sup> Jill Waterman is a lecturer at the Witwatersrand University-School of Arts. She is a Dance consultant and historian. She was a programme coordinator and researcher in the Shuttle 02/99 exchange programmes.

Also in the 1980s, history tells of an increase in community development dance programmes throughout South Africa (Samuel personal communication 2015). This was driven by support from countries like Britain, France, Germany and Scandinavia which encouraged the development of such programmes to ensure social cohesion. Nation building was high on the agenda given the background of South Africa's divided past. Many South African dancers and dance teachers were influenced by the models and methods utilised by international dance practitioners from abroad. Dance Teachers in the United Kingdom established "Community Arts Movement" (Waterman, 2009:12) in 1960 which they now started in South Africa. In the Western Cape dance teachers teach at community art centres such as The Eoan Group<sup>32</sup> in Athlone and CAFDA (Cape Flats Development Association) in Grassy Park. In both these spaces dance was taught for enjoyment and recreational purposes and not necessarily as a pathway to the professional world of dance.

This was the beginning of a shift in ideology around "who had the right to dance professionally" (Waterman, 2009:12). However, it is important to note that international dance practice influenced local practice as well as increased support of the local dance industry. However, there was an imperial shadow of the North developing the poor South and a repeat of colonialism in Africa through Dance.

Throughout the research process for this section and in my discussions with leading dance makers and scholars, I noticed how culture and cultural activities form an integral part in the political transformation of a society. Ballet in South Africa benefited from an apartheid government. In this context it continues to define current dance and artistic trends. For example, ballet companies tend to largely reproduce their repertoire that was acquired in the apartheid era. These ballets still seem to appeal to largely those same White audiences. Black South Africans were prohibited in the apartheid years from gathering publicly to discuss politics and restricted in terms of artistic production, however this did not silence the many communities who challenged the political climate of the time. Many South Africans made use of theatre in their cultural protest against apartheid. Liane Loots,<sup>33</sup> wrote:

South Africa's theatre history is a good example of this. The 80's saw mainstream theatre spaces in South Africa full of the western imports of ballet, Broadway musicals and British theatrical farces that often had little bearing on the social turmoil of the apartheid years.

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<sup>32</sup> The Eoan Group is a community arts programme in Athlone, Cape Town. It primarily offers Ballet, Hip Hop and Contemporary Dance to coloured children in Athlone. It is the only community arts project which works from its own theatre – the Joseph Stone Auditorium.

<sup>33</sup> Liane Loots is Lecturer in Drama and Performance Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal,

In alternate spaces, a genre now defined as Protest Theatre emerged, where primarily black South Africans were speaking out against the oppression of the white Nationalist government that's denied them the right to participate in society they lived and worked in. (2001:10).

Furthermore, Loots explained, "Protest plays like WOZA ABLERT (1983), for example have become cultural icons of this history and are studied all over the world as examples of how cultural practice can comment and challenge a society" (2001:10).

In South African Dance, it could be claimed that protest work was also being created. Jazzart Dance Theatre found its origins in a jazz dance studio founded by Sonje Mayo in 1975. It was directed by Sue Parker from 1978 until 1982. It was during the period of Parker's directorship that the Sue Parker Jazzart Contemporary Dance Company was established (Sichel, 1998:398). The Sue Parker Jazzart Contemporary dance company was later directed by Val Steyn from 1982 until 1986. In 1986, the company was named Jazzart Dance Theatre and this name remains today under the leadership of Alfred Hinkel.<sup>34</sup>

Under Hinkel's leadership, the company was determined not to conform to the apartheid laws imposed on South African society. Jazzart Dance Theatre was recognised as a space where multiculturalism was celebrated through dance, to inform social and political change in South Africa. Hinkel's philosophy for this company was to intensify the movement for political transformation in South Africa. Hinkel as artistic director embodied the mission statement of the company. The company operated according to non-racial, non-sexist and democratic principles (Dembovsky, 1997:44). Hinkel achieved these ideals by engaging in a co-operative as opposed to an instructive dance making and training of dancers. His approach to teaching permeated the premise that everyone can dance, directly opposing the belief that the white ballet dancing body was the ideal for dance or to dance. He explained that he used "the natural pathway of the body, a technique involving release work and contact improvisation, incorporating Alexander teachings and the concept of 'pathways' evolved" (Dembovsky, 1997:45). In his choreographic work, *Bolero* (first version in 1976 last version performed at the 10<sup>th</sup> Baxter Dance Festival in 2016), a dance work set the music of Maurice Ravel, he continually challenged the ideology of apartheid by to pushing back the political boundaries of the apartheid system.

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<sup>34</sup> Alfred Hinkel commenced his dance training at the age of 10 years against his father wishes and had his initial training in Classical Ballet. In 1970 he began training at the UCT School of Dance for a short while before returning to Namaqualand where he grew up. His recent recreation of *Bolero* (2016) performed at the Baxter Dance Festival celebrated 40 years of the existence of this work.

*Bolero* traced the apartheid history of South Africa. Each version saw a change in the size of cast, the costumes and themes. However, the piece continues to use the music of Ravel. He encouraged dialogue between the dancers and choreographer and created an environment in which decisions were made jointly. This approach I believe, diminished the perception of the dancer as an object merely being manipulated by the instructions of the choreographer. Hinkel challenged social norms by not only using mixed race groups in his dance work *Bolero*, but also through diminishing male dominance over the female body. He encouraged females to lift males and female to lift females. His work was driven by an ideology of inclusion and cultural cohesion. He accomplished this by incorporating indigenous African dances like the Gumboot and Indlamu (Traditional Zulu Dance) in another version of *Bolero* (1976). Hinkel enjoyed working collaboratively. This was evident in the first version of *Bolero* (1989) which he created alongside Dawn Langdown,<sup>35</sup> John Linden<sup>36</sup> and Jay Pather<sup>37</sup> in 1989. Adrienne Sichel South African dance critic and writer refers to this group as the Collective when she wrote, “In the late 1990s this core collective of dancers, teachers and choreographers left Cape Town spreading their influences to other provinces of the country” (Samuel, 2015).

Langdown, Linden and Pather were instrumental in introducing the Jazzart Dance Theatre philosophy to their own companies and projects. Loots wrote that Pather’s work and process of dance making resisted the apartheid rule:

Perhaps contemporary dance, and specifically the work of Jay Pather, a choreographer who defies cultural stereotyping, made the Playhouse nervous in that Pather’s dance work and the process of training contemporary dancers (with his collaborative approach to choreography) cannot be defined as white, black or Indian – concepts and categories highly suspect in the monolithic racial constructions they imply (1999: 108).

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<sup>35</sup> Dawn Langdown is a Coloured Afrikaans speaking woman born in Namakwaland and trained in Contemporary Dance. She is a founding member of Jazzart Dance Theatre. Returning to O’kiep she established the Namakwaland Dance Company. She taught street dance workshops in Florida, USA for the Urban Bush Women under directorship of Jawole Willa Jo Zollar whom Langdown met while attending the Bates Dance Festival in 1996 (Sichel, 1998:399). She is known for her commitment to challenging political injustices of the apartheid era. She did this by creating dance works like *Ekanievatie* (1991) which in English means I can’t handle it and *Unclenching the Fist* (1994).

<sup>36</sup> John Linden Founding member of Jazzart Dance Theatre, Director of Dance Joint affiliated to Jazzart Dance Theatre and member of Garage and Western Province based Contemporary Dance company. He is the creator of *Pros and Cons of a Hitchhiking* performed at the 12<sup>th</sup> Baxter dance festival in 2016.

<sup>37</sup> Jay Pather is a South African Dance scholar, Associate Professor, Director of the Creative Arts Institute and winner of the UCT 2016 Creative arts award. He is a prolific choreographer and his work embraces interculturality, performance art in public space for example, name of two works *Cityscapes* (first conceived in 2002) and *Qaphela Caesar* (2010). He is currently the Associate Professor at the Gordon Institute of Performing and Creative Arts- GIPCA. Pather and his work in Contemporary Dance have continually challenged the political attitude South Africa found itself in.

Pather's work is acknowledged as political in nature, innovative and challenges not only theatre goers but the person working in street. He moved away from the conventional proscenium arch theatre setting and danced to the people in public spaces. Pather questioned the socio-political issues that challenged South Africans. Craighead wrote:

Pather's choreographic repertoire is impressive and since the inception of his *Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre* he has managed to engage contemporary dance theatre in process and practice as political. Recently, Pather has engaged what he markets as site specific dance theatre by creating dance theatre works that occur outside the confines of the theatre and take place in various urban and architectural settings. Through his political dance theatre and more recently his site-specific dance theatre works he has offered the discipline of contemporary dance theatre as a collaborative tool for socio-political critique and exploration (2006:23).

Pather continues to challenge the boundaries of conventional theatre and has inevitably enlarged the playing field for other choreographers. This challenges their creativity and also encourages fusion of dances and exposing non-theatre goers to dance. He expelled the notion of elitism and engaging interculturalism by integrating different cultures and dance forms. Craighead maintained that:

His works offer, rather than an amalgamation of eclectic movement and dance forms, a dialogue between these forms. He interrogates cultural ownership through dance, and his works often engage classical, traditional, street and contemporary dance forms. Thus, Pather's works are targeted towards a racially and culturally diverse audience as he does not engage any strict classical or traditional technique, but rather uses these techniques to create debate and raise questions around such issues as cultural ownership and racial streamlining in relation to the dance forms that he engages (2006:23).

One of the biggest disadvantages in my opinion of the apartheid system was the lack of exchange between cultures within the borders of South Africa. The polarisation of races inevitably left South Africans feeling detached from each other's culture practices and dance. Pather aimed to cultivate a need for exchange in this manner and can be compared to performance theorist Rustom Bharucha who wrote that "I would like to reflect on the river as a metaphor of cultural exchange in the larger context of intracultural interaction and interventions in theatre. By the 'intracultural' I mean those exchanges within, between and across regions in the larger framework of a nation" (1997:31). Bharucha's ideas in the context of the dissertation allows me to question how South African dancers and dance makers of different racial groups experience the Growth Project when they may be experiencing marginalisation or feeling silenced due to a history of disempowerment and inferiority for many black South Africans.

While all this was happening, anthropologist-dancer Sylvia Glasser a White South African female, founded Moving into Dance (Mophatong) (MID) based in Johannesburg in 1978. This Contemporary Dance company was a racially integrated company from the time of its establishment. Glasser like Hinkel and Pather, saw dance as an opportunity to resist the apartheid system and create a South Africa wherein different cultures could share their dance experiences. In her struggle to achieve this goal she committed herself to research and investigations into South African indigenous dances. Waterman wrote:

Combining her research with academic inquiry into dance anthropology, MID began to establish the new Afro-fusion Dance technique and choreographic style which is their trademark today. This Afro-fusion vision has moved South Africa into Post-Apartheid era, giving voice to many South African cultural traditions that were undervalued and suppressed [...] (1998:561).

From the 1960s, South Africa had looked to Europe and North America to guide the making of Concert Theatre dance in South Africa and the form and approach that became Contemporary Dance (Waterman, 1998). Glasser explained “My training in South Africa was in British-based ballet and American tap dancing. Later, periods between 1959 and 1984 I spent several years learning European National Dance and American Modern Dance as well as Creative Movement in England and North America” (1997:85).

Glasser’s vision for South African Contemporary Dance in the 1970s was different. Her Contemporary Dance vision was one that celebrated the indigenous dance of South Africa and gave a voice to those marginalised dance forms. She achieved this by bringing together Modern dance as she knew it and fused it with the indigenous dance forms in South Africa and termed this Afro-Fusion which serves to remind us how our cultural identity and dance is perhaps intermingled. Her influence has indeed impacted on dance in post-apartheid concert theatre dance in South Africa.

Following the first democratic election in 1994, there was an urgent move to readdress the political injustices. Within Dance, an environment was created that would encourage inclusion, cultural diversity and opportunity for all to dance. Contemporary Dance choreographers continued to question the nature of South African Contemporary Dance and search for a unique voice by exploring multiple cultural heritage and indigenous dances in their new works. Emerging dance choreographers particularly from MID, for example Vincent

Mantsoe,<sup>38</sup> talked of “freeing the spirit of our ancestors” (Friedman, 2012a:7) in his search for identity. Gregory Moqoma<sup>39</sup> in his search of identity celebrated the musicians of 1950s and 1960s in his dance work *Rhythm Blues* (2000). Dance works by female choreographers increased despite a resistance from a male dominant society. Black female choreographers such as Mamela Nyamza,<sup>40</sup> Dada Masilo<sup>41</sup> and Neliswa Xaba<sup>42</sup> continue to create ground breaking work exploring issues of identity and expressing their liberation from apartheid. Loots maintained that “performance dance has attracted far more numbers of women than men” (1999:111).

The identity of South African Contemporary Dance is continually being examined and debated. Platforms for discussion can be found in conference settings such as the biennial UCT School of Dance Confluences conferences, the annual Jomba Contemporary Dance Experience associated with the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and took place earlier at Shuttle 99<sup>43</sup> hosted at Witwatersrand University as well as in papers presented at numerous international conferences. Although dance scholarship in South Africa could be seen as being in its adolescent phase in relation to the range of scholarship emanating from the United Kingdom or United States of America, it has made meaningful inroads into overcoming the scars of apartheid and actualising the identity of South African Contemporary Dance. The shifts and changes, which Contemporary Dance makes, reveal the societal developments and challenges from the past, which perhaps continue in the present.

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<sup>38</sup> Vincent Mantsoe is a South African dancer and choreographer born in Soweto Johannesburg. He was awarded the Standard Bank Young artist ward in 1995. He started his formal dance training at Moving into Dance in 1990.

<sup>39</sup> Gregory Maqoma is another Sowetan born Dancer and choreographer. He stated his training in 1990 at MID. He became an internationally acclaimed choreographer working with PARTS- Performing Arts and Research Training in Belgium and collaborating with Akram Khan. He was appointed as the choreographer of the FIFA Soccer World Cup in South Africa in 2000. He is the founder of Vuyani Dance Theatre and is currently the Artistic Director for the Company based in Johannesburg.

<sup>40</sup> Mamela Nyamza was born in Gugulethu Cape Town and received a scholarship to Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre in 1998. Her dance works make commentary on Classical Ballet and the Female Body.

<sup>41</sup> Dada Masilo is a Classical Ballet and Contemporary Dancer born in Soweto. She received her formal training at the National School of the Arts in Johannesburg. As a choreographer, she confronts audiences with issues of homosexuality and race.

<sup>42</sup> Nelisiwe Xaba was a scholarship holder to the Rambert Ballet and Contemporary Dance School in London in 1990. She returned to South Africa in 1997 and is one of South Africa’s leading female choreographers alongside Nyamza and Masilo. She has an interest in multi-media and collaboration across the performing arts and media. Her work *Uncle and Angels* uses video projects live and pre-recorded and explores traditional dance forms.

<sup>43</sup> Shuttle 99 and 02 was a Danish and South African exchange programme which involved 20 projects in dance, music and art administration. It was funded by the Danish Centre of Culture, Danish Foreign Affairs and Danish Secretariat of Cultural Relations.

## Contemporary Dance in Sweden: An Historical Overview

This section will briefly discuss the development of Contemporary Dance in Sweden. It is intentionally brief and simply outlines the events since 1991.

The largest Contemporary Dance venture in Sweden is called Dansen Haus (this will be referred to as the House of Dance in this dissertation). This institution is situated in Stockholm and provides dance audiences access to national and international Contemporary Dance works in Sweden. House of Dance opened in 1991 and is located in the people's house at the Railway Square in Stockholm. The House of Dance is financed by public funds. (Rautenbaum, personal communication 2016).

Earlier than 1991, Contemporary Dance was performed by the Royal Swedish Ballet.<sup>44</sup> The company's repertoire incorporated a rich heritage of contemporary work including the work of Swedish born Mats Ek<sup>45</sup> who recreated Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake in 1987 for them. In 1995 Norrdans based in Harnosand in North Sweden was established. During the same year Skanesdansteatre was established as an independent dance company in Malmö. The intention of both institutions was to create ground-breaking modern work after almost four decades of ballet repertoire seen in Sweden. South African born Desiré Davids<sup>46</sup> became a guest performer for this company Skanesdansteatre in Sweden from 2002-2004 and for Marie Brolin-Tani, MBT<sup>47</sup> Dansteatre in Denmark.

Opportunity to train in Contemporary Dance in Sweden is offered at the recently founded Stockholm University of Arts. In January 2014 the University of Opera, Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts and University of Dance and Circus (DOCH) merged to found the Stockholm University of the Arts. It offers specialised undergraduate and post graduate degrees in Dance for candidates who wish to become professional performers and dance pedagogy for candidates who wishes to specialise in education and movement science.

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<sup>44</sup> The Swedish Royal Ballet is the oldest ballet company in Europe established in 1773.

<sup>45</sup> Mats Ek is known for his innovative reworking of popular traditional Ballets like Giselle and Swan Lake. This Swedish born choreographer has worked with *Cullberg Ballet*, *Nederland Dans Teater* and *Royal Swedish Ballet*.

<sup>46</sup> Desiré Davids was a principle dancer at *NAPAC Dance Company* in Durban after graduating from UCT Ballet School in 1990 with a Dance Teachers Diploma. She was co-founder of Boyzie Cekwana's *Floating Outfit Project* in 1997. Other South Africans dancing in Sweden with Davids at the time were Melody Puto and Belinda Nusser.

<sup>47</sup> MBT is a dance company under the directorship of Swedish choreographer Marie Brolin-Tani.

## Introduction of the *Growth Project*

In 1996 Lara Foot, current CEO and artistic director of the Baxter Theatre Centre in Cape Town, met Maria Weisby, Director of Scenkonst Sörmland. This meeting developed into a friendship. The two directors met as result of a cultural exchange between Stockholm State Theatre in Sweden and the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, theatres in which these women were employed. Foot and Weisby soon realised their common interest in theatre lay in challenges to society and politics that impact on theatre. They both believed that theatre could transform society. Seventeen years later in 2013, they decided to embark on a collaboration between the Baxter Theatre and Sckenkost Sörmland, which developed, into the *Growth Project*.

The Baxter Theatre Centre is responsible for the largest Contemporary Dance festival in Cape Town with Nicolette Moses<sup>48</sup> as its planning manager and producer. It is at this festival that choreographer Ananda Fuchs presented her commissioned work *Fragile falling* in 2012. Amongst the dancers in this work was myself. I was to later to perform under her direction in the *Growth Project* as discussed above. It is from this internal viewpoint that I will research the nature of postcolonial international dance collaborations/exchanges and especially what occurs when women lead collaborations in dance.

Fuchs spent 15 years as a dancer with Jazzart Dance Theatre. Her training includes Siwela Sonke dance training programme offered by the Play House Theatre dance department in Durban in the 1990s. With this as background, she was able hone the movement aesthetic and teaching methodologies she uses today. After 2 years, Fuchs returned to Cape Town where she became a freelance choreographer. In this environment, she was able to explore her interest in dance for film and produced her first dance film, entitled *Waitless* in 2009. Extracts from the dance film appear in her Baxter Dance Festival Commission Work *Fragile Falling Summer* and *Fragile Falling Autumn* in which pieces I performed solos. Fuchs is currently a Dance educator at Wynberg High School, where she uses improvisation and contact improvisation processes as a springboard for teaching and new choreography. Her dialogue approach engages the dancer's individual improvisation processes using words, pictures or movement as a stimulus to natural, organic or free-form movement.

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<sup>48</sup> Nicolette Moses received her ballet training in the UCT Ballet School afternoon programme. She later performed with Sharon Friedman's semi-professional Contemporary Dance company resident at CAP (Community Arts Project) in Woodstock. She has directed the Baxter Dance Festival since its inception in 2004. This Festival offers a platform for emerging and established choreographers and dance artists.

