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I dedicate this dissertation to my dance teacher, the late Veronica Williams (19/06/1943 - 08/10/2022),¹ who as a hard taskmaster and loving disciplinarian at the Wilvan School of Dance gave me and many others a gift which is immeasurable. Although she could never reach the heights of her desire to dance as a professional as a result of circumstances wrought by Apartheid, the discipline and excellence she brought to bear as a teacher lives on through generations of dancers who learnt their dance and much of their life craft at Wilvan.

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¹ See Appendix 1 – Image of Veronica Williams

² See Appendix 2 – Image of Shirley Willenberg (Elaine Cloete was unable to supply an image at the time of concluding the dissertation)

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Abstract

There has been minimal emphasis in scholarship in studying and understanding inclusive social innovation within smaller community-based organisations, its intersection with the performing arts, resistance and the struggle for social change in Apartheid South Africa. In identifying this gap, the objective of this study was to investigate whether a community-based dance organisation, the Wilvan School of Dance, was an inclusive innovation contributing to social change. The research focused on the period of Wilvan's existence between 1968, when it was formed and 1994, when the first democratic election in South Africa was held. This was simultaneously a period of extreme repression as well a period of mass resistance to Apartheid.

The study used a qualitative research design focused on a case study, the Wilvan School of Dance, using hermeneutic phenomenology, an approach which made allowance for my subjectivity, as the primary methodology, given that I had been a student at this dance school over a period of 21 years between its formation in 1968 and 1989. This was supported by a grounded theory approach to the gathering of data, which was primarily through interviews with 20 plus stakeholders and associates of the Wilvan School of Dance. The value of the study is in its contribution to understanding how a micro-organisation interpreted and contributed to social change and how individuals involved with this community-based dance organisation acted as agents of social change catalysing an inclusive social innovation within marginalised communities during the repressive governance framework of Apartheid. In addition, the significance of the study lies in its contribution to scholarship on social innovation, social change and justice.

Keywords: Wilvan, social innovation, inclusive innovation, social change, Spanish dance, ballet, Kensington, Facticeon, South Africa, Apartheid

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym or Abbreviation	Name
AGM	Annual General Meeting
CAD	Coloured Affairs Department
CCC	Cape City Council
CCC	Cape Cultural Collective
CFCS	Cape Flats Cultural Society
CAFEF	Cape Flats Education Fellowship
Eoan	Eoan Group
Gateway	Gateway Children's Centre
IDB	Instructor de Baile
MAPP	Musical Action for People's Power
MDB	Maestro de Baile
PDB	Profesor de Baile
POS	Positive Organisational Scholarship
NEF	New Era Fellowship
NEUM	Non-European Unity Movement
NUM	New Unity Movement
SACOS	South African Council on Sport
SDS	Spanish Dance Society
SHAWCO	Students' Health and Welfare Centres Organisation
SI	Social Innovation
SPEF	South Peninsula Educational Fellowship
TLSA	Teachers' League of South Africa
UDF	United Democratic Front
UM	Unity Movement
Wilvan	The Wilvan School of Ballet The Wilvan School of Dance

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. Background to the Study

In 2022, 28 years into our South African democracy, the legacy of Apartheid still looms large, with the perpetuation of structural inequality. The majority of residents in previously disenfranchised communities remain on the margins with limited access to socio-economic opportunities. During Apartheid (1948 - 1994), laws were enacted that refined and rigorously enforced segregationist policies that had accompanied the advent of colonialism. These laws included the Population Registration Act, 1950, in which South Africans were classified into distinct groups using racial classification; the Group Areas Act, 1950, which entrenched spatial separation dictating where one could live; and the Bantu Education Act, 1953, which reinforced Apartheid through educational deprivation of all those not classified white. Apartheid rule was enforced by a repressive state apparatus, with a view to maintaining rigid division to “divide and rule” the people of South Africa (Davenport & Saunders, 2000). A number of organisations that resisted colonialism and Apartheid came to the fore. The scholarly literature has focused on the larger organisations such as the African National Congress and Pan African Congress and on the leaders of those organisations.

1.2. Rationale for the Study

There has been less emphasis in the scholarly literature on studying and understanding smaller community organisations and the innovative and positive role they played in disenfranchised communities in fostering inclusivity, agency, building social consciousness and resilience; all of which are elements of social or inclusive innovation (Heeks et al., 2013; McGowan & Westley, 2021; Nilsson, 2015, 2019). Nilsson (2019) states that the crux of social innovation is the dialectical interplay between “macro-systemic grand challenges and micro-praxis” that are “mutually constitutive,” inter-penetrate and are not mutually exclusive (p.287). He questions how transformation is fostered by “those eager living labs, eccentric community organizations, nervy public agencies, untamed networks, and thirsty, headlong schools, clinics, churches, mosques, temples, gardens and prisons - for that is where social innovation is happening?” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 285).

1.3. The Focus and Context for the Study

This study focused on The Wilvan School of Dance (Wilvan), a community-based dance organisation, established in the disenfranchised community of Kensington, Cape Town in

1968 (Ashes, 2009), during one of the most repressive periods in Apartheid South Africa. Wilvan closed its doors after 45 years in 2013. However, this study focused on the period between 1968 and 1994, which constituted 26 years of Wilvan under Apartheid. This study therefore seeks to understand whether the Wilvan School of Dance, as an “eccentric community organization,” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 285) that focused on the performing art of dance was a socially innovative, inclusive, transformative and creative response in a time of Apartheid. Furthermore, it will investigate its contribution and impact as a community dance organisation. In extant documentation, Wilvan is briefly acknowledged for its contribution to the dance heritage of the Cape (Sichel, 2013), but not much else is known about this dance organisation, its political ethos, its contribution and its impact.

Wilvan, was established as The Wilvan School of Ballet in 1968 and began its first ballet classes in the month of August in a vacant and dilapidated classroom, which later became a pre-primary school, known as Gateway, located on the premises of the Wesleyan Methodist Church at 60 Bunney Street, Kensington in the Western Cape. In terms of the Group Areas Act, 1950 (Republic of South Africa, 1950), Kensington had been declared an area for “coloureds” who were allowed to purchase their homes. I lived in Kensington at the time, which my family had moved to in 1966 from Bo-Kaap, where I had been born. In 1968, at the age of six, I was enrolled for ballet classes at Wilvan by my mother as one of its earliest pupils.³ Kensington was located next to the area of Factreton, which at the time of Wilvan’s establishment, was reserved for less affluent “coloureds” who at that time were not allowed to purchase their homes, which was rental stock that belonged to the local municipality.

According to Field (1990) Kensington and Factreton were regarded as lower-middle class and working class areas respectively. Until 1943 the combined area was called the Kensington Estate Reserve, popularly known as Windermere, and was populated by squatters. During the 1920s mainly working class “coloureds” were resident in the area and from the late 1920s to early 1930s more African workers moved into the area. Field (1990) indicates that the Kensington Estate Reserve, which he described as devoid of the basic necessities of life including water and sanitation, was in 1943 proclaimed as being under the jurisdiction of the local government, the then Cape Town City Council (CCC). In 1948 the Nationalist Party came to power in South Africa and the systemic implementation of rigid racial separation was

³ Appendix 3 – An image of some of the earliest Wilvan pupils taken in early 1969 at St. Timothy’s Church, Vliegtuig Laan, Factreton. I am second from right in the back row, vest sticking out, aged six (page 122).

enforced through Apartheid policies. Resultantly, what had become a cosmopolitan, albeit run-down, neighbourhood was swiftly dismantled (Field, 1990). “However, this era was not to last as the election of the National Party in 1948 and its ensuing practices were to destroy it completely” (Field, 1990, p. 54). African residents were forcibly moved to Langa with the poorer “coloured” residents in the area relocated to Factreton, a sub-economic area where they rented their houses from the municipality.

The Wilvan founding members included Veronica Williams, who had settled in Kensington in 1965 at the age of 22 with her young family; the van Staden sisters, Eunice van Willigh and Lola van Staden, who agreed to join Veronica as Wilvan dance teachers, with the first principal being Sophia Swartz. The name Wilvan came about as a result of combining the surnames of Williams and van Staden, with ballet being the initial dance offering in the community. The rationale for starting the school was to make a contribution to uplifting youth in the community through dance. Wilvan finally closed its doors in 2013, 45 years after it had held its first dance class, with ballet and Spanish dancing as the core evaluated dance forms. By that time the classes had expanded to include classical Greek and National dance as well and over time its name evolved to The Wilvan School of Dance.

This dissertation focussed on Wilvan during a particular period between 1968 and 1994, which was when the first democratic election was held in South Africa. The implied proposition was that the key actors in Wilvan, themselves disenfranchised, consciously worked within the community to include and empower those who were marginal and excluded in what Manzini (2014) describes as a bottom-up social innovation. More specifically, this will be a contribution to understanding the role of change makers, who used dance arts informed by a particular political understanding of the context they were acting in. The study therefore explored the role of agency and empowerment amongst women and how the teachers and students, predominantly girls and young women, classified as coloured under Apartheid, were impacted by a women-led process of building a dance organisation in a disenfranchised community. It required further investigation to either confirm or dispel this proposition.

Wilvan founders could be defined as “self-consciously political actors,” (Nicholls et al., 2015, p. 3) who were influenced by the political ideas of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), including the Teacher’s League of South Africa (TLSA).

1.4. Research Question

The question and sub-questions that emerged were:

How can the organisation, the Wilvan School of Dance, be regarded as an example of an inclusive social innovation, in a context of political and economic exclusion?

The secondary questions that followed were:

- What informed and inspired them? How did the teachers exercise their organisational leadership and agency in a time of oppression and exclusion from the levers of political and economic power?
- What was the impact of Wilvan as a community-based dance organisation on its constituency, including its students?

1.5. Research Approach

To answer the research question I conducted a literature review that focussed on social and inclusive innovation literature, which also incorporated literature related to the performing arts, particularly dance as a platform to foment social change. As I had been a student at Wilvan for several years both as a child and young woman, I selected hermeneutic phenomenology as my primary methodology in this qualitative, inductive research into this case study of Wilvan, which made provision for the subjectivity that I brought to the investigation. For my primary data, I conducted interviews with stakeholders of Wilvan, which included founding members, teachers, students, backstage crew and examiners of Wilvan's Spanish dance students. I also gathered primary source material from Wilvan's archives that could support the data gathered through the interview process. These were analysed manually and themes were extracted that form the basis of the main research findings.

1.6. The Most Essential Research Findings

There were seven main findings in this study that answered the research question in the affirmative about whether Wilvan was an inclusive social innovation in a time of repression. These were:

1. The agency and determination of the Wilvan founders were core to the formation (and continuity) of the community-based dance school in a then disenfranchised community, which emphasised cooperation, collaboration and collective endeavour.

2. Despite challenging material circumstances and resource constraints the Wilvan stakeholders, which included teachers, parents and members of the community, engaged in acts of bricolage, making do with what they had, to provide professional dance training and create professional dance productions.
3. Community support from churches, parents and other supporters, who acted mainly in a volunteer capacity, provided an eco-system that was central to the sustainability of Wilvan.
4. An environment of safety and belonging was cultivated by the teachers that enabled Wilvan students, especially young disenfranchised and marginalised women to thrive within a safe, coherent and positive organisational culture.
5. Professionalism and excellence were cultivated by the teachers of Wilvan that contributed to it being a positive organisation.
6. The formation of political consciousness and awareness of social injustice in South Africa and beyond was actively fostered at Wilvan and in this way they actively contributed at a micro-level to an awareness of the oppressive macro-political environment and the need for social change.
7. Wilvan believed the performing arts had a role to play and could not just be 'arts for art's sake.' Their dance productions particularly in the post-1976 period were infused with political themes that highlighted oppression, resistance and the need for social justice and change.

