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**Navigating choreographic transitions
through the use of personal narrative
and storytelling: an investigation into
the choreographic process and
performance of 'I stumble every time ...'
(2010).**

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Masters of Music in Dance by Choreography and Dissertation

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Declaration

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

Signature:.....

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Date:.....

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Abstract

This dissertation aims to analyse the choreographic processes during the making of the dance-theatre performance 'I stumble every time...' which was performed as part of my Masters in Choreography as a practical examination held, at Joseph Stone Auditorium in Cape Town, South Africa in October 2010. It also attempts to briefly analyse what dance theatre is and was in North America and Europe and to partially document the history of contemporary dance in South Africa, from the time of Apartheid, through its demise and until the present. There are also three key issues that will be discussed in this dissertation namely voyeurism, European funding and cultural appropriation.

My choice of presenting a piece in the style of dance-theatre comes from the idea that this specific dance technique embraces not only movement, but a narrative that combines emotions and situations relevant to us as human beings as presented by dancers on stage (Langer, 1984). During the course of this dissertation, I will attempt to explain why I believe dance theatre was the correct foundation to represent my choreographic choices of sharing narratives and performing 'authentic' stories of five Xhosa¹ women living in South Africa.

Chapter 1 introduces the dissertation by providing the background to the research and the reasons for the study and contextualise the work "I stumble every time..." detailing the research methodology which informed the final work . Chapter 2 briefly discusses the theories of cultural anthropology and the reasons behind using this as a choreographic tool. It also attempts to discuss some viewpoints of feminist theories such as Spivak (1998) and Kristeva (1993) amongst others.

Chapter 3 informs the reader about the emergence of Modern dance in the United States and Europe and attempts to build historical accounts of contemporary dance works until the current time period. It also describes aspects of contemporary dance in South Africa from the Apartheid era until the present day.

Chapter 4 analyses the creative process of 'I stumble every time...' . This is explained in some detail as it shows how my choreographic choices were influenced by my own influences and the narratives of five women. This section also details the various data collection techniques.

The dissertation concludes by explaining the key findings of the research process and the choices made by the choreographer and comments on concerns for future choreographers/practitioners wishing to develop similar processes.

¹ Xhosa are people who speak Bantu languages and live in South Africa, mostly in the South- East region of the country.

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Introduction

The dissertation will analyse dance-theatre choreography in Cape Town and focus mostly on my own choreographic work entitled 'I stumble every time...' presented in Cape Town in October 2010, as part of the requirements towards a Masters degree. This case study acts as a basis for a discussion of cultural anthropology, feminism, interculturalism, voyeurism, the use of personal narratives and choreography.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation will start by explaining the use of cultural anthropology as my research methodology. It will describe what my dance and choreographic background is and explain the processes I used for the dance work 'I stumble every time...'. The context of cultural anthropology within this work will be investigated. The dissertation will also examine the choreographic process that was based on the so-called real life experiences (or stories) of five Xhosa women from the Eastern Cape and the Western Cape of South Africa. The dissertation will investigate the role of the choreographer in shaping narrative stories through dance-theatre as a choreographic method/tool. It will build upon similar work adding to discussions of style and method of choreography that could be seen as marginal in Cape Town. It will also reflect on my own position as a European choreographer producing work that is relevant to a South African audience in South Africa.

This chapter will expose my research methodology, which rests on cultural anthropology and includes a specific type of observation i.e. daily /lived experience - an immersion within a specific community and gender - Xhosa women. The research process used field work and observation which was conducted in three different geographical areas of South Africa: Byra (Eastern Cape Region) Port Elizabeth (Eastern Cape Region) and Langa, within City of Cape Town (Western Cape). The dissertation clarifies some of the choices within the production 'I stumble every time...' and ends by suggesting how this type of methodology was a useful tool for me as a choreographer who intended to work with personal narratives.

Chapter 2 discusses the theory of cultural anthropology and attempts to justify the use of cultural anthropology as a choreographic tool. It also attempts to discuss some viewpoints on feminist theories. I propose that the 'other' also has the right to speak and questions such as: Do they speak? Should they speak? Who is speaking for them?, is raised I use the examples of female academics Gayatri Spivak (1998) and Julia Kristeva (1993) to sustain my thoughts on who has the right to speak. Other feminists such as (1990), Spelman (1990) and Brayton (1997), to find a possible line between my position as a female choreographer exposing issues relevant to my gender. This will continue with a discussion of the theme in Liane Loots's article "Post-colonial visitations: A South African's dance and choreographic journey that faces up to the spectres of 'development' and globalization" (2006) and the problematic issue of European funding in Africa. It also discusses the 'voyeurism' of the Western world towards Africans and African art, and the uncomfortable issue around cultural appropriation. I briefly examine Loots's views on some European artists who seem to be interested in South African black artists,

which hints at a categorization of them as 'voyeurs'. Her indication that Europeans have a mutual sense of pleasure and guilt when it comes to the 'help' of African artists is critiqued. I also examine South African dance academic Sylvia Glasser's views as expressed in articles such as 'Appropriation and Appreciation (1993)'. Glasser problematizes how one could embrace cultural exchanges in a neutral or respectful manner.

To add to this topic, the chapter also analyses Bharucha's [(1988) reflections on cultural appropriation and interculturalism and attempts to assess how it affects the so-called third world nations. A suggestion that stories can be appropriated no matter their cultural setting and that European funding towards African artists/arts is problematised. I examine whether European funding compromises African art production and artistic choices made, by with and for African artists. I argue that dance is a two-way communication and that respectful dialogue is crucial in any culture exchange.

My main research interest is in Dance- theatre and its creation and performance. Chapter 3 of this dissertation gives a contextual frame for the work 'I stumble every time...' situating this dance-theatre work as part of a relatively small number of works in this style in South Africa. The chapter provides a brief history of dance-theatre in South Africa, Europe and America in order to discuss the place of dance-theatre of today in the larger Contemporary Dance scene.

To write about South African dance history being a non South African² is difficult for me, as I cannot position myself within the experience lived by South Africans before, during, and after Apartheid³. I have reflected on issues of Colonialism, and Post-Colonialism and the specific period of Apartheid from the evidence that I have read, which arise mostly from either historical documents or academic journals, articles and books. My personal interactions with South Africans began in 2009. This has informed my writing on this subject matter. I briefly describe these topics from a historical point of view and reflect on the consequences resulting from them for South Africans that I have encountered. I have observed that they deeply shaped understandings of culture and especially the value and appreciation of the range of people (dancers, choreographers) involved in Dance in South Africa. One of the most important points of reference in this chapter is about South African choreographer and Afro-contemporary dance pioneer, Sylvia Glasser. I will examine her considerations of how colonialism came to affect dance in South Africa, bringing dance forms that were not originally African, such as classical ballet, to a position as the main dance form that was accepted and funded. Glasser

² It is for me; almost insult to write about South Africans histories given my "ignorance" as I do not have a personal experience of this period in the country's past. I first visited South Africa in October 2009 to meet with dance artists Uphondo Dance Company that are based in Port Elizabeth, having initially met them in Newcastle (UK) in 2005. At this time I was in my final year of study for BA Honors Choreography at Northumbria University, Newcastle (UK).

³ The term apartheid describes the official system of segregation or discrimination on the basis of race formerly in place in South Africa following the National Party's ascent to power in 1948. The apartheid legislation and systems that followed defined the country culturally and politically till the first fully democratic election in South Africa in 1994 (Hutchison, 2004:332).

also reflects on the 'Indigenous dances' that was separated from other dance forms such as classical ballet and contemporary dance and how the oppression of these dance forms has shaped South African contemporary dance and therefore, dance-theatre today.

Chapter 3 also gives a brief overview of American and European dance history. I will then refer to a moment where I feel a 'common thinking' of dance existed and then shifted which created different dance styles in both continents. I feel this shift is still visible in the professional dancers' world and in the choreographic environment. In order to illustrate this, I draw on the examples of UK based choreographer Lloyd Newson and his DV8 co., and other European choreographers currently engaged in dance-theatre work.

The points of view reflected in this dissertation, emanate from my experience and the relationships established with members of the South African dance community since my arrival in 2009. A series of interviews with dancers/artists, choreographers and artistic directors was conducted in 2010 as the primary data that gave birth to the choreography 'I stumble every time...' that was presented in Cape Town, South Africa. I give examples of other choreographers who work with personal narratives in developing dance-theatre as a particular form of representation. Choreographers like Pina Bausch, Bill T. Jones, and Ina Wichterich will be discussed in the chapter 3. I explain how they did, or did not, influence my own choreographic choices. I use some of Bausch's ideas/points of view to support my idea of dance-theatre in South Africa and explain how these various techniques can be used to build choreography. An interview was conducted with German/Spanish choreographer Ina Wichterich, (see Appendix A) who is a Cape Town based choreographer working in a similar dance-theatre style to me. Wichterich has been involved in the dance industry of Cape Town for ten years and is currently working as a choreographer for two of the major dance companies in the city: Jazzart Dance Theatre and Remix Dance Company. What is distinct about Wichterich is that she also approaches real life stories and is doing similar research processes to mine in Cape Town, South Africa.

Other dance-theatre works that are drawn into the dissertation include collaborations with South African dancers and external partners. This dissertation suggests that choreographer's choices in the retelling of real life stories are not neutral. It attempts to provide a brief description of the past and current situation of South African dance-theatre performances, within the socio-political dynamics at play. I will also reflect on my own perspective of the South African Dance scene as I have experienced it in Cape Town since October 2009.

My reflections are that South African dance cannot be neutral due the complex history of race, identity, language, ethnicity, and religion in this country. I conclude that due to years of political, social and religious oppression, South African dance and thus dance-theatre is highly political and socially relevant. It seems to act as a form of social activism which can be inspiring and bring about social and political change.

Finally, chapter 4 examines the process in which 'I stumble every time...' was created. It describes in detail the various scenes, music choices, props and the movement vocabulary that was developed. The dancers' personal input is discussed at length. The stories of the five Xhosa women are revealed in this chapter. It proceeds to explain how I created different sets and contexts for each story, by creating a series of solos and a duet that was intended to represent each story, not only according to what was revealed to me by these women, but also by what was given to me by the dancers enacting their own personal stories. This chapter explains why this work was purposefully set in this specific dance-theatre style and finishes with a personal reflection of the process of the work.

Many layers are intended to be unveiled during the course of the writing of this dissertation, particularly those that deal with issues of cultural identity and appropriation, cultural anthropology and feminism, social and political values. European choreographers producing dance theatre style in South Africa and the problematics around funding, voyeurism and cultural appropriation were unpacked. My research intends to find out whether the works can be seen as authentic voices that one can and should speak of. There are questions that still trouble me, which I will continue to reflect on such as: How do European choreographers translate African narrative stories using the form of Dance-theatre? Do European choreographers 'exploit' South African dancers in order to create performances and thereby neglect their own cultural identity? These questions are perhaps territory for future research.

CHAPTER 1

Research Methodology

This first chapter will start by clarifying the background of the dance work and my role as a dancer and choreographer. It will locate the performance project in Cape Town, South Africa and reflect the period of the study. I situate myself as the choreographer, introduce the dancers (Duduzile Woigts, Kristina Johnstone, Leanne Meyer, Aphiwe Mpahleni and Oyama Mpoba) and the context of the dance work itself. It will also describe my position and choice of the research topic, data collection and analysis, and the reasons behind these deliberate choices. The overall research methodology for this choreographic process is based on oral history and personal narratives, which were collected by informal conversations. This added to my database of ideas by eliciting deeply, felt stories. It is thus qualitative in nature.

The case study of 'I stumble every time...' acts as basis for discussions on how dance-theatre is being articulated in South Africa, particularly in Cape Town. It opens discussions about feminist and cultural anthropological approaches, as well as adjunct issues such as voyeurism, cultural identity and funding that will be discussed in chapter 2. Chapter 1, focuses on defining the context of the dance project, and touches upon issues of practice led research and participation observation that can be seen as fundamentals of cultural anthropology.

1.1 Background of choreographer, dance work and contextualization.

I was brought up in both Angola and Portugal, the daughter of Portuguese and Brazilian parents. My introduction to dance and movement was through sport when I was a child. I practiced swimming and got involved in competitions. Due to family matters I had to stop swimming competitively at the age of 16. This is when I was exposed to Contemporary Dance and the Brazilian dance/martial art form Capoeira. I graduated from Northumbria University, in the UK with BA Honours in Dance Choreography in 2008. During my years of study, my strongest interest was in choreographic research - the development of new dimensions within traditional and contemporary dance and how these fuse into Dance-theatre as a unique dance style.

My first contact with Xhosa culture was in 2005 through the Dance-theatre company Uphondo based in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. I had the chance to meet and shadow their work during Uphondo's first appearance in the UK working in collaboration with the Dance-theatre company, Dodgy Clutch. I developed a keen interest to understand more about the relationships these women had with their culture/s. Their social environment and some of the stories they shared fascinated me. I kept in contact with Uphondo and their dancers from 2005 until now. After their successful first trip to the UK, they kept returning to work with Dodgy Clutch Company every year, and in 2009, I travelled to Port Elizabeth to work with them in their own cultural space - South Africa.

In 2010, I was awarded a scholarship by The Leverhulme Trust to study a Masters degree. When I arrived in Cape Town to pursue my Masters degree, I was invited to work in the township Nyanga with a group of young children from this community who are being mentored by one of their schoolteachers and African dance teacher, Pamela Mtwata. Mtwata kindly linked me to the Community Plough Black Movement in the township of Langa and later to Laura⁴ that lives in Nyanga but who is originally from Mtata in the Eastern Cape. I was invited by Laura to go to Mtata to her village Byra where she was raised. These encounters formed the basis of my interest and consequent research in Xhosa culture and women, and explains how I came to collect personal narratives/ stories from individuals of this particular cultural group.

The rationale for my Masters proposal was to re-create what could be seen as “authentic” stories by shifting personal narratives to the stage utilising the form of ‘Tanztheater’, a derivative from European Dance-theatre that was created in Germany by choreographer Pina Bausch, and to explore how such stories are (re)presented; changed; and or altered e.g. by being shown on the stage which I will explain later in this dissertation. The data for my research process was collected through participation observation, daily notes and journals in which I transcribe the private narratives and recollection of as many of the informal conversations with the five Xhosa women (and later with the professional dancers) that I worked with.

‘I stumble...’ is situated choreographically in what can be perceived as an outcome of dance-theatre techniques. It is also my personal choreographic experimentation of presenting for the first time a work choreographed by me in Cape Town, and a personal challenge to my extend skills and abilities as a choreographer to re-present so called ‘real life’ situations on stage by giving them new shape.

A detailed analysis of the work and the techniques that I used will be considered in chapter 4. In order to express these narratives as an artwork, I choose the medium of dance, which I perceived as a human act, representing non-verbal communication. (Hanna: 1987)

Dance is culturally patterned and meaningful. It is not universally identical behaviour, a proven innate, instinctive response, although the raw capacities, materials or tools are. (Hanna: 1987:32)

Regardless of the importance of dance in each different existing culture, dance certainly follows a system of ordering movements, rules or range of movement pattern and is also used as an instructive method in each culture, reflecting or not, the culture itself (Hanna: 1987). As dance researcher, Judith Hanna (1987) explains, as individuals we learn of dancer’s innate capabilities and use these skills to reflect the social interaction. Therefore, dance can be analysed as a social phenomenon and understood as a collective human action. As one speaks, one is

⁴ I purposely use Portuguese names for the five Xhosa women to illustrate the universality of women’s rights issues everywhere. Additionally, I also took particular care not to reveal these private stories of the women and have altered their names to maintain their confidentiality. The UCT dancers all gave permission to use their names in this dissertation.

not always entirely conscious of the syntactic and morphological language laws; one creates verbal language and responds to it. (Hanna: 1987) In the same way, when one creates a dance one is responding to the world around oneself.

Having in mind that dance is part of non-verbal communication, I chose this method to find creative ways of expressing so called authentic stories narrated by women of a certain cultural group (Xhosa) and grappled with how to articulate this in the Cape Town contemporary dance scene. I hoped to make a statement that envisioned the thoughts behind these narratives and make visible its possible translations/interpretations, as well as investigating the relationships between choreographer and dancers when dealing with 'other's' stories.

In order to achieve these pretensions my dancers and I, engaged with a creative process that draws from 'others' narratives, playing with the concept of being the 'other'. My challenge was how to 'reincarnate' these stories into the new body - the dancer's body and create a more active relationship with the audience. Games of exploration of the deeper emotions that are generated through gestures, movements allowed a choreographic dance to follow. The games I mention, are inspired by some of the techniques of Polish theatre director, Grotowski who used developed these in his early work (1983-1986). This is sometimes referred to as Theatre of Sources, which was a programme, that involved investigations of apparent physical techniques and other performative elements that could relate to various world cultures. (Wolford & Schechner: 1997) Further details of how this type of technique informed the games I workshopped with the dancers will be explained in chapter 4.

The aim of my choreographic approach was to create a Dance-theatre language that could represent emotion and so-called authentic facts and recreate scenes from stories that were embodied through others, in this case the dancers., The dancers were all women and also brought their individual, personal experiences and perspectives to the scenes and therefore to the total development of the performance of 'I stumble every time...'. Chapter 4 of this partial dissertation will discuss the initial encounters with the stories and a detailed analysis of how the final product came about, that was unfolded, shaped by the dancers and later re-structured by myself.

My main research interest is in Dance-theatre and its creation and performance. Chapter 3 of this partial dissertation will provide a concise historical overview of South African Dance in order to discuss the place of Dance-theatre today. It briefly traces the story of European and American dance development until today and its relation to a focus of the study, which is Dance-theatre in Cape Town.

Finally, the position I reflect on here is that although I produce Dance-theatre performances in Europe, I have not done so in South Africa until "I stumble every time..." I am also aware that there have been few⁵ European artists producing European tanztheater style in South Africa for a South African audience whilst

⁵ Ina Wichterich- Mogane a former dancer for Bausch choreographer for Jazzart Dance theatre and has been in Cape Town since 2005. The work of Jay Pather, Robyn Orlin, and David Gouldie has also been compared with Bausch by Gerard Samuel.

there are several South Africans who have done so in the last twenty years . In addition there is no evidence of these type of experimental work by South African female dance performers that are not of the same ethnicity as the interviewed women who provide the narratives for “ I stumble every time...”

1.2 Conversations in the Eastern Cape and Cape Town: an approach to practice led research and cultural anthropology.

In January 2010 I had informal conversations with UCT School of Dance director Gerard Samuel about my proposal. Samuel advised me to contact BA Honours student Steven van Wyk that was exploring issues around anthropology and dance. During conversations with Steven van Wyk I was introduced to the work of ex Dance lecturer at UCT School of Dance, Jasmine Honore.

Ms Honore was a flamenco dance teacher at the UCT School of Dance and the first person to introduce African dance to the UCT School of Dance curriculum. Honore also conducted research on the fusion of flamenco and traditional African dance through the medium of interviews and observations. (UCT School of Dance, 75 Years of Dance: 2009 page no?) I proposed to try out something similar regarding how I would collect my data, analyse it and integrate it with the knowledge/input of a selected group of dancers. Later in this chapter, I will draw from my own choreographic/creative process and explain why such practice is also an active process and why practice such as performance, should be seen as valid expression of dance research.

Following the conversations with Van Wyk, I travelled to Byra and Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape, and Langa in Cape Town to carefully observe, actively listen to and collect some stories from women in both these places. I specifically did not look at stories from children (boys or girls), youth, or men as I wanted to discover how women’s stories transition when they are re-formulated for the stage. The data was drawn from women of an adult age. I did not know whether all of the women I had conversations with were in fact adult. I assumed that they were adults as they had children. According to Kinsey (1953) women could be seen to be adults as their children were either between 6 and 10 years old, or between 18 and 25 years old. Some of the women were also grandmothers with grandchildren between 2 and 5 years old.

The criterion of adult women and their stories for this research was thus deliberate. As mentioned above, the first contact I had with the Xhosa women, was during an encounter with the Uphondo⁶ dance group (Port Elizabeth, South Africa) when they were collaborating with UK based Dance-theatre company Dodgy Clutch. This I when I had the opportunity to meet one of the group members Ana who was at that was at the time, working as a dancer and actor with Uphondo dance group, and Dodgy Clutch (UK) in a production called ‘Elephant’. A friendship began and continued in the next years when Ana came to the UK to continue her work with Dodgy Clutch Company until 2010. In 2009, I received funding from the Arts Council England to continue this collaboration in the form of dance research

⁶ Uphondo Lwe Afrika Dance Troupe is based in Port Elizabeth (South Africa) under the Artistic Director of Zamaxholo Mgoduka. The group performs traditional amaXhosa dances.

with the Uphondo group and Ana in Port Elizabeth It was with fond memories that I recall some of Ana's stories about her place of birth and her personal stories. For this reason, I chose to continue a research project about Xhosa women and to listen to their intimate stories, which are interlinked with their own culture, beliefs, religion, rituals, and the political situation in South Africa as a whole.