Tebogo Monnakgotla was the composer of the music for the *Growth Project*, and was raised in Sweden with her Swedish mother and South African father Benjamin Monnakgotla. Her father lived in Johannesburg and later fled to Zimbabwe after having being pursued as a political activist who had suffered the violence of apartheid in South Africa. He stayed in a refugee camp for one year, where he received a scholarship to study at the University of Uppsala in Sweden. Here he met Kerstin Lund who later became his wife. Tebogo Monnakgotla commenced her musical career as a cello teacher and later returned to study cello composition at the Royal Music School in Stockholm. Today she is a freelance composer working with various orchestras and ensembles across Sweden. She has a keen interest in poetry which she incorporates into her music. She is also a board member of the Swedish Arts Council.

Monnakgotla and Fuchs were the second layer of collaboration in the *Growth Project*. This aspect of the partnership highlights the process of music composition and dance making. The following section will give a detailed description of the performance of each part of the trilogy of the *Growth Project*. As each performance is described, I will highlight and provide details of how the collaboration grew and where new participants were introduced.

The *Growth Project* is similar to many women led dance collaborations. Examples that have occurred in South Africa are: *In Opstanding* (2016) choreographed by Johnstone and Thalia Laric in collaboration with composer Adrian More, Pianist Coila-Leah Ederstein and Soprano singer Robin Botha; *I stand corrected* (2012) a collaboration between dance specialist Mamela Nyamza and UK born theatre specialist Mojisola Adebayo. A male/female collaboration also existed as early as 1934 between Howes and Bell when they produced the work *The Enchanted Well* (1934), which is mentioned in Chapter One. Many traditional collaborations in dance as I understand, is the partnering of two or more institutes or dance companies or schools or organisations or persons. Some of these have been led by males for example *Cargo*<sup>49</sup> created by Mark Fleishman and Hinkel. I will use this to make some points of reference to discuss the process of collaboration and determine notions of success and failure. This may suggest a certain distinction between lines of authority, for example when children and adults or

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<sup>49</sup> Cargo is the product of a series of collaborations between Magnet Theatre (a physical theatre company directed by Mark Fleishman and Jennie Reznik) and Jazzart Dance theatre and its former Director Alfred Hinkel. Cargo was the 4<sup>th</sup> part of a series of productions which presented the stories and history of slavery in the Cape in dance and drama.

teachers and pupils collaborate. The Baxter Theatre and Scenkost Sörmland Theatre is a partnering of two theatres but in my view, this exchange has a unique approach given that it is female headed both at management and artistic or creation level. It had 3 parts exemplified in 3 works, *I hit the ground running* (2013), *Struck Silent* (2014) and *Adagio of a Hacked Life* (2016) and I will provide an outline of each part of this trilogy.

*Part 1: I hit the ground running*

The first part of the collaboration choreographed by Fuchs and called *I hit the ground running*. It premiered on the 29 August 2013 and ran until 7 September 2013 at the Flipside, Baxter Theatre. The Flipside is literally the backstage of the Main theatre at the Baxter. The audience views the stage from the flipside or the rear end of the main theatre’s stage. Performances of *I hit the ground running* (2013) continued in Sweden from 12-19 September 2013 and took place in various theatres such as Katrineholm, Eskilstuna Theatre, Oxelösund and the highlight for me the, Stockholm Stadsteater. *I hit the ground running* became a 45-minute production with a cast of five, Grant van Ster (male dancer), Shaun Oelf (male dancer), Leilah Kirsten (female dancer), Andile Vellem (male dancer), and myself. It included one dancer who was hearing impaired. A sign language interpreter was part of the production



Photo 2: South African Dancers and Swedish Musician. Photo credit: Oscar O’Ryan

The project made use of live music performed by 5 musicians Ása Karlberg (female/flute), Johannes Thorell (male/Saxophone), Camilla Arvidsson (female/ violin), Hanna Dahlkvist (female/ cello), Johnny Axelsson (male/ percussion). This music was composed by Tebogo Monnakgotla. Included in the project were the technical teams of the Baxter Theatre: Nicolette Moses – dance producer, Fahiem Stellenboom – Marketing manager, Libie Nel – Stage manager, Benever Arendse – Lighting designer, Marcel Meyer – costume designer, and Oscar O’ryan photographer and Videographer. From Scenkost Sörmland Annette Taranto – Researcher, and Margareta Brillioth – Producer and administrator.

*I hit the ground running* told the stories and effects of global economics on the individual as well as society. It concerned itself with the constant economic pressures under which we find ourselves despite our employment status; the hunger for success and financial pressures, which can leave the individual fragile and unable to keep up with, demands.

The audience enters and see dancers and musicians walking briskly across the stage. All the dancers and musicians walk holding black umbrellas. The audience hears the sound of pouring rain. In the centre of the stage is a male dancer lying on the floor dressed in a white shorts and vest-underwear. This was meant to suggest a vulnerable body. The dancers walk passed him without noticing him at first. The house lights dim signalling the start of the performance. The pace of the walking intensifies and the dancers begin to notice the half-naked body on the floor; the dancer struggles to get onto his feet and slowly manages to drag himself off the floor. The other dancers and musicians begin to clothe the dancer suggesting it was unacceptable to be fragile or needy. Each dancer or musician brought him an item of clothing until he was completely clothed in the same costume in which all the other dancers were costumed. The dancers and musicians wore black formal pants with white skirts, ties and a top hat. Throughout the work, layers of clothing were stripped off until the male dancers were seen only in white vests and underpants. The female dancers end up in short, shoe-string dresses.

This all occurs in the front of a non-traditional cyclorama which is made with tightly packed white umbrellas. A video recording of the dance piece shown at high speed and in reverse, symbolises the unravelling effect of unemployment on a person’s life.



**Photo 3: Costumes detail-Dancers in white underwear in *I hit the ground running*. Photo credit: Oscar O’Ryan**

The musicians were placed upstage right during this performance. Two Perspex chairs on which the female duet commenced were in front of musicians.

The movement vocabulary was inspired by walking, jogging and running motifs and fingers that were rubbing together suggested money. The action of rolling dice represented gambling and was inspired by sign language and everyday gestures when money is utilised. The high speed running action is performed in horizontal lines but does not move the dancers’ forwards or backwards. It represented the continuous striving for success which is ultimately in vain.

The scenario unfolds into a male trio which is an exploration of male strength. The male dancers gave and received each other’s weight in a contact improvisation styled work suggestive of males supporting males to achieve economic success. The contrasting female-male duet is symbolic of a fight that may exist amongst gendered bodies to achieve to equal success. The female duet is inspired by women in the 1950s who were striving to be the good wife but tripping up each other in the process. The two female dancers sit very close to each other on the Perspex chairs to lean in and whisper inwards to each other’s ears giggling, gossiping and fluttering their eyes. The male solo demonstrates a struggle of the inner emotions that some people face trying to negotiate economic pressure. The male dancer’s body kept falling to the ground and as if he had no control of his body.

## *Part 2: Struck Silent*

The second instalment of the collaboration was titled *Struck Silent* (2015). Fuchs as choreographer and producer teamed up once again with Monnakgotla as composer. This phase also introduced Grant van Ster as an assistant choreographer and not as dancer. The new dance work looked at responses by senior citizens to the impacts of retirement in relation to economics in Sweden and South Africa. The primary theme wanted to address retirement and unfulfilled dreams in an ever-growing pace of a global economy. *Struck Silent* (2014) once more made use of live music for the performance and included Åsa Karlberg (flute–female), Elemér Lavotha (cello-female), Jonny Axelsson (percussion–male) and dancers, Gunilla Hammar (Sweden, female dancer), Shaun Oelf (South Africa, male dancer), Thabisa Dinga (South Africa, female dancer).

The audience enters seeing the video recording of the earlier work *I hit the ground running* playing on a traditional white cyclorama. The three dancers sit utterly still watching the video in the first row with the audience, perhaps making reference to the past and looking into the future. Throughout this performance, the choreographer unpacks the themes by presenting pictures of the dancers walking along a river over small rocks and stones. A pair of shoes without a body can be seen walking through a forest. A small mobile device that looks like a black and white television also shows some footage of a disturbed television signal. It could be described as black and white snow effect the kind an old television would display when it was out of reach of a broadcast signal. Up stage right was a set of drawers on wheels which was moved around strategically throughout the piece. It had movable drawers which at first glance may appear invisible to the eye. The theatre technology as discussed seemed detached from the theme but with further consideration may suggest the feeling the elderly may hold towards their position in a fast-paced society and comments on their contribution to a global economy.

The music which was non-melodic classical sounds assisted the meditative quality of this work. The musicians were placed downstage left hardly made any contact with the dancers. This time the costumes were very simple. All three dancers wore pants and T-shirts made in a soft, stretch fabric with colours ranging from light brown to different shades of blue and grey. The costume stayed the same throughout the performance. The choreography consisted of a persistently giving and receiving of weight amongst the dancers. They moved with ease in and out of each other's personal spaces with grace. A curtain created a tranquil or flow of smooth

movement. The movement may have also suggested how they relied on each other or mothered one another. *Struck Silent* premiered in Sweden in Munktelstaden Ekstiltuna on 3 September 2015.

### *Part 3: Adagio of a hacked life*

The third and final instalment was called *Adagio of a Hacked Life* and was choreographed by Grant van Ster with music composed by Jonny Axelsson (Swedish percussionist). Both van Ster and Axelsson had been involved in this collaboration since its inception in 2013. Partnering with Axelsson on music composition was South African born percussionist Nceba Gongxeka. The work premiered on 17 February and ran until 27 February 2016 once again at the Flipside Baxter Theatre. This time it had three South African dancers – Mishkaah Medell (female) Shaun Olef (male) who had been dancing in the production since its inception, and Themba Mbuli (male). The music was performed by both the composers Axelsson and Gongxeka with Mattias Windemo (male-guitar) and Anette Kumlin (Female-Oboe). William Wenner Swedish born male was the lighting designer.

The audience enters hearing pre-recorded voices layered over each other. The words and sentences were sourced from an earlier research process involving responses of patients in rehabilitation centres diagnosed with stress and burnout. These centres were in South Africa and Sweden. The pre-recorded voices were spoken by the cast members in the four languages English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa and Swedish. The choreographer made use of a white cyclorama in a gauze-like fabric which created silhouettes of the dancers' bodies when they stood behind it. The cyclorama billowed forward and backward as if it was breathing deeply in and out. This effect was created with fans which were placed behind the cyclorama. At times the dancers' bodies fell into the billows as if they were resting on clouds.

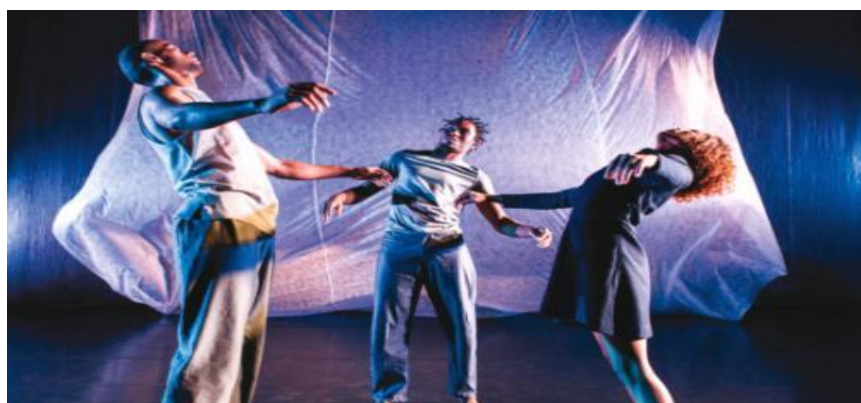


Photo 4: An aspect of Cineography- Billowing cyclorama in *Adagio of a Hacked Life*. Photo credit: Oscar O’Ryan

Upstage left was a 4-metre large chime made of glass or perspex tubes and a thick robe which hung from the roof and spiralled onto the ground. This chime was never used in the production. The male dancers were costumed in pants and T-shirt of different shades of grey, while the female dancer wore a navy blue long sleeved dress that could be described as contemporary, everyday pedestrian clothing.

All three productions made use of research as stimulus for developing movement themes and music cooperatively. This used groups of individuals from South Africa and Sweden who had participated in an interactive workshop. The workshops were conducted by Taranto and Fuchs and from their results, findings or outcomes, a joint artistic work was produced considering civil society's multiple perspectives on retirement and connections to global economy. The research process took place in Cape Town, as well as Eskilstuna. Taranto the researcher and workshop leader was responsible for guiding the research process. Each research workshop comprised two parts.

**Part 1:** a sample group was assembled in relation to the theme of the dance work being researched. This meant that in year 1 for *I hit the ground running*, a group of unemployed youth was assembled from an unemployment office across the region of Eskilstuna in Sweden and similarly across Cape Town. In the second year, retired citizens of both countries were consulted. The initial process of research required the entire ensemble; choreographer, composer and reference group to be involved in the interactive workshop process. In the first year and second years only, the composer and choreographer and reference group members were involved. In the final year, the entire cast of dancers and musicians attended and participated in the interactive workshop process.

The aim of the interactive workshop was to stimulate a dialogue not only between the artistic team that comprises the artists, composer and choreographers, but with reference group members. The dialogue would stimulate stories, feelings and perceptions of unemployment, global economy and retirement. The process was devised to ensure that responsibility and accountability for the experiences and stories of the unemployed and aged could stay as authentic and true as possible. The participants engaged in activities that allowed them to create storyboards, diagrams and pictures. The visual material was then translated into movement and then dance.

**Part 2** involved a co-creation of music and dance movement in this part of the process the dancers and choreographer created further dance movement parallel to the musician and composer creating the music. New material would be sent back and forth to the dancers and the choreographer and musicians and the composer in each of their respective countries. This process continued until a month before the first performance. One month prior to the first performance, the entire ensemble rehearsed at the same venue – the Baxter Theatre. This process ensured a continuous development and fine tuning of dance and music towards achieving a final product. It is fitting then that this *Growth Project* rests under the broader theme of ‘Growth’, and knits together each of the 3 works. This was the model used by both choreographers and all composers in all three productions.

Chapter One has attempted to provide a background to the *Growth Project*, giving insight into the position of the researcher and her concerns about Contemporary Dance in South Africa today. In this way, it lays a foundation for an interrogation into the nature of collaboration and the complexities of collaboration given the postcolonial and apartheid histories of South African and Sweden. It begins to highlight the possible impact of power relationships within a society between its cultural groups and asks what encourages the formation thereof. The chapter has opened an interrogation of gendered artistic collaborations, specifically dance collaboration. The next chapter will make further inquiry into the influences of patriarchy on dance and feministic approaches to artistic collaborations.

## CHAPTER 2: INFLUENCES ON CONTEMPORARY DANCE AESTHETICS IN THE WESTERN CAPE AND SOUTH AFRICA

How is the aesthetic of Contemporary Dance in the Western Cape been affected by collaborations? Much has already been written about African dance forms fusing and the hybrid nature of South African contemporary dance (Glasser, 1997; Loots, 2006) Can the nature of dance collaborations be understood through questions of gender? As a result of my personal involvement in the *Growth Project* discussed earlier, I am troubled by questions such as: how does being female<sup>50</sup> influence power dynamics in dance collaborations in the 2000s? Further, what happens when Third world women continue to struggle or to break free from a position of voicelessness when they engage in collaborations such as a dance project? The term Third world I consider as a response to Chandra Mohanty<sup>51</sup> when she wrote,

feminist women in the U.S. to describe the appropriation of their experiences and struggles hegemonic white women's movements, colonisation has been used to characterise everything from the most evident economic and political hierarchies to the production of a particular cultural discourse about what is called the 'Third World'(1984:333)

Furthermore, how does a legacy of their marginalisation impact on performing arts practices in the Western Cape today? What forms and methods of dance making do women apply when attempting to disclose their inner landscape<sup>52</sup> especially when dance collaborations are examined? This chapter will investigate the negotiations of power, gender and otherness by considering hooks (1991, 2013), Spivak (2006) and Katrak (2006, 2011), in an attempt to interrogate how these theoretical frameworks, support or tear down notions of femaleness through dance collaborations. I begin by looking at questions of power, and patriarchal culture and its impact on Dance.

My review of literature is weighted in two theoretical spaces: patriarchal culture discussed in Chapter Two and Gender Studies discussed in Chapter Three. It will examine theories and

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<sup>50</sup> Being female in this instance does not refer to the physical bodily traits that distinguish women as female and man as male but in this case, refers to how females are socially constructed into women and therefore the female bodies are constructed into the female dancing body creating a specific way of moving and performing dance that is identifiable female.

<sup>51</sup> Chandra Mohanty is a post-colonial feminist writer. She is a professor of Women and Gender Studies at Syracuse University.

<sup>52</sup> Inner Landscape as I understand it is the space, feelings creative inspirations, ideas and emotional responses that have been nurtured in us through past experiences.

ideologies imbedded in these two areas of study and demonstrate how such knowledge informs Dance Studies and particularly the female dancing body.

## **Understanding patriarchal culture**

I begin by providing a definition of patriarchal culture and show how it permeates dance and particularly the notion of female dancing bodies in South Africa. bell hooks<sup>53</sup> (2013) argued that patriarchy is a social and political system that considers one gendered group as superior and everyone else as weak. She explained that this ideology has both psychological and emotional effects on the subordinate gender group as well as the dominate gender group. hooks argued:

Patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence (2013:1).

This system encourages development of identities that prescribe gendered behaviour according to the values and beliefs of patriarchal ideals. Furthermore, it polarises gender roles within a society and creates certain expectations for masculine and feminine behaviour (Lipman-Blumen, 1984) which is problematic. These polarised attitudes and behaviour can be labelled into two categories: male and female each with its own psychological traits. This, hooks claims, stems from, several positions including: family systems, sites of work and political roles. Jean Lipman-Blumen,<sup>54</sup> suggested that:

For example, the traditional female gender roles include expectations for females to be passive, nurturing, and dependant. The standard male gender roles incorporate alternative expectations—behaviour that is aggressive, competitive and independent. Women as mothers, nurses and teachers, men as doctors, generals and legislators are part of the pattern (Lipman-Blumen, 1984:2).

The polarisation of attitude and behaviour of males versus females is maintained by assigning different tasks to each gendered role and one notes with concern the infrequency with which the same task is assigned equally to each gendered role. This creates and recreates the imbalance of power amongst males and females and demonstrates how male dominance can

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<sup>53</sup> bell hooks is the pen name of Gloria Jean Watkins. She is an American feminist writer and author of the *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre* (1984).

<sup>54</sup> Jean Lipman-Blumen is a professor of public policy and organisational behaviour.

operate over females. The male-female relationship has been demonstrated in this way for centuries as we can see from Lipman-Blumen's book. Lipmann- Lumen maintained:

The relative roles and positions (statuses) of women and men in society, their different responsibilities and privileges and their unequal control over societal resources point to a major power difference between them. Throughout history, this power differential between men and women has been attributed, with varying weights, to biological and environment. Few deny the possibility that sex-gender systems, with its underlying power dynamic, was originally set in motion by important genetic differences between men and women. Disparities in size and strength as well as women's childbearing and lactating capacities, formed the cornerstone of gender system (Lipman-Blumen, 1984:4).

And argued further that:

[...] the male-female relationship models power relationship, suggests that this relationship is the blueprint for all other power relationship. It is the model for power relationship generated from economic class (rich and poor), race (white and black), and imperial powers and their colonies and developed countries and less developed countries (1984: 5).