1.7. Contribution: Research and Praxis

The contribution of this study lies in the value it brings to the understanding of the dynamic inter-face between the micro and macro levels of society within the repressive environment that pertained in Apartheid South Africa less than three decades ago. It is a contribution to scholarship in inclusive social innovation, social change and social justice. The importance and transformative impact of the performing arts and the organisational context within which this occurred, in fostering identity formation, resilience and dynamic life-changing experiences for disenfranchised and marginalised community members in this repressive

context, is foregrounded throughout the study, particularly its impact on young women and girls.

1.8. Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 introduces and provides the introduction, rationale and the context of the study. Chapter 2 comprises a review of the literature in social and inclusive innovation and its intersection with social change and the performing arts. Chapter 3 is focused on the research design. The study used a qualitative research design focused on a case study, the Wilvan School of Dance, using hermeneutic phenomenology as the primary methodology. This was supported by a grounded theory approach to the gathering of data. Chapter 4 outlines the major findings of the study based on the primary data. Chapter 5 discusses the findings and situates it within the context of the literature reviewed as well as indicating its value for scholarship, organisational praxis and the possibilities for future research. Chapter 6 is the final chapter and concludes the study.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This literature review integrated the literature on social innovation and social change, which pertained to some of the key social and inclusive innovation concepts that I intended to cover in my research. Given the research question about whether Wilvan was an inclusive social innovation that contributed to social change during a time of repression, the literature selected focused on social innovation as it relates to inclusivity and agency; social change and the building of political consciousness; the arts; dance as a driver of social change and resilience and empowerment. In addition, literature that sketched and alluded to the political framing of the Wilvan actors, its intersection with the organisational context, and the arts as a platform of resistance in South Africa was reviewed.

2.2. Social Innovation in Review

Ayob et al. (2016) conducted a bibliometric analysis on social innovation and concluded that there is a substantive body of scholarship on social innovation. They located the conceptual origins of social innovation in the late 19th century within the discipline of sociology, with the first recorded use as a term in an academic journal in 1909. However, their primary focus was on literature over a 25-year period, between 1989 and 2013, a period when social innovation proliferated in the academy. They note that the majority of articles are located after 1999. The four primary categories that emerged were social relations, societal impact, social relations and societal impact, and social relations and technological innovation. Since 2004 the bulk of publications have been in the area of social relations and societal impact. Ayob et al. (2016) state that social innovation has strayed far from its late 19th century sociological origins. Applied beyond academia, in politics and business, they argue that the pursuit of social innovation for utilitarian social advantage is a ‘weak tradition’ and a ‘strong tradition’ is one which focuses on collaboration and the transformation of ‘power relations’ (Ayob et al., 2016, p. 637) with contestation between the two. They point out the ramifications of this for social policy research, which they state has largely been ignored by researchers in the area. In this regard, they assert that social innovation is still an emerging field of research (Ayob et al., 2016). In their comprehensive literature review of sixty years of social innovation discourse, Edwards-Schachter and Wallace (2017) concur with other scholars (Angelidou & Psaltoglou, 2017; Ayob et al., 2016; Cajaiba-Santana, 2014; Heeks et al., 2013; Nilsson, 2015) that social innovation is not a new development though the relatively recent explosion of the field in academia may have suggested this. They cite Peter Drucker, who

asserted that social innovation “goes back almost two hundred years” (Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2017, p. 2) and attribute scholars such as Frank Moulaert with attempts to get social innovation recognised as an area of scholarship, as he “identified guiding narratives on SI in management science, arts and creativity, territorial development and political science and public administration” (p. 2). They noted the terms and words that had emerged more regularly:

Most frequent terms are ‘process’, ‘change in social practices’, ‘social change and socio-technological change,’ ‘generation of social values’ (like ‘well-being’, ‘social justice,’ ‘inclusiveness,’ ‘gender equity’, ‘quality of life’, etc.). We also observe the centrality of ‘social needs,’ the identification of societal and wicked problems as drivers of SI, together with the distinctive participation of ‘non-traditional’ actors such as NGOs, social movements, social entrepreneurs and activists, ... (Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2017, p. 4).

However, between 2005 and 2014, Edwards-Schachter and Wallace (2017) found that these were the most prominently used: “process/ ‘learning dynamics’ (process) & collective creativity; ‘civil society’/ ‘third sector’/NGO/ ‘social and grass-root movements’ and ‘social change’/ ‘change in social systems’ / socio-technical change” (p. 6). It is noted these two studies on social innovation (SI) scholarship since the late 20th century, found a high degree of unanimity on the primary usage of the concept of social innovation (Ayob et al., 2016; Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2017; McGowan & Westley, 2021). This similarity appears to reinforce the strong tradition referred to by Ayob et al. (2016) where social innovation prioritises collaboration, social change and the transformation of power relations.

2.3. Social Innovation as Inclusive Innovation

Social innovation and inclusive innovation are often used interchangeably, however what differentiates inclusive from social innovation is that inclusive innovation can be characterised as a process that includes marginalised people, using novel methods of collaboration, to meet social objectives with a view to catalysing disruptive social change (Dias & Partidário, 2019; Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2017; Heeks et al., 2013; Manzini, 2014; McGowan & Westley, 2015, 2021; Nicholls et al., 2015; Nilsson, 2015, 2019; Westley, 2008). Agency is central to both activating and driving social change, and some level of inclusion of disempowered groups in the innovation process is central to producing this agency (Heeks et

al., 2013; Nicholls et al., 2015; Nilsson, 2019; Unger, 2015; Westley, 2008). Social innovation can take multiple forms, is ubiquitous and is geared towards different ends (Angelidou & Psaltoglou, 2017; Nicholls et al., 2015; Nilsson, 2019). From the studies conducted by Ayob et al. (2016) and Edwards-Schachter and Wallace (2017) it is noted that numerous scholars agree that social innovation is not a new phenomenon, but its entry into scholarship is more recent (Angelidou & Psaltoglou, 2017; Cajaiba-Santana, 2014; Heeks et al., 2013; Manzini, 2014). Heeks et al. (2013) indicate that while the term inclusive innovation appears to be a post-2011 phenomenon, academic work in this area has preceded it for a number of years. The increased interest is evidenced by a number of institutions and governments that have launched initiatives around inclusive innovation including the World Bank, the OECD, Harvard, UCT, India and China, thus embedding it into the mainstream of political and economic institutions (Heeks et al., 2013). They point out that inclusive innovation is fundamentally different to traditional innovation in general, as the latter usually refers to development in economic terms, relating to the production of goods and services for consumers. However, inclusive innovation encompasses the involvement of groups viewed as marginalised, which usually refers to the poor, disenfranchised or marginal sectors of society (Heeks et al., 2013). Foster and Heeks (2013, as cited in Heeks et al., 2013) state that:

Conventional views of innovation (often implicitly) understand development as generalised economic growth. By contrast, inclusive innovation explicitly conceives development in terms of active inclusion of those who are excluded from the mainstream of development. Differing in its foundational view of development, inclusive innovation therefore refers to the inclusion within some aspect of innovation of groups who are currently marginalised (p. 4).

They utilise a “ladder of inclusive innovation” with six levels, which outline greater or lesser layers of inclusivity. From level four, members of the marginal group are included in the initial process of the innovation; level five is when the structure, e.g., organisation or institution is one that has an inclusive ethos and level six is when the innovation is created “within a frame of knowledge and discourse that is itself inclusive... Only if the framings of key actors involved in the innovation allow for inclusion of the excluded; only then can an innovation be truly inclusive” (Heeks et al., 2013, p. 5). In this regard, the research to be undertaken will consider the “framing” of the actors and consider the extent to which the innovation could be regarded as an inclusive one. In discussing social innovation, Manzini (2014) refers to top-down, bottom-up and a combination of the two, namely, hybrid social

innovations. The definition is determined by who drives the innovation: “If they are experts, decision makers, or political activists, the innovation is largely top-down. If they are (mainly) the people and communities directly involved, then the innovation is (mainly) bottom-up” (Manzini, 2014, p. 57). This appears to correlate with the broader definition of inclusive innovation as outlined by Heeks et al. (2013).

Manzini (2014) cites two examples of bottom-up innovations, one from the USA, the NYC Community Gardens and one from China, the Ainonghui Farmers’ Association. The NYC Community Gardens were started in the 1970s by volunteer gardeners as a result of the financial crisis that the city was experiencing at the time. Residents and gardening activists planted “seed bombs” on vacant land, which snowballed into 100s of community gardens across the five boroughs of New York City (NYC). Manzini (2014) refers to the diversity of the gardeners, who facilitated the participation of citizens throughout NYC’s five boroughs, by the regular hosting of community events. The second example cited by Manzini (2014) was the Ainonghui Farmers’ Association that was established in 2005 in Liuzhou, Guangxi region of Southern China. This social enterprise came about as a response to the lack of safe food from local markets in the city. It was founded by citizens who began sourcing food from then struggling traditional farmers in rural areas. This initiative led to the establishment of organic restaurants and a food store, while educating consumers about healthier food choices. It also encouraged more farmers to return to the countryside thus growing the organic food movement in the region. Manzini (2014) states:

Looking at these examples, we can see that behind each of them is a group of people who have been able to imagine, develop, and manage something new, outside the standard ways of thinking and doing—to shatter mainstream ideas about how to solve problems (p. 61).

In both examples citizens took matters into their own hands, using their agency to innovate and create changes with situations they were unhappy about, taking the initiative and using their own resources. Manzini (2014) refers to them as “creative communities” (p. 62) who apply their collective creativity and innovative thinking to the challenges posed by their social circumstances and co-creating solutions in this bottom-up approach, which resonates with the inclusive innovation approach of Heeks et al. (2013) and the “micro-praxis” responses to “macro-systemic grand challenges” posited by Nilsson (2019). Augmenting the notion of bottom-up, community engagement elaborated by Manzini (2014), Edwards-Schachter and

Tams (2013) state that: “Empowerment and community participation have been recognized as central to mobilizing the creativity and synergies of people in their communities and enablers to growing the pace of social innovation” (p. 2). They specifically explore knowledge creation, power relations and empowerment in Living Labs as it relates to social innovation. While this dissertation does not specifically investigate the concept and structure of Living Labs, issues of power relations, especially between the micro-level (of the community) and the macro-system as well as the empowerment of the social actors as participants in a community dance organisation will be explored (Edwards-Schachter & Tams, 2013).