In addition, the specific choice of adult women's stories was also to reflect on my own position as an adult woman, researcher/choreographer and the dance story I wished to tell. I also discovered how 'women's rights'⁷ operate in the rural village and townships which are often close to cities. Many women all over the world, regardless of age, race, religion, or sexual orientation, proclaim these human rights. However, even though countries have laws that protect and or institutionalize these rights, many other countries have ignored or suppressed these rights. (www.hwr.org accessed 14/04/11). Therefore, my intention was to test these confidential stories that are told by women through finding points of common struggle that were mostly centered around the oppression of women in their society. The experiences of rules for women was captured during my research. The broad issue of 'women rights' has been a source of inspiration for the choreographic work – 'I stumble...', which I had hoped will to contribute to a discussion of women's rights and reveal issues that are not often seen about women in rural villages and townships in South Africa. I am critically aware that this is my own view of oppression of women.

This leaves one with many complex questions. For example, how are women's rights articulated in and through Contemporary dance in South Africa? Are the experiences or stories of women's rights of rural women different to stories of urban women? How could a story be translated, interpreted and still remain authentic to the original storyteller? What happens to such stories when voyeuristic choreographers change the original text? These questions will be discussed further in this dissertation.

I conducted several site visits and carefully collected cherished stories from the women through many informal conversations and observations. Only five stories were finally selected for the performance, mainly because of what I felt was the rich emotional content : stories of women that were either abused by their husbands, or forced into marriage, or oppressed by their relatives or cultural rituals that they were subjected to. These five stories were transformed into performance in a dance-theatre piece I created in October 2010 called " I stumble every time..." that was presented at Joseph Stone Auditorium in Cape Town .One of the cornerstones

⁷ The term 'women rights' is implied here as my personal notion, but I am also aware of The United Nations ' Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women' Acts that entered in force in September 1981. Eg. Article 5 part a) says:

‘To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;’ (www.un.org. accessed 11/04/11)

My definition of 'women rights' is defined by the inherent and common primary elements that each one of us as humans, and in particular women, has in possession: freedom, right of speech, equality and independence.

of my choreographic approach was to follow in Honore's practice led research methods and thus cultural anthropological methods of participation and - observation. In most traditional anthropological research, it could be understood that the researcher is required to read consider and evaluate the subject and in the end offer a critical comment on what has been read. In my research I tried to follow a Conquergood's⁸ methodology as opposed to an arms length enquiry. , Ethnographer, Dwight Conquergood explains that practical research is

way of knowing that is grounded in active, intimate, hands on participation and personal connection: 'knowing how,' and 'knowing who.'(Conquergood, 1999: 312).

In the case of 'I stumble every time...' I actively worked 'hands on' with the data providers i.e. the women. Practice research is one of the methods chosen by me; as understood that this method contributed to my role as choreographer who is researching through the very act of dance making on a broader level that is not usually considered a research methodologies. Therefore, this closeness enabled me to understand and interpret the stories both as a researcher and as a choreographer (Conquergood: 1999). Although I was influenced by the practice research methodology, I am aware of others who chose to research societies, communities, and small cultural groups through other knowledgeable and professional methods in the field. Researchers like Dwight Conquergood, South African- Spanish Ethno Musicologist, Pedro Espi Sanchis, and social anthropologist, John Blacking specifically approach research through ethnographic studies, which is defined by Spradley and McCurdy (1972) as 'The task of describing a particular culture'. By mentioning these issues, I hope to make clear that my work i accesses different academic approaches, and emphasizes that my core research methodology is through Dance.

Drawing from ethnography and ideas of different cultures, I must admit that people from different parts of the world fascinate me. Regardless of their gender, age, race, , political, social, economic or religious position, I am deeply curious when encountering people that seem to act and perhaps also who think differently from me. Cultural anthropology as a tool has enabled me to approach people who are not from my culture to develop a trusting , respectful relationship that opens up the possibility of personal information to be share on a kind of classified level. Such an example of this kind of privacy is the stories that the five Xhosa women shared with me, a Southern European woman for which I deeply humbled. This leaves me to question how does culture, inform choreography and if so, how did it help or hide what I wanted to say around women's rights issues?

Attempting to answer these complex questions, I will first briefly place why I had chosen cultural anthropology and participation observation as a method. Secondly, I will shed some light on my place as the 'outsider' in this study and thirdly talk about its advantages and limitations. I will write from my own experience of the subject of cultural anthropology and how I accepted it as a method. This informs f my theoretical framework will be discussed in chapter 2.

⁸ Dwight Conquergood was an ethnographer and an Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Communication at the State University of New York. Conquergood died in 2004.

1.3 Cultural Anthropology as methodology for choreographers

In the nineteenth century, anthropologists developed a methodology that focused on the evolution of culture. They developed techniques of how to examine the information collected by travelers, missionaries or colonial officials who visited and lived for some time in zones of the world where societies of interest to anthropologists were located. The same methods have prevailed into the 21st century. (Rosman, Rubel and Weisgrau: 2009). This fieldwork technique involves observation and participation. As anthropologists Rosman, Rubel and Weisgrau explain

After the turn of the century, fieldwork by professional trained anthropologists who lived among the people, observing the firsthand, learning their language, and participating in their ceremonies, became the defining ethnographic methodology for anthropology, and still is today. (Rosman, Rubel and Weisgrau: 2009:28)

Fieldwork means an ethnographic research that involves observation, participation, and interviews with chosen members of a culture to understand their ways of living. Subsequently, observation-participation can be seen as the act of living with other people, learning their language and trying to understand their ideas, beliefs and behaviors that are important to them. The practice of participation-observation involves an inherent contradiction, (Rosman, Rubel and Weisgrau: 2009) since on one hand a participant operates inside of a culture, on the other; the observer looks in from the outside. My personal choice for this type of practice led research has to do with the flexibility and openness it gives the researcher to enter a foreigner territory and understand how to manage that 'outsideness' in a respectful and non-intrusive way. This methodology taught me how to deepen my knowledge and learn about the everyday life of other people, understanding their values, norms and beliefs - noticing women's human rights from a different point of view. I was able to access a certain level of the relationship that seem to make them open up and narrate their private stories to me. These so-called 'authentic' stories are unique to them as they are informed by their social, historical, political, religious, language and cultural background.

Given the above explanation, I would like to continue by tackling the issue of researcher as the 'outsider' (Rosman, Rubel&Weisgrau: 2009) and the issue of 'inside participant' that will be discussed later. As a researcher I understand and accept that the concept of being an 'outsider' has been explored by many others who have researched in the field of cultural anthropology. These include anthropologists like Gramsci (1946) who discusses the problematic of cultural hegemony, Goodneough (1980) who wrote about issues related to the cross cultural study and the concepts of family and kinship, and Peoples and Bailey (2001) that focus on the consequences of globalization by studying societies and its cultures.. As field professionals, they invested their lives writing and studying about people. I will continue these discussions and what others have said and done in relation to my dance theatre project in greater detail in chapter 2.

As an outsider, I see and reflect on things differently from the ones 'inside' trying to remain detached from the subject. The 'outsider' position brings advantages and

disadvantages. On the one hand, it gives me flexibility to step 'in' and 'out' of the environment, and seemingly does not compromise my own being, as I will always be Jamila Rodrigues, with my own cross cultural background identity (Portugal/Brazil). Therefore, I can choose to simply observe and act only when I chose to do so. On the other hand, being an 'outsider' distances me from the persons under observation. This category as the 'outsider' can operate against me when trying to access certain information, which may limit my dance-theatre work. Therefore, my research, as cultural anthropology, has limitations, which I will further explore. Regardless of these limitations, I feel that when I study other people, I learn about myself and question my own values, concepts, and beliefs. I reflect on this issues and what motivates me to make choreography based on other people's narratives, in this case, Xhosa women.

I am aware that it is not possible to simply be entirely 'neutral' in one's point of view. All researchers, regardless of their field of study or subject, come with their own agendas/prejudices and therefore it is not possible to be neutral.

Since the anthropologist is interacting and participating with other people, it is impossible for him or her to be completely objective. Participation observation is difficult to carry out because it involves this basic paradox. It remains an ideal that is never completely realized. (Rosman, Rubel and Weisgrau: 2009:29)

Nevertheless, I attempted to be non judgmental and impartial in my approach. What I would like to clarify at this stage is that as a researcher, I am not looking into feelings of pity that may arise in me from the experiences of these women, but I am looking for powerful stories that I can relate to and which I can express in the arts. Even so, I am a woman and I do feel these stories as I find them important to be told and shared, not from the so-called 'pity' point of view, but from a respectful view, which I believe is inherent in any culture or group of people. During the research, I actively resisted the urge to cry, agree, or seem to be sympathetic with what these women were telling me. Saying this, I am also aware that I am not a "stone" but I tried to be isolated from a personal reaction. I tried to be objective and neutral, knowing that I can relate and connect with these stories.

I will now discuss some of the limitations that I found using this methodology. One of the constrictions for me was that, as an observer I needed from the beginning `to maintain a distance from the five women I was studying. I found it extremely difficult to engage with this personally, I am a very social and 'people's people' person. I often had to remind myself of my 'observer' role and not engage with these five women on a personal level. This had to be maintained for the duration of the research. Another limitation I found in using this type of process is that it is extremely time-consuming if one wants to collect so-called 'meaningful authentic' stories, since it requires time to adapt to the physical environment and the people's habits, traditions and social practices and for them to acclimatize to me . Difficulties in recording the data, as I will further explain on this data collection section were also experienced. (Ferraro & Andreatta: 2008)

Given the information above and on further reflection on the issues that concern cultural anthropologist's methodology, I argue that I am not a good anthropologist as I was unable to remain emotionally detached. However, I can relate my methods and my interest in people's culture and this may still make me a type of cultural anthropologist. I deliberately chose to deal and research a culture that is not mine, listen to their narratives, then I chose to analyze these stories, and later to create a dance work 'I stumble every time...' Having this in mind, I did not attempt to 'describe a particular culture' as a cultural anthropologist might do, but simply to observe the women of this particular culture and gather their personal stories, for purposes of re-presentation and to highlight third world⁹ women's rights issues through the medium of dance-theatre.

Finally, one can suggest that this research methodology is biased towards one's opinions, prejudices or points of view. But, research in itself seems to carry a non-neutral tag – an agenda. This section concludes by suggesting that there is value in research that can cross disciplines and embrace other research languages such as cultural anthropology. Dance researchers using anthropology to uncover and shed more light on a slice of life - rural life in this particular experience. The use of these tools as well as allowing one to collect people's stories and take their experiences or stories of women's rights can also be potentially problematic. The insensitive transfer of collected stories, cultural practices and traditions will be discussed later in this dissertation.

1.4 Data Collection

Data collection took place in Port Elizabeth, Byra (Eastern Cape) and Langa (Western Cape) and in Cape Town between 2009 and 2010. In November 2009, I travelled to Port Elizabeth to meet with the Uphondo Group and interview one of their dancers. There were 16 dancers: 10 women and 6 men. Uphondo was under the artistic direction of Zamaxholo Mgoduka. The group's age varied from 18 to 42 years old. I decided to interview only two women as they were the most easily accessible to me. In the final dance theatre work, I decided to use only one story - Ana's story. This was the first interview I conducted during my research. The second selection of a story took place in April 2010 when I travelled to Eastern Cape (formerly known as Transkei) for a period of 4 weeks. This opportunity was at the invitation of Laura, the mother of one of the community dance students where I was teaching at the Nyanga¹⁰ centre: Syamcela Qonongo. Laura and Symacela Qonongo, and Xholani Mtati (who volunteered to be my translator) accompanied me on this trip. In Byra, I had the opportunity to observe the village population and their daily routines as well as take part in the village activities, particularly the ones that involved mainly women. For example: cooking, washing, and feeding animals, amongst others. At the village, I made contact with 32 people: 14 were men and 18 were women. From the 14 men, 6 of these were between 40

⁹ The concept of third world as explained by the Oxford Dictionary 'the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America' (<http://oxforddictionaries.com> accessed 10/11/11)

¹⁰ Nyanga is one of the biggest townships in Cape Town. At Nyanga Centre the formal dance teacher, Pamela Mtata, invited me to choreograph for the dance students presentation at Baxter Dance Festival.

and 75 years old, and 8 of them between 15 and 30 years old. From the 18 women I met, 13 were between 50 and 80 years old and 5 were between 13 and 25 years old. From 18 women I approached I eventually choose to focus on only 3 women again for reasons of accessibility. In the end, I used only two of this group of women's stories. There were many other stories that I collected which I did not include as I felt they did not express a women's rights issue or were related to the focus and interest of this particular research which is on the experience of adult women. These other stories were mainly about their children, the village or domestic work, and my motivation was to find stories of their personal lives, as adult women. Therefore, the narratives I collected belonged to Laura and Teresa .

In June 2010, Pamela Mtati introduced me to the Community Black Plough Movement, which is based in Langa, Cape Town as I wanted to gather experiences from Xhosa women in the urban environment too. I met 12 women that work for the community and exchanged discussions firstly about dance, and aspects of traditional African cultural life . Further about their own life experiences with these parameters I selected a further two stories from the women of Community Black Plough Movement whose names for the purposes of this dissertation are Matilde and Lidia. The first challenge I faced when interviewing these women was to understand their background, and the strong oppression that they faced during Apartheid years. This was tremendously evident to me from their frightened and what I thought was repressed anger behaviour. I admit that I am not a anthropologist, or therapist but I felt that I could not get 'close' to what I was wanting to know with a prepared set of interview questions, an intimidating camera and voice recorder.

All five women did not agree to any form of recording, as they felt nervous, insecure about the purposes of the research, and suspicious as to what I would do with the information. Respect and common sense made me decide to take a risk and continue the sessions with no recording of the stories but to make detailed notes, which I then kept daily. I attempted to write up each of the conversations between the five women and myself and also wrote down their intimate dialogues with one another. I recognized this process as eliciting narrative through interview. According to 'The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics' the word 'elicit' means

To obtain or draw out from an informant. Thus one might try to elicit from speakers of English, either by asking or by some indirect means of testing, whether they would say or find acceptable a form whose status was uncertain: e.g. in a study of auxiliary verbs, ones like I didn't use to or I didn't ought to. (Matthews: 2007 page?)

I took this pathway as the only respectful and sensitive method I could use to collect the information that I needed. It gave my interviewees a safe and closed environment that made them comfortable to answer to my questions. As many dancers are trained in understanding non-verbal communication and to figure out body language I quickly felt that I could read their ease and happiness with this type of research process. When I prepare a dance class I am aware that anything can happen and must change my lesson depending on how I feel the student's group energy is on that day. I then adapt my class structure to their convenience without make it obvious and I have noticed that dance students work effectively

when the dance class structure is tailored to their physical and emotional circumstances. In the case of these women, the eliciting method was the way to connect to their emotional status and

understand the gestalt of the narrative and its connection to the psychological implications of free association" (Hollway and Jefferson 1997: 1).

The elicited narrative is often referred to as a free narrative where the interviewer asks a general question which is open to deviation or interpretation and gives time to the interviewee to reflect on what he/she wants to ask. An example of a question/answer would be "Tell me everything you can remember about . . . from the beginning to the end. The interviewer then uses minimal nonverbal encouragers (e.g. head nods, pauses, 'Mmmm', silence, 'Uh-Huh') and further open-ended questions (e.g. 'Tell me more about that.', 'What happened then?', 'What else can you remember about . . .?') to steer the interviewee to the next point in the story or to gently encourage the interviewee to provide further narrative information." (Powell and Snow 2009).

This was the process, which I used to elicit narratives, collect the information, and establish the perspective as a participating observer. As Mattingly and Lawlor observe

While there is never any direct access to past experience, stories appear to be our best means of asking a person to "relive" moments of their past, re-entering the rich emotional landscape of powerful experiences by telling stories about them. (Mattingly and Lawlor 2007: 2)

I am aware that observation methods are fundamental techniques to collect data on non-verbal behavior (Bailey: 1987).

As I arrived at the village of Byra, I was very well received by the people who congratulated me for being the first non-black person (according to their chief) to stay in the village. I was introduced to the chief of the village and instructed about the things I must and must not do during my staying with the community. Mainly this was advice on social conduct that I must adopt. For instance, regarding conduct towards elder people; in the presence of men; or the chief.

An example, is that as a woman, you are responsible to take care of the children and elder people and adopt a quiet presence around a group of men.

As the days passed, my data collection in Byra became frustrating as women were extremely shy towards me; very few could speak English; and they were not interested in my questions. Having a male translator also did not help me as I felt they were not comfortable to talk to him. I questioned myself as to how to get these women in their most safe place and I found the answer 'in the kitchen'. I then started to engage with their domestic lives, taking care of the animals, cleaning and cooking. I often entered into the kitchen and helped. Directions were given to me through gestures mixed with smiles and sympathy, and slowly two women's stories of women's rights were unveiled to me.

I was also very lucky that one of the oldest women in the village had been a primary school teacher and spoke English, but what is curious here is that she only decided to speak to me in English when she felt that I was not 'invading' their

social/personal space. In the kitchen, we spoke about events such as, food preparation, domestic work, children, and family. Slowly, I could observe who was open to discussion and happy to share their life experiences with me. Mattingly and Lawlor states

Stories show how human actors do things in the world, how their actions shape events and instigate responses in other actors, changing the world (and often the actors themselves) in some way. Stories also reveal the way events and other actors act upon someone, shaping her possibilities, the way she views herself and her world. (Mattingly and Lawlor: 2007: 2)

On the one hand, when I collect information, I am aware that I am invading someone's personal and emotional space. On the other hand, this same person has been made aware of a choreographic process and thereby gives me permission to transform her private story according to the dancers' and my interpretation in a public space perhaps because she feels that such stories might need to be heard by others. This sharing of a private moment is not only 'undressing' a particular sensitive moment of this person's life, but it also crosses cultural bridges between these mature Xhosa women and me - a non-black and non-South African young woman. For me, it was a moment of mutual respect and understanding of each other's womanhood and demonstrated a confidence in me as to what I would later develop from this sharing. Mattingly and Lawlor suggest that what private means to the speaker may be quite different than it is meaning to the listener. I also concur with their views that stories of particular events, times and places when a person reveals their private narrative stories can be extremely valuable in illuminating what kinds of experiences and actions the speaker refers to when she describes herself as private. (Mattingly and Lawlor: 2007)

1.5 Timeframes for the collection of stories

The timeframe to collect data, which would develop, into my choreographic piece was from November 2009 until October 2010. In November 2009 I travel to Port Elizabeth to meet with the Uphondo Group and interview one of their formal dancers Ana. This was the first interview I chose for my research. In April 2010, I travel to the Eastern Cape and was invited to stay at Laura's house in Byra, a village situated half an hour from Mtata. I had the occasion to get to know the village women and to participate and observe their domestic work. While observing and helping I got to know the local women and decided to collect two stories from my host Laura and another woman called Teresa. In the same month I began an audition process for undergraduate students of the UCT School of Dance, encouraging them to participate in my piece. I choose two dancers from UCT School of Dance - one first and one second year student to work with: Duduzile Voigts and Aphiwe Mpahleni, respectively.

In May 2010, I held auditions for professional dancers as I wanted to mix women student dancers and women professional dancers. This diversity was another feature of the entire research. I was invited to take my audition at local dance company IKAPA studio space. My first audition was not very successful. This may have been due to the fact that Master's students at UCT School of Dance do not usually work outside the university in terms of searching for different dancers for

their works ; or. Perhaps or that there is not many opportunities for dance students to work outside the university context, or that I am not a well-known choreographer in South Africa; or that the dancers might be apprehensive to attend an audition by a choreographers that they do not know and in a venue that they do not know. Or, there may be further factors that I may not be even aware of .My second audition took place in April 2010 at the same place and it was more successful. I chose the following professional dancers: Kristina Johnstone, Oyama Mbopa and Lee-anne Meyer.

In August/September 2010 rehearsals started with the dancers at UCT School of Dance. My first challenge was to define a timetable suitable to each dancer's commitments as I am working with undergraduate, postgraduates at UCT and professional dancers that are not from UCT. After common understanding of rehearsal needs was reached a schedule of rehearsals four times a week was agreed to by all. During the rehearsal period I developed exercises to explore emotional and physical responses of the five selected stories from the dancers both individually and as a group. The choreographic choices made were based on the five women stories and how this could integrate with each dancer's personal stories and movement responses as input. It is important to mention that some dancers struggled more than others to engage with this process since it required the dancer to be very subjective and offer their personal interpretation. Some dancers often got 'stuck' or frustrated with their own movement expression. I also realized that some dancers are very comfortable to work with someone like myself who directs movement rather than invents a choreographic dance step or movement phrase. I therefore had to adapt my way of working to these challenges. I gave specific vocabulary that was choreographed in this way by me but asked some of these dancers to dance within their own expressive way.

Through out the process, I kept my confidence and learnt that one must adapt oneself to the environment and use one's common sense to identify this type of situation. It was important for me to bring about mutual understanding in the best way that one can. As a result, in general feedback all the dancers said that they felt this process to be a learning curve. The most flattering comment I got was that each one of them was extremely thankful that I let them use their own movement and free expression on stage. One of the comments regarding this creative process was made by one of the professional dancers Lee- anne Meyer who said,

What I liked about this process is that you let us move the way we want to move. I found myself having a voice and representing the voice of another, like... (pause) this is the first time that happens to me. (Meyer: 2010)

They mentioned that I did not try to modify the way they danced and that I did not require them to move exactly like me. Each one of them was moved and interested about the stories I presented from the five women. Each dancer tried to recreate in their bodies what they were feeling towards the presented story, which I gave to them.

This chapter has discussed the background of the choreographer and dance work itself. It explained how personal stories from five Xhosa women in South Africa

became the theme of a dance theatre work and how did these women shared their personal stories to the choreographer. It gave detailed information of how I collected the data, the time frames for this, and how cultural anthropology can be seen as a useful tool for choreographers who want to use personal narratives, or work with so-called 'authentic' stories, to create dance work.