Furthermore, patriarchal culture and its ideology is entrenched in the development of children through stories. For example, children's literature is loaded with the notion of the damsel in distress Janine Lewis<sup>55</sup> explained this notion, when she argued that fairy tales portray females as weak needing rescuing from strong men, such stories perpetuating male dominance. Lewis wrote:

feminine identity found in fairy tales speaks to the princesses who are, without exception stunningly beautiful, but more than not presented as emotional, sad, lonely whimsical and unrealistic or in fairy-tale terminology 'enchanted. The princesses' malady is such a handicap that the male who is willing to take her as his wife, is generally offered half the kingdom thrown into the bargain (Lewis, 2012:246).

The way concert theatre dance was made in South Africa during the apartheid era and even in ballet performed by Cape Town City Ballet (CTCB) today, in my view, replays gender norms and patriarchy. For example, CTCB's the performance of *Cinderella* in (2014) first choreographed by Veronica Paeper in 1975 as well as *Romeo and Juliet* (2016) performed by Joburg Ballet and choreographed by Nicolas Beriosov/ Edgardo Hartley/ Lorna Haupt.

### **Patriarchal culture and power displays in dance**

The literature I have reviewed has allowed me to assert that patriarchal culture is deeply entrenched in some dance. This statement is supported by dance scholars such as Deborah

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<sup>55</sup> Janine Lewis is part time lecturers in the Drama and Film Faculty of Tshwane University of Technology.

Jowitt<sup>56</sup> who claimed dance reflects culture and argued that “western theatrical dancing ... has always been responsive to current trends. At its most profound, like the other arts, it reflects aspects of current world picture” (1988:8). Dixon-Gottschild (2008) claimed that the body not only reflects society like a mirror but also remembers and absorbs it. Dixon-Gottschild wrote:

The body remembers, the body re-members. The body speaks. The body tells us what is valued in the culture. Bodies are mirrors that absorb, remembers and reflects society’s politics, art, religion, aesthetics, hopes, fears, strengths, failings- both the officially sanctioned versions and the sub-rosa, closet taboos. Bodies are barometers measuring the pulse society (1997:3).

In addition, I will provide examples from Sally Banes<sup>57</sup> to support my claim. Banes argued, “whether on stage or in social life, dance is a mirror or a microcosm where the workings of culture, everyday life and even government are actively registered from above on passive bodies below” (1994:44). To begin with, the notion of dance as a mirror of culture and society is presented by Jowitt. Jowitt considered in what way culture displayed in dance. She claimed that dance is indeed reflected in culture or can be seen as an outcome of culture and argued, that “dancing and dancers do not produce culture but are products of it” (1988:8). Banes on the other hand does not argue with Jowitt’s claims, but wishes to extend this notion by adding that even if the body reflects cultures, it is not fixed or passive in its re-presentation of culture as the body can effect change (1994: 46). If dance theorists assert this knowledge, how does dancing affect change in society? Not all culture and all trends found in a society are patriarchal and gender biased. I wish to stress this notion to show how dance in some cases can be interpretative of society’s trends like patriarchy and gender inequality. In so doing I will investigate some dance writing which uses these trends to provide evidence in this regard.

Cynthia Novack<sup>58</sup> explained that in early theatrical dance forms dance and particularly ballet perpetuates the notion of patriarchal discourses. She wrote that in ballet like the fairy tales “representations of women as fragile creatures [are] supported by powerful men” (1993:43). This one can observe when the female ballet body was being manipulated by the male ballet dancer. It is the male who lifts the female and carries her body as if she is a damsel in distress. It is as if women needed to be portrayed as the weaker counterpart in society and as someone

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<sup>56</sup> Deborah Jowitt is an American dance critic and author. She authored *Time and the Dancing Image* published in 1988

<sup>57</sup> Sally Banes is the author of *Writing Dancing in the Age of Postmodernism* (1994) and *Before, Between and Beyond: Three Decades of Dance Writing* (2007). She was the former president of the Society of Dance History Scholars and the Dance Critics Association.

<sup>58</sup> Cynthia Novack is an anthropologist and dance writer. She is an assistant professor at Wesleyan College.

not able or capable to help herself. She needed to be helped (by men) and supported in her dance too. This stereotype continued to represent the male as powerful and dominant and showed that “men virtually always lift and manoeuvre women, embodying strength and exhibiting control [of] the more fragile [...]” (Novack, 1993:43). This has prompted me to question whether this dominant versus submissive role has actually changed in the 21st century and/or has the way in which dance that is produced and created by males and female dancers-choreographers changed? In addition, debates around the representation of women in Contemporary Dance continues. For example, when British choreographer Akram Khan<sup>59</sup> speaking at the premier of his new work *Until the Lions* (2016) at the Roundhouse in London, commented that the number of female choreographers should not be increased “for the sake of” (Jennings, 2016), he received criticism for what some would describe as a sexist remark.

Luke Jennings (2016), a dance critic in Britain, responded to Khan’s statement by challenging the following concerns: He questions whether Khan is aware or chooses to disregard the gender imbalance in the British dance industry. Jennings explained that British female choreographers are less favoured and easily passed over for commissions. He elaborated and explained that no female choreographer has been commissioned to stage a Ballet at the Royal Opera House since 1990. In response to Jennings concerns Khan explained that he agrees and recognises the topic as a valid concern for British dance but further explained that the ratio of male: female choreographers has fluctuated across time.

Elizabeth Dempster<sup>60</sup> expanded Novak’s viewpoint when she wrote how early Contemporary Dance in the United States of America (USA) attempted to resist the dominance of male dance artists of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Modern Dance in the USA and Europe began to question the emphasis of spectacle and virtuosic displays in the theatrical dance of the time and explored alternate ways in which the body could move and the approaches to dance making or choreography. Women dance artists such as Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller, and Ruth St Denis wished to express the dancing body as a dance that was “moving from the inside out” (Cohen in Dempster, 2010:230). Cohen claimed that “For the modern dancer, dance is an expression of the interiority: interior feeling guiding the movement of the body into external form” (Cohen in Dempster, 2010:230). Dance was also experiencing an emancipation of the ideology that women and female dancing bodies had to behave and move in a certain manner for

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<sup>59</sup> Akram Khan is of Bangladeshi descent and trained in Classical Kathak and Contemporary Dance. He resides and works as a dancer and choreographer in Britain. He established the Akram Khan Company in 2000.

<sup>60</sup> Elizabeth Dempster is a lecturer in Performance Studies at the University of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia.

example, movement that was characterised by a notion that women are naturally weak and not able to display movements in a virtuosic or powerful manner as men did. Women and women dance artists alike were mobilised to break down the societal boxes in which they were confined. In American and European Performance and Dance, and likewise in society, women began questioning and confronting how the female body was being suppressed through dance. Women dance artists expressed movements that liberated the body and changed the way in which we view dance today. Dempster examined Martha Graham's work and the work of Duncan, Saint Denis and Fuller whose approaches to dance making were inspired by changing the societal expression of 'the feminine' and notions of women as weak. Dempster wrote:

Graham's location of 'the feminine' may seem uncomfortably close to the space ascribed to the body, women and dance within patriarchy. Her choreographies however, represent the inner world as a dynamic, outward-flowing conflictual force, 'the feminine' is not passive but voluptuously and sometime violently active. It is the force which shapes the outer world. Grahams work reflects the psycho analytical preoccupations of her time [...] (Dempster, 2010:231).

The many gendered dance writers and scholars such as Dempster (2004), Novack (1993), Dixon-Gottschild (2008) and Burt (2007) supported the early notions of dance makers such as Duncan, Saint Denis, Fuller and later Graham who had criticised the persistent male dominance in dance. Their writing critically examined gendered roles in ballet and in Contemporary Dance and asked vital questions about the imbalance of power that existed in male-female relationships in dance.

An alternate way of moving during the Victorian era, which may be considered the beginnings of Contemporary Dance as we know it today, perhaps disturbed this norm established by Classical Ballet as concert theatre dance of this era. This alternate form of movement was considered radical. My interrogations of writing by dancers and choreographers of this period whose rebellion against the norm was expressed in choices of the costumes worn by dancers, the way in which the body moved and expressed movement or as Saint Denis' fascination with east, informs my opinion that Modern Dance confronted the representation of females in the Victorian era. The manner in which women were to be clothed or should move represented for some people a radical shift in thinking. Would Graham's choice in wearing dresses support women's suffrage? Would this choice in costume for her dances change stereotypical ideas

during the Post-Victorian era? Catherine Cabeen<sup>61</sup> addresses this idea when she wrote “Graham’s embodiment of a liberated female body connected power directly to beauty and maintained such traditional costuming. Her heroines almost always wore dresses” (2008:29). This suggest that Graham deliberately choose to be more female, a more powerful female and a more athletic female. In America, the wearing of pants only became acceptable in the late 1920s (Cabeen 2008:29). I suggest, and I am of the opinion that had Graham choose to wear pants as costume she would further challenge stereotypical notion of a passive female during the post Victorian era. I consider wearing pants a way to further challenge and influence the emancipation of women in society and dance practices. Furthermore, I question whether South African Contemporary Dance work continues to shift stereotypes that existed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Is the work of 21<sup>st</sup> century South African choreographers like Nyamza or Xaba as radical in terms of costume? What was the role of male choreographers such as Ted Shawn, Rudolf Laban and Lester Horton? These male choreographers and dancers also contributed to disturbing social constructs and the fixed social norms of the time. For example, one of Shawn’s goals were to advocate for more male dancers to enter the profession.

### **Patriarchal culture and its influence on contemporary dance in South Africa**

The review of literature thus far suggested that central to patriarchal systems is not only how sexes become polarised and dominated, but also how patriarchal systems operate across language, race and culture. Therefore, the question arises—how might such systems be operating in the Third world developing countries like South Africa? Is it the very notion of development itself a patriarchal construct? The term ‘development’ seems to suggest that certain parts of world need the help of other parts of the world to develop towards some kind of ideal that is considered acceptable. Liane Loots further elaborated on this point when she claimed:

Development is a term that often refers to various ideas and practices that have been premised upon the belief that some areas of the world are “developed” (the United Kingdom, Europe, United States) and others are not (Latin America, Africa etc.) ... In short, they should be more like the North (2009:295).

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<sup>61</sup> Catherine Cabeen is a former member of the Martha Graham Dance Company. She is the Artistic Director of Hyphen which she founded in 2009

The above quote prompted me to investigate the power dynamic, of First World or developed nations and Third World or developing nations and to seek how collaborations between these two worlds as highly charged cultural spaces could be negotiated. Dance scholar, Lynne Maree shares Loots' ideas and argued that "European literature, music, drama [and dance] all are permeated with notions of 'us' and 'them'" (Maree, 1997:145). The issue of development of the Third World nations as having to be developed by First World nations is being widely critiqued in scholarship from many research fields such as Dance Studies, Chatterjea (2001), Theatre Studies (Katrak 2006, 2011) and Gender Studies, Chandra Mohanty (1984). Leading Contemporary Indian dance choreographer, Chandralekha's work is analysed by Chatterjea when she negotiates the notions of development and expands the argument of Loots (2009) and Maree (1997) by questioning the development of a separate dance aesthetic for a developing nation. She problematises how this aesthetic is informed and imposed by developed nations, she argued that "Being inheritors of colonial structures and institutions of education, language, liberal values and perhaps even notions of aesthetics, we cannot overlook the mediation of the West in shaping our approach to our tradition arts. Problems of revivalism, nostalgia, purity, exclusiveness, conservation, preservation need to be examined" (2010: 73).

In saying so, is Chatterjea suggesting that there is a different aesthetic operating in each world? If so in what manner does this aesthetic currently operate? It is my opinion that a Third World aesthetic is shaped by a historical and political past. South African society is currently positioned in a post-apartheid setting where a primary concern is transition, or a striving to come to terms with a racially and culturally divided past. This continues to resurfaces in the present. It is the stories of South Africa's past that will manifest themselves in both the performance and making of Contemporary Dance. For example, the collaboration between Hinkel and Fleishman that was inspired by the resurfacing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century of the physical remains of Cape slaves buried during the colonial era / 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> century in South Africa, resulted in a work entitled *Cargo* in 2007. This collaboration is a haunting of the past that will not be silenced in the case of the present. Fleishman asserted that the performance of *Cargo* was a "process of remembering, one way of making the silent dead speak, because performance is connected to both time and silence in key ways" (2011:10). *Cargo* places into perspective the many absent stories of South African lives which the performing arts and dance can choose to ignore, or can incorporate into new dance making and productions. It

speaks to a past that was silenced but is now surfacing at a time of societal transition and cultural transformation.

This is one example of the process of South Africa's transformation and it will assist in a post-apartheid vision for which many are searching. A list of choreographers includes Dada Masilo, Sello Pesa, Fana Tshabalala, Gregory Maqoma and Vincent Mantsoe. I wish to question whether the reflection of our multiple cultures and the many diversities in our dance forms and styles, which may or may not look like Contemporary Dance to some, has power and can resist stereotypes? Is the South African dance community not able to accept the transition that we find ourselves in? What will allow for the exposure of many voices such as female voices which may have been silenced in the past? Furthermore, how are women dance-makers in South Africa impacted upon by patriarchal attitudes and behaviour? Craighead explained that the development of dance in South Africa has also been strongly influenced by protest theatre and the High art versus Low art culture debates and argued:

in South Africa [development of dance] has often been overshadowed by what in this context has been labelled protest theatre.<sup>62</sup> Apartheid and its severe imposition of the notion of separateness meant that black/white dichotomy was fuelled by an ideology discourse that violently placed White on a pedestal and Black at the base. Similarly, when one investigates the history of dance in this country, it emerges that high art/low, popular art dichotomy is a reinvention of the abovementioned Black/White Dichotomy (2007:22).

In a South African context, dance forms such as ballet was the privileged dance form and other dance forms like African indigenous dance forms were considered less valuable. Sylvia Glasser<sup>63</sup> together with Seónagh Odhiambo<sup>64</sup> investigated and wrote:

My research raises questions about unstated hierarchies between dance traditions. I am exploring transnational and transracial views of women's dance history as seen through Kenya Luo and Doris Humphrey dance in choreography. Their juxtaposition underlies the presence of false hierarchy that places concert dance, in this this "Western" form, at a higher end of a spectrum and "folk" dance, in this case "African" form, at a lower end [...] (2005:106).

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<sup>62</sup> Protest theatre used the medium of theatre to express dissatisfaction with political or social issues. This was especially used in South Africa during the apartheid era.

<sup>63</sup> Sylvia Glasser is a South African dance scholar and anthropologist. She is considered to be an early pioneer of South African Contemporary Dance. (Together with Jeannette Ginslov, specialising in dance for screen and studying towards her PHD at South Bank University and Tossie van Tonder writer of Nbonke published in 2013) She choreographed Transformation (1991) a dance work inspired by the belief systems, Trance Dance and rock art of the San people of South Africa. Her dance work Threads (2015) reworked in collaboration with Lebo Mashile focussed on gender relationships and cultural identity. Glasser pioneered the term Afrofusion.

<sup>64</sup> Seónagh Odhiambo is an Associate Professor at California State University, Los Angeles who teaches Dance and theatre pedagogy. She is the founder of Asava dance company (2010)

Glasser claimed that:

At both popular and informed levels amongst my colleagues in the dance community I still come across the attitude that “African Dance” is easier, simpler, less skilled than Western ballet or contemporary dance. Thus a number of prominent professional figures in the dance community have stated in the public that classical ballet is the basis of all dance training, because with a classical ballet training you could “do” African Dance, but if you had only been trained in African dance you could not “do” ballet (1997:83)

However, Maree extended this viewpoint when she argued, “South Africans still never doubt the universality of their culture: they don’t understand that ballet too is form of ethnic dance” (1997:145). This statement was first considered by Joann Kealiinohomoku <sup>65</sup> (1983) when she explained that dance reflects ethnicity and culture. Kealiinohomoku claimed that, “By ethnic dance, anthropologists mean to convey the idea that all forms of dance reflect the cultural traditions within which they developed” (1983:33).

I consider this to be a vital discussion when reflecting on how the world views South African dance and how South African dance writers negotiate their aesthetics in the global and local context. If all dance forms in South Africa could be considered as ethnic dances, then ballet that was positioned as high art would step down and takes its place on a level playing field with all the other so called dance previously labelled as South African cultural forms. Furthermore, this argument can also open up questions of the role of male and female creators of dance. In many traditional African dances, such as the Indlamu (a Zulu dance form in South Africa), and Domba (a socio-traditional dance form emanating from Zimbabwe) many dances are earmarked to be performed by specific genders only (and seldom a mixture of gender). A multifaceted renegotiation of access to dances for both genders could arise from this consideration. This study does not make provision for investigating these complex gendered roles in traditional African dance. The above notions of development, racial polarisation, certain forms of dance as privileged, all dances including ballet as ethnic dance forms, reflect the many ways in which dance scholars, choreographers and dancers negotiate dance located in patriarchal frames.

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<sup>65</sup> Joann Kealiinohomoku was an Anthropologist and some of her most interesting work in my opinion is the article referenced in the Bibliography of this dissertation.

## Women and the South African dance aesthetics

The question, what is an African and/or a South African Contemporary Dance aesthetic, has troubled many South African and international dance practitioners and theorists. The topic African Contemporary Dance has been investigated at many conferences in South Africa since the mid or late 1990s, for example Shuttle 1999 (see Chapter One for discussion), Confluences<sup>66</sup> in Cape Town since 1997, the 7<sup>th</sup> annual *Jomba* (as discussed in Chapter One) Contemporary Dance Festival in Durban in 2004. In my view, the problematic term 'South African Contemporary Dance' stems from the notion of 'us' and 'them' (explained earlier in this chapter) as well as the understanding that for dance to be considered 'good' it must conform to dance in the developed nations. This issue stems from South Africa's cultural isolation during the apartheid as well as colonial era. At the point of writing this dissertation, university students are currently fighting our colonial history in a desperate search for transformation. Also given the rich cultural diversity and the fact that dance is so imbedded in cultural activities and way of life that this makes the space of decolonised dance difficult to define and achieve. Defining a South Africa aesthetic is problematised by the large size of our population in comparison to smaller populated countries like Sweden.

*Jomba* and the other conferences mentioned above, provide dance scholars and makers a further platform to negotiate and discuss the thorny issue of South African Dance aesthetics. These events debate the term African Contemporary dance as it was used in developing countries and particularly by African scholars like Patricia Opondo (2006), Jay Pather (2006), Maqoma (2006), Hayley Kodesh (2006), Loots (2006), Craighead (2006) and Gilbert Douglas et. Al. (2006). South Africans discuss and debate these issues and their concerns were collated into the special edition of the *Critical Arts Journal* in 2006, all in an attempt to provide insight into this complex topic.

Pather, emphasises that the understanding of 'us' and 'them' results from the colonial practices so deeply entrenched in the South African society and that South Africa is not able to distinguish between that which is African and that which is Western practice. Pather argued, "even because we speak in English, the onslaught of the West has penetrated us so deeply, so to speak, that it is hard to figure out which is the West and which is Africa"

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<sup>66</sup> Confluences is a biennial international dance conference hosted by the Dance School at UCT since 1997. Confluences 8 held in 2015 was themed, Negotiating Contemporary Dance in Africa.

(2006:10). Furthermore, this deep penetration as termed by Pather, claimed that South African is conditioned to define itself, its society and culture and therefore its dance by looking to others. Pather further suggests the position of 'other' in which developing countries, like South Africa are placed, does not allow colonised nations to interpret what it means to be contemporary on its own terms. When something African is attempted, he argued, it is merely "a dialogue between a contemporary choreographer and traditional dance and ritual" this is then considered a Contemporary African Dance tradition but in fact is largely only a response to the idea of being contemporary.