Edwards-Schachter and Tams (2013) define empowerment as a process of “change in systems of meanings” (p. 5), which are capacitated or hampered by “relational structural and cultural dimensions” (p. 5). They cite Paulo Freire's definition of empowerment as it applies to the cultural dimension as the “ability to understand social, political and financial contradictions and to act against the oppressive influences of real life” (p. 6). In this regard, Freire (1970) asserts that: “The oppressed, who have been shaped by the death-affirming climate of oppression, must find through their struggle the way to life-affirming humanization, which does not simply lie in having more to eat” (p. 42). Edwards-Schachter and Tams (2013) posit that participation and empowerment are critical factors in social innovation discourse but caution that within diverse settings involving multiple actors, barriers arise between different actors, for example, in defining common objectives and reaching consensus. Given that the dissertation will be focussed on a single case study, the Wilvan School of Dance (Wilvan), the barriers Edwards-Schachter and Tams (2013) refer to are not strictly applicable. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that even within one organisation conflict and differences can arise between actors, which can create potential challenges. However, this will not be focussed on as much as the point made by Edwards-Schachter and Tams (2013) about the empowerment of social actors and the participation of the community, insofar as it relates to Wilvan.

Manzini (2014) hints at the concept of bricolage when he defines social innovation as “...a process of change emerging from the creative re-combination of existing assets (from social assets to historical heritage, from traditional craftsmanship to accessible advanced technology), the aim of which is to achieve socially recognised goals in a new way” (p. 56). Commenting on the evolution of the bricolage concept, Johnson (2012) comments that the word has been integrated into the English language and applied across diverse academic disciplines. He states that the originator of the term, Claude Lévi-Strauss, in 1962 initially

referenced modern art and art history to demonstrate the concept, which has since become ubiquitous. Johnson (2012) states that: “Along the axis of time bricolage, as Lévi-Strauss conceptualizes it, is in effect a process of destruction - or de-construction - and recombination... One could therefore speak of the fractal geometry of bricolage...” (p.359). Expanding on this concept as it applies to entrepreneurs, Baker and Nelson (2005) studied 29 firms experiencing financial constraints and how they combined “elements at hand” to offer distinctive services to meet this resource challenge. Understanding bricolage helped one to comprehend entrepreneurs who succeeded in resource scarce environments by “creating something from nothing” (Baker & Nelson, 2005, p. 331). Levi-Strauss (1962) describes a ‘bricoleur’ as follows: “His universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with ‘whatever is at hand’...” (p. 11), which converges with the interpretations of Baker and Nelson (2005) and Johnson (2012). This concept appears to provide some explanation of an innovation that is developed within resource constrained environments, where actors create something with “whatever is at hand.” (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p. 11). Therefore, the concept of bricolage was thought to be of relevance to a context within which Wilvan was established in 1968, during the height of repressive Apartheid South Africa, which for disenfranchised communities was a period of extreme resource constraints.

2.4. Social innovation as Social Change

Mulgan et al. (2007) state that there are many ways to view social innovation, a point made by numerous scholars (Heeks et al., 2013; Moulaert et al., 2013; Mulgan, 2006; Nicholls et al., 2015; Nilsson, 2019). It is contested terrain and Moulaert et al. (2013) state that the term has been appropriated and “has added to Babel-like terminological confusion” (p. 13) and that numerous policy initiatives within a neo-liberal framework require interrogation or they could be misconstrued as “forms of social innovation” (p. 13). However, they contend that: “Social innovation (SI), appropriately utilized, is a driver of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity in scientific research whose epistemological and methodological stances are in continuous development” (Moulaert et al., 2013, p. 13). However, Mulgan et al. (2007) assert that for most of the last century one macro-lens has equated social innovation with social change. This resonates with the “strong tradition” of social innovation identified by Ayob et al. (2016). Mulgan et al. (2007) posit that in the contemporary period, understanding change is usually viewed in three ways, “individual, movements or organisations” (p.13). They state that the success of social innovation lies in the power of the ideas planted that survive beyond the innovation itself (Mulgan, 2006; Mulgan et al., 2007). Nicholls et al. (2015) define social innovation as a fluid undertaking that can meet a number of different objectives.

The innovation has a dynamic social base in practice and outcome that seeks to better the human condition and can be transformative (Nicholls et al., 2015). They state:

Finally, disruptive social innovation aims at systems change. This is typically the realm of social movements and self-consciously ‘political’ actors, groups and networks aiming to change power relations, alter social hierarchies and reframe issues to the benefit of otherwise disenfranchised groups (Nicholls et al., 2015, p. 3).

Dias and Partidário (2019) state that the transformative potential of social innovation is receiving more scholarly attention, as social innovation is viewed as a useful framework to address complex societal challenges. Unger (2015) refers to a minimalist view of social innovation characterised by limited vision to project and organise anything radically different for the whole of society with the world living in a “dictatorship of no alternatives” (p.237). Unger (2015) focuses attention on a maximalist vision of social innovation, which he indicates constitutes a social innovation movement that goes beyond scholarly engagement and is about directly challenging the status quo. He states that this movement comprises “men and women who are un-resigned to ‘the long littleness of life’ and determined to place their practical powers at the disposal of a larger aspiration. These people are the lifeblood of the social innovation movement” (Unger, 2015, p. 235). The aspirations of Wilvan for a bigger vision of a just society and their rejection of the Apartheid status quo is explored in this thesis. Conceptually and practically, the research of Nilsson (2015, 2019), Dias and Partidário (2019), Unger (2015) and Nicholls et al. (2015) point to the transformative potential of social innovation discourse and praxis.

Westley (2008) states that “human beings are inventive” (p. 1) which enables us to change our social and physical environment, while being constrained by it. She refers to this combination of limitation and ability to change undesirable systems as the “paradox of agency” (Westley, 2008, p. 1). This recognition of the limitations and possibilities of agency is relevant in investigating Wilvan, given the historical context that they were acting in. Westley (2008) argues that the extent to which this agency is deployed to change entrenched social problems determines the extent and longevity of the innovation. McGowan and Westley (2015, 2021) investigate historical social innovations, through a consideration of their life cycle. They define social innovation “as new products, processes, procedures, policies and designs that seek profoundly to change authority and resource flows and eventually tip entire

systems towards greater resilience and sustainability” (McGowan & Westley, 2021, p. 52). This definition implies a transformative social innovation framework. In addition, they acknowledge scholarly voices in the field who argue that historical studies are central to analysing complex systems. They issue a cautionary note on historicity and other issues which could distort research findings, but concede that: “...history can provide a rich resource for those looking to understand social processes” (McGowan & Westley, 2015, p. 53). Considering McGowan and Westley (2015, 2021), Wilvan could be regarded as an example of a historical organisation that potentially provides a “rich resource” in understanding complex social processes.

Nilsson (2015) cautions against over-deterministic notions of social purpose and indicates that efforts to achieve freedom are generally of an experiential nature with no promises of a guaranteed outcome: “Social purposes like freedom, community, health, and justice cannot be reduced to observable structures of behaviour, language, and association. Such structures may at times seem to support those experiences, but they cannot guarantee them” (p. 370). He questions whether the quest for freedom can be institutionalised and indicates that this is one of the conundrums of institutional theory as it relates to social purpose. However, he references the work of positive organisational scholarship (POS) and states that its orientation surfaces implied elements of investigation “into social structuring and embedded agency” (Nilsson, 2015, p. 372).

POS is described by Cameron et al. (2003) as organisations that are typified by positive human experiences such as the cherishing of working together where the majority benefit through an approach which values and promotes “resilience, wisdom, humility and high levels of positive energy” (p. 3). They indicate that POS does not ignore the significance of a view that considers competitive behaviour and prioritises profit, given the state of our society and how it defines success. However, they emphasise that POS has received marginal focus in studies of organisations and that positive organisational scholarship or positive social science phenomena can be found where human excellence is located. In describing POS, Peterson and Seligman (2003) state that: “Our rule of thumb is to identify arenas of life where virtuosity is recognized, celebrated, and encouraged. The obvious examples that satisfy this rule are sports, the performing arts, friendships and romances, and school” (Peterson & Seligman, 2003, p. 25). In this respect, Wilvan was an organisation where the performing art of dance was taught and will be viewed through a POS lens.

According to Cajaiba-Santana (2014), the academic conversation has been dominated by two theoretical frameworks on social innovation – one which is focused on agency and the actions of individuals versus a ‘structuralist perspective’ in which the external environment determines social innovation (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). Nilsson (2015) disagrees with this binary approach. In this regard, he states that POS focuses on areas which demonstrate “unusually virtuous, energizing, and life-enhancing organizational phenomenon” (p. 372). He goes further to state that: “To develop applied and purposeful theories of institutional work, it would be helpful to know more about if, when, and how aspirationally motivated institutions occur” (Nilsson, 2015, p. 388). Cajaiba-Santana (2014) appears to support this view as he cautions against a deterministic approach in viewing social innovation as a means of always solving social problems. He too equates social innovation with social change but does not view every social change as a social innovation. He points out that: “The perspectives of social constructionism, sense making, and history telling might be of particular relevance to the study of social innovation since they stand for points of view more concerned with process than causality” (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014, p. 49). Considering social change as one which is empowering, Angelidou and Psaltoglou (2017) describe empowerment “as a result of the social innovation process and refers to the extension of the operational capacity of citizens and organizations to act, respond and be heard, in turn strengthening their role and position in the state of play” (p. 9). In this regard, the capacity of Wilvan, as a potential “aspirationally motivated institution” (Nilsson, 2015, p. 388) to act in the interests of disenfranchised stakeholders will be considered.

Soudien (2019) discusses the formation of non-racial politics in the Cape in the 1930s after the establishment of the New Era Fellowship (NEF) in 1937 in District Six. The socialist intellectuals, many of them organic intellectuals, who constituted the backbone of the organisation, kicked off a public education campaign, which they embarked on systematically. They were concerned with issues of social change and the work they undertook was a direct challenge to the status quo (Soudien, 2019).

The most important product of this effort, to call it by its most meaningful description, was non-racialism. In its broader usage in the South African liberation movement, the term is wide and loose. In its most generic sense, it equates to multi-racialism. But, non-racialism in relation to multi-racialism is different. For the Cape Radicals, non-racialism was a rejection of the very idea of race. Race was a fiction (Soudien, 2019, p. 16).

While Soudien (2019) concedes that the NEF did not become a mass movement, he argues that their contribution was “profound and transformative” (p. 16). This resonates with the idea expressed by Mulgan (2006) and Mulgan et al. (2007) about the power of ideas to survive beyond a particular social innovation over time and across the ages. The NEUM (renamed the New Unity Movement in 1985 – NUM), formed by NEF members in 1943, was similarly concerned with education. According to Braam (2018), NUM focused on education because of its pervasive and explicit indoctrination of the South African population which was intended for people not classified white to “... take up subordinate positions in society and in so doing further subverted the political and economic aspirations of racially oppressed people” (p.3). In this regard, NUM identified teachers as “key agents of social change” (Braam, 2018, p. 7). As Braam (2018) indicates ... “a co-occurrence of words such as liberation, revolution, teacher, and humanity depict a consistent theme in the narrative of NUM of political struggle against oppression and racism and the explicit agency used by teachers” (p.8). Wilvan founders could be defined as “self-consciously political actors,” (Nicholls et al., 2015, p. 3) who were influenced by the political ideas of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) (Braam, 2018; Titus & Steenveld, 2021). The NEUM had its genesis in the New Era Fellowship, which was established in 1937 in District Six, 11 years prior to Apartheid. It was in the NEF that the philosophy of non-racialism emerged, which Soudien (2019) describes as ground-breaking for its time. He refers to Veronica Williams, one of the key Wilvan founders, as follows:

Among the second generation were the great unsung luminaries of the city: Dullah Omar, Hosea Jaffe, Kenny Jordaan, Dulcie September... Veronica Williams, Johnny van der Westhuisen, Joe Rassool... Almost all these people, in more propitious times, would have been numbered among Cape Town’s most lauded intellectuals and public figures (Soudien, 2019, p. 14).