The choreographer is aware that on the one hand, cultural anthropology is a useful methodological tool that teaches one how to act from an observation-participation point of view. On the other hand, it introduces the complexity of being 'an outsider' and 'insider' within a community and the problematics of time, transfer of knowledge and data-collection/analysis/ representation. The discussion of cultural anthropology and how it became one of the key theories for my theoretical framework will be discussed in the next chapter.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical framework: Cultural –Anthropology- appropriation, and Feminism.

This chapter will address some of the arguments made with regards to theories around cultural anthropology. It will start by tackling the issue of cultural anthropology described in chapter 1, and attempt to explain why I chose cultural anthropology as the base for this framework. This topic generates other questions around the discussion of the other, power relationships that are intrinsic to feminist theories and arguments such as the ones of Spivak, Kristeva, Brayton, Lugones, Spelman, and others that will be referred to later in this chapter.

It will briefly discuss the issues of voyeurism that was discussed by South African dance academic Loots (2006) and her claim about some European choreographers in Africa and reasons why they can possibly be seen as voyeurs. Further, it will add to Loots's claims about cultural appropriation and Glasser's (1993) argument of appropriation and appreciation.

Drawing on these theoretical frameworks, the chapter will demonstrate that the issues of 'insider' and 'outsider', as discussed in chapter 1 are complex and views of the 'other' are constantly changing. Therefore, any dogmatic view becomes problematic. Secondly, it notes that some dancers in South African are willing to compromise what some may see as artistic integrity. For example: 'The Lion King'¹¹ which could be seen as a showcase of the 'exotic' dancing by some South Africans who play directly for European tastes.

2.1 Framework: Situating theories around Cultural Anthropology

Anthropology is linked to the Social and Human sciences. According to cultural anthropologists, Peoples and Bailey (2001) on the one hand, Social Science proposes to investigate mankind as an integrative element of an organized set structure, and on the other hand, Human Science focuses on mankind: its history, beliefs, philosophies, languages as well as ethical values. Anthropologists concerns are over human nature and behavior and justifying what that nature is or might not be and later to apply these definitions to all societies. Integrated to assimilating findings, is cultural anthropology, which differs from this approach Peoples and Bailey suggest this to be holistic; (as culture cannot be considered in isolation, all aspects need to be integrated)- comparative; (valid theories can only be achieved by testing the information on a range of cultures) -cultural relativism; (not judgmental behavior to other cultures or cultures that are different to one's own culture) and lastly ethnocentrism (an attitude of superiority towards other

¹¹ "The Lion King" is a musical theatre based on the animated film The Lion King produced in 1994. The music was created by Elton John and directed by American Julie Taymor and Jamaican Garth Fagan. This musical features actors and dancers in animal costumes, as well as giant hollow puppets.

cultures)(Peoples& Bailey: 2001). Ethnocentrism as suggested by these authors is something that is

essential to people's experience the sense of belonging necessary for contentment and if their culture is to persist (Peoples and Bailey: 2011: 17)

However, they argue that the study of people needs to be approached from a mild basis, since in an extreme basis, the study can lead to people being studied in relation to the researcher's beliefs that his/her system and values are the only correct ones and everyone else's positions should be judged.

Common concepts relevant to all societies such as marriage or family are relatively easy for one to recognize in the society in which one lives. (Goodneough: 1970) The problem begins when one goes out to other societies where one recognizes these that familiar concepts are presented to one's eyes by a group of people who may embrace these concepts differently. Yet, in cultural anthropology one seeks to find a set of universal concepts that could apply in a variety of cultures and to arrive at valid generalizations about them (Goodneough: 1970).

Relating this concept to my dance work, I attempt to argue that when I created ' I stumble every time...' I approached the encounter by trying to get a holistic picture of people from a culture different to mine. I used my creativity to develop these encounters, probe stories and hoped to engage the audience, by asking them to think about their own identities as individuals, as men and women, and members of a particular society with particular traditions and ways of thinking and doing things especially in regards to women. I used dance as the means to decipher my critical questions and was aware of my perspective. The dancers of the final work, and the five Xhosa women's personal perspectives of how people re-act in response to certain situations that confront them as women, and how they perceive and understand them was translated or re- interpreted by me as a non South African women choreographer.

Although cultural anthropology sets my framework, I am aware of its advantages and limitations. The concept of cultural anthropology teaches one about the importance of understanding and appreciating the cultural diversity that operates in the world we live, and might help us unpack our generalized concepts and ethnocentrism towards other people. The use of this framework helped me to learn about the importance of respecting values, and customs of others. It pointed viewpoints about norms and cultural concepts, and mostly the value of 'otherness' or the 'other'. As Peoples and Bailey suggest

Anthropology offers the chance to compare yourself to other peoples who live in different circumstances. By studying others, anthropology hope that people gain new perspectives about themselves (Peoples and Bailey: 2001:19)

Finally, because cultural anthropology insists on studying humanity from a comparative and integrative perspective, I feel that anyone who intends to do choreography based on narratives stories from people outside their own cultures should consider making use of this framework and consequent methodology as I found it to be very useful. It will help them to understand his or her own individual

life, and the position of being the 'outsider' referred to chapter 1; see new things about themselves and see how their life compares to the lives of the other people around the world. By using this framework, one might arrive at answers questions such as the one posed by cultural anthropologists Peoples and Bailey

How does the overall quality of your existence- your sense of well-being and happiness, your family life, your emotional states, your feeling that life is meaningful- compare with that of people who live elsewhere? (Peoples and Bailey: 2001:19)

As subjective as it is, I leave this question purposely unanswered as I am still finding my way on how to reflect on using cultural anthropology as Dance research and to understand what could its possible value be. I continue to ask what can be learnt from the people's bodies or their dances that is different from what cultural anthropologist finds about the peoples lives? So far, I suggest that my biggest attempt to possibly answer this question was by creating 'I stumble every time...'

2.2 Feminist theories: the forever question of the 'other'

Perhaps seeing women as other will help my search. There are many other questions that are troubling me such as : Do choreographers have a right to retell these stories? Who has the right to do so? Does it matter who does the story telling when it comes to women's rights? The idea of 'who has the right' or 'who can write as the other' has also been thought about by other academics such as literary scholar, Gaytri Spivak (1988) and issues concerning 'feminism' and 'woman' are investigated by Julia Kristeva (1993) whose suggests that the very term feminism is problematic in itself.

This dance project is veritably linked with feminist ideologies and concerns given that it was focussing on women right's stories and with the idea of the 'other' as being oppressed by a ruling group. This section attempts to give a brief explanation of what can be possibly seen as feminism and uses Spivak, Kristeva, Brayton, Mohanty and Maguire as part of my theoretical framework. However, before I do so, I am aware that in the context of this research project, feminism theories are a theoretical tool to discuss the ability of seeing who is this 'other', in this case, black rural women in South Africa. I note that feminist' researchers have not come yet to a common agreement of the possible structure of feminist research as theory and practice (Brayton: 1997) although the concept can be defined. One possible view is what Maguire describes feminism as

Feminism is: (a) a belief that women universally face some form of oppression or exploitation; (b) a commitment to uncover and understand what causes and sustains oppression, in all its forms and (c) a commitment to work individually and collectively in everyday life to end all forms of oppression (Maguire: 1987: 79)

Having in mind Maguire's quote, feminism can be seen as challenging gender inequalities in the social world. Although there are clearly differences in social location, orientation, age and race, that define the way women experience their lives as women, the basis of feminism is to recognize the organizing of the social world by gender and although feminism is a singular unifying theory the element to

different feminist theorizing is the attention to gender. (Maguire: 1987) Feminism and Feminism research does not necessarily inform all women stories, however, it provides new knowledge based upon the realities of women's experiences and enables structural changes in the social world. (Brayton: 1997) Examples of this are centered in the differences that affect white middle class females and, so-called working class women of color in the third world. Professor Brayton cites the case of Hooks and Collins two black feminist writers

Bell Hooks and Patricia Hill Collins have strongly argued against the biases that exist in white academic feminist writing, such as class exclusion, heterosexism, racism, and ethnocentrism. (Brayton: 1997: 13)

In 1991, feminist Mohanty was defending the struggles of third world women and how feminist theories could support these. She suggests how questions of gender race, age, and nation would intersect in determining feminism in the third world. (Mohanty: 1991) Another example is feminist Aida Hurtado (1989) that distinguishes the differences of 'personal is political' between white American women and working class women of color. Hurtado argues that for the so-called women of color, the issue of public/private has always been subject to state information in their domestic lives.

Women of Color have not had the benefit of economic conditions that underline the public/private distinction. Instead, the political consciousness of women of Color stems from an awareness that the public is personally political. Welfare programs and policies have discouraged family life, sterilization programs have restricted reproduction rights, government has drafted and armed disproportionate numbers of people of Color. There is no such thing as a private sphere for people of Color expect that which they manage to create and protect in a otherwise hostile environment. (Hurtado: 1989:849)

Despite what others have argued what feminism can possible be and how it can enable social change, I wish to highlight that my use of the female as the 'other' is deliberate and has informed my work as both women's rights work and human rights dance theatre . I intentionally chose to chose the study of, black rural women in South Africa and to select women's personal stories of encounters with their rights. I also made a deliberate choice in the creation process of ' I stumble every time...' to work with women dancers. I am a female choreographer and as a woman I could be seen as other . Finally, given my own mixed heritage as Southern European I could be seen by South Africans as the other.

Spelman says

Feminist theory - of all kinds - is to be based on, or anyway touch base with, the variety of real life stories women provide about themselves (Lugones and Spelman: 1990:21).

Having in mind Lugones and Spelman's reflections of feminist theory based on women personal stories, I suggest that the dance theatre piece ' I stumble every time...' was created from a feminist base line, in the kind of stories, private

narratives that women share with other women when in a safe environment. When I speak of safe environment, I suggest this to be one that includes the participation of women only, where subjects inherent to the gender can be exposed and debated. Moreover, what I also feel important is that for that to happen, one must be aware of the need to appreciate and understand the complex relations that shape women's political, social, and cultural lives. During the research, when I sensed that at some level this was agreed between us, I noticed how it was then that deeply personal stories were unveiled to me. Another point to consider is the recognition of a 'common difference'. I suggest here the relations of power, which serve as base for 'common differences' between the feminist politics of different constituencies of women and men. (Mohanty: 1991:13)

It is important to also mention the relationships of power imbalance between women and men, and women who act as active agents in a society and in the world at large. Examples of this can be seen in a working environment, education, or even sports, which is still male dominated. It is also important to clarify that although my research is informed by feminist research and theory, it is not totally or purely a feminist approach. I accept that feminist principles were conducted throughout the stages of this research: from topic's choice (women's stories) to the presentation of data by using one group of women (dancers) to represent another group of women (rural women of Byra and Langa), to the local work being written by foreign woman choreographer. (Brayton: 1997).

Another view point on the issue of women as the 'other' is how feminist theorist Spivak, embraces notions of 'colonized' consciences with respect to feminism and her focus on 'subaltern studies'. I draw from the example of Spivak's article '*Can the subaltern speak?*' (1998) In her article, Spivak questions the right of speaking as the 'other', and explains how the past historical colonizer 'Europe' embarked on a journey of epistemic violence, towards the so-called 'other', towards, according to Spivak, the 'other' being the 'illiterate peasantry, the tribal, the lowest of the urban sub proletariat' (Spivak: 1988). Spivak also comments that according to philosophers and social theorists Foucault (1975) and Deluze (1972) who references the oppressed/subaltern/other is that abstinence is not a solution. She writes,

For the 'true' subaltern group, who identity is its difference, there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself; the intellectual solution is not to abstain from representation...
... With what voice- conciseness can the subaltern speak? (Spivak: 1988:27)

In respect to the 'feminine' Spivak refers to women as the 'other' subject to subaltern's male orientated tradition.

The question is not of female participation in insurgency, or the ground rules of sexual division of labor, for both of which there is 'evidence'. It is, rather, that, both as object of colonialist historiography, and as object of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. (Spivak 1988: 28)

Spivak concludes by suggesting that if the right of voice of the subaltern as colonized is already complex and ambiguous, that the issue of female subaltern is 'more deeply shadow'. (Spivak: 1988) These issues can be directly related to black South African women's context, in the sense that racial formation was probably the most visible and repressive form of subaltern behavior in Apartheid era. Here, Apartheid defined racial segregation, the denial of 'citizenship' to black people, and consequently, and even greater marginalized position for Mohanty defines

... black women worker as 'superfluous appendages' – encapsulates the material force of ideological definitions of race (Mohanty: 1991:19)

South African black women struggles have been and if I can suggest, still are, bound to racial, political, economic and cultural liberation. Work, domestic life, access to basic education, food, and land rights all remain for third-world women across the world. (Mohanty: 1991) In addition, the stories that were narrated to me by these five Xhosa women are directly linked to power, political, and cultural dynamics. These stories will be discussed in chapter 4 of this dissertation and further explanations Apartheid's power over black women. This is situated in its context and the consequences for the whole nation (black and white, men and women) will be discussed later.

If one must address issues such as women and their common struggles and requests for rights, one must also consider the point of view of theorist Julia Kristeva. Kristeva does not consider herself feminist (Olivier: 1993) her work is also centered around the relationships between issues of 'woman', 'feminine', and 'maternal' and the semiotic/symbolic distinction as they function. According to Kelly Olivier¹², Kristeva argues that the beginning of sexual differences starts with the maternal relationship. Oliver suggest that

Kristeva maintains that a child's sexual identity is formed through a struggle to separate from its mother's body. The male does this by abjecting that body. The female, on the other hand, insofar as she also identifies with that body, cannot abject it without also abjecting herself (Olivier 1993: 97)

Kristeva is also of the opinion that feminist movements have taken two tracks: to infiltrate the social order and to try to subvert it and that is problematic. Women want to be taken seriously. Kristeva sees these feminist movements in three distinctive generations. A first generation of women who only sought to have the same rights that men had, or a desire for equal rights and equal treatment. A second generation rejected this action but during the process risked to become as sexist or even violent as the order it found so reprehensible (MacFfee: 2004). Finally a third generation, that she identifies as a hope that new feminists will try to critically re-evaluate this order, and encourage women to think about their own culpability. Kristeva's focus is on how men and women can re-think their views of masculine and feminine, and how those identities are constructed.

For this third generation, which I strongly support (which I am imagining?), the

¹² Kelly Oliver is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at University of Texas and lectures in Feminist Theory.

dichotomy between man and women as an opposition between two rival entities is a problem for metaphysics. What does 'identity' and even 'sexual identity' mean in a theoretical and scientific space in which the notion of 'identity' itself is challenged? I am not simply alluding to bisexuality, which most often reveals a desire for totality, desire for the eradication of difference. I am thinking more specifically of subduing the 'fight to the finish' between rival groups, not in hopes of reconciliation- since at the very least, feminism can be lauded for bringing to light which is irreducible and even lethal in the social contract- but in the hopes that the violence occurs with the utmost mobility within individual and sexual identity, and not through a rejection of the other (ibid: 223)

Kristeva likes to believe that there is a sexual difference, however this difference cannot be masochistic neither constraining, rather productive and freeing for women and their sexuality. (Macfee: 2004)

Kristeva criticizes feminist movements and does not consider herself a feminist since she believes that these movements sustain a concept of the feminine essence because they conceal differences between individual women (Kristeva: 1977). For Kristeva, feminism has the tendency to group classification - 'women', 'heterosexual', or 'homosexual'. She argues that it is impossible to speak for all women, heterosexuals, or homosexuals since groups are made up of individuals with important differences and to deny these is to deny their differences.

I suggest that although the agreement between Spivak and Kristeva seems to be that struggles in the name of group identities will and must continue, in order to overcome the oppression of women, the issues of cultural appropriation, hierarchies of "other," and any denial of such difference is futile. Having this in mind; I am from the opinion that the fight for women's rights is still very much needed based on my dance research project and own lived experiences. Relating the issues of feminism and 'otherness' into the context of 'I stumble every time...' my intention was to use the approach of theoretical frameworks like feminism and anthropology, to make relevant connections to questions such as voyeurism, the power of the funder and the artist as victim.

2.3 A consideration of Loots' postcolonial thoughts (2006): the issue of 'voyeurism' and European Funding.

I encountered Loots (2006) claim that most European choreographers in Africa are intrinsically voyeurs which I found problematic. Some of the questions for me, which arise from this claim, are: Are all choreographers not voyeurs, regardless of nationality? How are audiences in themselves not voyeurs? Is this any different if the voyeur was travelling to China or Peru? Further, I am also confronted with my own placement as a Southern European and what that could mean in relation to my voyeuristic influences (directly or indirectly), or whether my artistic and personal choices can be separated? Having this in mind, would I work differently if I were in Europe collecting stories from five Florentine (Italian) women instead of five Xhosa women in South Africa which I will describe in detail below.

I begin by analyzing my position as a voyeur in light of Loots' claim. According to Oxford Dictionary (2007:1024), the word "voyeur" means

A person who enjoys seeing the pain or distress of other people.

It further describes “voyeurism” as

a deviant manifestation of sexuality that involves looking without being seen in order to obtain sexual pleasure

Also, Professor Ted L.L. Bergman¹³ explains that

The voyeur is suspended between fascination and revulsion, fear and curiosity, and embodies the difficulty in describing something that is by definition ineffable (Bergman 2007: 14)

For me, it is important to unpack the word possible connotations of the word itself. Firstly the meaning is linked to (sexual) pleasure and secondly to a kind of ‘revulsion’ as noted above. Another suggestion is that a ‘voyeur’ can be someone that receives enjoyment over another’s suffering. In summary, one can suggest that voyeurism deals with feelings of revulsion, guilt, fear, and sexual curiosity that may make the outsider gain pleasure. While the position of the voyeur is often stigmatized, I will argue that it can be a valuable space for exposing issues that are not often talked about.

When Loots raises the issue of voyeurism when referring to funding sources from Western countries, she makes a particularly contentious argument around the role of Europeans in Dance in South Africa. Loots argue that Europeans involved in dance in Africa are primarily concerned with their position in relation to Africa, reflecting a sense of ‘colonial guilt’. Furthermore, she claims that some European choreographers and funders of dance do not seem to grasp the concept of herself as a African.

This level of reduction and presumed ‘authenticity’ around race as *the* singular abiding category of power is more about the voyeurism of Europe and their own colonial guilt around their history with Africa, than it is about my ‘being African (Loots 1992:92)

I agree with Loots in one sense that a number of European arts organizations such as Aliance Francaise, Swiss Pro Helvetia, British Council, or the Goethe Institute are more inclined to fund South African or African artists who are black. This issue suggests that these non-African organizations are mistaken with their idea that to be a “authentic African” one needs to be black and not consider the cultural diversity that exists on the vast continent of Africa. Whilst I agree with some of Loots’ frustration, in my view she constructs the European funders as a group.

In my experiences in dance communities across Africa, I have seen Westerners coming to Africa in search of ‘the African energy’, which they find ‘exotic’ to the European gaze. This attitude to Africa as a source of ‘primitive exotic energy’ can

¹³ Professor Ted L. L. Bergman is a lecturer in Theatre Studies at the California State University Fresno.

force choreographers to create romanticized products, such as *The Lion King* (see earlier footnote on page...), which in my opinion diminishes the social, and educational power of contemporary dance of South Africa as it nurtures stereotypes of the diverse peoples on the African continent.

Having the 'voyeur' issue in mind, one could argue that while I was in Byra, (Eastern Cape region of SA) living with the Xhosa women, I observed people, very closely and most especially the personal experiences of women. I used my so-called 'voyeur' position as someone that was observing from the outside even though I was welcomed as a guest and seemed to be treated like all the women in the village to observe how does women's rights function there. One can also argue that during my stay in Byra, this position exposed a 'dark side' of the Xhosa culture as it was my intention to symbolically represent of the current situation of life in the Eastern Cape region of South Africa through dance theatre.

During my stay, I attempted to adopt as neutral a position as possible especially regarding any racial or cultural judgments, which I undoubtedly had. My main intention was to explore through a mutual dialogue (even though I do not speak isiXhosa), to represent the so-called "other" stories through my choreography. A detailed account of the use of symbols / fragments of the original story is described later on in this chapter.

While one could argue that I had engaged in a deliberately discriminatory act when deciding to collect Xhosa stories and not White, Indian or Coloured stories, this decision was based on a perceived silence of these stories rather than the race group of the storyteller or the women being observed. Historically, the voices of rural black women have been more harshly silenced than the voices of their White, Coloured or Indian counterparts, making this a particularly interesting and pressing area for research. However, I acknowledge that there are stories relating to the challenges of human life that could be investigated in other races, gender and geographical areas in South Africa. For the purposes of this study, I identified Xhosa women as a defining category for the selection of stories, which were expressed in choreography. The key desire for me was to investigate only Xhosa adult women's stories and how these stories could be articulated in performance.

Similarly, I accept that my reaction to the so-called 'painful' story is only 'painful' according to my parameters. If observing and collecting these particular stories have made me, as researcher, a 'voyeur', that is a position that I cannot simply avoid. Although, I am confident that during my research I did not gain satisfaction from the possible 'suffering' of these Xhosa women. The stories tell experiences of women who went through ritual activities that included amputation a finger, kidnap, divorce or rape. The title of my piece, 'I stumble every time...' was influenced by the so-called real life stories of these Xhosa women. The work describes their stories, culture, and religious identities. According to North American philosopher Susan Sontag, in her book *'Regarding the pain of others'* (2003), she suggests that only people who are capable of reliving the suffering of others would have the right to reflect this experience; the rest of us are external, outsiders, 'voyeurs'. (Sontag: 2003) For me, what remains to be answered is: Who gives one the right to look at someone else's pain?