Mohanty (1984, 1991) expanded on this response by encouraging the importance of Third World countries expressing their own stories and histories in their own way. I propose this could be an important point for consideration as Loots (2010), and Cooper Albright (2003) suggest, history is also inscribed on the body and is awakened in the creating and performance processes. A self-reflexive position is integral to shaping of identity or an aesthetic of Contemporary African Dance Cooper Albright<sup>67</sup> and, Susan Leigh Foster<sup>68</sup> engaged in the notion of tracing history as a connection between past and present, and acknowledging that this engagement will be entrenched in the body (Albright, 2003; Foster, 2010). Loots further goes on to explain that "the self as the knower and the author of text (on and with the body), becomes the self-referential conveyer of theory and process, of history and memory" (2010:111). It is my opinion that a South African Dance aesthetic cannot escape looking at its dance through the lenses of others. It should consider the writing of Stuart Hall<sup>69</sup> that culture is not fixed. It is ever-changing and complex (Hall, 1990:225). Further, we need to negotiate this aesthetic independently from the west and differently. Hall asserts that different ways in which we negotiate our economic, social and political histories are already embodied in our cultural identity (1990:228). I suggest and have mentioned earlier, that South African dance scholarship should embrace the transitional period in which South Africa finds itself. I suggest that when dance scholarship can more fully embrace this period than this may open a variety of creative outputs and experimentation in the making of dance. I suggest that performance of traditional dances in South Africa locks South Africa into a past and gives too much voice to this past (Rani, 2012). In this way, South Africans re-colonialise themselves once more. I agree

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<sup>67</sup> Ann Cooper Albright Feminist Scholar and Professor of Dance.

<sup>68</sup> Susan Leigh Foster Choreographer and author of *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance*.

<sup>69</sup> Stuart Hall was a Jamaican born cultural theorist.

with Hall that the dance of South Africa needs to embrace its contemporary situation especially when South Africans look at others as South Africans and begin to create joint works or collaborative dances. What should South African choreographers create that could add value to a transforming culture and bring about change through acknowledging its colonial and apartheid past? How could diverse audiences of dance in South Africa access such dance? How can dance re-focus on the new aesthetic frames and offer a new choreographic experience, one that will tell many stories from many point of view? This idea is argued in the writing of Gerald Siegmund<sup>70</sup> when he claimed that “aesthetics experience is not just engaged in perception or interpretation processes, but simultaneously takes part in the very creation of the object of knowledge, and, for that matter art. By means of their cognitive affective and bodily participation spectators entwine [...]” (2013:82).

Chapter two demonstrates how patriarchy has polarised society and impacted on how dance is viewed, how the body is represented and particularly how the female body is represented. In a post- apartheid South African context these issues are more complex for black South African women given the legacy of not only apartheid but also colonialism. My research and reading in these areas has therefore also allowed me to investigate South African dance aesthetic and even when women make dance.

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<sup>70</sup> Gerald Siegmund is a professor of Applied Theatre Studies at the Justus-Liebig University in Giesen.

## **CHAPTER 3: WOMEN CREATING DANCE: CHALLENGES AND RESISTANCE TO NORMS**

This chapter offers an overview of the rise of feminist thinking and focuses particularly on the discourses of third world feminist writers. I borrow from these theories and the notion that dance choreography is text written on the body (Loots 2009, 2015) to unpack female headed dance collaborations that occur since (2012-2016) and particularly to inform the challenges the *Growth project* may or may not have experienced. I have drawn from several journals, books, and conference papers that have critiqued female dancers and choreographers including those by Loots (2015, 2009, 2010), Daly (1991), Elliot (2013), Dempster (2010), Craighead (2006), Novack (1993), Manning (1997), Banes (1994) and Jowitt (1988), to attempt to understand some of differences between the gendered groups i.e. male and female choreographers. I will discuss some of the categories for male dancers and examine the theory of the male gaze to demonstrate how this has impacted on the process of creating Contemporary Dance works. Lastly, this chapter investigates a theory that the South African female dancing body can be seen as a site of resistance and advocacy.

I claim that it is important to discuss the power relationships in collaborations as this may open a discussion around who is being heard and what is being valued. My study will assist in illustrating how gendered roles affect the disparities that exist in the processes of collaborating in the performing arts and specifically, Dance.

### **Intersection between feminist studies and the female dancer**

This section introduces the intersection between Gender Studies and Dance, the former which grew out of the early feminist argument and the Women's Rights movements. Ann Daly<sup>71</sup> had suggested that Gender Studies and Dance are well attuned. According to Daly, "the two are highly compatible. Dance is an art form of the body and the body is where gender distinctions are generally understood to originate" (2002:298). With this shared interest in the body, Dance Studies has the potential to be at the centre of research in Humanities and therefore the possibility exists to challenge societal and gender constructs central to this dissertation.

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<sup>71</sup> Ann Daly is Associate Professor in Dance History at the University of Texas.

In short, feminism may be defined as a range of liberation movements and ideologies seeking to achieve equal political, economic, social and cultural rights for women. The above feminist definition is challenged by hooks who asserted that feminism is for everybody. Her notion of feminism could be explained as a refusal of the early First World definitions which excluded many and perpetuated the stereotypical notion of feminism as being only for women and fought by women. hooks argued:

I tend to hear all about the evil of feminism and the bad feminists: how "they" hate men; how "they" want to go against nature and god; how "they" are all lesbians; how "they" are taking all the jobs and making the world hard for white men, who do not stand a chance. When I ask these same folks about the feminist books or magazines they read, when I ask them about the feminist talks they have heard, about the feminist activists they know, they respond by letting me know that everything they know about feminism has come into their lives third hand, that they really have not come close enough to feminist movement to know what really happens, what it's really about. Mostly they think feminism is a bunch of angry women who want to be like men. They do not even think about feminism as being about rights about women gaining equal rights (2000: vii).

These stereotypical thoughts may stem from the fact that this earlier feminism came to fruition in white patriarchal societies where Christianity was the dominant religion of the time. In a Christian society, it followed that males would have supremacy over their women and that women since biblical times were taught to be subordinate to their men folk—husbands and fathers who also represented the head of the household.—For hooks, feminism was a goal for all who were oppressed. hooks' feminist discourse defined feminism as follows, "Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression" (2000:1). While contemplating this definition, I realised that contemporary feminism is not about being anti-male, but that sexism is a problem that exists across gender roles and is not an exclusive characteristic of the male gendered group. hooks explained that at birth both males and females are socialised to accept sexist mannerisms, thoughts and actions (2000:2). The above statement suggests that feminism is not about women fighting against men or wanting to be like men but rather about achieving gender equality and social justice. It further suggests that marginalisation of certain groups and the world's injustices need to consider and fight against not only sexism but class and race injustices as well. If the environment and culture drives the formation of gender, race, class and discrimination then we should perhaps look to how colonialism expanded the perception of femininity.

It is important to view the emancipation of women and feminist movements globally as emerging in three waves.<sup>72</sup> Loots (2001), shed light on the formation of early feminist notions. Loots argued that “Women of colour and third world women began to feel marginalised as their specific concern around the interconnectedness of race, gender and post-coloniality were being subsumed by generic discussions around this monolithic grouping called ‘women’” (2001:11). Furthermore, Loots explained that

“the subsequent development of global feminist theories, women of colour in the mid-80s began to speak up about their specific need to be heard. Western feminism had become synonymous with ‘white feminism, as second wave feminism fought cultural battles around why no women writers were represented on school and university curricula, why films made by women were not being funded, why the representation of women in the media often placed them in the gender stereotyped roles of either sexual objects or mother figure. (2012:1).

Current definitions of feminism surface as a consciousness of colonial and post-colonial thought begins to emerge. Ketu Katrak<sup>73</sup> based in the USA, examines this post-colonial notion by demonstrating how the coloniser exerts power over the colonised. She wrote (2006), that the female body is being exiled by the legacy of colonial history. She highlighted the issue of the female body that is in a state of exile. Katrak used, similar to Pather the model of English education that was imposed in colonial settlements to describe the legacy imposed on women and which forms the base for postcolonial and patriarchal control. Throughout her book, she discussed how social and cultural moves are informed. She described these controls as different forms of exile. These constraints placed particularly on females caused a

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<sup>72</sup>The first wave occurred during the nineteenth and early twentieth century in the West and many writers considered Britain as the forerunner in the women’s liberation movement. This wave succeeded in gaining women’s suffrage. The idea around women’s suffrage begins in 1903, the women’s liberation movement in Britain was founded by Emmeline Pankhurst who was considered the leading women of the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU). They focussed on the economic rights of women and brought about changes to the legal status of women. The most fundamental goal was to gain a right to vote and have political power. The women activists were later known as the Suffragettes who introduced the use of militancy to mobilise the British Government to hear them. The suffragettes began with interruptions of Liberal Party meetings and jeering public political talks including vandalism of public space such as galleries, smashing windows and setting buildings on fire. The women’s feminist community sacrificed, suffered for, spoke for and put their own lives on the line for one another. Eventually women gain the vote in 1918. The Representation of the People Act granted women who were married and over 30 years the right to vote. It however extended the right of men over the age of 21 years to vote. Only in 1928 were women granted full suffrage equal to that of men. In 1960 the emergence of the second wave of the feminist movement shifted to issues of sexual freedom and the workplace. It remains largely in the West. Second wave activist groups like the Gorilla Girls in the United States challenged sexism and more hard pressing issue of racism. The third wave of feminism commenced during 1990’s and is informed by postcolonial thinking and drew attention to creating equal opportunity for women and could lead to a decline in sexism.

<sup>73</sup> Ketu Katrak Indian born Professor of Drama at the University of California and Postcolonial and feminist writer.

displacement of the self which Katrak maintained leads to silence and violence of the body. She also commented on other women writers such as, Ama Ata, Bessie Head and Tsitsi Dangarembga (in Katrak, 2006) to discuss the forms of oppression that have been exerted through societal practices like *sati* or bride burning, the exchanges of a dowry system and the exclusion of the lesbian as subject and thinking. Furthermore, Patriarchal systems had a way of silencing women's voices although greater cultural production gave voice to social subjects and gender equality. This discussion brings me back to how black South Africans used protest theatre to voice the concerns about apartheid. In addition, Loots writes that:

Feminism of the second wave (in Europe and America) is all about women taking hold of their own cultural production, challenging how male artists, directors, writers, choreographers had 'written' and 'spoken' about them. The second wave feminist slogan 'The Personal is Political' seems to clearly articulate how these 'soft' issues, generally seen as female needs to be firmly placed on a political agenda (2012:10).

The third wave of feminism commenced during the 1990s and is informed by postcolonial thinking and drew attention to creating equal opportunity for women and could lead to a decline in sexism. Susan Stinson, dance scholar whose area of interest is Dance Education wrote:

[...] feminism focuses on opportunities that are systematically denied to women because they are women and on the imposed barriers that keep women from competing on an equal footing with men. The goal is equal opportunity for women to enter the power structure within society and move up its hierarchy based on abilities (1994:26).

The above also demonstrated the way in which feminist theory and its liberation movement has evolved from a narrow definition of feminism that is for women only, into a more complex place where both males and females can define a type of feminist scholarship or activism which they wish to undertake given the context of their lives.

In Dance Studies during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the dominant dance form of ballet was being challenged by the work of what today is known as Modern or Contemporary Dance and its pioneers for example, Isadora Duncan.<sup>74</sup> Duncan's work is typical of the manner in which dance tore down barriers of class and gender at a time when womanhood and the liberation of women was frowned upon. Duncan energetically pursued the goals of equality. Her dance works *The Three Graces* (1922) was inspired by Greek Antiquity and questioned societal norms probing the ideas of wholeness and connections between the body and the mind. Her

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<sup>74</sup> Isadora Duncan was born on 26 May 1877. She was born into an artistic family-her mother a pianist who encouraged her children to explore culture and art. She was a pioneer of what was to be called American Modern Dance.

appearance and representation of the female body when she danced profoundly challenged what was being staged at theatre at that time. Duncan danced in loose fitting Hellenic-like tunics, which the writer Elizabeth Francis explained was a symbol of liberation. This led to an exploration of body *as female* (1994:25). Francis explained that Duncan freed the female body by ridding it of its traditional corsets. She wrote that the body was “stripped off all the corsets and let her body go—as one admirer described the sense of liberation from the prohibition and repression associated within female bodies” (1994:25). Francis asserts that Duncan assisted in transforming the position women held in artistic processes which consequently changed the way in which dance was viewed. In addition, she said that dance was “grounds for representation to an agent of representation ... [The] gaze of viewers shifted from her bust to her powerful legs” (1994:25), suggesting that the image of female as a sexual object was affirmed rather than her image as a powerful artistic creator. Francis (1994) discussed the artistic work of Joan Sloan and explained, a painter /sketch artist, was one of many artists who began to represent the beauty of life and the injustices of society in their work and Duncan was the subject of some of Sloan’s work as she portrayed the women of that society. Francis claimed that:

Sloan’s 1911 painting of Duncan performing on a darkened stage attempted to capture the event of Duncan in paint. Sloan’s broad strokes arrest Duncan in a lyrical moment. Her body is figured with head back and arm flung wide with fluttering tunic draped lightly and transparently over her body (1994:34).

Many writers such as Francis (1994) and Daly (2002) explained that Duncan’s dance resonated from a place deep inside the body creating an authentic and expressive dance form. Duncan’s movement was inspired by everyday movement like running, skipping and bending which may have suggested that all bodies could dance. Duncan’s body and dance itself became a symbol of liberation and modernity and modern life. Dancing became a powerful means of communication. However, it must be remembered that Duncan’s female body was being viewed as an object.

## **The male gaze**

The idea of a male gaze is derived from Film and Theatre Studies and has now made its way into Dance Studies (Manning, 1997). Manning examines the notion of the male gaze (1997) in

her review of Yvonne Rainer's early post-modern dance work, *Trio A*<sup>75</sup> (1996) performed by the Judson Dance Theatre group in New York. Loots (2015) and Dempster (2010) refer to Manning's article and review as an example of how male gaze was challenged through dance. Manning's investigation is rooted in the notion of male spectatorship and the manner in which the female dancing body was viewed. Women are thus represented in terms of male viewership (Manning, 1997). Male spectatorship in dance can be linked to the ballerina being positioned as an object of pleasure, something to be viewed by largely male audiences and in this way creating a male perspective of the female dancing body.

Daly also investigated this phenomenon (2002b). She suggested that George Balanchine<sup>76</sup> adored women and yet he considered them to be inferior to men. Daly believed that Balanchine would describe female dancers as "naturally inferior in matters requiring action and imagination. Women obligingly accepts her lowly place. Woman is an object of beauty and desire. Woman is first in ballet by default, because she is more beautiful than the opposite gender" (Daly, 2002:279).

Daly makes this observation examining Balanchine's Neoclassical choreographic work *The Four Temperaments* (First staged in New York, in 1946), which went against the prevailing representations of classical ballet vocabulary of the early 1940s. Daly showed how Balanchine's patriarchal foundations informed his use of the female body in ballet. She explained the manner in which the female body was being manipulated by the man controlling her movements and thus herself. Daly's writing examined the *pas de deux* or duet form i.e. a dance between the two persons usually a male and female dancer. She explained that the female body was being manipulated through movement She wrote, "with one hand he grasped his ballerina's upstretched arm like the throat of a cello; then he pulls her on her free arm, spinning her repeatedly" (2002:280). Furthermore, Daly explained that in the adagio sections of *Four Temperaments* the traditional/typical male-female relationship was maintained where the male dancer pushes the limitations of the ballerina's body Daly argued:

The couple enters together and, after a brief foray of the ballerina, the danseur puts her through an extraordinary sequence of precarious moves and off-kilter positions that render

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<sup>75</sup> *Trio A* was performed in 1966 to challenge the notion of the male gaze and body as object or spectacle. This postmodern dance work was performed with the dancers' backs to the audience which disrupted the notion of the objectification of the female body. (Loots, 2009:450). This resistance extended Rainer's 'No manifesto'.

<sup>76</sup> George Balanchine was an American Choreographer known to create dance works in a Neoclassical style. He was the founder and Artistic Director of New York City Ballet.

her totally vulnerable to his control. It is as if the man were experimenting with how far he could pull the ballerina off her balance and still performing classical ballet. The extreme to which the third theme exemplifies what a ballerina can look like with the support of her partner makes it an archetypal pas de deux (2002:281).

Contrastingly, some dance scholars have challenged Daly's notion that Balanchine's ballerina was being manipulated and controlled by her male counterpart. Writers such as Helen Thomas,<sup>77</sup> and Stephanie Jordan,<sup>78</sup> challenge Daly's views discussed above. Thomas and Jordan questioned whether or not, the duet in *The Four Temperaments* was not in fact a democratic relationship where the male and female relationships display a shifting balance of power and responsibility for each body (2010:150). They further argued that, "The woman lightly pushes the man's arm or foot or touches him as signal to move on. The man uses his strength to lift her or pull her up from the ground, but also acts as her support, which may not necessarily require much strength at all" (2010:150).

Furthermore, they explained that the lifts and support can be read as an interplay of power distribution between the two dancers and not only the dominance of the male dancer. They argued that the:

two bodies combine to extend and dramatize the line of verticality, the pull between the sky and the earth to create counter-tension in the horizontal plan. To enlarge movement ideas, to use the off-vertical (of the women body) as metaphor for danger and the assertion to overcome that danger (2010:154).

Despite the differing interpretations of Daly's views of the female body in ballet, Thomas and Jordan arguably challenge the pioneers of American Modern Dance, Duncan and Graham, who may be considered the most outspoken performers and choreographers of the emerging Dance form in America during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is my opinion that this attempt to push the boundaries was represented in these choreographer's choice of costume and certain movements. Yet I still question whether the change in costume, the articulation of the spine as opposed to the rigid spine portrayed in ballet was as radical as it was made out to be. Dempster presents some insight into why the emerging dance form of Dance and its movement vocabulary initially challenged gender constructs and views of the female body. She claims:

The early modern dancers were asking the body and its movement along with place and context of dance, be looked at in new ways. They inherited no practice; the techniques and

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<sup>77</sup> Helen Thomas writing from a perspective of Dance sociology.

<sup>78</sup> Stephanie Jordan who wrote from the perspective of dance practice and history respectively in their work *Dance and Gender: Formalism and semiotics reconsidered* (2010).

choreographic forms they developed were maps and reflections of the possibilities and propensities of their own originating bodies (2010:229).

The movement vocabulary was described as a construction of movement through the unballetic body, “producing a writing of the female body which strongly contrasted with the classical inscriptions” (Dempster, 2010:229). The choreographic approaches stemmed from individual artistic vocabularies and movement and “is a conception of the body as medium and vehicle for expression of inner forces” (Dempster, 2010:229.) Dempster’s writings further explained that early American Modern Dance and the female dancing body is not a docile body but one that is active revealing the stories inscribed in bodies. Dempster refers to the stories inscribed in the body as “expressions of inner forces” (2010:229). She wrote:

The modern body and the dance which shapes it are a site of struggle where social and psychological, spatial and rhythmic conflicts are played out and sometimes reconciled. The body – and it is specifically a female body- is not passive but dynamic [...] (2010: 230).

In addition, she explained that “the body and by extension ‘the feminine’ body in postmodern dance is unstable, fleeting, flickering, transient—a subject of multiple representations” (2010: 235). She is particularly interested in the shifting quality of the body that makes its practice so liberating. In contrast to her writing, Manning explained that Graham’s development of her technique and the ability of early Modern Dance pioneers to challenge dominant conceptions of gender could have led to a singularity of a dance form. Manning wrote “one women’s speech [became] women’s language” (Manning, 1997:156).

Dempster (2010) analysis of the literature written by Daly (2002), Manning’s (1997) and Roger Copeland<sup>79</sup> (1997) explained that Copeland on the one hand celebrates women as the dominate gender in early Modern Dance. Copeland wrote that culture is mirrored in art and asserted that early Modern Dance resisted male gender dominance that was so prevalent during the Victorian era. Manning wrote that “Copeland believes that early modern dance did resist dominate conceptions of womanhood during the Victorian era” (1997:158). In contrast Dempster explained that “early modern dancers’ resistance to the status quo was co-opted by alternately, their codification of techniques first developed experimentally and their essentialised notions of woman and the body” (Manning, 1997: 158).