In 1937, the NEF also became more active in the Teachers’ League of South Africa (TLSA) that was established in 1913 with Harold Cressy, the first principal of the District Six based Trafalgar High School, as its leader (Hendricks, 2018). According to Hendricks (2018) the TLSA adopted the phrase “Let us live for our children” to express their organisational credo. With the increased involvement of the NEF in the TLSA, the organisation experienced contestation for its leadership with the radical NEF members ascending to power in 1944 resulting in the more moderate members splitting off to form the Teachers’ Education Professional Association (TEPA) (Hendricks, 2018).

Taking into account Nilsson (2015), Caijaba-Santana (2014), Soudien (2019), Hendricks (2018) and Braam (2018), I find these readings a useful framework for considering the type of organisation Wilvan was. The history, social context, the external political philosophies or structures that influenced the orientation of Wilvan, the agency of the organisational actors within it and their experiences, which included Wilvan teachers as primary drivers of the organisation.

2.5. Social Innovation and the Arts

Cancellieri et al. (2018), in a study of arts movements in a few European countries (France, Italy, Netherlands and Spain), state that arts and culture have proven fertile ground for social innovation. They claim that the arts lends itself to communal dialogue between different stakeholders and pioneered innovative experimentation, which included fundraising and governance. They considered the social impact of arts initiatives in urban regeneration processes as a means to foster social cohesion, which is characterised by a sense of belonging, inclusion and participation (Cancellieri et al., 2018). They claim that the centrality of arts and culture to foster social cohesion has been neglected in scholarship. They cite the example of France's artistic and cultural hubs "Friches Culturelles," (Cancellieri et al., 2018, p. 95) which arose in the 1980s as collaborations between amateur and professional artists (using abandoned buildings), which had begun to unravel. This was due to tension between some of their goals including artistic innovation versus social cohesion, economic constraints as well as the cultural orientation of surrounding community members. The hubs were revived during the tenure of socialist Mayor Bertrand Delanoë (2001-2014), a proponent of the arts, which he believed facilitated social cohesion. Networks of public-sector and non-profits with social objectives were established in Paris. This demonstrated that the power of political will combined with the agency of artists, could be utilised to drive social cohesion (Cancellieri et al., 2018).

Soudien (2019) also references the importance of sport and cultural endeavours to the NEF, which found its way into its successor organisation, the NEUM. For them it was not a secondary activity, but quite central to the broadening of one's humanity and a central requirement to live a full life, especially within an oppressive context. "The young members of the NEF, as socialists, took the arts very seriously. They mattered in terms of the development of consciousness. What one did in one's leisure time preoccupied them intently" (Soudien, 2019, p. 83). Theatre and music performances dealt with political themes and often concluded with a rendition of "The Internationale." He attributes one of the reasons for this

keen interest, to their awareness of the relevance that music, for example, played in people's lives.

2.5.1. Dance as Empowerment and Social Change

While this dissertation will not focus on dance per se, it will be considering the Wilvan School of Dance within the context of performing arts and inclusive social innovation. Therefore, the choice of dance as an art form cannot be ignored in the context of this thesis. The value of dance, especially its role as both a platform for empowerment and driver of social change, is considered in this section of the literature review.

A scholarly argument has been made for dance to be viewed as a platform of social inclusion as well as to advance social justice (Mullis, 2015; Sanderson, 2008; Vanderburgh, 2018). Vanderburgh (2018) argues that dance is empowering and explicitly states that dance can be an agent of social change. She asserts "that dance is a mechanism through which we can develop affective feelings and sentiments that empower collective groups of individuals to compassionately work together to spark positive social change" (Vanderburgh, 2018, p. v). However, Vanderburgh (2018) critiques an empowerment lens which emphasises an economic approach, one which focuses on the individual rather than the transformation of power structures that perpetuate systemic inequality. She states: "Agency and empowerment can only go so far in generating social change if the expected outcome is for individuals to solely focus on their own goals without understanding how they connect with the goals and potential of those around them" (p. 8). Vanderburgh (2018) cites the global decline in funding for the arts as an indication of an attitude that does not appreciate or value the arts and the possibilities they have for positively and systematically changing lives: "Consequently, dance and the arts are often overlooked as tools that can help redress issues of human rights, community building and development..." (p. 3). This view converges with that of the "strong tradition" of social innovation of Ayob et al. (2016) and that of Dias and Partidário (2019) who emphasise the transformative possibilities of social innovation.

In delivering the 2nd Dame Peggy Van Praagh Memorial Address, Brinson (1993) argues for a politics of dance, stating that at the time, dance as an art form was low on the agenda for public funding and also not prioritised in the education system. He expressed his disappointment given that dance "is the oldest creation of human imagination and is the oldest art form along with music. Dance is part of the history of human communication, human movement and human culture" (Brinson, 1993, p. 3). Brinson (1993) is supported in this

assertion by a number of scholars and philosophers, many of whom locate dance as core to the formation of humanity (Côté, 2006; Ellis, 1976; Richter & Ostovar, 2016; Sheets-Johnstone, 2005; Vanderburgh, 2018). Ellis (1976) states that: “Dancing and building are the two primary and essential arts. The art of dancing stands at the source of all the arts that express themselves first in the human person” (p. 5). Sheets-Johnstone (2005) agrees with this assertion and argues that dance is located at the beginning of human bipedalism. Vanderburgh (2018) considers the “abstract and diverse nature of dance” stating that it is core to human existence, therefore “a crucial and functional component of how we understand and engage in the world around us” (p. 1). Côté (2006) asserts that dance has been around since the earliest of time and as it only required the body and no special tools or equipment it was core to the behaviour of early humans. They question why philosophers and scholars through the ages have relegated dance to the margins, in relation to other art forms, given its centrality in human evolution and as a historical cultural force (Brinson, 1983; Côté, 2006; Ellis, 1976; Sheets-Johnstone, 2005; Vanderburgh, 2018). In making the case for a scholarly (sociological) focus on dance that has value on a global scale, Brinson (1983) argued that all types of dance be studied, including professional, community and the dances of children. He states that dance advocacy is critical and those in power should recognise “that dance can make a significant contribution – no, is essential – to resolve the problems of multiculturalism in political, educational and cultural national life” (Brinson, 1993, p. 8). Expanding on the importance of dance in the education system, Brinson (1993) asserts that the exclusion of this art form is to deny young people a range of synthesised experiences in that it fuses physical, psychological and aesthetic elements which can be empowering for young people.

Sanderson (2008) concurs and indicates that within the British educational system the arts were low on the educational agenda and that: “...the limited experience of the arts in schools is likely to contribute to the social exclusion of some pupils: in effect they are being denied the opportunity to benefit fully from a range of cultural forms” (p. 470). Furthermore, she notes that dance is particularly underserved in this already deprived arts education scenario. Côté (2006) makes a similar argument about the empowering impact of dance for young people, given the holistic role that dance education plays as it “...requires creative and critical thinking skills; group creations challenge communication and collaboration skills and cultivate respect of others” (p. 28). She states that dance students should be encouraged “to increase their movement ideas through plagiarism” (p. 31). It is clear that she does not mean this in a literal sense, but rather that she believes that this “plagiarism” empowers students to learn by paying attention to the movements that most impressed them, so that they can draw

upon them later to interpret and improvise. Côté (2006) clarifies this by saying: “Students know that they can never reproduce a “stolen” idea in its original form. It must be modified so that the movement becomes a paraphrase, so to speak. Being able to build on the ideas of others is also an essential skill” (p. 32). This statement resonates with the concept of bricolage hinted at by Manzini (2014) and explained by Levi-Strauss (1962), Baker and Nelson (2005) and Johnson (2012).

2.5.2. Arts and Resistance in South Africa

Apartheid laws such as the Group Areas Act, 1950, underpinned spatial separation, which was a determining factor in the cultural life, and related activities that arose in segregated communities. These had serious consequences for the performing arts. Friedman (2012) states that the trajectory of the arts was heavily impacted by the segregationist policies of the Apartheid government. The severe repression of performing arts during Apartheid is confirmed by Coplan (2005) as well as the successful resistance of artists who used these restrictive conditions to fuel their creativity. However, the Apartheid environment would therefore have impacted how localised and restricted cultural life would be between rigidly segregated areas based on racial classification. Friedman (2012) points out that certain loopholes enabled the subverting of these restrictions, citing venues such as Cape Town's Space Theatre in the 1970s and 1980s, which operated as a “private club” (p. 2). However, this would not necessarily have been representative of what was happening in disenfranchised and resource constrained communities in that same period. The apartheid authorities may have imagined that they exercised absolute authority. Armed with a myriad of repressive laws that included the banning of people, writings and other art forms, dance appeared to pass unnoticed by the authorities. Friedman (2012) conjectures that dance may not have posed as great a threat to the government as theatre, for example, given that words are direct and have explicit power. As such, dance which portrayed “resistance art” may have slipped under the radar (Friedman, 2012). This is an interesting proposition when considering Wilvan in relation to their live performances, which will be discussed in this thesis. Friedman (2012) refers to the community dance organisations that arose in the 1970s in order to provide a platform for talent development as well as to “defy the separate development policies by establishing non-racial companies” (p. 5) and cites Johannesburg based dance company, Moving Into Dance, formed in 1978, as an example. She states that the performing arts were deliberately used as a protest platform, as the struggle for national liberation escalated in the 1970s and 1980s. This was not a straightforward process, with debates in the artistic

community, about the relevance of art in relation to broader political and societal issues, and related identity formation versus ‘art for art’s sake’ (Friedman, 2012).

While dance in general was not a highly rated art by the Apartheid authorities, ballet was regarded as “high art,” and thus prioritised during both the colonial and Apartheid periods (Friedman, 2012; Grut, 1981; Johnstone, 2012; Meewes, 2019; Samuel, 2016). The primary dance forms offered at Wilvan were ballet and Spanish dance, which were both foreign dance forms (Fensham, 2008; Holden, 2012; Kearney, 1995; Van Ede, 2014; Vargas, 2011), imported into South Africa. Johnstone (2012), commenting on the distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low art,’ indicates that a determinant in this categorisation was “South Africa's legacy of colonialism and apartheid” (p. 148). She acknowledges that during Apartheid, the possibilities for formal training in the arts for the majority were remote, as arts education was in the main excluded from the curriculum of schools of the disenfranchised. It was in this vacuum that community initiatives arose with formal arts education being the preserve of the elite – those classified white. She however questions the degree to which “community dance” (‘low art’) continues to maintain “existing notions of “race,” “disadvantage” and “development,” inclusion and exclusion, particularly in a post-Apartheid environment (Johnstone, 2012, p. 148). However, the post-Apartheid period will not be the focus of this research study, although it is acknowledged that she raises an important question which could be related to the “paradox of agency” (Westley, 2008, p. 1) and how the legacy of an oppressive system lingers long past its formal dissolution. She goes further to indicate that in the primary scholarly discourse on dance in South Africa, the voice of community dance has been absent, particularly in relation to the skewed “low art” versus “high art” narrative. “Community dance is an art of dance that has the potential to be subversive, by emphasising access and inclusion and rejecting the norms that enforce high art/ low art constructions” (Johnstone, 2012, p. 163). Johnstone (2012) describes the Wilvan School of Dance as a community-based dance organisation. In Titus and Steenveld’s (2021) brief overview of Veronica Williams, a founder member and long-standing principal of Wilvan, they link Wilvan’s organisational orientation to the political outlook of its key founders. In later years, Wilvan defined its vision as follows: “Our vision is social justice through dance. Our mission is to be a school of dance that nurtures self-expression, creativity, critical thinking and excellence” (Titus & Steenveld, 2021, p. 8). The exploration this opens up is to how this vision was enacted within the organisational context of a community dance school.