Considering Loots's criticism of European funders, in South Africa to support the so-called "authentic African experience" (Loots: 2006) my final question is: does being a Southern European (with Arab blood) who has travelled to rural areas of South Africa, interacted with a group of black women, and produced a work that represents these so-called real life stories and struggles, make me a 'voyeur'? Yes it does. Have I come to South Africa to know more about so-called 'authentic' black women's life pain? Yes I have. Considering all of the above, I accept that I am a 'voyeur' but perhaps one who is first and foremost a dance and cultural activist who strongly believes in the rights of all people and especially those who remain vulnerable - rural ,black women in South Africa.

2.4 Relationships of power: A detailed analysis of the issues surrounding appropriation and funding.

The following sub-section will analyze cultural appropriation and suggest how stories that are appropriated can be insensitive to the cultural background of the subject of study. The other related issue is the problematic of European funding.

As Loots mentions:

I embrace dance forms that are not my cultural practice. I question the validity and ability of doing this; can I take on a traditional Zulu dance form like *ngoma* and then play with it in a contemporary choreographic process? Is this cultural appropriation? Is it still cultural appropriation even if I spend two years of my life learning the authentic form first? (Loots 2006:92)

Loots questions the possible use of traditional Zulu dance forms that are not part of her cultural identity. I therefore, take on the same question: Am I not only a further degree of distance from Loots because I am European? And, how much time is sufficient time to fully understand the cultural values in South Africa?

Consequently, I asked my two Xhosa dancers to represent steps from a traditional Xhosa dance as South African dances are not part of my cultural identity? Loots explains her dissatisfaction with the current situation of South African arts funding and the issue of artistic collaborations with European countries which is prejudiced by the West/ northern partners. To a certain extent, I do agree with Loots that for the majority of overseas funding organizations they choose what "African art" should or should not be. This may give little choice to African artists to have a "voice" of such art made on their own terms. Historically, the funders of Europe favored the African continent and that which is perceived as exotic.

To probe the issue of collaborations between African and European artists, I illustrate with another example of another choreographer. Ann Cooper Albright's¹⁴ first impression when reviewing the European/African dance collaborations at the "*Dancing In and Out of Africa: Festival International de Nouvelle Danse*" in Montreal, Quebec in 1999. Albright said,

¹⁴ Ann Cooper Albright is a Choreographer/Performer and a Professor of Dance and Theatre studies at Oberlin College, USA.

I was prepared to deconstruct the neo colonialist basis of this latest importation of African culture, especially as several of the commissioned works were advertised as collaborations between European choreographers and African dancers (never vice versa). I mean really, who but Europeans, get around with a round-trip ticket “in and out” of Africa? What happens, I wondered, to these dancers after the European choreographers are done with them? (Albright, 1999:170)

Later during her review, Cooper comes to a different conclusion. Cooper is of the opinion that these types of collaborations are not always a pre-determined ‘failure’ and she expressed a pleasant surprise that much collaboration emanated from this cultural exchange:

Despite the corporate marketing and institutional hierarchies, there was still room for true artistic dialogue and critical exchange (Albright 1999:171)

Referring to French and Burkina Faso collaborations (dancers Salia Sanon and Seyduo Boro) Albright continues by saying:

The ‘performers’ dancing encompassed both African-based movements and the idiosyncratic gestures and stillness that punctuate the European postmodern dance aesthetic. There were exceptional moments of choreographic beauty when a barrage of fast, tumbling movements would suddenly arrive at an epic stillness, or when the awesome speed of the dancing would shift into a slower, more timeless quality. (Albright 1999:170)

Drawing from Albright’s initial and final thoughts about the overall experience, one can suggest that there is a generalized view that every European choreographer arrives in Africa in order to “save the world of African dance” (sic) through funding or regulated/controlled artistic collaborations. Sometimes, these collaborations arise from a common starting point, which aims to explore art together and about culture differences through, and other times, they fail as agendas override the expectations of such relationships.

Perhaps Loots’ statement about “infiltration” of European foundations/artists investing in African artists to create dance works comes from her experiences of central European countries. From my South European perspective, there is a cry for funding for the arts in Europe in general and in Portugal in particular. There is also, a genuine interest in cross-cultural collaborations, particularly between the Mediterranean and North Africa. In 2011, the European Cultural Foundation website (www.eurocult.org) informs about their grant scheme ‘STEP BEYOND’ as a source of funding for cultural exchange between Europe and North Africa

Funding mobility and exchange links closely to ECF’s overall objectives and specifically to our [European Neighborhood](#) programme, which currently works with organizations in Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, and Turkey. Also high on our agenda is support for people and projects in the Arab-Mediterranean regions. We especially welcome applications for STEP Beyond Travel Grants from these regions (www.eurocult.org - accessed 14/06/11)

In addition, Portuguese artists do not receive funding from their embassies in Africa or from funding organizations to pursue collaborative dance /art projects in

Africa and or in South Africa. Support for the arts in general in Portugal is highly competitive and money is very limited.

Artists globally seem to struggle with being able receive government funds to continue to make/ perform their art. An example of a so-called 'first world' country is the case of the UK and its arts scene. In March 2011, the Arts Council of England announced publicly a cuts list of several arts organizations. Journalists Charlotte Higgins and Mark Brown commented at the Guardian Newspaper that

More than 200 arts organisations have lost their funding, on a day of arts. Arts Council England (ACE) has announced its grants to theatres, festivals, dance companies, galleries, and orchestras, after what its chief executive called "agonising and painful decisions" (www.guardian.co.uk accessed on 30/03/11)

This suggests that even in well-developed countries such the UK, Arts are often categorized as "bottom of the heap" when comparing them with other professional activities. For instance, in 2010, Europe reached the highest level of unemployment ever seen, and at the top of the list the "P.I.G" group: Portugal (the country where I grew up) Ireland and Greece. In November 2010 in Portugal, artists came together in a public strike over the reduced cut for arts funding in the country. At the time of this writing Portugal has about 0,03% of Government money invested in art. In 2009, the European Cultural Foundation received 423 arts applications but only 26 were funded due a lack of funds. (www.eurocult.org accessed on the 11/02/11)

In my view, what seems to be the case is that that funding in Europe is very competitive, so I suggest that perhaps Loots did not receive funding because economic demands in Europe have prevented funds being channeled to Africa/ South Africa and that this was less to do with authentic Africans (black or white) as applicants. .

To conclude the issue of funding, I draw from my personal example. I was awarded a scholarship from the UK-based, The Leverhulme Trust, which is a private organization that awards European students to pursue their master's studies abroad. I was also awarded a separate grant that allowed me to pay the dancers that I have been working with for my master's choreography. This brings me back to many questions such as: am I taking advantage of British funding? Were the South African artists who collaborated with me interested in the work due to this easy source of funding, or would they have refused to take part if there was little or no money involved? Do professional dancers not deserve to be paid regardless of where they come from? Were they genuinely interested in my choreographic concept and approach? Did they want to explore dance theatre as a form? What were the power relationships or just who is exploiting whom? Perhaps, both parties needed each other but for different purposes.

I conclude this section by drawing on South African choreographer Gregory Maqoma comments in relation to cultural identity and art in South Africa, when he said,

It is my belief that people of different backgrounds can transcend cultural barriers

and create a new and dynamic culture for all South Africans. (Maqoma 2001:79)

Bearing this in mind, I argue that as a foreign choreographer I am free to choose five female dancers (two of who happen to be half European -half South Africans and three South Africans) I am free to choose five different social and ethnic classes to perform the choreographic fiction that is based on so -facts or stories from the five specific Xhosa women. I am acutely aware that not all women enjoy these freedoms. I am of the opinion that all people must be allowed to freely integrate and participate in dance and art making regardless of their cultural backgrounds.

2.5 Cultural Appropriation and Interculturalism through the 'eyes' of the so-called 'third-world' researchers: Glasser and Bharucha.

This section articulates the thoughts of South African dance academic Sylvia Glasser¹⁵ and theatre director/researcher Rustom Bharucha from India. The choice of presenting them as so-called 'third-world' voices is intentional, as they write from a non-western position, concerning issues that affect directly the so-called 'third-world' nations such as South Africa and India.

Therefore, I bring back the concerns around the topic of cultural anthropology and cultural appropriation and to further unravel a this complex issue. I illustrate this from South African dance academic and choreographer; Sylvia Glasser's article "*Appropriation and Appreciation*"(1993)

By appropriation I mean taking something that belongs to someone else and making it your own. This can be done either valuing, respecting and understating the "other" culture i.e. appreciation, or by brashly taking without regard, knowledge or sensitivity towards the "other" culture (Glasser 1993:1)

The word "appropriation" that is defined by the Oxford Dictionary & Thesaurus 'Take something for your own use without permission' (2007:40) reveals the undertone of an action that is done without approval. In her article, Glasser highlights two concerns of the term 'appropriation'. Glasser describes the example of when, in 1993, a local South African ballet organizer (with its head office in London) asked her help with a traditional South African dance "The Eland Bull Dance" which they refer to as the "Bushman deer dance". Glasser uses this case and explains that the way in which she uses the term 'culture appropriation' is referring to someone who takes an aspect of a culture with no full understanding of its context and suggests that they use this to make a new work, which they call their own. This is problematic as the new work is being presented as if it represents the total culture itself. A second point is that with cultural appropriation, a 'cultural fusion' is likely to happen and develop.

By cultural fusion, I mean the integration or combination of two or more cultural forms of expression, which have their roots or sources in different traditions or different countries. (Glasser 1993:1)

¹⁵ Sylvia Glasser is the founder and Director of M.I.D_ Mophatong (Moving into Dance) based in Johannesburg since the 1970's.

Glasser also discusses the so-called 'fusion' as inevitable due the current (in 1993) improvement of media and communication resources or the idea of a global village. Glasser adds that this fusion should be an encounter of different cultures and the development of a unique language that embraces both forms (Glasser 1993). Glasser finishes her article with a reflection of what she considers some of the main aspects of the problematics of culture appropriation and the lack of concern for the specific context of South Africa. These aspects are: trivialization, appropriateness, integration, attitudes, and motives. She specifically discusses ritual and traditional dance forms and their transition. By 'trivialization,' Glasser means the problem that emerges when people try to embrace other cultures using the so-called cultural 'item' in an exploitative way, suggesting that what is considered a ritual and sacred to the source culture is made less valued and used inappropriately. (Glasser: 1993)

Glasser mentions the term 'appropriateness' to refer to the aptness or careless way in which a ritual or cultural 'item' is being used in the new context. She also questions whether the people who are culturally appropriating the 'item' have a true understanding of the significance of the original context. The word 'integration' is also used by Glasser to explain her concern of how this appropriated 'item' is being adapted/ changed as form of new work and cultural expression. What is being lost or diluted? Finally, Glasser discusses the 'attitudes and motives' of people when embracing the so-called 'item' of cultural appropriation. Glasser reflects her concern of the attitude behind the action, if it is either patronizing, dismissive, disrespectful, and insensitive. (Glasser: 1993)

Glasser reflections made me consider when creating 'I stumble every time...' whether I the cultural context in which the stories were presented, was given dimensional shape to these so-called authentic stories in a way that the dancers and myself felt was respectful. If I am accused as being an appropriator of those stories, I feel I did not do this. It was very important to me that the exposing of the stories publicly was not trying to overwhelm, and or being patronizing. My motivation was genuine, however how can one know? This is why, I agree with Glasser when she asks that people should reflect on their intentions before embracing cross- cultural artistic collaborations, and especially how this will affect all people involved, choreographer, dancers and audiences.

Considering Glasser's idea of cultural appropriation, I would now, like to draw attention to Rustom Bharucha¹⁶ points of view on cultural exchange and the politics of interculturalism, considering his article 'Somebody's Other' (1996). Bharucha argues that the 'other' is inextricably linked to a political dimension and that in post-colonial societies the 'other' as layered, named, designed, theorized, and represented is mostly by westerners.

Our vigilance in non-western societies, therefore, is called for on at least two levels: one, at the level of the constructions of our 'otherness' by which orientalism is further consolidate; and secondly, at the level of the appropriation of our critiques by which- and I will try to be cynical- the sentiments, humanitarian feelings, and guilt pangs of our erstwhile critics are legitimized and empowered through their

¹⁶ Bharucha is an independent writer, director and cultural critic based in Kolkata (India)

seeming endorsement and understanding of our positions in non- western cultures. (Bharucha 1996: 198)

Bharucha considers the example of Peter Brook's version of the Indian epic story of the Mahabharata in 1988. This review brings our attention to what others can perceive as 'non- Western' art appropriation to serve "Western" audiences. In his review for the *Economic and Political Weekly (August, 1988)*, Bharucha sharply criticizes Brook's version of the sacred Indian story Mahabharata, affirming that this was handled without care. One of Bharucha comments was

Peter Brook's Mahabharata exemplifies one of the most blatant (and accomplished appropriations of Indian culture in recent years. Very different in tone from the Raj revivals, it nonetheless suggests the bad old days of the British Raj, not in its direct allusions to colonial history, but in its appropriation of non-western material within an orientalist framework of thought and action, which has been specifically designed for the International market. (Bharucha 1988:142)

Bharucha directly 'attacks' Brook by calling his version of the Indian epic story, Mahabharata, a sign of cultural appropriation of non-Western matter that was used to please a non-Western audience (first presented in France and later touring to other countries including the United States) without a true understanding and respect for Indian traditions. Bharucha questions the validity of the legacy and the authenticity on which this was produced and presented by the theatre director Peter Brooks and his combination of International actors (England, France, Japan, Iran, amongst others, and only one Indian actor). Bharucha main contention is his discontentment that as Indians (including himself) he has to assert his position. The hosting of others without caring about a possible hidden agenda borders on of exploitation of the other. (Bharucha: 1988)

We need to be much less euphoric about intercultural exchange and guard our territory. By 'territory', I do not merely mean land, or technique, or knowledge, but what is part of us. There is no need to invite appropriations of our culture: they are neither uplifting for our morale nor particularly lucrative in the long run. (Bharucha 1988:1647)

Later in his writings, Bharucha (1996) also refers to the truism that orientalism was never made possible only by the coercion of one political system over another, but consolidated through the complicity of a series of systems of power inscribed within another system of power. These systems of power are related to the possible Euro-American interculturalism view of a utopic return to a prenational state of culture/human togetherness. However, he suggests that interculturalism is implanted within and transmitted through government bodies and states. (Bharucha: 1996) The phenomenon of interculturalism explained by Bharucha as a process, which where diverse cultures are exchanged, transported and appropriated across countries/nations. Relating this to my work, I am aware that 'I stumble very time...' could be seen as such a inter cultural exchange. Although he sees this as a vital component for globalization, there is another side to it. As Bharucha further explains

Because, if in globalization we are seeing the homogenization of western cultures into the Other of the 'developed world', in interculturalism-from the politics of my

location, at least- it is possible to see how non- western cultures have been encapsulated into the alluring Other of the Orient. (Bharucha: 1996: 206)

As a researcher, I do understand Bharucha and Glasser's values and concerns. I am aware of the potential problems that emanate from cultural appropriation and intercultural exchange especially if they are not done with careful thought and sensibility.

If there is a need to exchange our culture for insights into another, then the door can be left open for negotiations based on mutual needs and respect. (Bharucha 1988: 1647)

Having these two writers in mind, as a researcher, I desire to acknowledge that a cultural transfer must show an accurate, respectful understanding for a culture that is not one's own, without falling into the trap of corrupting the 'raw' material, in this case so-called real life stories. In addition, the challenge remains how not to romanticize what can be perceived as the position of the outsider' and therefore a contributor to stories that may be seen as 'exotic'. I accept that an absolute position of neutrality is impossible.

What is relevant to dance-theatre is that when an artistic director decides to explore a culture different from hers/his and to collect stories from a cultural group, and transfer them into someone else's body, there are ethical issues to be considered. Firstly, to have an understanding not to relay these stories as if they are true, not to decorate or frame them as 'exotic'. This also applies when working with local dancers, women and people who are from rural areas. Secondly, I suggest that in the choreographic process, a catalytic approach should be considered, which can ignite what has been submerged, making the dancers/actors that are performing, make such stories more accessible to audiences. When the Byra communities attend performances such as 'I stumble every time...' they can 'listen' to what has been internalized and perhaps relate to it forging new understanding of their lives and cultural practices.

To conclude this chapter, I summarize some of the theories, which underpin my work 'I stumble every time', and the topics mentioned above. The work situates itself in cultural anthropology because I proposed to investigate cultures different from mine and trying to understand their meanings and values which are different from mine, making a reflection on how their life compares to the lives of others.

To highlight my work is linked to feminist theories, since it was created gender issues and common struggles like women living in patriarchal societies. In a South African context, women deal with finding their economic, political, and social place and racial liberation (Mohanty: 1991). 'I stumble every time...' tried to narrate five women's authentic stories and reflect my personal relation to this as an outside woman. I wanted to make it possible for other women and men to see certain issues and reflect on it. I tried to adopt a neutral position as far as these issues are concerned, but defend my right to be not so neutral as to be afraid to want to 'talk' about them publicly, on stage.

I argued that Loots's (2006) position of all Europeans, as 'voyeurs' is a generalized one. Also I can see how by creating the work that I did, that I too can be considered a voyeur by some people. This chapter tackled issues of funding and the possible problems that arose from being a Southern European and using UK funding to create a dance work in South Africa. Dealing with issues of cultural appropriation and cross-cultural relationships is complex and it requires attention not to fall in the trap of disrespect and patronization. (Glasser: 1993) However, if, according to Glasser, one sets the task of working from a common basis of respect and cultural understanding, collaborations such as 'I stumble every time...' are possible. I suggest that one can move away from the concept of European artists versus African artists, and that one can make a dance theatre expression that can relate to certain South African cultural and gender issues. Having this in mind, I am aware of other choreographers that have worked like this before, and of their work, which has been a guide in my own creation process of 'I stumble every time...' This issue will be considered in the next chapter.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 3

A contextual frame for ‘ I stumble every time...’ a dance-theatre work in Cape Town, South Africa

This chapter will provide an overview of the history of dance-theatre in South Africa and internationally. It will present a range of choreographers who utilise dance-theatre as a methodology within South African Contemporary Dance and explain how their work did or did not influenced ‘ I stumble every time...’ It clarifies some of my influences including German choreographer Pina Bausch¹⁷, and American dance-choreographer Bill T. Jones. It begins by providing a concise historical overview of the birth of dance-theatre in Europe. I consider what other European and American choreographers who are currently engaged with dance-theatre to locate my own work and praxis. Finally, it will also trace the beginning of Modern dance in America and show what influences European choreographers have had globally and how they have shaped contemporary dance today.

Join)I will draw on my personal experience as a Southern European¹⁸ working in South Africa, and the experiences of other European choreographers who are working in South Africa, such as Ina Wichterich who have been active in South African dance for approximately ten years. Wichterich currently works as a choreographer for the Cape Town-based, Remix Dance Company and Jazzart Dance Theatre.

Join)In order to better understand and theorise the current situation in dance-theatre in South Africa, I will briefly reflect on South African Dance history and the context of colonialism and Apartheid. I will draw on the writings of some South African artists that were living and working in this era. Finally, this chapter suggests that choreographer’s choices in the retelling of real life stories is not neutral and shows how dance theatre in Cape Town and around the world is changing.

3.1 The birth of dance-theatre

It could be argued that dance theatre started in Germany between the 1910s and 1920s, by choreographers such as Pina Bausch and later Sasha Wiess. These

¹⁷ German Choreographer Pina Bausch as a former student of German Choreographer Kurt Jooss. Bausch as developed what is called now “Tanztheater” which can be seen as a fuse movement with the theatrical methods of stage performance, creating a unique form that also combines the use of set, costumes, and props as equal players when a work is being made. This “Tanztheater” technique involves not only a narrative/literal plot, but instead a mixture of specific situations, fears and emotions that are familiar to the human being.

¹⁸ I consider myself a Southern European even though I was born in Angola and was educated in Portugal from 1988 to 2000. I pursued my dance studies in New York (US) and graduated in Newcastle (UK) in 2006. I could be seen as a global citizen but maintain this view due to my dominant cultural roots that are mostly from South Europe. I speak Portuguese and was raised in the Christian religion. I could also claim an African ancestry due to my birthplace and that I have a so called Brazilian father who may have his roots in West Africa. Finally, my mother’s great- grand parents are from Morroco.

pioneers wished to distance themselves from the classical ballet dancer / art form. One could suggest that amongst these pioneers was Rudolf Van Laban. Choreographer and dance publicist Norbert Servos who maintains support this view,

According to Laban, Dance Theater, which he understood to be an interdisciplinary total art form, should allow one to be drawn into an inherent eurhythmic harmony, which is then expressed on stage (Servos: 1998:81)

New independent companies with dance-theatre and its core started to emerge; Pina Bausch, Rudolf Laban and Mary Wigman were amongst the pioneers of this total art form concept. In other words, dance theatre came to fuse movement with the theatrical methods of stage or drama performance, creating a unique form that also combined the use of set, costumes, and props as equal players when a work was being made. *Kontakhof*¹⁹ choreographed by Bausch used both highly trained and untrained performers. In 1979, Bausch performed this work with her company. Later in 2000 Bausch staged *Kontakhof* with gentleman and ladies over 65 and in 2008 she returned to this work producing it with young people between the ages 14-18 years.