This discussion of the male gaze, and a patriarchal culture that surrounds the emergence of Contemporary Dance alerted my thinking that the female body had been under pressure to

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<sup>79</sup> Roger Copeland is Professor of Theatre and Dance at Oberlin College.

conform to patriarchal ideas and gender constructs for several centuries. This has prompted me to examine how the female dancer in the South African context has been controlled by patriarchal interests and how the female body can be a site of resistance and power. However, I also wish to consider the male body in this scenario.

## Challenging the Male Gaze

The male in dance was limited to the perpetrator or the weight lifter. I acknowledge that female dancers are being manipulated and positioned as victim, but I wish to highlight that most male dancing bodies are also being dehumanised by a fixed perpetrator role of oppressor or manipulator. A typical example is found in the 2003 version of *Bolero*<sup>80</sup> where gendered roles are strongly opposed through the contact improvisation as a choreographic method. It displays how males lifting males and females lifting males and females lifting females supports the idea of non-manipulator role by males in dance. In addition, questions about choreographer's voice and how an agenda is being articulated in a performance is seldom recognised in the theories about ballet. Analysing of ballet tends to focus on the technical abilities of the dancer. This thought was supported by Susan Sontag<sup>81</sup> when she wrote:

In the nineteenth century what prestige of ballet really amounted to was the reputation of the dancer; and that even when there were great choreographers (notably Petipa) and great dance scores (from Adam, Delibes, and Tchaikovsky) dance was still almost entirely identified for the large theatrical public with the personality and virtuosity of great dancers (2008:334).

It is interesting to note that in an analysis of the dance form Contemporary Dance, dance scholarship focus on female personalities but their voices or agendas is not heard. Hooks was eager to analyse the male counterpart in society when she wrote about the emotional state of males in a patriarchal society. She questioned how males are struggling to break free from notions of masculinity that arise in society. hooks wrote:

Patriarchy demands of men that they become and remain emotional cripples. Since it is a system that denies men full access to their freedom of will, it is difficult for any man of any class to rebel against patriarchy, to be disloyal to patriarchal parent, be that female or male (2013:4).

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<sup>80</sup> Bolero is a dance work choreographed by Alfred Hinkel. There were several versions that changed with each version. It was Hinkel's intention to adapt the piece as the political climate of the country changed.

<sup>81</sup> Susan Sontag was an American novelist with a varied interest in filmmaking, literature, theatre and dance.

Ramsey Burt,<sup>82</sup> troubles the dance scholar with new insights into the issues of masculinity,<sup>83</sup> the male body as well as male spectatorship in dance. He argued that the way in which the male is viewed stems from reasserting male dominance and in effect reinforcing power imbalances between male and female dancers. Burt suggested that when the male dancer is viewed through a non-discriminatory lens, a new male dancing image may emerge. Burt argued, “in an ideal world man should be able to find ways of expressing their individual experiences through dance and contribute to non-discriminatory perception of differences between men and women” (2007: 2).

This highlights the complexity of the patriarchal system operating in Dance. I recognise that both male and female dancers contribute to a continuation of a patriarchal system. Choreographers whether male or female, who conform to a damsel in distress ideology can perpetuate the system of patriarchy. A simple example of this is that when mothers and fathers read the fairy-tale stories such as the *Sleeping Beauty*<sup>84</sup> or *Cinderella*<sup>85</sup> to their children they continue to perpetuate the image of the female as weak and dependant on males to rescue them. This reinforces the silence of women’s voices. Persistent translation of the stories suggested that patriarchy is not specific to one culture but stretches across language, race and culture. hooks explained that “Patriarchy as a system has denied males access to full emotional well-being, which is not the same as feeling rewarded, successful, or powerful because of one’s capacity to assert control over others” (2013:5). In order for this system to be uprooted it will require females as well as males to uncover the ideology and rewrite gendered lives. hooks wrote, “To truly address the male pain and male crisis we must as a nation be willing to expose the harsh reality that patriarchy has damaged men in the past and continues to damage them in the present” (2013:5). Feminist dance scholars should be cautious when re-viewing dance and refrain from fixed roles that exist for females, and for males.

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<sup>82</sup> Ramsey Burt is the author of *The Male Dancer* (2007) and Professor of Dance History at De Montfort University, UK.

<sup>83</sup> Masculinity in dance is discourse which negotiates the multi-faceted male dancing body.

<sup>84</sup> *Sleeping Beauty* transcribed in 1812 by Grimm Brothers (Jacob Ludwig and Wilhelm Carl Grimm) from Germany is the story of a young princess who fell into a deep sleep at the age of fifteen due to a spell cast by an evil witch. The spell could only be broken with the kiss of a prince.

<sup>85</sup> *Cinderella* was transcribed in 1857 by Grimm Brothers (Jacob Ludwig and Wilhelm Carl Grimm) from Germany. History books tell of an earlier version transcribed in 1697 in France by Charles Perrault. This dissertation will refer to the version of the Grimm Brothers. *Cinderella* is a story of young girl being rescued by a prince from the clutches of an evil stepmother and her daughters. After *Cinderella* mother’s death, her father remarried her evil step mother who subjected *Cinderella* to slavery, and ultimately the servant of her and her daughters.

## **Patriarchal culture and its impact on the female dancing body**

The above discussions give rise to question of 'otherness' a central theme in postcolonial discourses. Gayatri Spivak<sup>86</sup> addresses the notion of 'otherness' in 2006 maintaining "Some of the most radical criticism coming out of the West today is the result of an interested desire to conserve the subject of the West or the West as Subject" (1988:271). While Julia Kristeva<sup>87</sup> refers to the notion of otherness or the other as the foreigner who in fact resides within the self. Once people are able to reflect on the world they are more likely to look within themselves to find understanding (Kristeva 1991). Kristeva extends the view of Spivak and argued that:

Strangely, the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder. By recognizing him within ourselves, we are spared detesting him in himself. A symptom that precisely turns "we" into a problem, perhaps makes it impossible, the foreigner comes in when the consciousness of my difference arises and he disappears when we all acknowledge ourselves as foreigners [...] (1991:1).

The construct of the foreigner, 'otherness' or 'othering' in my opinion, is reflected in how the world has ordered itself into hierarchical states of being. It is a theme that destabilises ideas around identity and invites an analysis of knowing who we are in order to know what we are not. It confronts what people understand to be the norm and that which is not, that which is considered the centre and that which is marginalised. When considering the body as an object one may simply be referring to the actual body – the thing, or the exterior which has an identity that is shaped through culture and history, in summary by society. The body as subject relates to the stories that come from the body, the representation of a person's thoughts, beliefs and assumptions which gives rise to certain theories and philosophies. Otherness becomes a discussion around polarities of race (white versus black), gender (male versus female), sexuality (heterosexual versus homosexual) and physical ability (abled body versus disabled body). The body as object is brought into conflict with the body as subject. For example, the idea that a population could be divided into race groups placed South Africans into four distinct race groups which was determined according to people's variations in skin colour, facial appearance and hair texture, amongst other bodily traits that were pre-

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<sup>86</sup> Gayatri Spivak is an Indian scholar, literary theorist and feminist critic who is a professor at Columbia University.

<sup>87</sup> Julia Kristeva is a Bulgarian Feminist and Philosopher in Literature. Her main theoretical position is held in abject theory, examining ideas of the messy or leaking body. I may have examined her work superficially as abject theory is not the main focus of the writing in this dissertation.

determined. The body as object transformed the human being into an identity that became known as coloured, black or white. The experience of racial classification, marginalisation and discrimination based on wealth and power transformed countries into First and Third World spaces. Similarly, female bodies have been transformed as weak, passive and obedient.

This indicates how South African women, given their apartheid legacy, are even further silenced and without a voice. These considerations in the light of this dissertation, provided the foundation from which to research collaborations in dance undertaken by women and whether in Spivakian terms 'voicelessness is overcome, sustained or in fact remains unchanged. Lipman-Blumen (1984) and Loots argue that certain limitations in gendered behaviour in society, art and dance informs how the body behaves and is viewed and what limitations are imposed on women in dance. Loots argued that:

It is not enough to be "allowed" to create cultural products unless these products are given space to be seen and heard; in short, to have agency within a society. What this brings to the gendered debate around cultural practice is a need for vigilance so that, firstly, women (and one could argue all marginalised groups) take space to speak, and secondly, that the structures that make up our society are closely monitored as to how they make room to "hear" these cultural voices (Loots, 2001).

This notion of space to speak, and space to be heard, can also be found in, Kristina Johnstone<sup>88</sup> (2012) whose investigation of otherness and power relations in relation to community dance and concert theatre dance in South Africa are pertinent here. Johnstone examined the space that community dance occupied in South Africa dance and she questioned if and how community dance models in South Africa play a role in perpetuating the notion of First World versus Third World communities. In South Africa, the status of being advantaged versus being disadvantaged and the many power relations that may exist play themselves out in many ways and in Dance is highly visible. Johnstone suggests that:

With community-based dance projects abounding certainly in urban centres and outreach programmes linked to virtually every dance company in the country, there is a need to critically question the space "community dance" occupies in the larger framework of theatre dance in South Africa. And the power relations that exist between what is considered "professional" and what is considered "community" dance. Rather than assuming that community dance in South Africa is somehow inherently valuable because it addresses issues of access and inclusion, it is my view that there is a need to question to what extent community dance programmes plays a role in perpetuating existing notions of "race", "disadvantage" and "development" (Johnstone, 2012:148).

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<sup>88</sup> Kristina Johnstone is dance lecturer, writer, choreographer and a Co-Director of Underground Dance Theatre. She holds an MMus degree from the UCT School of Dance and is currently a Doctoral student.

Earlier I mentioned that ballet was considered the dominant dance form and considered a high art. Access to such ballet was denied to black South African citizens and few opportunities were created for them to access ballet as a form of dance training and performance. This severely impacted on who danced where and how dance training was conducted and for whom the various dance training institutions, for example, schools, studios, community arts centres, university, dance companies of dance taught dance. Loots reminded one that:

in the South African context where black dancers, not historically having had access to formal dance training, have come to performance dance later in in life, only to have to compete with the hegemonic (and racial, in South African context) privileging of ballet line and form as the dancing body ideal. While this notion that constitutes the “correct” dancing body is profoundly challenged in South Africa at the moment, performing arts cultural bodies (as important bench-mark institutions for gauging artistic politics and policy) are doing very little to cross contextualise cultural dance performance and thus are adding to stereotyping (racial, gendered and cultural) of the dancing body (Loots, 2012:56-57).

It is interesting to notice how the body absorbs the societal constructs and informs its movement or way of communicating in this language called Dance. The female body was subjected to cultural and societal systems for example patriarchy and was inscribed by its ideals. Despite societal constructs the female body is not a fixed or unchangeable site. Catherine Botha<sup>89</sup> in her 2008 conference paper wrote.

In my view Banes is correct in highlighting this reciprocity: rather than being a self-contained, closed entity, the body is an open and dynamic system of exchange, that is constantly constructing modes of subjection and control, but also of resistance and becoming but also of resistance and becoming. As such, Classical Ballet, as so-called high art and hip hop as urban dance form, reflects specific norms as to what the body should be” (2008:42-43).

This is echoed by Loots when she wrote:

The “body” comes to dance already inscribed by discourses and ideology whether these are gendered, racial, or cultural. The visceral body (the body) is often encoded by cultural practices, social and racial constructions and gendered conditions of use and reception (Loots, 1995:53).

Throughout patriarchal discourse, one can observe females that are persistently being silenced in society and in dance. Loots argued that:

[...] in all instances of culture are lived experiences and hence connected to the power relations of any given society. A society's cultural activities relate to governance as they are connected to the creation and transformation of that society. The notion of 'society' is not

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<sup>89</sup> Catherine Botha is a senior lecturer a University of Johannesburg’s Department of Philosophy. She is a registered ballet teacher associated with the Royal Academy of Dance.

homogeneous. Counter-cultures and alternative cultures become political means for groups to re-define and challenge mainstream cultural production (Loots, 2001:9).

If 'dance is a mirror' of society and culture, as interpreted from the above quote by Loots then she goes on to claim that:

What we create, write, film, dance ... can question and reflect how we are spoken about, represented, defined and ultimately governed. Cultural practice can become a moment of self-definition and a political act that challenges how, for example, patriarchy and capitalism define us (Loots, 2001:10).

Discourse around patriarchal culture particularly female dancing bodies and how they conform and are manipulated, is an important issue to grasp for any understanding of collaboration. What is the constant state of attack in which the female body finds herself in the performance, choreographic processes and dance training methods? How will this attack be negotiated when she enters into dance collaboration whether with males or females? The following section will demonstrate how women have attempted to challenge patriarchal culture and overcome the challenges imposed on them by society. It will particularly look at the female dancing body as a site of struggle in the South African context in 2000s.

### **The female body as a site of resistance**

The notion of the female body as a site of resistance is a primary discourse of feminism and has become influential in the understanding of Dance. Banes (1994) suggested that discourses on the power of culture on the contemporary body finds its origin in feminist, Foucauldian (Foucault, 1977) perspectives suggesting that contemporary bodies are controlled, formed and rearranged into images determined by the dominate ideology. Susan Bordo<sup>90</sup> provided literature with two theories of the body in culture. Bordo suggested that the body is capable of change and is not fixed. While the second theory suggested that the body of ordinary people is manipulated by politics and culture pushing the body into producing images of a dominate ideology. Bordo argued:

The first postmodern theorists like Susan Rubin Suleiman, who celebrates the body as protean, capable of slipping out of a fixed role or "voice", entering instead into a flux of endless complicated and creative movement. The second is cultural studies theorist, like John Fiske, who celebrates the body as a "site of resistance" where ordinary people- who have no political power become empowered, creating their own identities by manipulating

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<sup>90</sup> Susan Bordo is an American feminist scholar who contributes in the field of Cultural Studies. Her key ideas are centred on body theory in the western context.

and reworking the oppressive body images produced by the dominate ideology (Bordo in Banes 1994:46).

This notion of Femaleness was an initial inquiry. Loots expanded this idea of femaleness and argued that the female body:

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 prescribes it. The female body was looked at for how it represented a “colonial space” (2012:55).

Furthermore, Loots asserted that “Feminist work began a whole way of re-looking at the female body as a point of power which was taken up by feminist media theorists” (Loots, 2012:55). Many discourses within Dance Studies stem from discourses within the Social Sciences (Anthropology, Philosophy, Sociology).

The notion of the female body as a site of resistance is also discussed by hooks who wrote about black women who used their domestic homes as a resistance to white supremacy. hooks suggested one needs to “Theorise the value of “homeplace” for black families living in the colonized world of white supremacy” (1991: 382). The idiom ‘home is where the heart is’, has taken on a new meaning for me. During this writing, I became more aware of a conscious political site of resistance in me when I acknowledged the struggle to break free from the apartheid and colonial politics that have shaped us. I recognised that these events shape how I dance, perceive dance, create dance teach and study dance. The homes of black women were being transformed into space of resistance and protest. hooks asserted that,

Houses belong to women, were their special domain, not as property, but as places where all that truly mattered in life took place—the warmth and comfort of shelter, the feeding of our bodies, the nurturing of our souls. There we learned dignity, integrity of being, there we learned to have faith. The folks who made this life possible who were our primary guides and teachers were black women (1991:383).

What is striking about this is that many black women were servants in the white homes performing chores like cleaning and cooking and ultimately creating a homely space for their white master, often under dehumanising conditions. At the end of such a day, they would return to their own homes and do the same. The black women were responsible for creating a space that was nurturing and a place where an awareness of the social injustices of society was made conscious. hooks argued:

One’s homeplace was the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist. Black women resisted by making homes where all

black people could strive to be subject, not object where we could be affirmed in our minds and hearts despite poverty, hardship and deprivation, where we could restore to ourselves the dignity denied us on the outside in the public world (1991:384).

hooks goes on to claim:

Even as I speak there are black women in the midst of racial apartheid in South Africa, struggling to provide something for their own I want to honour them, not because they suffer but because they continue to struggle in the midst of suffering, because they continue to resist (1991:385).

The writing here reiterates how politics, and particularly culture has influenced and “shaped black women’s thinking, their sense of home and their modes of parenting” (hooks, 1991:387) but has not left them docile in the face of oppression in a society. When I consider the context of South Africa I need to mention that most (especially black) South African women are impacted by a patriarchal culture, anti-feminist notions and the racial discrimination that began in the colonialism and apartheid eras. Stripping of a women’s power and subjecting her body to punishment and discipline will result in an oppressed body.

This notion should be viewed parallel to Foucauldian<sup>91</sup> theories which claim that bodies can be trained to subscribe to the norms of society. Foucauldian ideology argued that:

The classical age discovered the body as object and target of power....it was a question not of freeing the body, en masse, ‘wholesale’, as if it were an in dissocial unity, but working it retail, individually, of exercise upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of mechanism itself-movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body (Foucault, 1977:137).

This is even more striking because despite liberation from apartheid 20 years ago, women continue “to struggle in the midst of suffering, because they continue to resist” (hooks, 1991:385) despite their democratic freedom in South Africa.

The body as a site of resistance in South Africa dance discourse is so appropriate because black dancer’s bodies communicate the notion of power and resistance. In my view, the body is not a neutral site onto which dance can be placed through training and choreography. As Loots asserted “the body” comes to dance already inscribed by discourses and ideology whether these be gendered, racial, or cultural” (Loots, 1995:53). This notion supports the fact that society drives the making and training of the female dancing body. Also that female dancers

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<sup>91</sup> Foucauldian Theory extends a discourse on relationships with power, language and behaviour and how these are expressed in society. This theory is based on the writings of French author Michel Foucault. In the context of my dissertation, I wish to extend this theory to demonstrate how in South African lives and behaviour were controlled by apartheid rule.

and choreographers in South Africa have inscribed on their bodies cultural, racial and sexist discriminatory ideologies. Does this not impact on the way in which female dance and create dance?

### **A female approach to dance making in South Africa**

I acknowledge that a range of both black and white, female choreographers in South Africa undertake their work from a feminist view. A short list may include Mamela Nyzama, Louise Coetzee, Adele Blank and Nicola Elliot in the Western Cape.

Nicola Elliot<sup>92</sup> a white, South Africa female, choreographer of *Run (2013)*, together with Fuchs is some of South Africa's leading choreographers who I consider as one of the leading female choreographers in South Africa. These artists have attempted to resist societal inscriptions placed on women and particularly South African dancing women. In analysing Elliot's choreographic process, I argue that she uses strong feminist approaches. For example, her choice in asking her dancers to be co-creators. This notion of co-creation of knowledge is argued by Stinson (2015) and Buckroyd (2000). Elliot argued that:

formalism is a tool to enable us in our individual capacity to relieve ourselves from applying the same meaning via association, over and over to everything we see Formalism can be a type of vulnerable honesty that we all share whether we are performers, choreographers or audience members, as it demands us to look at what is really there as opposed to its symbolic reference (2015:40).

Furthermore, she argued that her experimentation in this choreographic work like *Loots*, cannot consider the dancing body as vessel on which a choreographic process is carried out but rather that dance makers must consider the racial, social and gendered constructs of the dancing body. Elliot wrote; "Along with technique, this performer brings her 'whole' self to the rehearsal room, and is engaged by the choreographer not simply as a vessel for technique and design but agent of personal, political, spiritual, physical and psychological aspects" (2015:40). In engaging in a process of *Run (2013)* Elliot explained the performer is a skilled technician but cannot operate as technician only. The performers come with many facets. Elliot claimed:

She may have accumulated several different sets of tools over her lifetime: she may be, for instance a skilled contemporary dance (one set of tools), but she may have travelled to South America and learnt tango (another tool). The performer does not come into a

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<sup>92</sup> Nicola Elliot is a guest lecturer at UCT, and Rhodes University and won the National Arts Festival young artist award in Dance in 2014.

creative process blinkered into thinking that only certain creative ideas are relevant (2015:41).