Veronica Williams had her dance roots at the Eoan Group in District Six, where she attended ballet classes at age three, until her family was forced to move from District Six in 1955 due to the Group Areas Act, when she was 12 years old and she stopped attending ballet classes (Titus & Steenveld, 2021). Pistorius (2017) states that the Eoan Group was founded in 1933 in District Six “as an educational project among Cape Town’s so-called ‘coloured’ population, the Group expanded its initial activities – classes in deportment, elocution, and physical health” (Pistorius, 2017, p. 140). It was established by British immigrant, Helen Southern-Holt and is regarded as the “first grassroots opera, dance and theatre company” in South Africa (Eoan History Project, 2013, p. 2). It was forced to relocate from District Six in the 1960s as forced removals got underway and moved to the Joseph Stone Auditorium in Athlone on the Cape Flats. It is important to note that the Eoan Group was not unaffected by the political context of the time. Resistance against the Apartheid regime was escalating in the 1970s and 1980s and the Eoan Group was viewed in some quarters as collaborating with the Apartheid government due to the financial support it received from the Department of Coloured Affairs, an Apartheid institution. This undermined their support from the community it was established to serve, leading to boycotts in the 1970s and 1980s (Johnstone, 2010). The South African Council on Sport (SACOS), an anti-Apartheid sports organisation, actively called for a boycott of the Eoan Group in 1980, which was the year of a major student uprising in the Western Cape which spread across South Africa (Eoan History Project, 2013).

The primary dance genres offered at Wilvan were ballet and Spanish dancing. Holden (2012) references the close relationship between these two dance genres in South Africa. She indicates that one of the primary reasons for this phenomenon was the introduction of Spanish dance into the syllabus of the UCT School of Dance in the 1940s, “where ballet students were taught ballet, Spanish dance and national dance (Hungarian, Polish and Russian folk dances), with the focus on ballet” (Holden, 2012, p. 131).

2.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature review considered four primary areas as it related to the research question about whether Wilvan could be considered an inclusive innovation in a time of repression. This comprised (1) a review of social innovation literature, (2) social innovation as it related to inclusive innovation, (3) social innovation as it equated to social change and (4) social innovation and the arts that included a review of the relationship between dance and social change as well as the arts and resistance in South Africa during Apartheid.

The review of social innovation literature in Section 2.2 as conducted by Ayob et al. (2016) and Edwards-Schachter and Wallace (2017) introduced the literature review chapter. A high degree of correlation was found in the social innovation concepts accentuated in these two major studies with social change and unconventional actors from grassroots and civil society formations acting as major drivers of social innovation. Given that Wilvan was a community-driven, non-profit civil society organisation, this framing of social innovation was relevant to the study. The second literature stream in Section 2.3 considered what constituted an inclusive social innovation. This pointed to a framing of social innovation as one that meets a social need and involves disenfranchised or marginalised communities at some level in both its conception and execution using their collective creativity (Dias & Partidário, 2019; Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2017; Heeks et al., 2013; Manzini, 2014; McGowan & Westley, 2015, 2021; Nicholls et al., 2015; Nilsson, 2015, 2019; Westley, 2008). The delineation by Heeks et al. (2013) of the six levels of inclusive innovation was of relevance in defining the extent of participation of marginal or disenfranchised community members in the innovation. This was material in investigating to what extent Wilvan could be considered an inclusive innovation. The fact that members of a disenfranchised community were central to the Wilvan endeavour indicated a high level of inclusivity in the innovation and was to be investigated.

This led to Section 2.4 that reviewed literature that characterised social innovation as synonymous with social change. This had surfaced in the review of social innovation literature conducted by Ayob (2016) and Edwards Schachter and Wallace (2013) in Section 2.2. The transformative potential of social innovation was focussed upon particularly with regard to how individuals, organisations and movements engage with or drive social change processes (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014; Mulgan, 2006; Mulgan et al., 2007; Nicholls et al., 2015; Nilsson, 2015, 2019; Unger, 2015). Within this context, the concept of agency, particularly the paradox of agency (Westley, 2008) emerged as one of interest given that the Wilvan actors were constrained by their socio-political environment. How they deployed their agency despite this limitation was to be investigated. In this framing, social innovation and social change are equivalent and by definition transformative and disruptive of the status quo. Within this framing, literature within the discipline of positive organisational scholarship was reviewed as it appeared to be worthy of consideration to investigate the type of organisation that Wilvan was (Cameron et al., 2003; Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012). The political influences that may have shaped Wilvan were reviewed in relation to their actions as social change agents in a social innovation process (Braam, 2018; Hendricks, 2018; Soudien, 2019).

The fourth literature stream reviewed in Section 2.5 considered the contribution of the performing arts, particularly dance as a platform of agency and development (Brinson, 1993; Cancellieri et al., 2018; Coplan, 2005; Côté, 2006; Friedman, 2012; Holden, 2012; Johnstone, 2012; Sanderson, 2008; Vanderburgh, 2018). Given that Wilvan was a community-based dance organisation established during one of the most repressive periods in South Africa made this literature stream relevant in the context of the study.

The connection between the selected literature in relation to the research question about whether Wilvan could be regarded as an inclusive innovation driving social change is explained throughout the review by surfacing the possibility of their political framing, the agency of the actors involved, the levels of collective community participation and the significance of the performing arts in a process of social change. The complexity embedded in human beings as social actors with agency has also been touched upon. In this regard, the political perspectives held by the teachers of the school, which regarded the arts as a central platform for social change as well as a critical element to assert one's humanity within the context of an oppressive socio-political environment were surfaced.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design: Approach and Strategy

Two methodological approaches, hermeneutic phenomenology and grounded theory that have much in common emerged during the research process. Both hermeneutic phenomenology and grounded theory prioritise lived experience and its interpretation by participants and researcher alike (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015; Annells, 2006; Charmaz, 2014; Gioia et al., 2013; Laverly, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019; Reiners, 2012; Rennie, 2000). **Figure 1** is a representation of the key compatible areas between the two methodologies. Some of the key commonalities of these two methodologies are that both are constructivist, require an interpretive approach, are iterative, reflective and make provision for subjectivity. The latter element was critical given my proximity to the subject of my investigation.

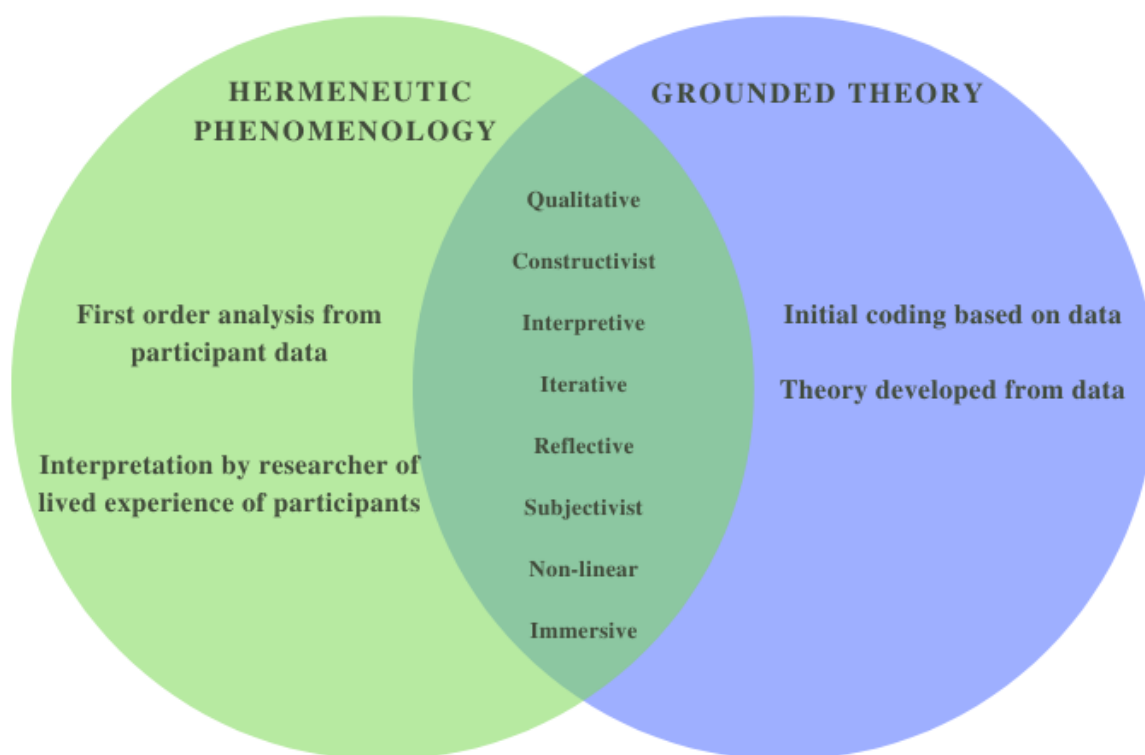


Figure 1: Hermeneutic and Grounded Theory Methodology

Rennie (2000) asserts that the method of grounded theory equates to “a union of hermeneutics and method” (p. 32). He states that within grounded theory analysis the data leads to theory which is not preconceived conceptually and in hermeneutics the analysis of the text leads to understanding and interpretation for meaning (Rennie, 2000). Lincoln and Denzin (2000, as cited in Annells, 2006) contend that a shift is occurring within qualitative research “...that is likely to feature ‘interpretive bricoleurs’ for whom ‘invention is not only the child of necessity, it is the demand of restless art’ and qualitative approaches ‘become the “invention,” and the telling of the tales – the representation – becomes the art” (p. 56). This was a key point of interest for me, as the concept of bricolage emerged embryonically during both the literature review process and when research respondents referred to the conditions under which they practiced their dance art. The use of two existing methodological approaches that are compatible in key ontological and epistemological respects to produce one dissertation suggests a process of methodological bricolage rather than methodological confusion.

The methodologies I selected were appropriate to the type of study being undertaken and the research questions posed, which was an investigation as to how and why Wilvan could be regarded as an example of inclusive social innovation in a context of political and economic exclusion under Apartheid. In this regard, how the stakeholders, including the founders, teachers, students and parents, made meaning of and interpreted their experiences in relation to Wilvan was key. What informed and inspired them and how they exercised their agency and leadership during this period were explored in order to develop an understanding of this phenomenon. The study was therefore quite specific to a particular historical context with a focus on a community dance organisation and considered the meaning, experiences, understanding and purpose assigned by the actors involved with or connected to the organisation.