Dance-Theatre involves not only a narrative/literal plot, but instead a mixture of specific situations, fears and emotions that are familiar especially to domestic lives of ordinary human beings. In its own way, I believe dance theatre is a political and social weapon where choreographers and dramaturges come together to serve one purpose i.e. free expression. As dance author, Roland Langer suggests

The audience is stimulated to chase a train of thought or reflection rather than a choreographic dance movement piece (Langer: 1984:18)

Dance theatre is not just a fusion of several actions at the same time in the same place. Neither is it simply a fusion of sequences of choreographed movements performed to a particular piece of music. Dance-theatre is, rather, the free expression of emotion through movement and words performed by trained dancers. Dance theatre was a revolution in Germany and across Europe and brought about a new era of dance in its time. For the first time, choreographers could express contemporary social issues in a frank way without being restricted to what society would expect from them. Dance (read ballet) at this time mainly had themes, which were concerned with the 'harmless' ballet repertoire that was created to entertain the elite of the society. Bausch blossomed in this time of free speech and experimentation, new vocabulary and sometimes created works with no subject matter included (Cohen: 2006).

Although some ballets such as German choreographer Kurt Joos's '*Green table*' deals with the futility of peace negotiations during war 1930's war time, or UK choreographer Christopher Bruce that fused the qualities of songs to reflect the

¹⁹ *Kontkhof* was a piece choreographed by Pina Bausch first performed in 1979 by her company members and later in 2000 re performed by ladies and gentleman over 65. In 2008 young people between 14 and 17 years old re performed it. The piece is about intimate stories where performers have to deal with issues of pain and rejection on stage.

“sexual war” between men and women during his own teenage years which could be seen as an engagement with socio political issues of the day, the majority of ballets espoused Romantic themes such as those found in *Les Sylphides*, *Giselle*, *The Nutcracker* or *Swan Lake*. In Europe, the Tanztheater revolution started in the 1920’s when classical ballet began to be pushed away in favor of new ideas and ways of moving. The new dance theatre performances became mainstreams and were even staged in opera houses. Bausch had her own theatre in Wuppertal since 1973.

After the second War World, American companies started to tour in Europe and choreographers like Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham were amongst the first and most influential artists/choreographers to access the work and ideas of the pioneers of Modern dance based in Europe. It could be argued that Europeans planted the seeds of inspiration and Americans found their own creative ways to develop a particular style of modern dance and or dance theatre. Contemporary Dance (Modern dance) continued to develop after the major world wars in Europe with companies such as DV8 in the UK, Netherlands Dance Theatre, Les Ballets C de la B in Belgium. In my view, tanzteater as a separate dance/art form continues to have a strong influence on what could be described today as European dance or European Contemporary Dance.

Join), Dance theatre today as a quickly shifting methodology could be seen to be approaching a further interdisciplinary phase - borrowing from film, new media technology and borders on performance art. The European audience is now confronting what is dance as conceptual art comes into focus, how to engage with multi functional performances since bridges have been crossed to achieve different levels of performance (*Kennedy 2009:63*). The combination of disciplinary types of dance is another dimension to consider as this exploration of dance theatre used in this research is explained.

3.2 A reflection on Dance Theatre in Europe and North America

In my view, Dance in the UK became conceptual, (a term which I will clarify) from the late 1990’s. Postmodern approaches in choreography in the UK resulted in a shift in the status of British art in the international Dance scene (Rowell: 2000). My own observation in the UK since the late 1990s shows that many choreographers such as Jasmine Verdimon and Hofesh Scheter of Israeli origin, Lloyd Newson from Australia and Jennifer Irons from Canada are amongst those who are successful creating Contemporary dance and Dance-theatre for a British and international audience. British Dance lecturer Bonnie Rowell addresses this issue by saying:

Our position at home has changed in terms of a rapid shift in the racial make-up of our population (Rowell 2000:188).

Due to the diversity of cultural groups and identities in the UK and across Europe, choreographers are shifting their ideas away from social political concerns of a multi cultural situation by shaping their Contemporary Dance and Dance-theatre into a more conceptual form. By conceptual form, I mean that these dances are created around ideas, often abstract, visual pictures and themes. This is different

from a literal re-telling of a story that is also used by German choreographer, Pina Bausch's Dance-theatre style or form that is categorised as 'Tanztheater' that will be discussed later in this chapter. Alongside choreographers in the UK and other parts of Europe, dancers are being challenged to change the minds of the audience to stop thinking of them as "body objects/machines".

The traditional notion of the dancer as the malleable material of the choreographer with its concomitant value system of the body as an object as finely tuned expressive tool- has given way to a notion of the dancer as a person and as thinking, feeling collaborator within the process of choreography (Rowell 2000:196)

In my opinion, Rowell's comment on this "thinking – feeling dancer" relates closely to my own practice and attitude when working with my dancers in the Dance-theatre performance, 'I stumble every time...' This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4 of this partial dissertation.

In 2010, UK choreographers were responding to the earlier interest in fusion of cultures and the many social issues that emerge when or as Brustein says when 'cultures collide' (Brustein: 1991). Rowell argues that postmodern theory impacted on contemporary British Dance, bringing an awareness of new ways of expression that dealt with themes such as feminism, disability and racial minority (Rowell 2000:188). These aspects contribute to a new "thinking" body. Rowell notes:

Most notably there is youth as an acknowledged art form, and its materials are human beings- that is, 'thinking' and interacting bodies- the body, as a site for political and social tension has been a feature of the era. (Rowell 200:188)

UK-based Dance companies like Lloyd Newson's DV8 created works that deal with homosexuality and some of the so called "dark issues" such as "cottaging"²⁰. Newson is known to use dance-theatre to address controversial political and social agendas like gender stereotyping and sexual orientation, questioning forms of accepted cultural behaviours, from religion to dance training (Rowell 2000:196). I position DV8 as the main leader in dance-theatre in the UK during the 80's until today. Newson's work seems to relate strong political and social contexts. His latest work "Can we talk about this?" (2012) deals with freedom of speech, censorship and Islam. Newson used a documentary-style dance-theatre based production, using real-life interviews of high profile writers, campaigners and politicians as inspiration for his work. (Extracts of the work can be found at www.dv8.co.uk). Although I recognize DV8 as one of the mainstream dance-theatre companies in Europe, a detailed analysis of Newson's work and his creative methodology are beyond the scope of this dissertation. If contemporary dance in the UK and Europe is becoming conceptual and less fascinated by cultural fusion, in the 2010s, could one propose that contemporary/modern dance in North America focuses more on the virtuosity of movement rather than dancers ability to make political or social comments in this same period.

In the era of Modern Dance in the mid 1950s, North American and European Dance had independent traditions but perhaps common values, and the divergence was

²⁰ 'cottaging' is a term that refers to homosexual acts in a public toilet.

not as clear as it is today. Professor Susan Manning²¹ suggests that that early Modern Dance choreographers like Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, Mary Wigman, Kurt Jooss or Rudolf Laban developed distinct techniques but

were united in their refusal to separate the formal values of movement from the social import of dance (Manning, 1986:58).

On both continents- Europe and North America-, choreographers valued the political significance of breaking away from a classical tradition, agreeing that dance and socio-political commentary should be linked. Manning is of the opinion that after World War II, Modern Dance lost its belief in a dual mission due to social-political reasons emanating from both continents. Manning is particularly interested in the case between North America and Germany. Therefore, I take her analysis as one possible comparison between North American and European modern dance choreography and their works. Later, I will refer to the development of dance- theatre in Germany and North America and the reactions to this birth (Manning 1986:59). Manning explains what followed World War II as a kind of celebration to experiment. She says

While Germans took refuge in ballet during the early post-war years, America dance adopted and increasingly formalist credo. Ballet choreographers followed the example George Balanchine, and modern dancers that of Merce Cunningham, as both idioms enjoyed the security of America's newfound cultural and political dominance. Choreographers no longer struggled to fuse formal values with social import. Rather they gloried in technical virtuosity and formal experimentation and play' (Manning 1986:59)

After World War II, contemporary dance in these two geographic areas had significantly differentiated from each other. This started to be visible in the late 1980's, especially in Pina Bausch dance-theatre style, or 'Tanztheater'. Manning says:

While American choreographers generally emphasize the inherent expressivity of pure movement and consider narrative or representational subject matter beside the point, new German choreographers reverse these priorities and consider subject matter far more important than the formal display of movement values. In other words, the new German choreographers are no more interested in exploring "dance vocabularies" than their American counterparts are in engaging "social problems." (Manning, 1986:57)

These clear differences are still visible today. Consider the example of the North American dance- theatre company like Alvin Ailey and Pina Bausch's Wuppertal Tanztheater in Germany. On the one hand, Alvin Ailey's ideologies are solidly based in the empowerment of black artists, the achievement of a modern dance that is politically and socially active, and a contemporary dance vocabulary that frees the dancer from restrictions imposed by race and choreographic biases. Despite this, Ailey's work was and still is based on different influences from European dance-

²¹ Susan Manning is a Professor of English at Northernwest University (USA) and pursued her research studies in dance, particularly in Dance-theatre and performance.

theatre choreographers (DeFrantz 2005:665). Ailey's first vision was based in developing highly trained dancers in styles such as ballet, contemporary, African Dance fusion and tap, engaging technical versatility as a foundational ideology for the Company and the Dance School (DeFrantz 2005:661). On the other hand, Pina Bausch's 'Tanztheater' takes on a different perspective. Bausch actively subverted gender roles with her dancers. Men are often costumed in women's clothing. Bausch has a strong visual and theatrical component in her themes, and presents this as an open structure subject to rational description and interpretation. Bausch is more concerned with the interior landscape of the human being, namely their thought, prejudices, feelings. (Jeschke and Vettermann 2000:65). Her pieces also involve highly trained dancers mostly in ballet and contemporary, but she uses movement, speech and scenery to develop a singular dynamic. Dance researchers, Claudia Jeschke and Gabbi Vetterman, are of the opinion that Bausch uses sensorial and emotional inspirations taken from personal experiences:

In her productions, movement, speech, music and scenery develop an independent dynamic, which she welcomes because they expand her (and the audience) sensory experience and intuitive understanding. (Jeschke and Vettermann 2000:65)

Drawing from these two examples (although there are many similar companies in North America and Europe that one could analyse), one can suggest that some North American and European Dance and Dance-theatre have clearly taken different paths in their choreographic choices. Jeschke and Vettermann (2000) are of the opinion that the common struggle between North American and European Dance for the recognition of new styles of performance and means of interpretation on the dance stage is now over. North American Modern Dance and German Dance-theatre took a different direction from each other. (Jeschke and Vettermann 2000:68)

Nowadays, the differences are apparent. In 1920s North American and European modern Dance companies were flourishing and taking their first steps against classical technique. North American Dance has less influence on European Dance. Jeschke and Vettermann claim that, with the exception of Belgium:

Extremely physicality, as used by American choreographers or the Belgium dance scene, is well known and well received, but remains without conceptual or aesthetic influence on the choreographers working in Germany (Jeschke and Vettermann 2000:68).

The Dance picture of today tends to show that these differences of North American aesthetic influence or conceptual emphasis are relevant to other countries in Europe such as the UK, Portugal, France or Italy. DV8 (UK), Rui Horta (Portugal), Cie Linga (France), and Zappala (Italy) are just some examples of companies that are working under the stronger influence of Europe's dance-theatre aesthetic. Analysing in further detail, what these companies represent to European dance scene is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

One can also consider that after the revolutionary works in Tanztheater of Pina Bausch, other choreographers also started taking risks, and successfully created multi disciplinary dance performances. Artists like Jasmin Vardimon (Israel/UK),

Constaza Macras (Germany), Russell Maliphant (UK) Lloyd Newson (UK) or Rui Horta (Portugal) are amongst the leaders of so-called mainstream contemporary dance scene in Europe in the 2000s. Theatre has also embraced the fusion of movement and acting. Companies such as UK based Frantic Assembly, Stan Won't dance or Forced Entertainment are exploring dance within their performances and other types of performance forms, erasing the boundaries between movement and speech creating what is called Physical Theatre (Kennedy 2007: 64).

Having in mind these issues, the position I reflect on here is that although I produce dance theatre performances in Europe, I had not done so in South Africa, until 'I stumble every time...'. There have been few²² European artists producing European tanztheater style in South Africa for a South African audience who make their work based on real/ life stories from five Xhosa women who come from a rural urban context. However, it is important to understand in what context South African choreographers were and still are producing dance-theatre work that could be seen as valuable, social and political engaging dance work. I am aware of at least choreographers such as Ginslov, Van Tonder, Pather, Glasser, Gordon, Mantsoe, Rapoe, or Maqoma who have all worked with inter racial/cultural re- presentation in a dance theatre style.

3.3 A brief history of Dance-theatre in South Africa

This section will consider some of the main socio-political issues surrounding dance-theatre in South Africa. These issues are reflections of the consequences of Colonialism and Apartheid in South Africa and how they affected culture in general. The focus of this section is to contextualize Contemporary Dance and Dance-theatre choreography in SA. It is important to mention that this partial dissertation is principally writing about dance theatre during the period of the 70's, 80's, and 90's and looking at some of the choreographers that emerged during this period.

In order to discuss South African contemporary dance²³, one must establish its foundations and the extent to which this has influenced the current structure and position of South African dance. To support this discussion, I will draw on the writing of Indian Postcolonial studies scholar Ania Loomba (2005). I will also draw from unpublished dissertation of Kristina Johnstone²⁴ (2010) that discusses how colonialism and post- colonialism have been influential in determining the development of South Africa contemporary dance. Secondly, I will broadly discuss shifting stages of this ugly period in South Africa's history and describe the influence of the Apartheid era on the arts scene in South Africa. Finally, I will relook at post-colonialism and its effects on the Dance and dance-theatre of today to assess how this may be influencing in the making of dance works or

²² Ina Wicherich- Mogane a former dancer for Bausch choreographer for Jazzart and has been in CT since 2005.

²³ I am referring specifically to dance as a performing art in mainstream theatre spaces and not traditional dances being performed in rural areas. My study is not discussing for instance other dance forms like ballroom dance / Hip hop/ Flamenco, amongst others. I am aware that they are also performing in SA.

²⁴ Kristina Johnstone is a professional dancer and current Dance lecture at UCT School of Dance. Ms Johnstone holds a Masters in Dance. Ms Johnstone researches about 'community dance' and has been actively working in Uganda and South African black communities.

choreography.

It could be argued that the first contact between South Africans with persons from the European continent was made when the Portuguese explorer Batolomeu Dias encountered the Koi san people of the Cape of Good Hope accidentally (sic) while trying to find his way to India in the 15 century (Hall, 1993:179). In the mid 17th century, a settlement was made firstly by the Dutch and later the British in 1700's. This could be seen as the beginnings of Colonialism in South Africa that has marked the history of the country until the present days. (Hall 1993:179) In contemporary South Africa, like many other countries, there is a melange of American, European, African, and Asian influences in the context of a country that engages with a diversity of racial and ethnic, religion and language groups. While according to the Oxford English Dictionary (cited in Loomba 2005:7) Colonialism is:

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

Loomba explains, 'colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people's land and goods' (Loomba 2005:8). This suggests that there is a tense encounter between people's resulting in an occupation and domination of one nation over the other. Colonialism was associated with the belief that European culture was superior to African culture, resulting in the dismissal and derogatory attitude of many white people towards African culture (Glasser 1999:2). South African choreographer and dance researcher Sylvia Glasser writes:

Historically, indigenous South African culture was seen as less civilized, less valuable and on a lower level than Western culture.... (Glasser 1993:80).

Sharon Friedman²⁵ (cited in Friedman & Triegaardt, 2000:1) is also of the opinion that South Africa:

has been dominated first by the colonial aesthetic and second by the deliberate embedding of a Eurocentric, nationalist culture

It can be argued, therefore, that four hundred years of colonial domination and a 40-year oppressive rule of Apartheid that began in the mid-20th century damaged the culture of people of the south in an almost inconceivable and irreparable way. One also needs to note that different periods of colonialism and post-colonialism had a different impact for the various cultural groups often depending as who was in power. The term 'post colonial' suggests a dual significance. Firstly, the prefix 'post' suggests an 'aftermath' in two ways: temporal (as in arriving after) and ideological (as in supplanting) (Loomba quoted in Johnstone 2005:12). One can propose that post colonial is referring to a consequence of colonialism, which was a consequence of imperialism, the process that leads to domination and control. (Loomba quoted in Johnstone 2005:12) It is understandable that colonialism and

²⁵ A dance lecturer at University of Cape Town School of Dance. Friedman is a pioneer of 'dance in education' in SA and current UCT's Contemporary Dance Course Convenor

post colonialism have in part shaped what South African dance is today, affecting dance in a manner that separates 'black dance' and 'white dance' along hierarchical lines. This effect remains deep-rooted in the culture. However, colonialism only plays one part on possibly shaping South African dance influences. The history of Apartheid in South Africa that was formalised into law by the National Party that came into power in 1948 was another important factor to consider. Some of the main laws included Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, Population Registration Act, Group Areas Act, Reservation of Separate Amenities and the Bantu Education Act that separated white and non-whites from access to education, health, and the arts.

Due to these discriminatory laws, Apartheid caused social tension between communities that is in my view still just under the surface of what Archbishop Desmond Tutu called the "Rainbow people"²⁶. In my view, although a new nation and identity is being created, the economic disadvantage between racial groups is still very visible. This remains a very difficult issue for various people in South Africa who do not have equal access to economic and thus cultural opportunities. This has a direct bearing on how South Africa dance theatre becomes shaped as will be explained below.

South African dance takes on a different narrative than European Dance and or contemporary/modern dance in the USA, largely because of the political situation that this country faced especially from 1948 - 1994 when the right-wing Nationalist Party came to power and instituted a system of apartheid (Hutchison, 2004:332). Dr. J.L Gibson, Professor in African and African North American studies at Washington University explains that:

Apartheid gave ideological, (pseudo) scientific, and religious justifications for intergroup difference and hierarchy, encouraging and legitimizing in-group identification and out- group vilification. One would expect, consequently, that an important legacy of apartheid is strong in-group identities among South Africans, coupled with ample intergroup animosity, prejudice, and intolerance (Gibson 2006:667).

As Gibson says the deliberate categorization of people according to their racial identity was a consequence of the 'animosity, prejudice and intolerance' amongst South Africans. This history of "in-group identification and out-group vilification" underpins Glasser's (1997) apology to people of South Africa when referring to them as black or white.

However, the material for this paper is set in a society where even though the laws have been now changed, and apartheid is officially dead, racism and colour-coding have been to a large extent entrenched (Glasser 1997:79).

²⁶ The term "rainbow people" was first coined by Nobel Peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu at a celebration commemorating the new nation introduced the rainbow over South Africa as a symbol of reconciliation and unity among all the diverse people in the nation. This spirit of unity is captured in the new identity adopted by South Africa as the nation of the "rainbow people." (Moller, Dickow, Harris. 1999: 246.)

This shows that, as Gibson said above, apartheid came to devalue people by creating hierarchy according to race. Although Glasser recognizes that laws have been changed, racism is still prevalent at the time when her article was written – ie. the late 1990s or only after 3 years into democracy. Glasser argues that apartheid is similar to colonialism that preceded it. She argues

The attitudes of the British imperialists and colonialists in the 19th and 20th centuries were one of absolute belief in the superiority of their system and ideas... while various forms of racism had been in practice since colonialism, formal Apartheid was legalised in the mid of the 20th century (Glasser 1993:80)

Glasser describes apartheid and its relationship with the arts in the following phases: an early stage from 1977-1985, where government was extremely restrictive with its legislation and personal freedom was almost nonexistent. A second phase from 1986-199 where 'political resistance was carried out by liberation movements, with increasingly repressive measures enforced by the South African government'. (Glasser 1999:5) Moreover, a third phase from 1991-1994, marked by the release of Nelson Mandela and the start of negotiations between the African National Congress and the former Nationalist government. Due to the apartheid system, segregation between white, black and coloured and Indian communities was created which severally limited the interaction between people. The ideology of racial supremacy in South Africa is similar to Nazi ideologies. Sylvia Glasser says,

separatist or exclusive tendencies can easily be distorted to serve racism, as we have seen with Nazism and apartheid (Glasser 1997: 80).

Professional dancer and dance researcher, Kristina Johnstone supports this idea when she writes,

In addition, any development of South Africa arts and culture been particularly affected by the policy of separate development and rhetoric utilised by the Nationalist Party, which came to power in 1948 in the political aftermath of World War II. There are many similarities in the Nazi promotion of an Aryan race and the way in which the Nationalist Party promoted the dominance of the Whites in South Africa (2010: 93).