Furthermore, the performer-choreographer is engaged in a creative process in the hope of generating movement and therefore dismisses the notion that the dancer is a tool to manipulate or, as she wrote a “puppet in the hands of the choreographer” (Elliot, 2015:41). Elliot explained in this in her approach to the dance as the subject as well as the object. She questions the dancer’s entire experience.

These are all the things that make up a person (history, politics, personality and society), but there are also the immediate sensory qualities: her experience of weight, touch, environment, focus, emotions. All of this is potentially relevant in making a performance (2015:41).

I noticed that, not only does the dancer as a vessel coming into this process inscribed by his/her past; by a politics or culture, but that the body itself has to be able to be engaged in an experience of the reality or the present moment. The body is manifest in the dance performance and the improvisational processes of choreography. This reminded me of the writing of Loots when she argued that, “while the dancer’s body is always marked with physicality of race and gender, there remains the need to decode and deconstruct the dancing body to examine how discourse and ideology permeates the use and reading of this body” (2012:58). The above quote allowed me to question the responses of the dancers in the collaborative dance project—the *Growth Project* and particularly the first instalment described above – *I hit the ground running*. Did this dance work challenge the current notion of power that is reflected in society and the ways in which dances are made or has this dance work continued to support it? What is the impact in a collaborative dance project when female bodies engage with dance-making?

In this chapter, I have provided evidence of what others have said especially about the female, the dancing body, and how the female dancing body is in constant dialogue with its societal constructs. I have reflected on the body as being constructed in racial groups and male or female categories. These constructs deeply impact on the body the manner in which different bodies will perform as well as choreograph dances. This is particularly evident when a dance collaboration with dancers and musicians from different cultures and different gender comes together. This dissertation acknowledges that the body can be seen as changeable and suggests that it may be in a continuous reinvention of itself. The body can be understood from many views and areas of study within the Humanities or Social Sciences. In addition, the

female dancing body is subject to a multiplicity of representations. This literature overview has given insight into the gaps that exist in the dance literature in South Africa in particular from women choreographers. It forms a foundation from which to investigate the nature of collaboration from a vantage point of women collaborating through dance.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter Two highlighted power relationships found in patriarchal cultures in society, examining and explaining gendered dominance and the subordinate roles in various relationship models (for example male-female, male-male and female-female roles). It demonstrated how such control may be perpetuated throughout society as well as in Dance. This dissertation acknowledges the writing of Spivak, Daly and Katrak and recognises that it may not have been written for a South African context. Nonetheless, this I recognise that Spivakian notions of otherness could be appropriate to broaden understandings of South African identity. I suggest that because the South African identity has been subjected to racial and gender separateness, I recognise how women in a male dominant society can be regarded as the other in the South African context. The female body maybe viewed as existing in a position of resistance and agency. The complex notions of the negotiation of power and an asymmetrical balance of power in the dance making processes, needs to be considered when so called developing countries attempt to collaborate with developed countries in dance. Katarina Lion<sup>93</sup> suggests that Dance in the Third World and First World should be viewed differently. She problematises the notion of collaboration further when she argued that:

There is an old habit to discuss dance in the third world as a discovery of something new, exotic and different .... In a wider perspective I could discuss how and why we, in the West, write dance history based on geographic positions, relations and between different countries, using hierarchic perspectives (2006:136).

My own research therefore, wishes to investigate the interwoven and complex discourses of power and agency to explore the possible hierarchic views for women and how these are to be considered when women collaborate with other women to create dance. Chapter Four will consist of detailed descriptions and explanations of research methods used. It will provide the reader with rationale for the use the qualitative research approaches and suggest how John Creswell's (2007) approach to qualitative research was ideal for this study. My choice is supported by my understanding that qualitative research gives us the best understanding of Dance as Dance concerns the body which is nuanced and complex. Dancing bodies can tell us various stories and dance scholars such as Gerard. M. Samuel<sup>94</sup> (2015, 2011, 2009) are arguing

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<sup>93</sup> Katarina Lion is a Swedish dance scholar and researcher. She is a freelance teacher at Danshögskolan and Stockholm University.

<sup>94</sup> Gerard. M. Samuel is currently a senior lecturer and the Director of the School of Dance at the University of Cape Town. In December 2016 he was awarded a Ph.D. from UCT, which focused on Otherness in Dance. Much of his scholarly interest and writing is found in the arena of Disability Dance.

the intersection of discrimination and prejudice in dance in South Africa. Bodies in themselves create meaning (Samuel, 2015). I commence with a detailed description of research strategies and procedures including how data was collected for this study. I will discuss how the variety of data collection strategies such as *Researcher as Participant*, *Researcher as an Observer/Documenter of analysis* and the *Researcher as an interviewer* will be used. The intention of using a variety of research strategies allowed me to provide this study with multiple perspectives or a 'thick description' as noted by Clifford Geertz (1994). This chapter gives insight into the selection criteria of the participants, detailed explanations of each interview conducted, and provides the reader with concluding thoughts. The limitations of this study including areas for future research opportunities that study may present to dance scholarship is explained.

Before commencing, I wish to make clear that even though this dissertation has elaborated on all three parts of the *Growth Project* in Chapter One, the study will only focus on the first instalment, *I hit the ground running* (2013.). I investigate how South African women, given their socio-political history, negotiate power when collaborating with women from so called developed countries such as Sweden. My study aimed to provide insight into: How does being female influence the power dynamics in a dance collaboration? How does the legacy of marginalised voices impact on artistic practices today? What forms and methods do women apply when attempting to negotiate power?

Qualitative approaches to knowledge inquiry offer this research a variety of opportunities for rich data collection such as interviewing, observation of events and participation in performances. It allows the researcher to gather data in its natural setting and this process may lead to a greater disclosure of rich information regarding the participant's experiences, feelings and own ideas. In comparison to quantitative research approaches that seeks to accept or reject a hypothesis and frequently takes the participants out of their natural setting to conduct research; a qualitative approach allows the researcher to participate in the research process.

This research used qualitative research strategies as proposed by Creswell (2007). I aimed to include the voices and ideas of participants, reflect on findings discovered, deepen dance literature and hopefully inspire action for further research. In doing so I recognised three key characteristics Creswell used when approaching qualitative research. I recognise these characteristics as fundamental to this study. Creswell proposed the following techniques

which he called the *Researcher as a Key Instrument, Multiple Sources of Data and Interpretive inquiry*.

The first type is the *Researcher as a Key Instrument*. In the context of this dissertation, the researcher (i.e. myself) was primarily responsible for the collection of data. I was actively involved in collecting data, engaging in analysing and interpreting documents, which include newspaper articles, programme notes, choreographer's notes, interview transcripts, attending audience Question and Answer sessions, audio recordings of interviews and analysis of any dance promotional material relating to the *Growth Project*.

The second type is using *Multiple Sources of Data*. Creswell explained that this allows the researcher to gather information from multiple sources rather than relying on one source. He said, "The researcher reviews all of the data and makes sense of them, organising them into categories or themes that cut across all of the data sources" (2007:38). The third and final type of research that I will use is *Interpretive inquiry*. Here the researcher makes an interpretation of what has been seen (in this case the dance performances), hears (the interviews as responses to specific questions, general conversation with collaborators, cast members and dance scholars) and draws certain conclusions on what may be understood. This form of inquiry Creswell argued suggested that "interpretation cannot be separated from their own background, history, context and prior understanding" (2007:39). In my view, the above techniques were most suited to the questions and ideas that I wanted to examine. The next section provides a detailed description of the three research strategies and the procedures used to gather data in an ethical and valid manner. I will look at models used by other dance and theatre scholars to validate and support the procedures that were engaged in during this research process.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

### *Researcher as participant*

The first qualitative research approach is supported by Mark Fleishman and David Whitton<sup>95</sup> and is called Action Research, which finds its origins in Education Theory. It has been appropriated to Theatre and Performance Studies where it is known as Performance/Practice as Research. Action Research recognises the process of creating as its own form of scholarship

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<sup>95</sup> David Whitton is an Emeritus Professor at Lancaster University's department of Languages and Culture.

based in academic rigor. In a Dance context, this could mean that the process of choreography and or a Dance production is action research. Dance becomes a valid and reliable arena in which to research. It becomes the research space from which one can gather data.

This notion goes against traditional academic inquiry where knowledge inquiry is investigated and presented via empirical evidence. I wish to make clear that my understanding of practice as research allows Dance and choreographic processes to be seen as arguments that are presented logically. Whitton supports this view. He argued, for example, that to consider qualitative research designs as valid and reliable it must have empirical evidence. Whitton wrote:

Across a wide spectrum of disciplines, positivist epistemologies which assume that knowledge is only admissible as knowledge if it is founded on empirical evidence, rationally analysed, have been challenged-not necessarily in order to replace them but to assert the equivalence of other categories of knowledge (2009:77).

Whitton considered that the “practice is not merely the application of knowledge to instrumental ends (its traditional function in positivist epistemology) but a form of knowledge in its own right, a knowledge that might be called art ...” (2009:77). This I imagined to be a valuable research approach that would allowed me to investigate the performance aspect of the *Growth Project*.

Furthermore, Fuchs selected me to be a dancer and therefore I was a practioner and could be seen as a source of knowledge. In 2012 Fuchs selected me to dance in the *Growth Project*. Fuchs choreographic approach is rooted in improvisational techniques which like Elliot (noted in Chapter Two), allows the dancer to actively participate in the creation of the work and in so doing diminishes the opportunity for the dancing body to be manipulated or have movement imposed on it. My participation and interpretative inquiry has allowed me to investigate the process of the creation of the dance and the collaborative processes between Fuchs, Monnakgotla, Moses and Taranto, which occurred during this project. My study will take into account my role as dancer in the creative process and the performance process. It comments on my role and the role of the other dancers (three of whom I have interviewed), as well as my interview with Fuchs as the choreographer, interview with the composer and dance producers.

I will reflect on the improvisational tasks to create a movement vocabulary for this piece and the emotional and physical responses of my body to the dancers and the choreographer. This

qualitative design has helped me investigate the choreographic process and the idea of the 'female body' is being problematized through an artistic collaboration.

### *Researcher as observer*

As an observer, I purposefully studied the performances in which I did not perform. I only viewed the opening night performances of *Struck Silent* in August 2014 and *Adagio of a Hacked Life* in August 2016. Both works were performed at the Baxter Theatre Centre. No performances of the two works were observed by me in Sweden due to financial constraints. The performances of *Struck Silent* and *Adagio of a Hacked Life* were performed before an audience and Question and Answer sessions occurred after the opening night performances only. This section allowed me to observe audience interaction with the dancers, choreographers, musicians, producers and marketing team. The questions from the audience varied as the audience had the opportunity to question the performers and the other parts of the collaborative team about anything regarding the collaboration or the performance they had just seen. It unearthed information about the choreographer's process, research process and nature of the collaboration between Baxter Theatre Centre and Scenkost Sörmland.

### *Researcher as interviewer*

The third research activity that I undertook, took the form of a qualitative interview. I am aware of other methods of research such as surveys and case studies which I will not be using in this study.

According to Turner, the interview process seeks to understand and give meaning to how individuals experience events in their lives (Turner 2010). I was eager to learn more specifically what was dancers' experience during the *Growth Project*. I wished to examine the moment of exchange between two sets of people: a group of South African partners (Fuchs, Moses, van Ster and Olef) and a group of Swedish (Monnakgotla and Taranto) partners. What was happening when these groups attempted to collaborate on an artistic idea based on a global phenomenon. The criteria for selection of these specific individuals will be discussed in *The Selection of the Interview Group* section which follows below.

My interviews aimed to elicit rich and detailed information about the interaction between the artists (dancers and musicians) and female headed leaders (choreographers, managers) of the *Growth Project*. I analysed the responses, and attempted to clarify their attitudes, and

feelings towards the nature of the collaboration. I also took notice of the facial response and gestures where possible.

I conducted six different interviews with different individuals who played different roles in the *Growth Project*. The interviews with the Swedish partners were conducted telephonically or via email as the funding for this research did not allow me to travel to Sweden. While all the interviews with the South African partners were conducted either in their homes or their places of work. The pre-arranged date allowed the interviewees to possibly eliminate disturbances and perhaps to reflect on the events that may have occurred in the *Growth Project*.

All the interviews comprised specific questions (see Annexure 1) relating to the interviewees' roles in the collaboration as well as their experiences of their involvement in the *Growth Project*. The questions were both structured and semi-structured in nature. Some of my questions were prepared prior to the interview and some of the interviewees' responses elicited new unprepared questions. All of the responses are commented upon. I aimed to use an open-ended question design which allowed the participants to contribute any information about their experiences in as much detail as they wished to. Where closed ended questions were asked, this was to find out something specific for example, I asked Monnakgotla, "What is your father's name?" The open-ended questions elicited information that was rich in qualitative data. All the interviews were informal and conversational in style. I also took notes, made observations and an audio recording of each interview.

*Interview One:* The telephonic interview took place on 3 June 2015 at 19:00 between Taranto the dance producer of Scenkost Sömerland and myself. The interview aimed to elicit information about who and how the project was funded, clarification of The Scenkost Sörmland organisation and the purpose and goals of a collaboration from a Swedish organisational perspective.

*Interview Two:* The telephonic interview took place on 11 May 2015 at 15h00 between Monnakgotla the composer of *I hit the ground running*. The interview lasted approximately 40 minutes. This interview comprised prepared questions which had been emailed to Monnakgotla prior to the telephonic interview, as some questions may have needed her to do some prior research. The questions addressed to Monnakgotla included an inquiry into the biography of her father who was born in South Africa (mentioned in Chapter One), clarification

of her biographic information and career as a musician and composer. It further inquired into her opinions regarding her role as composer in the *Growth Project* and an assessment of the degree of success of the collaboration.

*Interview Three:* My first live one-on-one interview took place on the 7 October 2015 at 12:00 with Fuchs the choreographer. This interview lasted approximately 50 minutes and interrogated her involvement in other collaborations such *Cargo* (2007) prior to the *Growth Project*. This allowed Fuchs to make connections with her experiences as part of the creative team in *Cargo* and that of her new role in the *Growth Project*. The questions elicited information about collaborations between women, her opinions on how South Africans collaborated given the post-apartheid context, as well as her opinion of the performance, the pre-production research process and investigation of the choreographic process of *I hit the ground running*.

*Interview Four:* The second live one-on-one interview took place on the 4 June 2016 at 19:00 with dancers Van Ster and Olef both of whom had performed with me in *I hit Ground Running* in 2013. I conducted the interview which lasted approximately 40 minutes. The questions addressed to Van Ster and Olef investigated once more the collaboration between Hinkle and Fleishman's *Cargo* as both were dancers in the performance of *Cargo* as well as in the *Growth Project*. I also enquired about their opinions around the level of success of the project. Although some questions were specifically directed at Van Ster, I asked him the questions in the presence of Olef. This I hoped would allow for discussion. Olef and Van Ster expressed their agreement or disagreement when one or the other had responded.

*Interview Five:* This interview was conducted with Moses, the dance producer of the Baxter Theatre, on 17 June 2016 at 12:00 for approximately 30 minutes in her office at the Baxter Theatre centre. Like Taranto, the questions addressed to Moses were intended to find information on how the project was funded, a clarification of The Baxter Theatre's organisational context and the purpose and goal of collaboration from a South African organisational context.

*Interview Six:* Kirsten was the other female performing in *I hit the ground running*. This interview specially focused on eliciting a female's perspective and experience as a dancer in the collaboration especially because it was headed by females. It was an email interview held on 6 October 2016.

Conversations were held via the telephone, email and personal communication held with the dancers, the composer and other members of the *Growth Project* after the performances that took place in South Africa. This was prompted by even more questions which emerged during process of writing this dissertation. The next section gives insight to my criteria with regards to the selection of the above individuals for my interviews.

I wish to commence by providing this study with a descriptive Table of the many collaborators involved in the *Growth Project*. I grouped the participants according to the country in which they reside or work during the collaboration. Next, I noted their role or position held in the collaboration and finally I noted where each performance took place in South Africa and Sweden. This table will be considered in the next section as well when I discuss the limitations of the study. While some participants took part in the collaboration across all three of the productions, I only wish to focus on the first leg of the collaboration and this is clearly highlighted in the appropriate diagram below.

**Table A: Participants in *I hit the ground running* (2013)**

Role in the project	South Africa	Sweden
<b>I hit the ground running</b>		
Manager/Dance Producer	Nicolette Moses	Annette Taranto
Choreographer	Ananda Fuchs	
Composer		Tebogo Monnakgotla
Dancer	Grant van Ster Shaun Olef Bernice Valentine Leilah Kirsten Andile Velleem	

**Table B: Tour Schedule of *I hit the ground running* (2013)**

Name of work	Performance dates in South Africa	Theatres in South Africa	Performance dates in Sweden	Theatres in Sweden
			12 Sept 2013	Eskilstuna Theatre
			14–15 Sept 2013	Stockholm Theatre
			17 Sept 2013	Oxelösund Tärnan
			19 Sept 2013	Katerineholm Tallåsaulan

The table above does not take into account the many other members of the production teams such as the marketing team, stage managers, lighting costume and sound technicians who

were also involved in the collaboration but who does not form part of the selected group being interviewed. This dissertation seeks to interrogate the experiences of dancers and female led partnership between local organisations and foreign organisations. Its focus is on the creative and artistic team rather than the technical teams that are integral to productions.

### **Data collection process**

Data was collected from my journaling process and lived experience as a dancer in the production *I hit the ground running* (2013). My journal process commenced while on tour performing in the production in Sweden. Shorthand notes were entered into a book primarily as a reminder of my daily experiences in the studio, theatre and whilst touring. Reading the notes and journal information gave insight to the experiences and emotion experienced while performing and touring. I was able to investigate and recall key events in the collaboration like the Amandla moment, then link them to my emotions and experiences, which initiated the thought processes of this dissertation.

Other sources of data collection were accumulated from programme notes designed in South Africa by the Baxter Theatre Centre as well as promotional material designed by Scenkost Sörmland in Sweden. *I only accessed* newspaper articles from news agencies in Cape Town, South Africa including community newspaper agencies such as the *Southern Suburbs Tatler*, weekend editions of the *Die Burger* and *Cape Argus* and *Cape Times* similarly offered sources of data about this collaboration. These sources highlighted the views, and opinions of the audiences at the performances. When reading these articles I highlighted and underlined strong opinions of these outsiders such as audience members, and the newspaper journalist. This I coded as individual interpretations of the dance work.

A video-recorded interview of some partners in the *Growth Project* produced by the Baxter Theatre Centre was posted onto social media, as part of their marketing campaign. This also provided rich sources of data regarding the process and progress of the collaboration. This video recorded interview, in the rehearsal period of the production, included dancers, musicians and management in South Africa as well as Sweden. This, I believe, adds much value to the research as the participants were able to express their thoughts and experiences of the process and creative process as it was occurring.

Full transcripts of the interviews have been integrated with my notes and observations and have provided me with invaluable material from which to begin to theorise. These can be found in the appendices and suggest a transparency and ethical approach to my research process. Beyond the data collection and unpacking of data from promotional material, recordings of interviews, programme notes, newspaper articles and journaling, I have engaged in many conversations with Samuel who had seen all 3 productions as well as random audience members who attended performances. Finally, revisiting my research methodology, I identified recurring issues in the data. I categorised these issues under themes which seem to hold the main questions of my research around a female experience in dance. Chapter Five will engage in a detailed analysis of the data.

## CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter I will interrogate the challenges to this dance collaborations by providing insight into the finding of this research process. The themes that have emerged include challenges for the performers, management and the creative team. I will attempt to answer the questions concerning that which informs the nature of collaboration and complexities that could surround collaborative practices. Chapter Two acknowledged the role of South African history and how current political events in South Africa have surfaced because of the impact of colonialism and apartheid. I considered this to be the backbone of many artistic themes which surfaced when groups of people from different parts of the world come to work with a wounded South Africa. Chapter Five primarily concerns itself with providing insight into how women with cultural, political, and historical differences collaborate. A thread that can be found throughout this dissertation emphasises a feminist approach to dance collaborations. What was the process of the choreographic work *I hit the ground running*? What kinds of relationships of power existed during this dance collaboration?

This chapter will provide a discussion of the findings which have surfaced from the various interviewees who reside in South Africa and Sweden. The findings include a careful analysis of newspaper articles and programmes that were used to promote the *Growth Project*. I also examined and watched the marketing video footage that was created by the Baxter Theatre Centre as part of their marketing campaign. I reflected on the numerous personal discussions with dance scholars, my observations of some performances and importantly my lived experience as a performer in the *Growth Project*.

I commence by unpacking this project as seen, through the lens of gender—a woman dancer in this dance work. I want to explain my experiences as a female dancer. The very current issue of unemployment never had strong bearing on my life. Even though I come from a middle class coloured family, I never experienced the harsh realities of growing up in a family where my father our breadwinner, had been unemployed. However, the realities of unemployment and poverty flourished in streets in which I grew up. Our neighbouring residential areas was driven by crime and poverty because of unemployment. It is through these lenses that I recognised the stories I was telling in *I hit the ground running*. The initial excitement and honour of being selected to perform in this collaboration was soon clouded by the responsibility I have as women to tell the stories of women struggling in this male dominated power to climb the economic ladder. This was further perpetuated by the legacy of being a

Black South African woman. The female duet in particular, reminded me of the vulnerabilities and passivity women experience competing for the same recognition a male would. This duet further exposes the vulnerability of women even in female partnership like this duet. This duet, exploring the notion of women being less than males, is further challenged by females tripping each other up, demonstrated in movement vocabulary symbolising that even amongst women there exist power struggles. My experience soon made me realise the realities of the world in which I live and recognised how Dixon-Gottschild (2008) claim that body remembers and absorbs societal issue, was being displayed in my interaction and dance making process in the *Growth Project*. It is perhaps the nature of people to engage in establishing order by using power as the commodity to measure themselves and place others in a position of disempowerment and passiveness and others in position of power and authority.

My general observation of the complex negotiation of power, patriarchal culture and gender is echoed in the recent student process movement that began at the University of Cape Town in 2015, popularly known as #rhodesmustfall<sup>96</sup>.

A key observation in this intense research process was how challenging it was for a dancer to undertake a collaboration like *I hit the ground running* in the *Growth Project*. Many of the

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<sup>96</sup> #rhodesmustfall which occurred in March 2015, profoundly disturbed or challenged the current political climate in South Africa, and particularly the University of Cape Town's transformation agenda. The debate around the protest concerned itself with academic discourse that is deeply embedded in the South Africa's Dutch and British heritage and colonialism. #rhodesmustfall has surfaced in attempts to find a de-colonisation of the curriculum, one that could embrace notions of democracy and transformation. My reading of these political events and happenings around the #rhodesmustfall campaign demands an examination of the themes of power, otherness, development and aesthetic. The article found in University Cape Town in the Monday Times, a university newspaper (April 2015) questioned who holds the power in this institution (2015). The concern about power and wealth is a topic that reoccurs throughout the politics in South Africa and in Contemporary Dance in South Africa. In my opinion it is symbolic of the patriarchal culture embedded in our world and reinvents itself in our country's governance, communities and institution. Furthermore, the #rhodesmustfall protest and the symbolic meaning and histories attached to it have allowed me to look to other public artworks in Cape Town and ask where are the female statues representing our history? Why do so many of South Africa's public spaces and artworks consist of mostly of white male statues? My opinion that #rhodesmustfall not only addresses the University of Cape Town's transformation policy, but the current state of South African history and politics and patriarchal culture. My search for female statue in our public spaces, further allowed me to question the ideology of voiceless and who is being heard. How are women being silenced by a lack of representation of this gendered group in our public space not to mention the faces of black women. Equally, issues of development and aesthetics are also rooted in the protest, and resurface in dance over and over again. However, I am optimistic about and encouraged by the ability of the youth of South Africa mobilise such a large and powerful protest and in such a short time frame, due in part to the advances of social media. In my opinion, it is one of the positive aspects that have grown out of our legacy of apartheid and it is encouraging to notice how the South African youth is attempting rise beyond their state of passivity and legacy of disempowerment.

interviewees expressed in detail how the *Growth Project* was dense with challenges. These included that a lack of clarity experienced by all participants. The idea of collaboration based on teamwork and common goals prompted me to question whether or not such a version of collaboration was even achieved in the *Growth Project*. My findings concur with Schechner (1990) and Bharucha (1990) who claimed that artists need to be very mindful when different cultures attempt to come together. What relationship of power is actually taken place? The lack of clarity I believe is owed to the notion of the North versus South or Us and Them. Even though the intention was to create collaboratively each partnership had its own agenda to accomplish.

The interviews exposed various opinions of power dynamics that existed. I noticed that the purpose of the collaboration from a Swedish perspective may have been initiated for the purpose of development. This is evident in the interview with Taranto when she explained:

*There was also, there is also on us pressure, not pressure actually but like encouragement to do international co-productions for all of the benefits and learnings that lie in any international co-production. Artistically learning wise, practically and all of that-* (Taranto:2015).

However, she explained that it was not the intention of the collaboration to explore or make comparisons between South African dance and Swedish music, but to find a research method that was creative and governed by a non-hierarchical approach to making art. She explained:

*Look, one thing that I want to say that was important actually, was that this particular project was neither thematically nor was not so much about, you know comparing South Africa and Sweden. Like comparing growth in South Africa and Sweden or merging the two cultures of Swedish folklore and South Africa folklore what so ever. It was not so much about that, or not at all about that. Whomever you merge will always bring their life experience or bodily experience and rightly so, many international collaborations are also interested in looking at what happens when Greece meets Brazil. This was not so much about that or very, very little or nothing about that, as like core quality. It was about other things* (Taranto 2015).

This may also suggest that an awareness of colonial history played its part in this collaboration and therefore the South African participants could become silenced. It further points to Schechner and Bharucha's theory of intercultural exchanges and questions as to whether neutral exchange is actually taken place. Fuchs expressed her opinion on this when she argued that South Africans approach collaboration differently. She said:

*One of the biggest differences in collaboration within my context, South Africa and then collaboration countries, overseas is that South Africans seem to really know how to collaborate and I wonder if that doesn't have anything to do with the idea of "Ubuntu"?*

Furthermore, she goes on to suggest that when she compares previous collaborations for example, *Cargo* (2007), in which she was involved, the male collaborators had a more 'chronological' way of working which may indicate a more structured approach. Fuchs said:

*I do find that men generally, first of all they, (Pause) Mark Fleishman is incredible he is just so creative he is amazing. I often am in awe of how he sees things or his train of thought. And Alfred as well with the men, all the men in the collaboration dealing with creativity is very different it's a lot clearer cut. So this is the story this is A this is B this is C this D it is almost chronological then in its way and then it makes sense and it does very masculine.*

In my view, Fuchs is suggesting that the way in which men create dance is more linear. Male dancers for example, Oelf and Van Ster debate whether male or females collaborate better. They explained:

*GV: it's cause Ananda also comes from the same background which is Jazzart, you know what I mean. So obviously she picked up a lot on the method and creative processes in terms of creating her work, you know what I mean. Knowing the difficulty that Ananda had communicating with Tebogo and coming up with decisions you know what I mean. I think with two females, with that particular project and the two females that got in the way cause of the fact of them being two females. Being so far away and the communication was difficult and also the one didn't wanted to give in to the other one.*

Oelf challenges van Ster's above statement asserting that it may have something to do with egos but communication was difficult in process. Oelf said:

*SO: I disagree I don't think it's the two females that come in the way I think ... I would just say it's the communication and ego thing but nothing to do with females.*

Van Ster further substantiates his earlier statement by asserting that given the male dominated society females may find it difficult engage in this way. He thought

*GV: [...] living in a society where the males are the assertive and dominant and the leadership and there is that thing with the males, it still there, you know what I mean, where it is a little bit more difficult for female.*

However, Kirsten in her interview claims that collaboration has less to do with gender and more to do with individual personalities and character. She does on the other hand mention men and women collaborate differently she explained:

*LK: What I have observed from working on a collaborative artistic project with two females artist and another with two male artists, is that the former is combination tended to suppress creative opinions or confrontations in front of their cast. While the latter combination were more forthright and abrupt with regards to opinions and artistic interpretations in the rehearsal space.*

The above remarks when analysed further can be categorised into three areas with an aim to assess the complexity of the collaboration as well as to determine whether or not

collaboration was even achieved. I will present my finding in the following three categories: *Challenges discussed by management* (Moses and Taranto), *Challenges experienced by the creative team* (Fuchs and Monnakgotla) and *Challenges experienced by the performers* (Van Ster, Olef). Lastly, these categories are cross referenced with various role players to shed insight into the many nuances and varied responses.

## **Challenges experienced by management**

I noticed how the challenges discussed by Moses and Taranto (the managers), were centred around the merging of the music with dance and based on logistical issues like expectation and time lines between each of their production houses and between managers and the artist/creative participants engaging and interacting with each other on the artistic and performance level. In the interviews with Moses and Taranto, Taranto expressed concern for how teamwork would be achieved when “you put a team together that don’t know each other, they have not chosen each other” (Taranto, 2015). While Moses found work distribution a difficulty. Moses responded that,

*The distance, also I mean, although Lara and Maria had known each other for many years as the artistic heads of their institution they were not involved on the ground with regards to the making, ... .. it was a given from the get go [that] ... would be generated from here and that [the] music component [would come from] from Sweden, Because it was a first, Margareta being very much a music person and you know Annette was the dance person and yet from this side, I had to deal with both (Moses, 2016).*

In her response I noticed that she had to handle both aspects of music and dance whereas in Scenkost Sörmland, they had separate music and dance producers employed who dealt with the issues of the respective disciplines whereas Moses had to deal with both dance and music on her own. This made me question whether a level playing field that is supposedly a characteristic of collaboration was firmly established. Furthermore, Moses explained the difficulty that existed in communication between Fuchs and Tebogo the members of the creative team. Moses explained that:

*the communication, I think one of the issues initially was that because Tebogo works and Ananda works they were not able to communicate with each other effectively and that caused huge frustration all round to the point where it became unpleasant at times and which is why for the finale instalment we opted to turn it on its head and change it completely (Moses, 2016).*

Moses’ comments suggested that an unrealistic expectation between choreographer and composer was created:

*No, I mean you have Skype, Dropbox, Wi chat all sorts of mediums through which to communicate. What was great you know and an advantage is that people like Grant and Johnny had seen what had happened and seen what had transpired. And they had forged a relationship—a really solid working relation. So it was easy for them to fall into. I am the composer and I am the choreographer. There were no unrealistic expectations and they were talking for a year before the production came into the rehearsal room. The fact that the entire company got ill and we had to cancel performance ... but I mean I think just a lot of the stuff we'd experienced and entertained at the beginning, towards the end, we kind of pulled backed. And I kept saying, less is more. And focus was really on the dance and the music (Moses, 2016).*

This response from Moses perhaps supports Fuchs's comment on the linear manner in which men create dance in collaboration. Moses was further challenged by what aspect of the production would be prioritised as the project was meant to be a collaboration with dance and live music. She was concerned with what would hold the strongest visual stimulation and in her opinion that would be the dance. Moses explained:

*It a dance piece with live music and what takes, what takes you to stage, what do you prioritise I mean it was equally important but I mean at the end of the day the visual is the dance and does take pride of place and I mean yes I was very biased and I was like a real she-bear about things because that is what I am passionate about. So ja it was ... ja (Moses, 2016).*

This corroborates the observation by Taranto who suggested that challenges were created by the participants who did not have an opportunity to choose with whom they may want to work.

*you put a team together that don't know each other, they have not chosen each other. Tebogo had never written, never written for dance before, she didn't know much about dance she liked ballet but you know. Ananda had been working with music but had never worked with contemporary strange music which was also I mean I think that gave the whole a super interesting qualities it was I mean it wasn't that was also a challenge (Taranto, 2015).*

## **Challenges experienced by the creative team**

Many of artist interviewees openly expressed their concerns without even being asked to discuss what challenges they had experienced. Some of the interviewees were able to make comparisons between the 3 instalments of the project. This unsettled the larger question as to whether or not collaboration had actually occurred. Other than Fuchs's opinion about how South African's sense of Ubuntu influences the approach to collaboration, Fuchs expressed deep frustration about feeling unheard in the process. This Fuchs elaborates on when she discusses the block of communication with her co-creator Tebogo. Fuchs said:

*Tebogo was my co-collaborator as far as I understood. As far as my co-collaborator goes, how we communicated was nothing like the process that I have gone through in collaboration before. It was all via email it very top technological driven something that I had to learn do really well really fast. I attempted to kind of give Tebogo an idea of where I was coming from in terms of the music and [a] soundscape and that kind of thing. We went onto Youtube and I played her some things. I was like it needs maybe a little bit of an African feel not like you know talking drums and jembes, but some reference which came out quiet strangely later on in the next production. But, I really felt she didn't hear me and yet I was waiting for the collaboration part where she would then say this is where I am coming from and we could find a middle ground. That was impossible. So, what ended up happening is there was the score. (Fuchs, 2016)*

Fuchs further elaborated and explained that the difficulties surfaced because they were both female and argued that:

*I think with two females, with that particular project and the two females that got in the way cause of the fact them being two females. Being so far away and the communication was difficult. And also the one didn't wanted to give in. So I think that was a little bit the whole female thing got in the way.*

## **Challenges experienced by performers**

Oelf who had been a part of all three instalments explained that his biggest challenge was how difficult it was to get involved in an improvisation process without being involved in the research process particularly for *I hit the ground running*. He explained that this becomes more evident after being involved in the research process of *Adagio of a hacked life*.

*SO: As a performer and dancer, because I was in all three, the last one it helps so much with my performance. What emotions to use because I was a part of the whole thing. You know what that person is going through and I could relate to. We couldn't draw anything from what Ananda was experiencing in the first and second one. What was in the research? Bernie dit was 'n groot verskil (it was huge difference). I don't know how we did it in *I hit the ground running* without knowing anything. Where we were going? It really made a huge difference when we [became] part of [the] research.*

I agreed with this. I remember experiencing the same frustration having only the one-dimensional perspective of what was being expected from the choreographer in the rehearsal process. I would image that being involved in the research process and engaging with the unemployed may have impacted on the way I created movement for *I hit the ground running*. Although Fuchs created opportunities for discussion and experimentation in creating process, not being directly involved in the research process still left me feeling disconnected to the experiences of the target group.

If so many of the dancers expressed a lack of cohesion, was the *Growth Project* a success? And yet it came together 3 times over 3 productions. It positioned the Question and Answer sessions as a key part of the Contemporary Dance performance. Were the women involved really partners or unable to really listen to one another? Does any of this matter in the end as an artistic production was achieved? Perhaps it can also consider dance as language and its power to communicate and educate society on issues of employment. The question of whether the process is male or female led, is this relevant when dance and the body are the main carriers of a message. Did the message become distorted or lost because of gender?

## CHAPTER 6: LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This study aimed to examine the perceptions and experiences of South African and Swedish artists as well as the management team of the *Growth Project*, however it only reflects on the first years' performance which was called *I hit the ground running*. Chapter One provided detailed information of each of the productions. I have deliberately chosen to reflect on the first-year production in the findings. I have relied on my recall of events and experiences of a collaboration which took place from 2012 when the pre- production research process commenced to 2016 when the last performance was presented. I accept that some inaccuracies will arise.

The study recognises that no surveys of audience responses in South Africa or Sweden were collected or documented, as this study is not interested in the audience experience rather the embodied experiences of the South African dancers. Even though there were many opportunities to survey the audience I did not undertake this activity as I was not interested in audience responses per se. This may point to an opportunity for further study. This chapter will conclude with my final thoughts in the conclusion.

Furthermore, only the opening night performances of all 3 productions in South Africa were viewed and none of the performances in Sweden. I did not interview the cast of each of the three performances, as this study only reflects on the first year's production. The responses of the dancers or musician in *Struck Silent* and *Adagio of a Hacked life* are absent as the dissertation distinctly aims to consider the South African perspective.

I am aware of the many different roles in management and the production team that formed part of the collaboration, which may have been instrumental in the success of this collaboration these but were not a major focus of the study.

This dissertation also may offer an opportunity to study the effect of collaboration on Vellem who is a hearing-impaired dancer in *I hit the ground running* cast. Presently I have only focused on able-bodied South African dancers during my study as I ran out of financial resources to properly include his impact via sign-language and interviews.

The final issue that may have limited this study is the open-ended nature of the questions, which allowed the participants to provide responses to the events and their experiences in as much detail as they wished. This made it a difficult process to extract.

## CONCLUSION

The study examined the very idea of femaleness in Contemporary Dance in the Western Cape. The impact that such femaleness had on choreographic processes is argued via the discourse of patriarchal culture. In my view, this influence has marked dance making in South African Contemporary Dance. The voices of South African black female choreographers have been largely silent and their stories unheard in the early development of Contemporary Dance in South Africa. The stories of this marginalised group were told largely by the early pioneers of South African Contemporary Dance including Glasser (1997), van Tonder (2014) and Ginslov (1999).

This dissertation sets out to look at the nature of female headed collaborations in Contemporary Dance. It critically questioned the nature of collaboration in a Western Cape context but more interestingly, it is influenced by my reflections and experiences as a dancer in the *Growth Project*. Many of the critical questions found in this writing stem from that 'Amandla moment' discussed in the introduction or perhaps in the many hours of perfecting my skill as dancer in the dance studio. This training of the body began with a relentless attempt to please the demands for perfection in classical ballet. I persistently re-evaluated and challenged the process of dance making from the beginnings of my brief professional career that included a short stint as ballet dancer and my current role as a black, dance teacher and young researcher. It is in this latter phase as a post graduate student that I have engaged with discourse in dance performance as well as dance pedagogy. The *Growth Project* illuminated my experiences of dance, shedding light on the many hidden resistances of my female dancing body. It has allowed me to view Contemporary Dance in South Africa and the position black South African female dancers and choreographers occupy in South African Contemporary Dance today. Furthermore, I have questioned the position dance holds in South Africa. How perhaps the government disregard the value of dance as a language in its turbulent transformation phase.

This research project only investigated in detail, the first production *I hit the ground running*. This specific work was produced and created by an all-female production team which ignited my curiosity as to differences that may exist when females collaborate with one another. In my introduction, I explained the urgency for developing dance literature written by South African practitioners because very little has been written about Contemporary Dance in South Africa and particularly in Cape Town about females who engage in collaborative practices. In

addition, I noticed that much of the existing work is written by scholars who do not hold South African citizenship. Next, I described my positionality as a researcher and my relationship to the topic I was studying. I maintain that my insider and outside role is valuable because it offers a *thick description* (Creswell, 2007). In Chapter One I briefly explored a partial history of Contemporary Dance in the Western Cape as well as a brief history of Contemporary Dance in Sweden in order to provide a context for the *Growth Project*. In this section I suggest that the impact of colonialism and especially apartheid legislation had profound influences on the development of dance in South Africa and the Western Cape.