Laverty (2003) expounds on the dissatisfaction within academia with quantitative and empirical methods and the advancement of qualitative methodologies, particularly during the 1980s: “Increasing questions emerged about the focus of inquiry, as well as exploration of methodologies that emphasized discovery, description and meaning rather than prediction, control and measurement” (p. 21). Guba and Lincoln (1994) refer to the evaluation of quantitative methodologies particularly with regard to its usefulness and reputation within academia as a superior method for academic enquiry. They comment that people’s conduct requires interpretation in order to comprehend its “meanings and purposes” (p. 106). In this regard, numerous qualitative research methodologies have emerged that include

phenomenology, grounded theory and hermeneutic phenomenology. Consequently, a qualitative, interpretive research framework is a good fit for understanding meaning in complex human phenomena (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Laverly, 2003; Rennie, 2000; van Manen, 2007). A qualitative research framework has the potential to generate valuable insights and in-depth understanding, which is an aim of this study (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Laverly, 2003; Maxwell, 2012).

Therefore, the research methodology used was a qualitative, interpretive one which Maxwell (2012) describes as a reflexive process that is applied throughout the research process. Maxwell (2012) posits that in designing one's research, five elements need to be addressed i.e. (1) clarifying one's goals for the research, (2) the conceptual framework, (3) clear questions which indicate what it is that one wants to understand, (4) the methods of collecting and analysing data and (5) finally establishing the validity of the study. In addition, he indicates that an ethical approach is required throughout the course of the research (Maxwell, 2012). The elements of data collection, data analysis, ethics as well as the reliability and validity of the study are addressed within this chapter. In addition, the research involved a case study and my intention was to engage the proposed subjects of my study in a collaborative manner in the process (Van De Ven & Johnson, 2006).

3.2. Ontology and Epistemology – Influence on Methodological Approach

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994) the methodological approach is pre-determined by the ontological and epistemological approach of the researcher. Annells (2006) considers the appropriate use of more than one methodological approach in a singular research study i.e. grounded theory and hermeneutic phenomenology. She raises the issue of possible methodological confusion by the “slurring” of the methodologies but indicates that this could be addressed if there is a ‘good fit’ between the two approaches. Wilson and Hutchinson (1991, as cited in Annells (2006) observe “...that those who use grounded theory or hermeneutic phenomenology share a commitment to a qualitative, naturalistic, contextual, historic, intersubjective methodology to understand human responses and experiences from a variety of perspectives as they are transformed over time” (p. 56). However, concerning the issue of possible methodological confusion, Guba and Lincoln (1994) assert that the development of a grounded theory falls within a post-positivist ontology, which prioritises critical realism. The epistemological positioning is modified dualist/objectivist where objectivity is valued, contrary to the view expressed by Annells (2006). The grounded theory methodology is about discovering through investigation, “the meanings and purpose that

people ascribe to their actions, as well as to contribute to grounded theory” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110). They assert that the selection of a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology follows a constructivist ontology that is relativist and the nature of reality is through “multiple, intangible, mental constructions, socially and experientially based...” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110). In other words, the core of hermeneutic phenomenology is that it focusses on the lived experiences of people. Therefore, the epistemological basis of hermeneutics is one that is subjective in which the researcher and participant are connected and actively engaged, which eschews objectivity (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015; Lavery, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019; van Manen, 2007). Methodologically, grounded theory and hermeneutic phenomenology share key attributes, but according to Guba and Lincoln (1994) have divergent ontological and epistemological positions. The use of both methodologies are, strictly speaking, contradictory if the position of Guba and Lincoln (1994) is accepted as a researcher could be said to have two different ontological and epistemological positions. It should be remembered that they admitted that their thinking was still evolving and that their study was published in 1994. Quinn Patton (2015) argues for “methodological openness” (p. 483) in support of intellectual enquiry that will gather the required quality data, while acknowledging the concerns about methodological slurring expressed by Guba and Lincoln (1994). This is an important consideration as other scholars have posited that the ontology of grounded theory can be found within a constructivist ontology and an epistemology that eschews objectivism as per Guba and Lincoln’s (1994) explication (Charmaz, 2017; Mills et al., 2006). Mills et al. (2006) indicate that “a discernible thread of constructivism” (p. 25) can be located in the evolution of grounded theory that they assert should be viewed within “a methodological spiral that begins with Glaser and Strauss’ original text and continues today” (p. 25). Therefore, while the cautionary comments of Guba and Lincoln (1994) regarding the determinant relationship between ontology, epistemology and methodological approach resonate, the evolution of grounded theory within a methodological spiral suggests that the ontology and epistemology of grounded theory and hermeneutic phenomenology are not as far apart as asserted by them (Annells, 2006; Mills et al., 2006; Rennie, 2000).

However, a hermeneutic phenomenological paradigm will be the primary methodology utilised, for the reasons outlined in this section and is further explained as follows. My understanding and discoveries were not solely based on investigation as I had (1) prior experience (2) personal knowledge (3) and some insight into the case study subject, which were to be tested and explored more deeply through the research and I was subjective as a result of my experience. As can be discerned during this explication, the ontological paradigm

from which I proceeded was constructivist and the epistemological position was subjectivist. Neubauer et al. (2019) assert the importance of the lifeworld of the researcher which they state leads them to decide on what phenomenon is worthy of investigation in the first instance, as was the case for my study. They contend that the researcher should be upfront about their subjectivity, including how this influences their analysis of the data in a reflective manner (Neubauer et al., 2019). The use of a hermeneutic phenomenology as a primary methodology was therefore congruent with both my ontology and epistemology.

3.3. Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Hermeneutic phenomenology foregrounds description, and as indicated, the lived experience in the world of the participants as well as the researcher and most importantly, their interpretation of meaning that is constantly evolving (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015; Cooper Albright, 2011; Lavery, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019; Suddick et al., 2020; van Manen, 1997, 2007). Both phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology focus on the lived experience with the former focused on description and the latter on the interpretation of the lived experience. However, the manner in which this experience is investigated is where the two part ways (Lavery, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019). Cooper Albright (2011) describes phenomenology as focusing on the description of phenomena: “the study of how the world is perceived, rather than the study of the essence of things as objects or images of our consciousness. It is a way of describing the world as we live in it – a philosophical approach that positions the body as a central aspect of that lived experience” (p. 8). This interpretation is particularly relevant in the context of a dance organisation where the embodied experience is central to the art form. While phenomenology is focussed on description and insists on the neutrality of the researcher approaching their investigation as a blank slate, hermeneutic phenomenology is about “the science of interpretation” (Smith, 1999, p. 359). In addition, and most importantly from my perspective, hermeneutic phenomenology does not require the researcher to “bracket” themselves (Lavery, 2003, p. 23), which is the major point of departure between phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology. Rather, the experience, assumptions and influences of the researcher are regarded as beneficial components of the process of interpretation in hermeneutic phenomenology (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015; Lavery, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019).

Suddick et al. (2020) quote one of the founding fathers of hermeneutic phenomenology, German philosopher, Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900 – 2002), who contended that the respect for an external perspective should not reject one’s own experience, which could be of value in

understanding the perspective of the other. “A hermeneutically trained consciousness must be, from the start, sensitive to the text’s alterity. But this kind of sensitivity involves neither “neutrality” with respect to content nor the extinction of one’s self, but the foregrounding and appropriation of one’s own for-meanings and prejudices” (Suddick et al., 2020, p. 4). Reinforcing the point about the impossibility of researcher bracketing, Ajjawi and Higgs (2015) state that: “...subjectivity is valued; there is acknowledgement that humans are incapable of total objectivity because they are situated in a reality constructed by subjective experiences” (p. 614). As indicated, the issue of researcher neutrality was a key consideration in the selection of the methodology, as I was not a neutral participant given my relationship to the subject being investigated. This was of relevance, as I was a student at this dance school over a period of twenty one years from its inception in 1968 and therefore could not claim to be an objective observer or researcher in this study. My lifeworld as the researcher that included my experience of the phenomenon under study was critical in the choice made to research it. The readings selected for review were influenced by this experience and I did not approach this study as a blank slate. Van Manen (2007) asserts that:

In doing phenomenological research, through the reflective methods of writing, the aim is not to create technical intellectual tools or prescriptive models for telling us what to do or how to do something. Rather, a phenomenology of practice aims to open up possibilities for creating formative relations between being and acting, between who we are and how we act, between thoughtfulness and tact (p. 14).

According to this statement reflective writing is therefore key to the method and as a response to questions about the validity of a work. He describes the potential impact and influence a phenomenological work may have on one in the course of an iterative process that unfolds in the doing of the work:

Phenomenology formatively informs, reforms, transforms, performs, and performs the relation between being and practice. In-formatively, phenomenological studies make possible thoughtful advice and consultation. Re-formatively, phenomenological texts make a demand on us, changing us in what we may become. Trans-formatively, phenomenology has practical value in that it reaches into the depth of our being, prompting a new becoming (van Manen, 2007, p. 26).

This is echoed by Ajjawi and Higgs (2015) who state that: “According to the interpretive paradigm, meanings are constructed by human beings in unique ways, depending on their context and personal frames of reference as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (p. 614). Hermeneutic phenomenology could therefore be said to accomplish its objective when the reader is affected because the text is evocative and resonates with their experience of life, how they make meaning of it and influences them, a process that is dynamic and iterative (Neubauer et al., 2019; van Manen, 1997, 2007).

3.4. Grounded Theory

A grounded theory approach, was the secondary and supportive qualitative methodology in this study, particularly in the consideration and approach to the data collection phase (Charmaz, 2017; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Gioia et al., 2013; Mills et al., 2006). Gioia et al. (2013) consider the requirements to provide rigour in inductive, qualitative research, given the criticism that academic rigour is sparse in this type of research. Their approach was developed when they recognised that traditional scientific methods of research emphasised existing ideas and the development thereof, which often constituted a hindrance to original scholarly discovery: “Our concern with this traditional approach is simply this: Advances in knowledge that are too strongly rooted in what we already know delimit what we can know” (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 16). This voyage of discovery in the research process is reinforced by Charmaz (2017) who states that: “... using constructivist grounded theory means designing and fitting methodological strategies to explore what the researcher discovers along the way” (p. 4). Discovery is therefore an important component of the research endeavour.

Gioia et al. (2013) foreground the fact that organisations are socially constructed. By implication, this requires paying greater attention to how organisations are constructed and the meaning that actors involved derive in this process. These actors are termed “knowledgeable agents” (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 17) who as organisational actors have insight into their intent, actions and the tools to interpret their experience. In this regard, the voices of respondents as “knowledgeable agents” were prioritised in the research gathering process, which Gioia et al. (2013) assert allows for the generation of new concepts and by extension new knowledge. In understanding the role and impact of the dance school, the experiences and voices of the members who constituted it were a major focus in this interpretive research study.

3.5. Case Study Approach

Numerous scholars assert that a solid research design is underpinned by a framework that is compatible with the researcher's convictions about the nature of reality (ontology) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Mills et al., 2006). This point has been emphasised in this chapter and my position as the researcher has been explained. The primary method in pursuing the investigation of the research question is via a case study of the Wilvan School of Dance, which according to Yin (2003) is most appropriate for "how" and "why" research questions, and serves as a comprehensive method of enquiry. My research question was a 'how' question and this therefore applied. In addition, Yin (2003) provides a few examples of a rationale for a single case study, one of which is that the subject of the study is unique or quite specific. He further indicates that the researcher may be aware of the identity of the case study subject from the outset (Yin, 2003). Both these statements are relevant to this study and the latter statement is applicable in this instance as Wilvan is an organisation well known to me.