Similarly Apartheid reinforced the boundaries of race and ethnicity that were present under colonialism, leading to Xhosa, Zulus, Afrikaners and others being kept apart and developed separately. Glasser continues,

The theoretical basis for apartheid as given by the Nationalist government in South Africa was based on the notion of separate development or cultural exclusivity. Ethnic groups were seen as discrete, homogenous entities each with their own costumes, beliefs and practices (Glasser 1992:2)

Apartheid contributed to the segregation of South Africa's art/dance, suggesting that black African art/dance was seen less important than white art/dance. As a result, at that time, Dance in mainstream theatres was isolated from various South African cultural groups/communities and as a result traditional dance remained associated with Black South Africans and classical and Contemporary Dance/

Modern Dance belonged to a white community in white theatres (Samuel: 2009). Moreover, the state/ government funded classical ballet companies and this form of Dance was privileged in the established theatres. Indigenous dance on the other hand was still seen as tribal entertainment and categorized as minor dance and performed in mostly outdoor /makeshift performance venues (Glasser 1997:2). Some examples of people who trained and collaborated with Glasser during and after Apartheid era are South African dancers/choreographers like David April, Vincent Mantsoe, Greogory Maqoma and Sello Pesa. Under the mentorship of Glasser, they are fine examples of choreographers politically involved in raising the voice of black African people during and after the Apartheid era. Others who shared in this vision in Cape Town were Tossie Van Tonder, Alfred Hinkel and Dawn Langdown; and in Durban Jay Pather, Lliane Loots and Boyzie Cekwana. Many drama or theatre practitioners such as Mbongeni Ngema, Ronnie Govender and Nicolas Ellenbogen were also strongly voicing their political concerns through the form known as 'protest theatre' (Larllham: 1991).

Alongside black African dance was Modern Dance or Contemporary dance as it is referred to in South Africa. Dance lecturers, Sharon Friedman and Elizabeth Triegaardt²⁷, attest that when in 1962 the government allocated funding to the Performing Arts Councils, that this budget was only available for classical ballet companies. Much later in 1990, the first contemporary dance companies were eligible to receive public government funding (Friedman & Triegaardt 2000:1). Due to this radical divisive political system, South African arts were directly affected by the separation of the communities and consequently the development of each art form. This suggests that race and ethnicity played a crucial role in promoting and suffocating art and dance. It becomes clearer why dance theatre, which speaks of personal individual experience pain and suffering, is being used by choreographers making work in South Africa now.

3.4 South African dance-theatre of today

The following section considers what South African dance-theatre is and offers an overview of past and current South African choreographers who were pioneers of South African dance-theatre. The overall picture of the relationship between dance in Europe and in Africa is complex. Further, the relationship between South African Dance and European dancers funding organizations as briefly mentioned in Chapter 2 and the development of dance theatre in South Africa is even more problematic. One can suggest that South Africans are attempting to establish their own dance technique in relation to existing techniques that are from Europe and North America. Examples of this are some of the pioneers of South Africa dance-theatre. In the 70's, Sylvia Glasser was running a racial integrative dance company called ' Moving into Dance' that still remains active in the dance scene in South Africa today. In addition, in the 70's, choreographer Tossie Van Tonder²⁸ who was highly influenced by other artists like North American choreographer and musician

²⁷ Sharon Friedman and Elizabeth Triegaardt are Dance lectures at UCT School of Dance. Friedman is a senior lecture head and Course Convenor of Contemporary Dance and Triegaardt is an associate professor and the Chief Executer and Director of Cape Town City Ballet.

²⁸ Tossie Van Tonder is currently based in Cape Town and working as a filmmaker.

Meredith Monk emerged. Tonder was also a follower of French feminists and philosophers like Julia Kristeva, Helen Cixous and Michael Foucault. In her CV, Tonder expresses that they inspired her own choreographic work:

Their work enhanced my perspectives on the current Southern African issues of the African Diaspora, third worlding by the West, the effects of globalization on the third world, post-colonialism, post-negritude, the inherent democracy of motherhood and the politics of the body. I started to write and developed an essayistic form of prose that has accompanied my performances ever since. (www.luxapis.co.za/Tossieeee_cv.htm / 17/03/11)

In the early 80's other choreographers like Robyn Orlin worked and continues to explore themes that were mostly political – concerned with racial identity and “whiteness”. Orlin also deconstructs the fragile world of ballet and “tutus” (<http://robynorlin.com> 10/03/2011). Dance journalist Adrienne Sichel says that Pina Bausch is a strong influence on Orlin's work. Orlin ran the first black dance company in South Africa – FUBA (Federated UNINON of Black artists) Dance Company in 1983. Sadly, it only lasted one year.

Alongside Orlin, Jeannette Ginslov is also another good example of a choreographer working in the dance theatre style. Ginslov is a screen dance maker based in Johannesburg working both as director and editor. Ginslov is the Artistic Director of Walking Gusto Productions.

Her dance videos and live interactive media works explore the amplification of the authentic and the digital, the emotional and kinesthetic to heighten empathetic viewer responses. She combines dance, music, text, video and interactive media in stimulating explorations of the notion of identity and how this is tied in with the actions of “bending cinema”, “breaking the frame”, freeing the imagination and otherness. (<http://www.jeanetteginslov.com> 10/03/2011)

During the 90's, choreographers like Sello Pesa, who was a former dancer from 'Moving into Dance' in the 70's, developed his own dance language that reflects a mix of contemporary and traditional dance forms from South Africa. Pesa started to choreograph for the Soweto Dance Project and later he was invited as an artist-in-residence at the American Dance Festival in North Carolina. He was commissioned for several international works, such as for the London's Dance Umbrella Festival. (<http://www.movementrevolutionafrica.com/sello.html> 22/11/11). Pesa is currently working in Johannesburg, his hometown, where he explores through his dance work issues of social and political engagement. What these choreographers have in common is the fact that they successfully create an art form rooted in political and social reflection of their community environment. These choreographers continue to work locally and internationally today. Whether one was Jewish, Afrikaans or Black, there was a huge cry to shake up the existing dominant ballet conventions and to strengthen contemporary dance that was seen as 'ugly' by some mainstream audience members. They were some of the pioneers of this era and laid the foundations for the so-called “dance-theatre” of South Africa.

In my view, the work of South African choreographers in the period of 70s to mid 90's often reveals bitterness towards the past. This is understandable especially when considering South Africa's complex history of colonialism and Apartheid.

There is an understandable resentment that South African choreographers have towards colonialism and its influences over African art and dance in particular. During my research on South African dance and choreography in the post-apartheid era, the effect of colonialism in the country places Westerners as people who stole their land, devalued their rituals and disrespected their culture. Westerners have shaped the meaning of race, class and gender with their overpowering and manipulative attitudes towards the colonized people.

Colonial practices were nothing if not conscious of indigenous class, gender, cast or regional hierarchies, which they manipulated, altered or entrenched (Loomba 2005:141)

Consequently, colonisers also brought their own cultural habits that are now deeply rooted in South African culture, and also, the Dance history. There are key persons in the field of South African contemporary dance who contributed to a new face of the arts/Dance in South Africa in the period between 70's until today. The performance spaces and events/ festivals in which these dance choreographies took place are also important to consider. A list of these contributors include Dance researchers and lecturers such as Gerard Samuel, Jay Pather, Sharon Friedman (Western Cape); Sylvia Glasser (Johannesburg); Juanita Finestone-Praeg (Grahamstown, Eastern Cape). Other key persons include Dance Forum director – Ashley Killar (Durban), Dance Umbrella's Festival Director Georgina Thomson (Johannesburg) or Theatre Directors like Lara Foot (Western Cape). Finally, dance teachers and choreographers like Jill Waterman, Vicki Karras, Gary Gordon, Samantha Piennaar, Mamela Nyamza, Robin Orlin and Vincent Mantose are all also very influential persons who have shifted the South African dance scene and especially its choreography. In my view, South African Dance and Dance Theatre choreographers, and their works, informed exchanges between countries and these exchanges cannot be neutral. The history of Colonialism and over 40 years of Apartheid left people, and in this case, choreographers and dancers, a sad legacy of categorization by race which has led to segregation, political and social tension. South African choreography has not only focused on hurtful past but concentrates on building a hopeful future.

Choreographers like Robyn Orlin, Tossie Van Tonder, Jay Pather, Lliane Loots, Gregory Maqoma or Sello Pesa understood that it was necessary to 'speak' out' to their communities about issues of the past and reflect the old and new situations of the Nation (Samuel: 2009). Presently, these choreographers are still actively involved in so-called controversial work, exploring new roots of movement vocabulary and integration of intercultural and inter- disciplinary artwork. Whether North Americans or Europeans influence them, South African artists do have a voice that is uniquely theirs. A voice that tells the story and the struggle of this complex nation that was once under Colonial and Apartheid rule.

I am aware that my own contribution is not in a vacuum or isolation, and that there are many choreographers working in a similar method to me in South Africa. I am also aware of some of what these South African dances and choreographers were socially and politically exposed to and the impact that their work must have had. I also empathize with their need to make a shift forward in the sense that roots of

Colonialism and Apartheid will always be visible, and necessary to be exposed and talked about. My position is that although I am aware and respect the great contribution that South African choreographers such as Sharon Friedman, Sylvia Glasser, Jay Pather, Lliane Loots, Robin Orlin, Sello Pesa, Vincent Mantsoe, Mamela Nyamza, Nelisiwe Xaba amongst others did make to bring about a possible social and political change in the country my own vision of working in dance-theatre is different from theirs and hopefully this can also add to South African dance.

Therefore, in 'I stumble every time...' I suggest that the differences mentioned above, are mainly to do with socio-political cultural backgrounds, which are different between the choreographers described above and myself. I feel that my personal movement visualization or dance of the five Xhosa women I interviewed is kind of a cultural anthropology that possibly uses feminist approaches which is particular. I can, to certain extent, attempt to be neutral about these stories, however I feel compelled to present them on stage. Would South African Xhosa descended female choreographers like Mamela Nyamza or Neli Xaba deal with these stories in the same way? Would the work become more personal to audiences because of the choreographers context? I am inclined to answer that, in face of their closeness to these topics of violation of women's rights, South African female choreographers, would have tackled these issues differently to me. Finally, I am of the view that all our varying opinions have value especially when it comes to the representation of human rights in general and women rights in particular.

3.5 Choreographers Influences that shaped 'I stumble every time...'

This section will factor the key choreographers that have influenced my past and present work, and my most recent work 'I stumble every time...'. I start with the most influential choreographer in my creative work – Pina Bausch - and explain how some of her concepts and working techniques have informed my own way of working. I will continue this section by giving examples of other choreographer with whom I share a similar manner or approach. to me. This will include American choreographer Bill T Jones, and another European choreographer working in Cape Town for the past ten years, and former dancer from Wuppertal Tanztheater, Ina Wichterich.

The proposal for my practical Masters choreographic examination was to examine the choreographic processes of what could be seen as 'authentic' stories on stage. For this purpose, I chose to utilise the form of 'Tanztheater', a derivative from European dance theatre that can be attributed to Germany choreographer Pina Bausch to explore how stories that are represented become changed or are altered when on stage. This dissertation further investigates the work of German choreographer Pina Bausch and notices which aspects of her choreographic techniques influenced my way of working. Bausch comments

I am not so much interested in how people move as in what moves them... its is never something you can describe exactly. Basically one wants to say something, which cannot be said, so we make a poem so one can feel what is meant. You see it and you know it without being able to formulate... The piece has many levels, and

what you see depends a bit on where you are yourself (Bausch: 2007:1)

This approach to dance making or choreography has greatly influenced my creative processes, way of thinking and viewing dance. I am deeply moved when I see a vivid performance one that not only incorporates a skilled dancer but a fully expressive performer on stage. Prior to my own experience as a dancer, I remember that I am first a human being. As a human being, I am faced with everyday problems, emotions, familiar and unfamiliar situations to the person next to me. This is what intrigues me and is what I want to choreograph about - deeply personal situations that anyone can relate to in a subjective way.

I was privileged to have had the experience of working with Pina Bausch on a youth dance project with members of her dance theatre company in Wuppertal in 2009..

Join) Pina Bausch's work is very hard to categorize due the uniqueness of the vocabulary that she presents to the audience. She is at once

highly emotional and subjective to the human eye, a response to feelings and emotions, usually comical, violent and disturbing, that talks about human relations and explores new ways of movement, and yet, not really acceptable by the American community (Ferguson: 1986:98).

While American choreographers were busy working in the inheritance of aesthetic and pure technical movement, German choreographers like Bausch 'were reversing the roles and consider subject matter and social engagement more important than movement itself (Ferguson 1986: 99). Bausch's central theme is the relationship between men and women and the violence that they do to one another.

She subverts the gender and ageist stereotypes through cross dressing in manic gestural repetitions until both literally and physically the lines become blurred and we see human suffering joy or pain (Ferguson 1986: 101)

To engage with this 'pain', I noticed how Bausch pushed her dancers to search inside themselves for feelings of violence (sic), power, attraction, flirtation, rejection, and submission, amongst others. The dancer must look inside himself/herself for those answers and use what emerges mostly from their own personal experiences. Deborah Jowitt, one of Bausch former dancers, explains

Bausch may not only be commenting on the world today, but offering a cautionary note about the connections between intimate, domestic violence and the violence of one people toward another. (Jowitt: 1986:18)

I observed that the research process for the dance and choreography begins with movement within oneself. When one is capable to communicate these own issues and personal experiences and adapt these deeply emotional personal situations into a movement vocabulary that can be dramatic, it usually can only be performed by oneself. It is for me a unique story or authentic voice at its clearest. Bausch's work includes

repetition of movement and situation, stereotypical gestures, violence, hysteria, autobiographical information from the dancers, complicated music montage, and dance.' (Ferguson.1986: 101).

In my choreography, I used Pina Bausch's methods as a structure for eliciting narrative, emotion, and movement from my dancers. If the dancers and I could fit the stories of the five Xhosa women who were verbally, emotionally and physical abused by others, mostly by a male figure, then I was convinced I would have a story linthan feeds from Bausch's idea of submission and inherent power relations that exist between men and women. Further explanation about my own process and the incorporation of Bausch's choreographic techniques will be explained in chapter 4.

The most influential choreographers in my life were people who expressed dance through theatre or physical theatre and that practiced cross-cultural collaborations in their work. Examples of choreographers that most influence me are Pina Bausch, Argentinean choreographer Constanza Macras that is based in Germany, Rui Horta, from Portugal that now regularly works with English contemporary dancers and Luiz Abreu from Brazil who is currently working in Germany and France. Interesting, in 2010, Abreu worked in collaboration with South African dancer Nelly Xaba. In my opinion, each choreographer seems to focus on one or two aspects of human conditions. Bausch explores gender representation such the case of work *Cafe Muller (1978)*, Macras considers the cultural influences from non-European countries arrive to Europe, and most recently, gave attention to the current situation of the Romani- people in the Middle and Eastern Europe in her upcoming work *Open for Everything* (<http://www.constanzamacras.com> 17/11/11). Horta that recently presented at UK Dance Umbrella Festival (2010) a work entitled *Talk Show* explores the dynamics of relationships over time and the body as a communicative tool and explores gender issues regarding sexuality (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vy4hvirgeia> 13/11/11).

All these choreographers are currently working in dance theatre mostly in Europe and the north Americas and could be seen as the pioneers of a new genre of dance. Although I am aware of the remarkable quality of these northern European choreographers, I note that choreographers Bill T Jones, and Ina Wichterich seem to work in the same method that I do which is through story telling, personal narratives and a re-creation of all of this for the stage.

In my view, it is important to refer to Bill T. Jones, although in a different context from my work. I examine the example of the controversial case of writer and dance critic Arlene Croce²⁹'s refusal to review and attend Afro American choreographer Bill T Jones performance untitled ' Still/Here' in 1994 in New York. The choreographer presented people who were HIV positive that danced and talked about their own terminal illness: HIV (Paris: 2005). Carl Paris³⁰ refers to Bill T Jones as

²⁹ Arlene Croce is an American dance critic and the founder of Ballet Magazine. Croce worked for New Yorker as a dance critic between 1973-1998.

³⁰ Carl Paris was an American dancer/performer for several African dance and modern dance companies (Eleo Pomare, Olatunjuni and Alvin Aliley) and taught Modern Dance at Temple University where he gained his PHD.

Constantly to be looking for himself, or at least for ways to explain his self, Jones feels he has had to fight for his life, figuratively and literally; he experiences himself as the sexual, political and ideological Other' (Paris 2005:67)

In her infamous review for *The New Yorker* in December 1994, of Jones' performance *'Discuss the Undiscussable'*, Croce, who refused to attend the performance, said

by working with dying people into his act, Jones puts himself beyond criticism. Jones has crossed the line between theatre and reality; he thinks that victimhood in and of itself is sufficient to creation of an art spectacle.
(<http://www.thenewyorker.com> 20/04/11)

According to Croce's, she could not review someone who she felt sorry for or helpless about. Drawing from this example, I relate this to 'I stumble every time...' and question if I am unqualified to expose the 'other' pain and re-present this in a performative active act, just as Bill T Jones had made in 1994 when he exposed people's life stories and their struggles with a terminal illness like AIDS? Will critics like Arlene Croce or Liane Loots consider that I could be 'victimizing' the 'Other' and exposing what cannot or should not be exposed? Did I have a 'voyeuristic' attitude by observing these women's lives and collecting their stories? I would argue that Bill T Jones also travelled to several places in North America collecting stories from HIV positive people and used them in video installations in his piece "Still/Here" to represent their struggle. He travelled to eleven different cities in the same country (USA) and interviewed, recorded video and text from people (ages 11-74) talking about their experiences, feelings, speculations, or illness and asked his dance company members to embody this through dance movement (Bordwell: 1998). The answer is complex and messy. Bill T Jones found inspiration for his work from distinct parts of his cultural, familial and personal background. As a choreographer I also found stimulation from the life experience stories from five women. Like Jones, I used the experience (subject/text) and the dancer's body (the object) as the central position through which my personal feelings and ideas of what these women stories might or might not be saying to communicate to the audience (Paris: 2005). One can argue that both Jones and I collected so-called real life stories and data in a 'voyeuristic' way as research but without a sense of pity for the subject as a victim. One of the key differences is that Jones identifies himself, as a 'victim' as he is also HIV positive and as researcher I do not include any of my own painful stories in 'I stumble every time... Further detail about the stories of these women will be found in chapter 4.

I conclude this chapter with a brief description of choreographer Ina Wichterich who is also a choreographer working in dance theatre in South Africa., This will expose some of the similarities between her way of working and mine. I intend to demonstrate how this choreographer's work is also narrative based and a dance-theatre form. I also consider her contribution to dance- theatre in the Western Cape in South Africa.

Wichterich is a German/Spanish choreographer trained in Limon and Classic techniques. She was a former dancer of Pina Bausch Wuppertal Tanz Theater and

moved to Cape Town in the 90's. Since her arrival, Wichterich worked as a freelance, guest lecturer at the UCT School of Dance and recently works as a choreographer for two of the majors dance companies in Cape Town: Jazzart Dance Theatre and Remix Dance Company. Her most recent choreographic work includes 'Partly God' (Jazzart Dance Theatre), 'Beautiful' (a collaboration between Jazzart Dance Theatre and Remix Dance Co dancers) and 'Lovaffair' (Remix Dance Co). Her work is also influenced by Bausch tanztheater techniques, where she includes narrative and the performance of so-called real life stories or situations. Wichterich comments on her own work, noting that

Sometimes gets emotional or stuff because we are not sure of the next sections you know?... we are asking questions, they are giving an answer and than I work with . Sometimes I changed it around, I use this thing in a different rhythm and than in a different tempo, do it running do it.... (pause) whatever I feel in them... (Interview extract: Wichterich: 2011)

Wichterich informs that her movement is moulded according to the dancers answers to her questions and that the same movement its then transformed, re-taught with a different dynamic including the change of the tempo, rhythm, intensity energy. The choreographer also comments on Bausch's work saying

Pina Bausch? (long pause) ... For sure. Twenty five years, thirty years.. (long pause) and how... her work as changed and how is she as gone all over the world... she changed the world of dance... she revolutionized the world of dance. And she never stopped because she kept on.... Looking, she kept on looking.... She kept on looking for some sort of a true. (pause) she is not just an icon for nothing. She moved people because she continued moving herself... (Interview extract Wichterich: 2011)

I also agree with Wichterich regarding the influence of Bausch to her own work. I also search for the so-called 'truth' that informs my work. I notice how this searching influences my choices of dancers; movement; music and even which stories should be told. When questioned about whether dance theatre should or should not integrate so-called real life stories, Wichterich answered

I will never.... (pause) I won't be interested in putting something that is not real... I don't believe in theatre like that... (Interview extract Wichterich: 2011)

I am also aware Director UCT School of Dance; Gerard Samuel has compared choreographers who are South African born like Jay Pather, Robyn Orlin, David Gouldie and Nelly Xaba to Bausch. . (Samuel: 2011) Having a general context of South African dance history and the rise or development of dance-theatre, one can suggest that on the one hand, the works of South African choreographers reflects on the harsh lives within various communities, which they lived in. In addition, South African choreographers are interested in including hybrid identity into their work. By mirroring situations, they confront the political and social issues of the country in which they live. These choreographers search for work that could act as a catalyst to bring about changes in their culture, history, and in multiple identities which many find themselves in. In my opinion, that is admirable.

When I relate the work of these South African choreographers to my choreographic process, which is mainly influenced by Pina Bausch, I am aware that the base structure comes from a different cultural, political, and social history. Mostly, in my opinion, South African dance-theatre choreographers may be working towards a social and political reaction while I tend to focus on a humanist response. My work 'I stumble every time...' is mostly concerned with tradition, love relationships, culture, and modern women's stories. An analysis of my own choreographic method, its points of departure and final performance will be discussed in the following chapter. I can see how any reflection of the human condition can at the same time be deeply personal and political. After all, as feminist Carol Hanisch said 'The personal is political' (1950).