In Chapter Two and Three, I looked at what others have said about patriarchal cultural and feminist theories and how these theories impact on dance and particularly dance in South Africa. I thoroughly agree with hooks (1991, 2013) and Lipman-Blumen (1984) that society perpetuates patriarchal culture through literature which I extend to its Dance. I also agreed with Dempster's writing when she explained that in partnering the female body a kind of manipulation of the female body is enacted. For me, the persistent pushing of the female by male bodies anchors dance forms and normalises patriarchal culture. However, I also question whether some male dancing bodies are being discriminated against by fixing males into positions of perpetrators and oppressors. This practice can equally be seen as a devaluing of the male dancing body. I found patriarchy and gender discrimination to be rife in South African Dance and that much work still needs to be done to challenge colonial and apartheid history. Such challenge is evident in the events occurring in the South African universities in 2016 in particular the #feesmustfall protest and #rhodesmustfall protest, which began at The University of Cape Town in 2015.

In Chapter Four I noticed that collaboration can succeed when theatre makers (including choreographers and directors) are mindful of cultural collisions and fusion as suggested by Bharucha (2000) and Schechner (1991). I recognised that collaborative practices in dance may be considered a site of struggle where an interplay of power exists, placing some at the centre and others at the borders of cultural and social interaction. Power disparities were demonstrated to be problematic in relation to Schechner's theory of interculturalism and an inherent inequity when cultures team. Therefore, collaboration results in challenges and power disparities that must be carefully negotiated or we fail to establish level playing fields. A collaborative environment where equality resides is difficult to achieve for both males and females because male dominant patterns persist and they persist particularly in dance. I

noticed that it was more difficult for artists from South Africa than for those from Sweden to collaborate given the South Africans' colonial history. The history of apartheid may have also placed many South Africans in a position of vulnerability and subservience encouraging weakness and passivity. This is especially challenging for black South African females who suffered under apartheid and colonialism. My study acknowledges my position of passivity, compliance and silence as a Black female South African. I am now able to connect this to the legacy that was apartheid and the long range impact of colonialism.

One may assert that females are better collaborators than men because they are less competitive and more nurturing but these are clichés as collaboration is complex; social, political, and cultural influences dominate patterns and societal values that shape dance and thus culture. The literature and research conducted in this dissertation continues to point to relations of power. It informed us that power disparities are inherent and an unavoidable part of social interaction, and even more so when artistic collaborations take place. Despite this the *Growth Project* managed to produce 3 successful dance works. This research has shown that perhaps silent boundaries within power disparities were felt by some participants. Furthermore, binary opposites for example: First/Third World, European/African, or coloniser/colonised exposed who is being valued over the other. These values, I assert, are also embedded in our thinking and therefore would impact on the social interaction, dance making and our management of dance making processes in collaborative practices in Contemporary Dance. My 'Amandla moment' is perhaps strong evidence of this. The emotional reaction by Tait unleashed a multitude of questions that have become rooted in this dissertation. For the first time I realised how passive I have been in my dance processes and the presence of silent boundaries and powerlessness within my thinking and myself.

Revisiting the data I also noticed the collaborators made a good attempt creating a sisterhood amongst the females of the *Growth Project* but my research suggest that collaboration in this case though successful in producing a performance is not neutral. Furthermore, the cliché of being female: the nurturer and less competitive discussed earlier does not disrupt the complexities of social interaction and collaboration and gendered positions. Whenever people come together there seems to exist issues of power even when such togetherness or collaboration is a goal of women. Women and particularly South African women continue to struggle to negotiate their position in society and in artistic practices like the *Growth Project*.

My position as researcher and dancer in the first production of this project made me notice how finances and how the major funders played a huge role in the determining who has greater power in this project. Subtle and perhaps unintentional adjustments in body language and an energy in the room will change when the funders entered the rehearsal space. This inevitably created a distinction between *us* and *them* or placed some in the collaboration as superior and others not. This data perhaps suggests that a dependency still exist from South African dance makers for assistance and validation from the North. This may further point to patriarchal constructs being imposed by first world women on third world women, reinforcing their silencing. This notion also points back to Mohanty`s (1990) claim that collaboration between first and world countries is not always equal.

Finally, this process has given me an ability to re-position my thinking and take courage to overcome those silent boundaries and hidden agendas that have lived in me as black female Contemporary dancer and dance teacher in the Western Cape and South Africa. Perhaps my journey may inspire other South African dancers and dance makers to reflect on their past in order to emerge, more empowered and confident in the future.

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## **APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND EXTRACTS OF TRANSCRIPTS.**

Although 6 interviews were conducted below only extracts of two interview transcripts will be found.

### **1.1 Live Interview with Ananda Fuchs (Choreographer)**

**7 October 2015 at 12:00**

#### **What is the value of collaboration in Post-apartheid South Africa?**

AF: I think there... (Pause). I mean let's be honest financially we have to collaborate with countries that have funding available which is becoming less and less. But who are wanting for whatever reasons and I am sure there are many reasons to bring the funding to Africa or south Africa and I am sure as much a benefit in Europe as there is here you can only get funding if you put it in a place that would somehow better the world which can have a tendency to be a little bit patronising and that is an experience that I don't enjoy. Because in my experience I don't need to be patronised by anybody for whatever reason they think is justified we stand very nicely very strongly in terms of art. So post- apartheid south Africa I don't think that society can exist without art and I don't think art would exist without it has too there are like mirrors to each other or art is I suppose to society and again it's about that Ubuntu thing it is important to that people work together because there is such a great pull for people to go off and isolate themselves and become specialist and again and if that's the case then our countries is in trouble. And we are already there we constantly having to deal with violence of a kind that is different to apartheid violence in a sense it's on the surface its seemingly safe or our democracy is very progressive but underneath we fundamentally live in a very violent society. And I think most young people suffer from like post-traumatic stress disorder especially in our schools. So it necessary because if we don't collaborate then we don't talk about or investigate what is really happening like below the surface that depth of things that are really happening and the impact the depth of things. And in art is where you can do it without it without it what? In Dance it is done such universal way, dance is a universal thing so it is not specific if I do a collaboration with Sweden the communication issue or the translation issue happens behind but essentially what you put on the stage has to be it for it have to be able to speak to anyone if it is relatable to them it's got to be universal it got to be things that we all deal with.

### **1.2 Live Interview with Nicolette Moses (Dance Producer Baxter Theatre)**

**17 June 2016 at 12:00**

**BV: How was the collaboration funded?**

NM: It was funded entirely for from Sweden by the basically they equivalent the dep cultural affairs in Sweden. Because they provided Scenkost Sörmland with a grant which meant to be over a 3year

period. The fact that we stretched it over four years is because the first year was a huge learning curve and it was incredibly difficult. I mean it was good but it was difficult as it was first for everyone.

What were some of the challenges? (not ask however NM answered despite not being asked the questions)

And then the distance also. I mean although Lara and Maria had known each other for many years as the artistic head of their institution they were not involved on the ground with regards to the making of it. It was given from the get go it would be generated from here and that music component from Sweden. But yes because it was first Magrette being very much a music person and you know Annette was the dance and yet from this side I had to deal with both. Not that I had dealt with music before but the approach which we kind of fine-tuned toward the end of the process. I mean initially it was like they wanted the score done even before we set foot in the room. Yes, we done the research the two research blocks which the dancers and musicians weren't involve in but the choreographer and the composer. So you know from that aspect it was very difficult because the score had already been written and you know, just in terms of the way it was done and way it had been structured, there was no room to amend things or even slightly adapt things once everyone was in the room. And that became a problem it became hugely problematic and very frustrating on lots of levels. Particularly for the dancers you know cause the musicians would just come in and do their thing and play because this was written and this is what we play.

## APPENDIX 2: EXTRACTS OF PROGRAMME NOTE



### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

BY ANNETTE TARANTO, RESEARCHER AND WORKSHOP LEADER

*I Hit the Ground Running* is the first of a three-year artistic collaboration between the Baxter Theatre Centre and Scenkonst Sörmland under the project entitled *Growth*. This refers to economic growth. As we know it today it is narrowly defined and measured. As a reaction to this there are an increasing number of movements and initiatives within political and academic spheres searching for and investigating a redefinition of growth, a wider understanding of what it could and should be, even alternatives to growth at all. In today's growth spiral too many things fall in between; a threatened climate, finite resources, human potential and human needs that are not easily measured or defined by existing economic models and vocabularies.

For three years and in three performances Scenkonst Sörmland and Baxter Theatre Centre will contribute to this movement by zooming in on and mirroring the human, everyday life experience of relating to growth. How is it to be unemployed in a context dictated by economic growth? How does one not working due to age view his or her role in a society coloured by economic growth? How is one affected who doesn't fit into the social structures and life tempo defined by economic growth? We

comment on this by letting a choreographer and a composer meet reference groups in Sweden and South Africa, representing the above mentioned experiences. This first performance *I Hit the Ground Running* is the result of such meetings.

Two groups of unemployed young people in Eskilstuna, Sweden and in Cape Town, South Africa, worked intensely during two process weeks, autumn of 2012. Together with choreographer Ananda Fuchs and composer Tebogo Monnagotla they read relevant research reports and papers, articles from magazines and selected chapters in books. Terms and theories were discussed and turned inside out. Experiences, opinions, thoughts and feelings relating to growth were put into words, pictures, movements and sounds. It is this very specific bank of human experience that is the whole base for the performance you are about to see. It is created out of the material generated by these two reference groups.

Many themes emerged during these weeks.

One of the reports that the reference groups read was *We are Thrown-away People*, (by Ariane De Lannoy, Children's institute,

University of Cape Town). From this report "Many doubt whether democracy has brought about a change for the better and perceive the new South Africa as overlooking their community and lives. Historically-created isolation, lack of cultural and social capital and shortfalls of institutions like schools continue to impact on youths' lives and life chances. Their future aspirations are low, resulting in a fragile sense of belonging."

This feeling of fragile belonging was one of the themes that echoed in both the Swedish and the South African groups. The wish to belong, to be a natural and contributing part of a larger context, a society, exists parallel to the feeling of being outside, of unwillingly being a burden. Or the feeling that my contribution is not highly valued on the scale of growth as we know it, and therefore not rewarded.

"As every hunted animal knows it's not how fast you run that counts, but not getting behind the others" (from the article *Pack Behaviour*, *The Economist* (15/11 2008))

The title of the performance, *I Hit the Ground Running*, refers to a recurring theme in both of the groups; an inhuman tempo that one is forced to adapt to. No or few mistakes are

allowed. Choices should be made early in life and then be stuck to. There is lack of space for uncertainty, to start again, to go in circles for a while.

Shame was another theme common to both groups. There was a consciousness about "what one should do" and "how things should be." For good and for bad this serves as a driving force, pushing the individual in different, often confused directions."

But shame is also a hindrance. Feelings of abasement are stigmatising. To again and again stand in line at the unemployment office without it leading anywhere, to apply for work and not get it, to need social welfare, often becomes a loop hard to get out of.

"The South African labor market is generally regarded as a segmented labor market, with various segments of the population excluded from entry to better paid and more stable wage employment. Economists and policymakers are concerned not only about the extent to which individuals cross these divides, but also who can cross these thresholds and how they do so." (Paul Cichello, Haverford College, co-author of the paper *Transitions across types of employment over the recent crisis in South Africa*.)

One of the main sources of inspiration in this project is Tim Jackson's book *Prosperity without Growth*. "The 'empty self' stands in

continual need of being filled up with food, consumer products and celebrities. [...] What emerges from this analysis is that the empty self is in itself a product of powerful social forces. Individuals are at the mercy of social comparison. [...] The restless desire of the empty self is the perfect complement for the restless innovation of the entrepreneur. [...] Taken together these two self-reinforcing processes are exactly what is needed to drive growth forwards. It's perhaps not surprising that this restlessness doesn't necessarily deliver genuine social progress. There are some pretty clear reasons. Amongst them is that this is system driven by anxiety" (p 100, 101).

The individuals of the reference groups expressed in different ways, along the lines of the above quote, feelings of being forced to live outside of their true selves, to fit in, or consciously choose not to live up to certain image requirements and thereby be left outside of everything.

*We are very grateful to our reference groups for their generous contribution and we hope that this performance gives justice to their experiences and carries their voices and stories into public space.*

#### CAPE TOWN

Jeffrey Makobela  
Dustin Beck  
Marlon Swarts  
Siphumeze Tafari Khundayi  
Julia Ruzyczka de Rosenwerth  
Shupai Mother-Nature Mchuchu  
Lusindiso Tyhulu  
Thukelo Maka

#### ESKILSTUNA

Robin Pihl  
Philip Nordström  
Celena Eklund  
Björn Gustafsson  
Sara Lindborg  
Amie Njie  
Martin Nordlöf  
Erik Broberg  
Bälla Härnberg Törn  
Henrik Schullström  
Jani Mattinen  
Magnus Danielsson  
Anja Weinhede Somnerq  
Jonna Lantz  
Christian Karlsson  
Alex Satta  
Chris Larsen  
Ida Wadman  
Axel Johnson Blom

## APPENDIX 3: PRESS CLIPPINGS

Southern Suburbs

# Tatler

Thursday August 22 2013

Editorial tel. 021 488 4230

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Southern Suburbs Tatler est: 1979

CAPE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS



■ *I Hit the Ground Running*, a collaboration between Scenkonst Sörmland and the Baxter Theatre, is a cutting-edge dance and music performance piece which runs from Thursday August 29 to Saturday September 7 at 7.30pm. Pictured from left are, Leilah Kirsten, Andile Vellef, Grant van Ster, Berniece Valentine, Shaun Oelf. See page 14 to win tickets to the show.

### Cutting-edge show at Baxter

*I Hit the Ground Running*, a first-time collaboration between Scenkonst Sörmland (Sweden) and the Baxter Theatre Centre, is a cutting-edge dance and music performance piece at the Baxter Flipside, which runs for one week only from Thursday August 29 to Saturday September 7 at 7.30pm, with a matinee on Saturday September 7, at 2pm.

The global economy and its effect on the individual come under the spotlight in this contemporary dance piece which has been developed over a year by the Baxter and Scenkonst Sörmland.

Five dancers under the direction of South African choreographer Ananda Fuchs and five musicians playing music by Swedish composer Tebogo Monakgotla will bring the power, terror and the complexity of economic growth to the stage in a groundbreaking, artistic explosion.

Scenkonst Sörmland is a regional Swedish organisation for the performing arts which covers music, theatre, dance and film.

Annually the organisation produces more than 1 200 performances through collaborations with professional musical ensembles of all genres, independent theatres and dance groups, and municipal cultural authorities.

Tickets cost R80 and booking is through Computicket.

For discounted group block or school bookings, fundraisers or charities contact Sharon Ward on 021 680 3962 or email [sharon.ward@uct.ac.za](mailto:sharon.ward@uct.ac.za)

● Five lucky Tatler readers can each win a set of double tickets to see the show. SMS STGROUND and your name to 34445. Each SMS costs R1.50.

Lines open today, Thursday August 22, at 10am, and close Sunday August 25, at 10pm.

Winners will be notified by telephone.

# Dance collaboration highlights economic growth and sense of alienation

## Arts writer

A FIRST-TIME collaboration between Sweden's Skenkonst Sörmland and the Baxter Theatre Centre, *Hit the Ground Running*, examines the global economy and its effect on the individual using contemporary dance. The piece, which was developed over a year, will be staged at the Baxter Flipside from August 29 to September 7 at 7:30pm nightly, with a matinee on September 7 at 2pm.

The collaboration features five dancers under the direction of choreographer Ananda Fuchs and five musicians playing music by Swedish composer Tebogo Monnakgotla. Together they will interrogate the complexity of economic growth on stage in a unique artistic production.

Through research and development, the artistic process began with dialogue between Fuchs and Monnakgotla, as well as two reference groups from Cape Town and Eskilstuna, made up of unemployed young adults.

Local dancers are Grant van Sier, Shaun Oelf, Andile Velleam,

Bernice Valentine and Lelah Kirsten, and the Swedish musicians are Asa Karlberg (flute), Johannes Thorell (saxophone), Camilla Arvidsson (violin), Hanna Dahlkvist (cello) and Jonny Axelson (percussion). The musicians were carefully selected because they have extensive experience with contemporary chamber music and also performing on stage in the dance, music theatre and theatre genres. Design for the production is by Marcel Meyer and lighting is by

## Benever Arentse

"The echoing theme for me is the idea that the average citizen lives either on the periphery or the outside of the economic growth spiral," explains Fuchs. "There seems to be a resounding sense of alienation from the mainstream or even the expectation in society of an upward spiral in order to attain success. With an ever-increasing financial pressure on human beings today, the emergence of a very fragile and often elusive

sense of belonging seems to have been created. We hit the ground running until we cannot keep up any more - it is, quite simply, the human response to the economic monstrosity."

Adas Tebogo: "Through the music I wanted to musically capture the different impressions that

came up during the workshops with the unemployed young adults from the two countries. It does not, nor is it intended to, present solutions to this complex challenge that we face. The sound images are merely a reflection of the emotions which came from these young people who shared their innermost feelings and thoughts on the subject of economic growth."

● Tickets are R80. Call Computicket at 0861 915 8000, or book at or Shoprite Checkers.



STRUGGLE: Grant van Sier and Lelah Kirsten explore economic effects through dance in *Hit the Ground Running*.  
Picture: OSCAR O'T RYAN

# Running ragged in quest for identity

## I HIT THE GROUND RUNNING

CHOREOGRAPHER: Ananda Fuchs  
COMPOSER: Tebogo Monnagotla  
CAST: Grant van Ster, Shaun Oelf, Andile Vellem, Bernice Valentine and Leilah Kirsten, Åsa Karlberg (flute), Johannes Thorell (saxophone), Camilla Arvidsson (violin), Hanna Dahlkvist (cello) and Jonny Axelsson (percussion)  
VENUE: Baxter Flipside  
UNTIL: Saturday  
RATING: ★★★★★

**E**NTERING the Flipside, audience members are confronted by a performance already in full swing.

Performers clad in anonymous black coats, wielding black umbrellas, stride impatiently past a man clad only in white underwear, prone on the ground.

Shaun Oelf writhes pleadingly at the passersby, who walk right over him, when not passing him with a shake of the head. His actions take on a rhythm and pattern, a dance from which he half rises, only to sink back as he coils in on himself, a miserable and depressing sight.

Eventually a passerby offers him a shirt, another offers him a tie, and so on, until he is fully clothed, but all do so with a grudging disdain, at arm's length.

Now he looks like all the rest, but is he really the same?

This lack of real human interaction (to work together) is interwoven throughout the performance – even when dancers perform as duos or trios, moving with each other, there is a sense of disjunct, of each dancer trying to break down the other's rhythm so they can get ahead – the two women



PERFECTLY SUITED: Leilah Kirsten, Shaun Oelf and Bernice Valentine in *I Hit the Ground Running*.

PICTURE: OSCAR O'RYAN

as a duo representing this aspect most distinctly.

The performance culminates in Grant van Ster confronting each of the other dancers through perspex cut-outs of their silhouettes, maybe to question just who is the real self, maybe not, it isn't clear.

Powerful anxiety-inducing music overshadows the dancing

in this Swedish and South African collaboration.

Tebogo Monnagotla's score was created first, with Ananda Fuchs' choreography seemingly created in response to the not-quite dissonant but nevertheless discordant riffs and trills.

The percussion provides less a beat and more an underscoring of

dissonance, disturbing, unnerving.

The entire performance of music and dance is all about evoking a feeling rather than telling a story. The dancers give us a series of fleeting images, hinting at feelings of being left out of the loop and not being able to keep up. The theme of running constantly pops up, specifically running all the time

and not being able to keep up.

Throughout the performance Andile Vellem spells out population statistics and his poignant refrain "what about me?" is the strongest image created – in a world in which people struggle to keep up, where is the room for individuality or inclusion, and are the two mutually exclusive?