Yin (2003) points out that one possible weakness of doing a single case study is that it may not turn out as initially envisaged. In this regard, he advises that the researcher be flexible and hold an open mind so that they are prepared for this possibility. He indicates that contrary to what is often assumed, case study research is not an easy method and the additional qualities required are good questions, which can be analysed, a "firm grasp of the issues being studied" (Yin, 2003, p. 59), and the ability to listen carefully, given the nuances that may arise in the interview process.

3.6. Qualitative Data Collection – Interviews⁴

The objective of the research was to interpret the voices and experiences of the research subjects. Hence emphasis was placed on the engagement between participants and myself as the researcher, as "the primary instrument of data collection" (Smith, 1999, p. 359). In this regard I engaged in fieldwork and data collection through conducting interviews, which were supplemented by primary sources of documentation from personal and the organisational archives of Wilvan. Within the hermeneutic phenomenological paradigm, interviews serve a particular function as an essential tool for collecting accounts of lived experience, through conversation which makes provision for participants to express their own reflections and meaning of the phenomenon being discussed (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015; Creswell, 2007; Smith, 1999).

⁴ See Appendix 4 – Student interview questions (page 123).

In developing the interview protocol, Gioia et al. (2013) advise that care is paid at the outset to prioritise the research question. As the interview process unfolds the inevitable process of discovery may redefine the original research question. “We follow wherever the informants lead us in the investigation of our guiding research question” (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 20). They assert that the lack of rigidity enables the process of knowledge generation, which continues to evolve in the analysis phase.

The questions were framed so as to elicit experiences of respondents that could either validate the original research question or result in the reframing of it. I did not find that the original primary research question changed substantially through the discovery process while conducting the interviews. However, one of the sub-questions was reframed as the original sub-question focused on the dance form rather than the substance of the primary research question on inclusive innovation and thus shifted to enquire about the impact Wilvan had on its constituency, particularly its students.

3.6.1. Data Sampling Process

As previously indicated, the period I identified for my research on Wilvan was between 1968 to 1994 during Apartheid South Africa. The interviewees were therefore stakeholders associated with Wilvan, including founder members who are still alive (in their 70s and 80s), teachers, students, parents and associates of the school. Within a hermeneutic phenomenological paradigm no specific approach to data collection is prescribed (Patterson & Williams, 2002) however, eight to ten in-depth interviews are regarded as a sufficient number to collect the necessary data (Kumar et al., 2020; Lauterbach, 2018; Moser & Korstjens, 2018). However, I was interested in a range of voices and the lived experience of those connected to the school during the period under investigation and my sample exceeded 10 interview participants. These voices were prioritised and the criteria set for interviewee selection was on the basis that they had been involved with Wilvan directly in one way or another, and were thus able to share their life experiences of and insights into Wilvan that would be valuable for this study.

Therefore, the selection of interviewees was purposeful and aligned with hermeneutic philosophical principles as the phenomenon that they were being interviewed about had and continues to hold meaning for them (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011). This was particularly the case of the teachers and students, who were consistently involved with Wilvan over an extended period of time. Three of the teachers interviewed had been involved with Wilvan

for over four decades and had therefore spent a considerable part of their adult lives immersed as educators in the dance school. They all lived in Kensington when the school was established.

At the outset of my study in about February 2021, I contacted founder member, Veronica Williams, who had been principal of Wilvan for 39 years. She had also been a dance teacher for the entire period being researched. In reaching out to her as a custodian of Wilvan, I also wished to establish whether there would be general willingness to support my research. As far as I was aware, such research on Wilvan had not previously been undertaken at postgraduate level that would provide for a more in-depth study. Veronica Williams had also been my only dance teacher throughout my time at Wilvan for both ballet and Spanish dance. In her multiple roles in the school over a period of four decades she would therefore be a key “knowledgeable agent” (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 17) carrying vital institutional knowledge. Thus I identified her as a crucial point of entry for my data collection. She provided me with a list containing about 90 names and contact numbers from which I selected 20 plus potential interviewees that met my criteria.

The people interviewed included seven teachers that included the three consistent teachers over that period, Veronica Williams and sisters, Elaine Cloete and Shirley Willenberg, as well as four Wilvan students who later taught at the school as adults; two parents, including one of the founding parents; two backstage crew members, including one stage manager and 15 students of Wilvan. The four Wilvan students who later became teachers at the school were included in this student sample. Ten of the 15 students interviewed were from the local community of Kensington and Facreton (66, 6 %) at the time that Wilvan began, with the remaining student interviewees then based in areas such as Walmer Estate, Elsie's River, Belhar, Bellville and Fairways. I also interviewed two members of the Spanish Dance Society (SDS), who examined students of Wilvan during the regular SDS examinations, which pupils were entered into. I contacted 27 people, of whom 24 confirmed their participation as indicated in **Table 1** that also reflects the interviews in chronological order.

I conducted two interviews, each lasting just over two hours with Veronica Williams. The interview with Elaine Cloete and Shirley Willenberg was a joint interview over a two and a half hour period. Although the recorded interview with them was just over two hours, I spent five hours with them in total as they reminisced and spoke about the post-1994 period at length, which was not recorded given that this was not of relevance to my immediate study.

I returned to visit Veronica Williams, Elaine Cloete and Shirley Willenberg on multiple occasions subsequently to obtain primary source material, some of which are reflected in the appendices. For the remainder of the interviews, the average length was one hour, with the shortest interviews conducted with members of the backstage crew and SDS members, which were about 30 minutes each.

Table 1. Interview Respondents

Name	Position	Date of Interview
1. Veronica Williams	Founder, principal and teacher	25/09/2021 04/11/2021
2. Marlene Petersen	Student	04/02/2022
3. Fahiem Stellenboom	Student, teacher	07/02/2022
4. Lorraine Peters	Parent	10/02/2022
5. Naiemah Eksteen	Student, teacher	12/02/2022
6. Carlyn Adams	Student, teacher, principal	15/02/2022
7. Ian Adams	Backstage assistant	15/02/2022
8. Charlene Gillies	Student	16/02/2022
9. Cheryl Samuel	Student, teacher	23/02/2022
10. Elaine Cloete	Teacher	26/02/2022
11. Shirley Willenberg	Teacher	26/02/2022
12. Myrna van der Venter	Student	28/02/2022
13. Bernadette Kolbe	Student	02/03/2022
14. Wynoma Stockenstroom	Student	03/03/2022
15. Ronel Cornelissen	Student	07/03/2022
16. Denise Slingers	Student	15/03/2022
17. Audrey Petersen	Founder parent	15/03/2022
18. Althea Pilz	Student	15/03/2022
19. Jill Levenberg	Student	18/03/2022
20. Belinda Jacobs	Student	26/03/2022
21. Geoffrey Neiman	Spanish Dance Society	29/03/2022
22. Malcolm Campbell	Stage manager, backstage	29/03/2022
23. Suzette Afonso-Embalo	Student	30/03/2022
24. Mavis Becker	Spanish Dance Society	15/06/2022

3.6.2. Data Collection

I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews with no direct questions related to my conceptual framework on inclusive innovation. This provided for richer and more in-depth textual data to emerge. However, my own experience as a former dance student at the subject of my case study was key in considering the primary research question and was helpful in guiding my search and selecting the literature that I reviewed. When I first considered the interviews, the insights gained in the literature review within which I had situated the study were signposts for my primary data gathering through the interviews. However, as indicated, the interview questions were focused on the way in which they experienced Wilvan in line with my methodological approach. The semi-structured interview allowed “...participants freedom to respond to questions and probes, and to narrate their experience without being tied down to specific answers” (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015, p. 619). This format therefore allowed interviewees to share their experiences on their understanding and interpretation of the impact Wilvan had on their lives. In addition, it enabled them to reflect on the impact the organisation had on the external environment as a potential social innovation during a particular historical context in South Africa.

I was concerned that a number of the older interviewees were of advanced age, including the three Wilvan teachers who had taught for over four decades as they all were over 70 years old. In addition, Veronica Williams had a health condition that made it important that I interview her as soon as possible after receiving ethical clearance from UCT at the end of August 2021. Two interviews with her were therefore conducted in September and November 2021, respectively. She passed away on 8 October 2022 as I was in the process of finalising the dissertation. The 23 other interviews were conducted between February and June 2022. Twenty-two of these were concluded by 31 March 2022. Of the three that I did not interview, two of whom were former students, one did not respond to any messages that I sent and one was unable to make it at the appointed time, due to ill health. I did not pursue them further as by then I had determined that I had secured a sufficient number of interviews with former students of Wilvan, who constituted 15, therefore most of the 24 interview respondents. The interview questions to the students are included in Appendix 4.

3.6.3. Interview Protocol

I sent an initial WhatsApp message to the majority of possible interviewees, in which I briefly explained why I was contacting them, and requested their email addresses. I followed up with an email in which I could provide a more detailed explanation that also included the consent

form, which each respondent could read and consider well ahead of the interview. In the consent form I elaborated on the purpose of the interview, the rights of the interviewee, which included the right to withdraw at any point of the dissertation process, as well as providing the option to go on the record or remain anonymous. I requested an in-person interview for approximately one hour and permission to audio-record the interview. I provided possible dates and times from which respondents could select or propose an alternative if none of those were suitable.

As indicated, I was a student at Wilvan, having started in 1968 at the age of six and finally left at the age of 27 in 1989, with a few years break in-between. Therefore, the majority of the people I contacted were known to me, either as a teacher, fellow student or as a result of their involvement in the school either as a member of backstage crew or as parents. In three instances I called first, due to the uncertainty of contact details in one case and the other two were members of the Spanish Dance Society, who were unknown to me. In the case of the latter, I decided that a WhatsApp message was not appropriate as it could be construed as potentially intrusive by being overly familiar. A phone call was likely to yield a more positive result, which was the case. These were also followed up with an email.

I had made provision, where an in-person interview was not possible, for the interviews to be conducted online via a tool like Zoom, which allowed for an audio and video recording. As one of my respondents had moved to Germany, and had been resident there for a number of years, I thought it would be necessary. Fortunately this was not required, as she was visiting Cape Town during March 2022 and I conducted every interview in-person. Of the 24 interviews that took place, 21 were conducted at people's residences, two were at their places of work and one took place mid-morning in a restaurant, before it became busy. All agreed to go on the record and signed the consent form accordingly. Initially one of the respondents was not sure but later agreed to go on the record, understanding that they could withdraw at any point during the research process. The 23 other interviewees did not hesitate to go on record on the date of the interview. I provided each respondent with two copies of the consent form for signature, which contained my contact details, should they need to contact me, one of which they could keep for this purpose.

As indicated I prepared a semi-structured interview with questions which were adapted for each of the categories, which included students (see Appendix 4), teachers and parents. Three of the interviews involved two people who lived together. These included the teachers who

were sisters; a couple who met in a Wilvan production as student/dancer and member of backstage respectively; and a founding parent and her daughter, who attended Wilvan's first day of dance classes in 1968. Each of these interviews probed for the experience that each respondent had of Wilvan, either directly through their emergence in Wilvan as a teacher, student, parent or backstage crew member; or intermittently, but on a regular basis, through their formal examination of the dance skills of the Wilvan students. During this process, I was provided with programmes of some of the Wilvan dance productions by one of the teachers, which included productions between 1970 and 1994. This same teacher had also played a key administrative role, that of secretary to the dance school, over decades.