University of Cape Town

Chapter 4

A detailed analysis of 'I stumble every time...'

This chapter will analyse in depth, the dance work 'I stumble every time...' created in October 2010, which was presented at the Joseph Stone Auditorium, Cape Town. It will describe the components, which informed the creative process. The various scenes, music choices, and interactions between choreographer and dancers, and the final outcome/product of the performance will be analysed to illustrate changes in dance-theatre as preferred choreographic tool within contemporary dance.

The foundation for 'I stumble every time...' was to re-create and perform five personal narratives from five Xhosa women in South Africa. These stories were told to me at different chronological times and in different geographical spaces; however, they belong to the same cultural background Xhosa. The stories were about women that escaped a force marriage; another that got her index finger cut off at the age of 12 as part of a traditional Xhosa ritual in order to 'clean' her-self from a particular difficulty; another that was forced into a ritual healing by her husband, another that was kidnapped and later raped by her husband and subsequently taken away from her parents. Finally, another woman that went through *Imbeleko*³¹ process in order to clean herself from a lost child.

The stories were not recorded, or audio or videotaped, instead all the women gave me permission to write their stories down. Later and interpretation of this was revealed through the dancers. The first idea for the work was to create an imaginary scenario that would bring these women together in a space. Although they did not know each other in real life, their so-called 'common struggle' in the sense that they belonged to the same gender and cultural group. It felt it was important to create visual and movement links.

4.1 Introducing the stories and first scenes

The dancers, who were selected to perform these stories, did not know each other well. Some of them were outsiders from the UCT School of Dance, others undergraduate students from another academic programme, and another a final year Master student. Therefore, the first session welcomed the dancers to the project and explained to them the intention and goals of the research project. When I presented the so-called 'authentic' personal stories of the five Xhosa women, there was a general silence amongst the dancers. They felt the stories were dramatic, sad, touching and complex, and as women, they could relate to them too. They felt compelled to 'dance' these stories; in the same way I felt to perform them to a larger audience when I first heard it. I let my dancers chose which story they wanted to represent.

³¹ Imbeleko is a Xhosa ceremony that is conducted shortly after a baby is born and a common practice in cultures like the Zulu; Xhosa; Kikuyu; Shona; Ashanti and many more. Matilde's child, suddenly died days after that process.

Oyma Mobpopa choose the story of Laura and her escape from an abusive marriage and choice to work as domestic worker. Duduzile Voigts opted for Lidia's story about her index finger being cut off at the age of 12, and Aphiwe Mpahleni was moved by the story of Teresa and her story of being kidnap and shocking rape situation. Kristina Johnstone felt hearth broken by the story of Matilde and wanted to explore the reason behind *Imbeleko* process. Lee-Anne Meyer agreed to represent Ana's story and her struggle not to become a Xhosa traditional ritual healer. Once the stories were allocated, I knew I wanted to present each one of them as a 'solo', letting the dancer represent in her way re-telling the story. However, it was important for me to situate the work as a dance-theatre performance. Initial trust games were workshopped between the dancers and myself. Discussions about these five Xhosa women and their lives, and later discussions about the dancers personal lives and how these stories could relate to some of the dancers new stories that they were creating with me. This allowed me to construct an interaction between the dancers and their characters, and later, with them as a group of women, representing other women.

The rehearsal process was photographed, and choreographic notes were given during and after the rehearsals each week. Discussions happened in order to situate the story line and monitor progress. When I mentioned the creation of a story line, my intention was to give a base structure to the narrated stories. In real life, these Xhosa women do not know each other and do not have access to each other's stories. Therefore, I created an imaginary bus as a departure point where these characters would meet and interact with one another. The first scene, which was the bus scene, dancers meet as individuals travelling somewhere- to the Eastern Cape perhaps, followed by a bus accident interlinking the characters and established them as a group. Later, I introduced the first 'solo' performed by Duduzile Voigts, recreating Lidia's story. The choice of music for this scene was by women's group Zap Mama. The soundtrack 'Peleke' talks about a car accident, uses voice percussion and humoristic lyrics, in French and Malawi. The props used for this scene, were five large travelling bags.

In the following scene, dancers are on the floor, recovering from the accident, and one of the dancers (Johnstone) reacts to this by vomiting inside someone's travelling bag. A humoristic scene happens when Johnstone throws the 'vomited' bag to Voigts, and generates a kind of hysteria between them where the five bags are throw on stage giving the impression they wanted to get rid of the 'vomited' bag.

The interaction and group interaction was then set. The next scene, which I called 'Tango', introduces the first intimate relationship between the dancers. The choice of music was 'Modje Trofel' by Cesaria Evora³², who is a female Cape Verdean singer. One of the singularities of this singer is that she performs barefoot, as an action of respect towards the women and children of her country. I was inspired by this woman and felt her music style would fit the mood for the scene. This represented a story that had to be expelled but one that no one wants to know about or keep.

³² Cesaria Evora sadly passed away on the 17th December 2011.

The dancers changed into evening dress, suggesting going to a party, where they danced Tango style. This was deliberate as tango is for me a male dominated style. However, I wanted to distort this idea by having two women dancing this particular style together. My intention was to represent these women's femininity through an evening dress, but dancing a so-called masculine dance. This would contrast with their so-called fragility as women. Purposefully, I made the women dancers powerfully supporting and carry each other. An evening dress suggests a certain way of conduct, perhaps a sensual and provocative way of moving. I wanted to know about the dancers personal stories of evening dress and party situations, especially to recall any embarrassing situations during such events. In discovering this, I could then explore their intimate individual/unique reactions. Gradually, the dancers start to unveil their own personal stories to me, just like with the collection of the Xhosa women narratives. I wrote these down in a notebook and highlighted the ones I considered valid to link with the initial stories. The use of repetition, inspired by Pina Bausch choreographic methods, was one of the methods I used to choreograph this particular scene.

As far as the use of repetition, I tried to incentivize dancers to work through repetition of a movement phrase until the point of exhaustion. I am also interested in the emotional effects that the dancer experiences when executing the same movements over and over again. An example of this was while I was explaining to one of the dancers, Kristina Johnstone, the story of Matilde from Langa. I mentioned that this woman was fascinating to me as during my field trips I noted that Matilde arrived to our meetings by bicycle. This led to a recurring bicycle theme when Kristina told me the day she too fell off her bicycle when she was little and felt embarrassed. I gathered this element and asked Kristina to perform that 'fall off bicycle' movement over and over again until she would feel exhausted and Aphiwe would come and 'rescue' her from the repetitive movement. The second scene finished with Kristina carrying four bags, follow behind Aphiwe carrying one single bag on her head, which contrasted Kristina's struggle to support the rest of the bags on her own.

4.2 The creation of the Solos

In the next scene Duduzile Voigts performed Lidia's personal narrative as a solo. When I asked the dancer, to move according to what that woman must have experienced, I also asked her to demonstrate to me how she would feel. The selected dancers Duduzile Voigts, Aphiwe Mpahleni, Kristina Johnstone, Oyama Mbbopa and Lee-Anne Meyer are trained in different styles and institutions. Duduzile trained Attakkalari dance (Bangalore, India) and currently studying at UCT School of Dance. Aphiwe is also trained at UCT School of Dance with traditional Xhosa dance background and contemporary. Lee-Anne Meyer is a former dance student from Jazzart Dance Company and Kristina Johnstone trained classical and contemporary dance in Belgium and Uganda and finished her Masters degree at UCT School of Dance. Therefore, the work can be seen as influenced by many dance forms and styles including contemporary, classical ballet, traditional Indian dance and Afro-fusion styles. When we were creating the solo inspired by Lidia, a women from Langa that had half her index finger cut off due the fact she was still urinating

in bed at the age of 12, I asked dancer Duduzile Voigts, to show me how she would she feel if this would have happen to her in a guide improvisation. She answered

If I put myself in these woman's shoes I must think about the context she was living, a young Xhosa girl that needs to follow her culture, but personally I would feel numb after a shock like that. (Voigts: 2010)

The way, in which I chose to represent the story, was by placing Duduzile on stage, performing under a single shaft of light her dance opening sequence. Afterwards Kristina brought a bottle of water and dropped the water onto Duduzile's legs, suggesting that she had urinated in her dress. While Kristina walks away, the audience sees for the first time, water running down Duduzile's legs, creating a dramatic visual image. I asked Duduzile's to show her index finger folded, giving the impression that she had her finger cut. The movement that followed is slow and controlled, recording that same numb feeling Duduzile explained to me. Several facial expressions represent sadness and fear of losing her finger.

For this solo, I chose soundtrack 'Iguazu' composed by Gustavallo Santaolalla. The soundtrack recalls a particular scene of the movie by American film Director Alejandro González Iñárrito's 'Babel' where a Mexican babysitter that works in the United States gets deported to Mexico, after running away from the police. The music created the mood of the solo, since it recalls a sad and beautiful melody. I tried to use it only as a background environment to the action, rather than focus on the rhythm of the music and put steps to music.

The following scene is performed by all the dancers, and finishes with Oyama's solo representing Laura's story. The scene starts with Oyama and Aphiwe singing a traditional Xhosa song, which was their own choice about marriage.

I asked the dancers to speak and sing in their mother tongue throughout the performance. There was a mix of Xhosa, German, Flemish, and Afrikaans languages on stage that painted a pictured of a cross-cultural environment. This was ironic since they would react to each other's language as if it was their own. I believe one emotionally engages on a different level if performing in one's first language. I assume this due to my own experience. I find that when I speak English as a third language, and Portuguese as my first and the differences between using my third language vocabulary and the most fluent one- Portuguese is that I feel more liberated and powerful.

While the two dancers sing, they removed the skirts on their bodies and dress Duduzile in traditional Idhaki Xhosa skirts. The rest of dancers now also dressed in the same skirts joined them. Xhosa women use these skirts when they first get married to discourage the approaches of other men. My choreographic stimulus for this particular scene comes from another choreographic method of Bausch called 'petit danse' where one gives full attention to detail and uses of the dancer's body as a background to the gestures and minimalist movements. This creates a visually effective little dance within the larger dance. I also like to work with stillness and subtleness to create a visual image that is recorded like a framed picture, where I am able to add movement to it.

In this scene, the dancers standing still simply lift their hands up holding their breath until they cannot do so anymore and as they exhale they move their hands towards their navels. The movement gets lost by two of the dancers and the other three continue repeating the movement until it grows into a form of protest. Gradually, dancers take off their skirts as a sign of protest against this so-called ‘ forced marriage’ and leave Oyama alone on stage. From this point, Oyama begins a frenetic cleaning movements action, gathering the skirts close to her, later stamping them, dragging them, slipping and falling in them, in a frustrated act of keep everything around her clean. From improvisation, Oyama wished to represent what she felt Laura’s frustration might have been of being part of an unwanted marriage and become a domestic worker to sustain herself and her children. In my notebook, I found a quote from Oyama during rehearsal process that said

I feel anger you know... (pause) my mum was also a domestic worker, my father wasn’t nice to her... (long pause) she used to hide us beneath the bed so we didn’t see him hitting her... (sigh) no, no... (pause) we didn’t see... (pause) but we listened. (Mbopa: 2010)



Dancers Oyama Mbopa, Kristina Johnstone, Dudzile Voigts and Lee-Anne Meyer in traditional Xhosa Idhaki skirts, rehearsing for ‘ I stumble every time...’ October 2010

4.3 Duet and fourth-solo scene

The next scene introduces a duet between Kristina and Lee-Anne, which represent the story of Ana and her struggle between her personal choices, and her ancestors. Lee- Anne performed Ana’s story. Ana explained to me that the so-called ancestor

'calling' her was her dead sister. I chose Kristina to perform this character. I immediately saw a duet between two sisters where one is pulling the other to some kind of unwanted action and explained my intention to the dancers. The duet started as a reflection of Ana's story, being composed of some violent and physical movements suggesting some kind of conflict. Later, this duet was enhanced by Lee-Anne personal story regarding her relationship with her own sister. Later in rehearsal, Lee-Anne confessed (sic) me that her relationship with her sister was problematic.

Since our mum died it just became worse... (long pause) she wants me to be something that I am not. (Meyer: 2010)

When I wrote this quote I had in mind developing an action according to the emotion that could elicit that 'something that I am not'. I questioned Lee-Anne what could that possibly be to her as a dancer, or maybe to Ana. The duet was created under the inspirational music of Dario Marianelli for 'The Soloist' movie soundtrack called 'The Lord's Prayer'. The choreography recalls a struggle and power game between the two dancers, and finishes with Lee-Anne characterizing Ana 'asking' for forgiveness to her dead sister. Personally I feel that it was Lee-Anne's personal way of asking forgiveness to her sister too.

While Kristina drags Lee-Anne off stage, Aphiwe appears with a long black dress, moored with a rope around her waist. Aphiwe's solo represents the story of Teresa that was kidnapped and raped by her husband and sold to him by her family for a lesser value because she has lost her virginity. This Xhosa practice was common in the past and accepted by the community as part of its cultural traditional customs according to Aphiwe. In Aphiwe's case I opted for a rope, representing what I felt was a 'trapped' situation. I felt as if it was like a 'lost case', since Lidia had no support from her family, sold to a man that although said he loved her, he first raped her in order to get, in Teresa's words, a wife at a 'cheap price'. When discussing with Aphiwe how the rope constricted her movements and what this could also represent to her, she mentions

I am a Xhosa woman. I never... (pause), never never wanted to go through that... Sometimes I am ashamed of my... (long pause) of what my people do. (Mpahleni:2010)

I asked the dancer to try to move away from the rope, creating tension, and stretching every time the dancer tried to escape. Slow movements, contrasted with fast and furious movements were choreographed to suit the dancer emotion during this scene. The music choice was by women's traditional Xhosa song group called Ngqoko Xhosa. Xhosa songs are often tied to rites and ceremonies within the community. South African choreographer Vincent Mantsoe gave this particular music to me. I had the opportunity to be mentored by him while working as a dancer at a Johannesburg based international dance project 'Crossings 2010'. Mantsoe was supportive of my choreographic research, and offered his personal contribution to the project by giving me this music suggesting I create Teresa's solo. This scene finishes when the dancer gets pushed off stage still holding on the rope. The dancers, reunited, ran and stumble on stage.

4.4 Quartet and final solo

The quartet was a deliberate choreographic devise, which I chose to create to as I felt they are technically more capable than Oyama, who is a physical theatre performer rather than a professional dance-theatre performer. The movement started with a recall of Aphiwe's solo, falls and recovering from the floor. Contemporary movement was created to fit with the song *Maria* from the Balanescu Quartet. Rather than concentrating on timing and rhythm, I asked the dancers to listen carefully and find me a mood that recalled the music. My intention was to create a moment of togetherness between the characters, in which four of the stories were revealed, a connection was made, and therefore to show compassion and mutual understanding between them. As the dancers reach the end of this contemporary dance sequence, lights start fading and a single spot light is left on stage, in which Kristina steps in. Oyama arrives and undresses Kristina's black dress that remains with her chest uncovered. She dresses in the same black top, which she used for her duet with Lee-Anne. This time, it is Duduzile who arrives and drops a bucket full of sand on Kristina's feet, to recall an earlier action when Kristina drops water on her. Kristina is left on stage alone standing in this sand, looking into emptiness. From all the solo's and duet creation, I found Kristina's solo the most complex and emotional challenging, not only for her, but also for me.

I sat down with Kristina alone in the studio and I designed a circle on the floor with sentences in which Kristina had to give me feelings/emotions that connected her to these. Sentences such as: When I was five years old... my father is... when I dance... my biggest loss...sand represents.... For each sentence Kristina answered me with personal moving stories from herself and her past occurrences of lost.

We attached these emotions, to the ones we felt Matilde could have felt. I decided that Kristina had to dance in sand and that it would represent the loss of life and life cycles. I wanted the dancer to attempt to mould this sand to her body as if she was moulding her own life and personal story, and possibly Matilde's life story of real loss and the emotional consequences revealed in the body. Kristina fearlessly attacked this sand, jumped, hopped, stumbled over and over again and ended up trying desperately to bring the sand back together, as an attempting of bringing something, or someone, back. The first time the other dancers and my co-supervisor Raizenberg saw this solo, they burst into tears. The end of the dance work was found.

What I learnt from creating this particular solo is that no matter how we tackle issues and try to fight them, life's experiences are like sand, they move around you, close and near to you. They attach to your skin formatting who you are as individual, and as much as we try to bring anything back, there will always be some sand left behind. The shape that remains will be different. The performance ends, when the rest of the dancers came on stage, gather around Kristina, each bringing their own travelling bags. As they open these, sand falls out.

4.5 Conclusion

What I tried to achieve with this work, was to play with the so-called authentic stories as I had imagined the situation but also to ask my dancers to interpret this feeling in any way they wanted. As I continued to explore even deeper into their emotions, the gestures, then movement dance followed. I have witnessed the same process, which seems to happen in Bausch's choreographic methods as she continuously asked dancers to express themselves and to expose some authentic-life situations, and then she would later reflect on her movement choices with the dancers. The outcome of this type of choreographic approach is that I want to be able to create a dance theatre language that is representative of emotions and so-called 'authentic' facts and recreate scenes of stories that are now embodied through the dancers.

Regardless of my choice of age, race, gender, or the experiences of these five Xhosa women, it is their own truth, and therefore, in some sense, the audience can relate to truth or fiction. Moreover, with these women's permission, I attempted to engage in a dialogue and expose 'real facts' (sic) that are part of Xhosa culture but perhaps not often talked about. My final reflection is that throughout the research I did not try to 'change' (sic) the people in Byra, Port Elizabeth, or Langa community, neither did they try to change me. Instead, I re-told the story of five women that I encountered in a symbolic and hopefully respectful manner that is subject to the gaze of the audience, rather than a literal or 'truthful' message.

Dance critic Adrienne Sichel reviewed the piece 'I stumble every time...' and made the following observation. She comments,

In her evocative piece, "I stumble every time..." Jamila Rodrigues enables five young women, who span the racial and cultural palette, to explore the obstacles presented by their gender. (www.iol.co.za accessed on 14/03/11)

Finally, my aim was to question how do black or Xhosa women fit into a space of visibility in a nation that has historically kept them away? What can and cannot be represented e.g. in what's happening and happened in these particular Xhosa females' cases? Creating 'I stumble every time...' was my attempt to create a performance narrative that overcomes the invisibility of black women in South Africa and find a space where issues of such importance are publicly revealed and talked about.

Conclusion

This dissertation questioned issues around choreographic processes; cultural anthropology, feminism, voyeurism, cultural appropriation, and the credibility of stories told by others. These issues are relevant matters for a choreographer/researcher working in the field of dance-theatre and storytelling in a South African context.

Chapter 1 looked at my research methodology as cultural anthropology and choreographic processes in which my own role as choreographer for the work 'I stumble every time...' and the background in which this work was created was theorized. It provided an explanation of how I collected data using the methodology of cultural anthropology. It also informs the reader of how this method can be a useful tool for choreographers working with personal narratives. The chapter informed how I chose my research topic; the processes of data collection and the motivation following my deliberate choices to re-creating so called 'authentic' stories from five Xhosa women living in different geographical areas of South Africa and place these on stage I explained the fieldwork conducted in 2009 and 2010 and the first encounters with Xhosa culture in 2004 while working in collaboration with South African dance group Amaphondo³³ in the UK. It explained the various ways in which I used cultural anthropological methods to collect data in order to create my final product, which is the choreography with five professional dancers.

The dissertation discusses the audition processes and the choices I made regarding the dancers I collaborated with. It gives an elaborate report on how these choices affected the creation process and the entire choreographic process itself and examines the theories behind my choreographic praxis. It also commented on the relationship created between the dancers, the narratives and myself. The chapter suggested that although cultural anthropology is a helpful method of how to act from an observation and participation perspective, it shows that being an 'outsider' and 'insider' can be complex. As researcher, I am aware that working with a community might cause problems of knowledge transference and its analysis. This chapter concluded by introducing a discussion of how dance research can possibly be seen as part of cultural expression (Hanna: 1987) and act as a basis for reflections of how dance-theatre is being used in Cape Town.

Chapter 2 attempted to justify why the choreographer chose this method as the basis for the framework of 'I stumble every time...'. It also demonstrated that the 'inside' and 'outside' issue discussed in chapter 1 is a complex one and the views of the 'other' are in constant change, reflecting that a dogmatic view of this issue is not viable.

Chapter 2 continued by analyzing some feminist theories from theorists such as Mohanty, Spivak, Kristeva, Brayton and Lugones and demonstrated how issues of gender are common struggles. Women, who live in patriarchal societies, deal with

³³ Amaphondo are a dance group based in Port Elizabeth (Eastern Cape, South Africa) that work with traditional Xhosa dance forms and dance-theatre styles.

economic, political, social and racial liberation are some of the examples investigated. (Mohonty: 1991). Therefore, 'I stumble every time...' attempted to investigate these issues and make it possible for women and men to reflect on sensitive gender issues. The theories discussed generated more questions around the debate of the other and power relationships that are intrinsic to the work of feminist theories. Chapter 2 concluded by reflecting that although the choreographer tried to assume a neutral position as she still believes that these must be 'talked' about publicly, on stage through choreography and dance.

Chapter 2 continues by noting that some dancers in South Africa might be willing to compromise what can be seen as artistic integrity and that this will generate complex debates about cultural appropriation, funding, and voyeurism. The chapter discusses these issues from the points of view of South African dance academic Lliane Loots (2006) and her claim about most European choreographers working in Africa as voyeurs. I argued against Loots' assumptions that European funders have a pre-conceived agenda about who the 'true' Africans are (Loots, 2006). I found Loots argument overall to be valid in that she exposes real problems within South Africa and the African arts environment. It is unfortunate that some Western funding organizations are still looking for the 'exotic' when it comes to collaborations between South African and non-African artists. Loots seem to have generalized the idea that all Europeans are voyeurs and this raised a question for me that I could be considered one too.

I also discussed South African dance academic, Sylvia Glasser's (1993) views that cross-cultural collaborations should start from a common base of respect and cultural understanding. I consider whether the concept of European artists working with African artists in a level playing field is possible to achieve and found the colonial and apartheid histories to be old ghosts. In 'I stumble every time...' I found that through a dance theatre expression as an outsider choreographer that I could relate cultural and gender issues that are relevant to a South African context. Glasser affirms that the so-called 'dance fusion' and dance collaborations are likely to happen even more due to the expansion of media and communication resources which provide access and facilitation of these processes. Her concerns remain not on the idea that these collaborations should not happen, but how they should happen. For Glasser, this interaction needs to come from a place where both cultures, identities and historical backgrounds embrace a language that 'speaks' for both forms, and that engages honestly with cultural dialogue (Glasser, 1993).

Chapter 2 concludes with reflections of theatre critic Rustom Bharucha and his argument that the 'other' is inextricably linked to a political dimension. In post-colonial societies, the 'other' is layered, named, designed, theorized, and represented by westerners. I explained how this tool could inform dance theatre as a language to express the personal narratives of these five Xhosa women as a potential 'oppressed' group. By doing that, I could create some awareness of the social and political reaction to gender stereotypes to the people who attended 'I stumble every time...'

Chapter 3 started by providing an overview of the history of the birth of dance-theatre in Europe and considers what other European and American

choreographers currently engaged with dance-theatre are doing and how my own work and praxis could be located. This chapter reflected on the history of dance-theatre and dance in Europe and North America and how they influenced each other during the emergence of Modern Dance in the mid 1920s, as well as how they eventually diverged from one other (Manning, 1986). It provided a reflection on the manner in which dance has shifted to become, in a generalist sense, more conceptual in Europe in the late 1990s as opposed to a focus on motion/movement in the United States during the same period. Examples of different companies working in these styles such as Pina Bausch and her Wuppertal Tanztheater Company in Germany, and Bill T. Jones in the United States are examined. While Europe and North America were occupied with discussing the problematics and concepts, dance in South Africa took on a different attitude due to its specific political and social transitions.

Chapter 3 also presented a background of South African dance theatre and dance and presented a series of choreographers that also work with dance-theatre as a method within South African contemporary dance. Therefore, it reflected on how South African Dance history is placed in the context of colonialism and Apartheid. I draw on the writings of some South African artists that were living and working in this era. This section reflects that the works of South African dance theatre and contemporary dance choreographers are expressions of the complex and harsh social and political lives, which they lived, in their different communities. Consequently, they have explored issues regarding politics, sociology, cultural identity, gender, and race (Glasser, 1992).

I suggest that contemporary dance and dance-theatre in South Africa is not only pure entertainment, but also a strong political weapon used to expose the past 'struggle' and a still fragile democracy at present. It is not easy for a South African choreographer/artist to find a neutral position when it comes to creating art in the country. In consequence, many South African choreographers' works are mechanisms that related directly to their culture, history and multiple identities. I suggested that choreographer' choices in talking about these issues, or retelling of real life stories, cannot be neutral and shows that dance-theatre in South Africa and internationally is shifting.

Chapter 3 introduces a variety of choreographers that use dance dance-theatre as a methodology within South Africa Contemporary Dance and I explained how some work did or did not influenced ' I stumble every time...' I clarify the influences of German choreographer Pina Bausch, on my work and considered the case of another choreographer using personal narratives such as American dance-choreographer, Bill T. Jones. I also draw on my personal experience as a non South African working in South Africa, and referred to German choreographer Ina Wichterich that has been working in Cape Town for the past ten years, as a referential point of other choreographers working in dance-theatre using Bausch techniques and personal narratives in Cape Town. Chapter 3 concluded by discussing some South African choreographers who also chose the methods of dance-theatre, like Jay Pather, Robin Orlin, Nelly Xaba and David Gouldie (Samuel: 2010).

Chapter 4 gave an extended examination of the proposed dance work 'I stumble ever time...' and described the components that informed this creative process. I explained which music, props, and scenery, interactions between choreographer and dancers, and specific movement I chose to inform this work and illustrated how dance-theatre can be a creative tool in contemporary dance. The chapter also reflected on my goals during the creation process and the way in which I play with the personal narratives, as point of departure for a dance theatre performance. It reflects on how the exploration of these stories operated between the dancers and myself and how they interpreted and felt each story. I explained how I managed to use and interpret some of the dancers personal stories as integrative parts for the creation processes and their emotional and physical reactions to it. I recall some of Bausch's techniques in the sense that she used to continuously ask dancers to expose their life story situations and that reflect on what movement choices they made which she would mould.

I conclude chapter 4 by suggesting that my choreographic aim was to be able to create dance-theatre that could represent the so-called 'authentic stories' of Xhosa women and use dancers to embody these stories on stage and recreate these in a dramatic way. I hoped audiences would have an emotional reaction to the work and made them think of the personal and political lives of these women.

There are many questions that still trouble me: What is the common interest between the artists? Are they genuinely interested in understanding, respecting and learning about each other's culture and identities? My initial feeling is 'NO', as my research seems to highlight that these relationships are still largely superficial and artistic intentions and goals are poorly defined. This might change when future choreographers recognize the basic power relationships much earlier in the process of exchange.

One of the limits of this dissertation is the complexity regarding the choice of retelling stories. I found it nearly impossible to tell whether any story told to me was true or not. This meant that there is the potential for fact and fiction to be distorted. Moreover, the potential 'illusion' as choreographer and researcher, I also take a conscious action of retelling "stories" in the performance. –As Bruner (2002) comments

Why do we use story as the form of telling about that, which happens, in life and in our lives? Why not images, or list of dates and places and the names and qualities of our friends and enemies? Why this seemingly innate addiction to story? (Bruner, 27:222).

My opinion is that people who tell and share their stories with others have an intention, a purpose in doing so, depending on the context of the situation or even to the person who is receiving the story. Ochs and Capps note that

An important challenge to humanity is to recognize that lives are the past we tell ourselves (Ochs and Capps, 21:1996).

Finally, I recognize that these women could have been looking for my compassion, sympathy or giving me a 'illusion' of what is the innermost, or private aspect of the

Xhosa culture or simply they needed or wanted to be listened to. What I did with these stories was to re-tell them from my own personal perspective. Didn't I make up my own story too and stumble every time?

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Appendix A

Interview with Ina Mogane Whicterich (21.01.11)

Jamila: ... Than tell me, how does your creative process start?

Ina: Sometimes gets emotional or stuff because we are not sure of the next sections you know?... we are asking questions, they are giving an answer and than I work with . Sometimes I changed it around, I use this thing in a different rhythm and than in a different tempo, do it running do it.... (pause) whatever I feel in them... but if people.... Come with something and they are not comfortable....

Jamila: ... Or if they are not ready or if they don't know how do it....

Ina: They say it... They say it... I am trying to make sure the space is there for the performer to know that.... If they don't wanna go there, than.... (Pause) I don't know if you saw you 'Beautiful?' was three years ago... and... when Jackie told the story tells the story haaa... you know? She had a particularly way of making her bed... that's'... quite strong because it was her mother story...

Jamila: Hum...

Ina: (pause)... and she really for the first time starting dealing with that thing (Pause) and it was very emotional for her at that time, and I know her mum very well and I love her mum, I love... love her mum... and I said to Jackie you must ask your mother...

Jamila: How did she?

Ina: No, you must ask your mother, ask your mother... all of those things, because it was the first time they spoke about her father...haaa... (Pause) and they we started to write the script together. And I wanted to keep it natural, but it is set what she's saying. Just sounds like... you know? But I said to her... (Long pause) Ask your mum permission ... I mean, she never says "my mother, my father" she only says "she" and " the same time I saw her cry at his funeral..."

Jamila: Oh... Wow...

Ina: And all that stuff... But I said to her you must ask your mother if it is OK for her. And than her mum came and we discuss about it... her mother was OK.

Jamila: OK, so this is what I did with these women... I asked for their permission to put their story....

Ina: I will never.... (pause) I won't be interested in putting something that is not real... I don't believe in theatre like that...

Jamila: I'm talking from my own experience... I feel if you go to another place, and if you do dance theatre the way I do.... (pause) I got a critic of someone that said in a

part of my piece, if they closed their eyes and opened, they taught to be in a Pina's piece... (pause) I am not so sure about that.....

Ina: The only reason to compare someone's choreography with someone else is if it looks like you took something that has been done. But if...if... whatever you do makes sense... doesn't matter. Every movement, every costume, everything is been done in dance ok?... So... You can only just try to be... (pause) we all I think, we trying to find some sort of a truth in that moment... and your authenticity is the feeling that this is right...you know? So... If my... if... everything.... Its a quality now... and now you put it together that will be... that is... your thing with the dancers... you know?

Jamila: So... Now what I am reading in articles of other people... now I'm reading Lliane Loots and Jay Pather, they wrote this articles... about us the Europeans, and I'm in even totally European but hey...is just happened... so they both say.... And they are unhappy with the fact that Europeans are coming to this country and with lots of funding trying to... to take work for them here... And Jay says that South Africans are trying now to embrace this new era of dance theatre that was brought by the Europeans they... they are creating dance for a white audience... so who are we? What are we doing here?

Ina: Is quite interesting... Love Affair... whenever there was an audience that.... They all laugh... they understood it in another way.... But I think... you know... but if it was a white audience... you know? It was people who had a different emotion connection to...

Jamila: Yeah.... Yeah... I mean, I couldn't understand what they said but.... I burst into tears... I burst into tears...

Ina: Because.... Because we had such a journey.... And.... It was heavy.... And.... That was what it came out. I know that Beautiful as more commercial value.... You know... it was interesting... some of the theatre people it was so beautiful... and arrg... but Beautiful is much older you know what I am saying you know.... But Love Affair was so much more layered... and... exactly... to me... Love Affair I stayed.... In the same key.... Even musically I almost stayed in the same key...the same thing.... Over and over and over again... Exactly... Maybe... I was criticized for Beautiful that as commercial value... I don't care about it... I like the fact that as commercial value... the piece went it happened... I would have pushed things... but naa... for the sake of the art and even that shit... haaa... what I am trying to say is that we made the main thing with the three Remix... the three Remix people and the three Jazzarte people 3 years ago. The kids came in the weekends because... there was school you know... but exactly the thing for me is Beautiful is a lot more layered... the commercial value... what's wrong with the commercial value? Is...is... is because every time this piece goes sad I go up (Lifted the arm up) with the music. I keep on doing this. And I wanted the people... I need it the person... that's what it felt, I need the people to grew out, I wished like Nina Simone... " I wish I would know..." I knew I was wanting to use that song from the beginning... before (pause)... and we always warmed up, we were working in the school hall and it was cold man and we were just... running and rolling around the place because we could see it our own

breath it was cold... and we always blasted the music in the morning ... and I thought like... if... (Pause) I still like... dreaming and wishing if I could create a piece that could deserve that song. (long pause)

Jamila: Ya... But sometimes we want to do pieces that deserve the song

Ina: And the song is so strong. (quoting from Nina Simone) “ I wished I would know what it feels to be free, I wish...” You know? “ I wish you would know what it feels to be me” I mean that song... and I... (pause) there’s a thing about Nina Simon... whatever song... whatever type of song, even if someone else who wrote the song, there’s something about...

Jamila: Nina

Ina: yeah... she sings it... she just... (pause) for me, it’s a problem... whenever Nina sings it I ... if you understand it... its like... the sadness you could you ever... (pause) adore... adore...(long pause)..... You know? Hum... and its nice to be shifting with humour, because if everything goes sad you just stop feeling it you know? hum... but when I... when I... heard Nina Simone real story... I... (pause) Is just... Is just... this strange like... she understands life, she’s been there you know? ... (long pause) what I wanted to say like is if damn people say like if Love Affair is a role model of a play there’s a kind of playing... sort out... intellectual... intellectual maybe... (pause) I don’t mean bad “I” or saying you know...?

Jamila: So... just coming back to the question... you know... so I read what Jay wrote than I read Lliane and there’s a part of her paper where she says that Europeans are voyeurs... like... in a sense ...

Ina: (interrupting) maybe some Europeans are... I am not that... I am... not... (pause)But generally this kind of... of (pause) boxing people is exactly the same thing the Africans want to get away from, right? So... I am not sure...(pause) how this discussion is going to contribute to the people who are living in Europe or in Africa, and how’s that exactly contributing to the ... some sort of a true in the arts? It’s the same discussion of... white people say now they can’t find jobs ... I think if you really ... whoever you are... wherever you come from If you... (pause) if you do good work, than... you will always have work. Because in the end of the day people speak a lot, people gossip a lot... there’s a lot of cack energy around... but in the end of day the thing that is going...going to continue is that...and you know what? Pina Bausch? (long pause) ... For sure. Twenty five years, thirty years.. (long pause) and how... her work as changed and how is she as gone all over the world... she changed the world of dance... she revolutionized the world of dance. And she never stopped because she kept on.... Looking, she kept on looking.... She kept on looking for some sort of a true. (pause) she is not just an icon for nothing. She moved people because she continued moving herself, and I don’t really care if she is either German... I don’t have a particular... I am... I am half German but I am... I don’t have a particular thing of celebrating the Germans... There are many things to say about this... But generally...(pause) I couldn’t give a shit which colour you are, where you from... (long pause)....

Its like... I am sorry but we all share... we all do our own things and its like... and going to that discussion is exactly useless... so why spending that energy of having to compare x y and z. maybe sometimes it as to happen... I can understand that... you know? You know? The majority of the country... is flipping like oppressed on I don't know how many years and people need to... go together and write and do this thing, but I think.... Specially the arts, we are privileged... we privileged... and... and... its an amazing thing to... that's stay with the work... I always say "that can stay with the work"

Jamila: and also... they mentioned that its us the Europeans that bring the funding and therefore gives the idea that African dancers would be more likely inclined to work with us because we have access to better funding.

Ina: Well look, partly sometimes that's true, but than like... is what I said in Love Affair... and Malcom said... this is a letter that he really wrote with his sister hey? I just changed it... Whenever she says "my brother and I" I made into " my brother, my sister and I" my brothers and sisters and I" ... and I took all the medical things out... and the letter in the end ...it's a severe thing that his sister has the same condition...

Jamila: Hum hum...

Ina: It's a real letter... It's the book. She wrote a book, you must read that book... (Interruption by traffic noise)... and they did send this letter all over the world (quoting from the letter): " Anywhere in the world, any scientific would help us we are willing to do it..." (Interruption)... and in the end of the letter... you know? (Quoting): "we can't wait" whenever there was "medical intervention" I took the medical out, in the sense of... we can't wait for intervention you know... (Pause) I think the issues of ... the issues, the so-called issues of gender, of race, of a.... religion, in the name of religion of gender of race of the other... you know? The other that can't walk... So-called disability... it's the same stuff. Its stupid. Its fucking stupid... you know? Its like how can you think someone who as a vagina is possibility less... juts because of the fact you got a vagina, you are intellect less... less... (Pause) complicated or less value. How can a person... anyone thinks because of have a different colour of skin you are less value or you less capable, is juts stupid. It's down right stupid. Look the same thing is that because of this that happen with power and all the other stuff the victims... started to believe that shit so has a long history... it gets hectic... but... for me its like: can we remember in the beginning is it stupid ok? So... (pause) because I think otherwise you know? There's this thing that Neo wrote in this script ... haaa... is it "how can you... (slow pause) how can you have democracy without changing? " you have to change first before you can think about democracy.

Its like... (pause) this weird kind of.. ... I think that... (pause) intellectuality is important but deep down, I think we are starting thinking.... Because we had to rectify mistakes... (pause) we still have to remember... that it was a mistake.

Jamila: The other question I wanna ask you is... You know, I have been reading this articles, and I have a feeling that sometimes SA artists discuss that European Choreographers come here in order to kind of "save the world" of Africa... I mean..

African dance, or that we are coming to have a “true African experience” or something like that...

Ina: Oh man... you cannot generalize... I am with you that. But you know some people do... I have seen people; they are coming from Europe... they are coming to teach in a township... They haven't made it in Europe ok? And now they come here to try it ... you know?

So... Now... I have seen that... I have seen that... People coming from Europe... and ... (long pause) its not so much about an attitude but its like... white people growing dreads (laughs)

Jamila: (laughs) Kristina calls them “the third world hippies!” (Laughs)

Ina: Ya! (Laughs) at least... at least... understand you don't have the hair! At least understand that you want the dreads but you don't have the hair... so your hair is going to become really dirty.... In order to become... (Laughs) you still gone have to wash it tough... (Laughs) but that's another story about that... but ah... (pause) if you really want to do it that's also cool (laughs) its also cool.... (pause) I don't have an issue with that... you know? I am exactly thinking about putting myself some dreads... (laughs)

Jamila: (laughs) oh is it??

Ina: That's how a white director has to be you know? (laughs)

Jamila: (laughs)

Ina: But you know... There is a true in the thing, as well you know? I see people that didn't make it at home and now they are coming here... feeling this knish... now they are gone come and help. And I want to say “ you are not used to come to the work... you know... either you teach in Nyanga East or at Artscape or at The Paris Opera... you know... the thing of... or thing of like... (pause) and that's the fear... (pause) I always have... and you... like... you know when you see something good... you know... I am not making pieces for people to love it. I can't think about what the audience is going to think, is gone drive me crazy you know?

Jamila: Ya, I know that...

Ina: But I know... its like... using a song you know? When you make a piece and you love the song you know? But when you heard it for the ten time and you starting doing like this (going with the head in circles) with your head than you know its time for the song to go... (laughs) its not the right thing...

Jamila: Let the song go! (laughs)

Ina: Ya, let the song go... (laughs) but if you listen over and over... (pause) and you still love it... than you keep it. Hum... I think that's staff if you... (pause) you have to be honest about that...

Jamila: So... How do you respond... for me... for me... the way I respond is in my writing was " I have a Southern European vision about the wall thing... " And I really hope that these artists who are saying this are generalizing the all issue... I mean... from a Portuguese or even Spanish point of view... I don't see us as artists with a lot of money you know...

Ina: Yes in one hand I agree with you, on the other hand you need to be careful...because artists will speak up for that. Because in the end it really doesn't matter if you are German, or Portuguese or you are coming from Asia... or whatever you are coming from... but... " can we talk about your work?" And who we are as people... can we than... only than we can learn from each other. We can really share... we can criticize each other properly, like saying " I am not feeling this like... " Something is missing, like...

Jamila: Hum... than... than how do you respond, to very well established South African choreographers, I mean we all know who they are.

Ina: I can say a word... I can't say a word... I am insecure, as well you know... I mean... I battle... I have been working for years and years in South Africa... working my "rat" of... and I did the same things like last year, but under someone else's name... I didn't get paid and it wasn't my name... But I have working the same amount... and the people who have been working in the industry know that stuff. But like... its like, but now suddenly it has change because last year is like... I get paid for it and they say "directed by" do you understand? So it's a different ...

Jamila: It's a different way...?

Ina: yeah, and its interesting how people... people... you know...people change... Towards you... But I never changed...

Jamila: But it's a weight.... Its like, you carry now this new responsibility which for didn't change it at all...

Ina: yeah because I had that responsibility all the time. To a lot of people has becoming a problem... " Oh now she could give me work... " Which is understandable...

Jamila: I get really irritated with this shit... People judge me all the time as well... Who am I? Why am I here? Am I voyeur? Am I really interested?

Ina: What moves you about the stories?>

Jamila: Because they are women... and they suffered...and the way they are now

Ina: Than tell the storie. SA is not like the all of Africa... right? So they are different places, like Europe right? Different countries all together there...

Jamila: And people forget... Do they forget of "our two wars" on the other side??

Ina: Ya, but that's what I am saying...

Jamila: What about Franco? And Portugal living under dictatorship for more than 40 years? Yes it wasn't racism... direct one because the Jews were coming to the country escaping from Germany and there's was hate there to... but there's no freedom of speech, no religion tolerance either.... Not so long ago, my parents come from that generation, my sister too... it ended about 30 years ago...

Ina: What about Russia... I lived in Russia.

Jamila: Did you?

Ina: Ya. And... (pause) and... the Russians remind me a lot of the South Africans... because people have this particular perception of the Russians... (pause) because if you think about... for example look it at ballet... right? Like... in this country ballet was an "elite white thing" right? Like people who would put ballet on stage, others couldn't even go to see it on stage, right? That's real thing, I understand it. But than we make the mistake to connect ballet with the Russians and Russians must be like that.. which is absolutely bullhsit... The Russians, the reasons why the Russians are so good at ballet is because if you had a child in Russia that was good ballet, than she or he would provide food the family.... So there's a lot of other issue of survival... It's a business and the pression those kids are on to deliver. There's a different ...

Jamila: Its like, why are the Russians so good at the Olympiads, and acrobatics? It's the same issue...

Ina: The survival.