3.7. Reliability and Validity of the Study

Yin (2003) indicates that there are four tests that are used to establish the validity of research, including case study research. Construct validity is an important element and case studies are often criticised for being deficient in this respect, with accusations of researcher bias (Yin, 2003). Within the methodological framework of this study, subjectivity is recognised and the context has already been explained. Therefore, additional measures of the quality, reliability and validity of this study were required. Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that within a constructivist paradigm, trustworthiness and authenticity are the two key areas which need to be addressed to establish the quality of a qualitative research. Trustworthiness comprises the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. It was anticipated that most of these criteria would be met, except for transferability due the specificity of the localised case study. In this regard, it was not the primary objective of this study to be transferable, although a reader could find that the study, or elements of it, may resonate with their experiences and find value in it.

The criteria that comprise authenticity are fairness, ontological authenticity, educational authenticity, catalytic and tactical authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Regan (2012) states: "As will be shown, this ontological freedom encompasses historicity, temporality and authenticity through hermeneutic analysis." (2012, p. 289). The guiding methodology of this dissertation is hermeneutic phenomenology and the principle of achieving understanding was through being reflective as well as the interpretation of the interview texts by re-reading and engaging with them in the analytical phase. It was the intention through this iterative practice that ontologically the study would be authentic.

3.7.1. Reflexivity

The reader of the research should find it more authentic, credible and trustworthy if my positionality in relation to the research is made explicit and supported by a deep reflective account of the research experience as captured in a reflective journal. The reflective approach was therefore essential and core to the research design in order to buttress its validity and authenticity. It was in this process of reflection that my positionality as an “insider” researcher and how my interview subjects engaged with me emerged. Had I not been known to them they may have engaged with me in a more formal and distant manner and been less animated. The level of engagement during the interviews spoke to a high level of trust in the relationship between myself as researcher and the interviewees. The fact that they knew that I was familiar with many of the people and experiences they related, such as the teachers, concert performances or dance exams respectively, underpinned this relationship of trust. Regarding the necessity for reflection Van Manen (1997) emphasises its importance for the researcher throughout the process of writing. He states that: “...the researcher is an author who writes from the midst of life experience where meanings resonate and reverberate with reflective being” (van Manen, 1997, p. 368). Reflexivity means the exercising of what van Manen (1997) calls ‘hermeneutic alertness’ (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015, p. 620). This refers to a process where the researcher consciously retreats to contemplate the information being imparted by research subjects, thus adding another layer of meaning in a reflective, interpretive process (Clarke, 1999). Dodgson (2019) stresses the contextual underpinning of qualitative research and indicates that the positionality of the researcher “makes a difference in the findings of their study; objectivity is not present” (p. 220). Mauthner and Doucet (2003) state that it is necessary to acknowledge possible influences on the researcher, including epistemological, ontological and emotional aspects that also serve to provide perspective to a potential reader (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003), which could serve to establish both the trustworthiness and authenticity of the researcher. Charmaz (2017) asserts that constructivist grounded theory facilitates the surfacing of key questions in the process of conducting research as well as a “deeply reflexive stance” (p.1).

I found my position as an ‘insider’ researcher to be a paradox, simultaneously an advantage and disadvantage (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015). The advantage I had as an ‘insider’ meant that access to the research participants was not difficult. It has already been established that quite a number of Wilvan stakeholders, most of whom were known to me, willingly engaged with me. As I was known to most of them I anticipated that there would be a high level of trust and as result they would be more relaxed and speak openly about their experiences in relation

to Wilvan. As confirmed, this was the case as I experienced a disposition of openness in the interviews. Another advantage I had was that I understood the language of the discipline of dance for example, particularly ballet and Spanish dancing. When dance terms were used, no additional explanations were required (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015). This advantage definitely facilitated a smoother and freer flow of conversation during the interview making most of the interviews a seamless and enjoyable experience. Interviewees laughed and at times cried during the interviews making for several animated and emotional interviews given that several student interviewees had spent a considerable number of their formative childhood and teenage years at Wilvan. The anticipated disadvantage was that they would speak about Wilvan beyond the time frame I was investigating, given that many interviewees remained at Wilvan beyond 1994 and my focus was on the pre-1994 period. This was the case for several interviews. Consequently, as indicated, I practiced reflexivity on a consistent basis after the interview process, the transcription process and during the writing up of the thesis, albeit at varying levels of intensity at each phase of the research journey. In the immediacy of the interviews it was a practice to reflect in writing on the day or on the days that followed. An additional tool to support this element of the research journey was to keep an online reflective journal, which recorded the thoughts and insights which arose for me. Smith (1999) illustrates the significance of this exercise when he says: “Extracts from the journal create an audit trail of my reasoning, judgement, and emotional reactions...” (p. 360), which also contributed to a process of active self-awareness.

I also had various notebooks in which I jotted down thoughts about the study as it arose, especially when not in a position to be online. This was perhaps not as linear a process as the online process but had its benefits. This practice made provision for my immersion in the study, welcoming what I as the primary research instrument brought to the study as I acknowledged that “objectivity is not present” (Dodgson, 2019, p. 220). This practice resonated with the methodological paradigm of hermeneutic phenomenology (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015; Laverly, 2003; Neubauer et al., 2019; van Manen, 1997, 2007).

3.7.2. Triangulation of Sources

In addition, a variety of sources of evidence, which correlated or converged, contributed to a process of triangulation which buttressed the validity of the study. In this regard, primary as well as secondary documentary sources were consulted, such as the secondary sources covered in the literature review, which were selected based on the research question I wished to investigate. The primary sources included primary documentary sources such as principal’s

reports to General and Annual General Meetings between 1976 and 1994 that were mainly handwritten; Spanish dance exam reports of a number of the interviewees; correspondence which included cards and letters from teachers, dancers and audience members; concert programmes; a copy of an undated short talk given to the Wilvan parents on the role of the arts in education; newsletters and photographs. Samples of these primary data sources are included as Appendices in this study.

3.8. Research and Data Analysis

Hermeneutic phenomenology is about the interpretation and meaning of the lived experience with a view to developing an understanding of it. In the research analysis phase this involved analysis of the material produced during the interview process (Smith, 1999). The analytical mode is one that emerges out of the relationship between the participant and the researcher and is iterative, which I found had already begun in a nascent manner during the interviews. I uploaded all the interviews that were orally recorded onto UCT's One Drive in order to safeguard it and to access it as required. Once I completed the interviews, I attempted to transcribe the interviews manually, but given the time-consuming nature of the task I eventually used Otter.ai to transcribe the interviews from audio to text. I was still required to fix the copy as the Otter.ai application did not transcribe the South African accents accurately.

The advantage was that the transcription process and the fixing of the copy once again facilitated my engagement with the text generated by the interviewees in this painstaking exercise, allowing me to reflect on the data in an iterative manner (Patterson & Williams, 2002). The process enabled the deepening of observations about what was emerging in the interview material (Neubauer et al., 2019; Rennie, 2000). This was the beginning of a constant engagement with the text in which I sought out similarities that could develop the major themes which would be reported on in the findings chapter.

It is the iterative process of reading and writing cycles and analysis that is referred to as the hermeneutic circle within hermeneutic phenomenology (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015; Kafle, 2013; Neubauer et al., 2019; Patterson & Williams, 2002; Patton, 2015; Reiners, 2012; Suddick et al., 2020). The analysis comprised an iterative process of (1) reading and engaging with the interview texts repeatedly (2) returning to the literature (2) reflective writing, writing and re-writing as my interpretation shifted and evolved as the process intensified. **Figure 2** illustrates the hermeneutic circle.

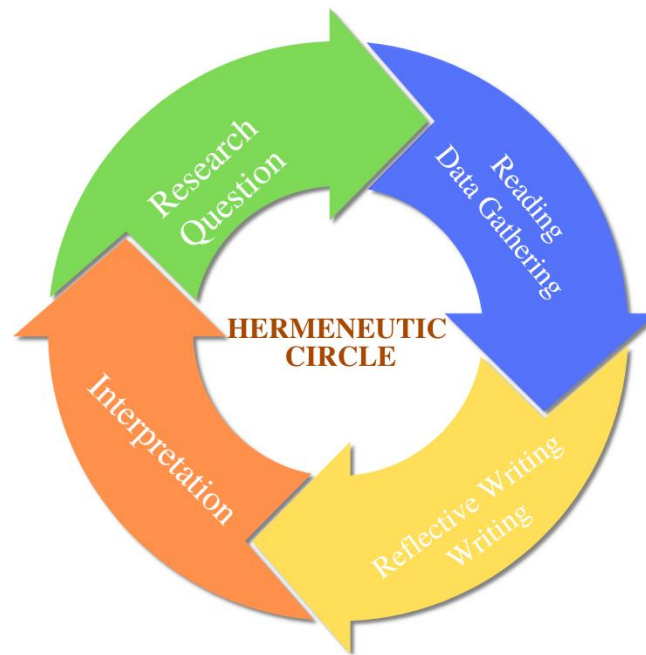


Figure 2. Hermeneutic Circle

My reflective writing process included the recounting of (1) the experience of interviewing the participants, (2) my early interpretations of the data, (3) recognition of similarities or differences between interviewees and (4) recording the unexpected or comments made outside the immediate scope of this study for possible further interpretation. As I further engaged with the interview material I considered the hermeneutic method of examining the text. This then facilitated a process of identifying the interpretations and meaning of the participants in a 1st-order construct of analysis (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015; Gioia et al., 2013). In the 1st-order phase the focus was therefore on the data generated by the participants, which Gioia et al. (2013) indicate could initially create confusion for the researcher. However, they assert that “getting lost” is an important element of the process. Accepting that confusion was not unusual, and that analysis was an iterative and generative process, helped to keep me grounded during the analysis phase.

This was followed by the interpretation and insights by me as researcher in a 2nd-order phase to develop an understanding of the material, which was grouped in order to develop the themes that emerged (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2015). The themes initially drawn up from the insights gained during the literature review process was not a wasteful exercise within the hermeneutic circle process. I developed a table with themes in which I considered material from the interviews within the context of the literature reviewed in the background, from which patterns were

discerned that could explain the findings of the study. **Table 2** contains these themes and the concepts to which they related.

Table 2. Themes

Themes	Concept
Agency and determination	Social innovation / Strong tradition of social innovation
Constraint management	Bricolage
Community engagement	Inclusive innovation / Strong tradition of social innovation
Belonging	Positive organisation
Safety	Positive organisation
Professionalism	Positive organisation
Excellence	Positive organisation
Political influence	Social change / social innovation
Dance as agency	Social change / social innovation

3.9. Limitations

There may be some limitations in this study. I have indicated what these limitations could be and how I addressed it in the data gathering phase as follows:

3.9.1. Trust

As stated I found a high level of trust from my interviewees, including from the two respondents who I did not know. This had its advantages, as I have indicated, which I ascribed to being an ‘insider’ and therefore regarded as trustworthy by my interviewees. However in the process, although interviewees had agreed to go on record, and were fairly open to share information, at times they would indicate that they would prefer if a particular statement or comment would not be shared in my thesis or not quoted directly. Where these requests were made during the course of the interviews, it was recorded in the transcript or it would be shared prior to or post the recorded interview. I have done my best to ensure that I respected the wish of interview respondents in this regard as to do the opposite would lower the level of trust interviewees placed in me, and potentially cause harm to the interviewee and the relationship of trust established between us.

3.9.2. Elderly Interviewees

With regard to potential harm being caused, six of my interviewees were elderly, between the ages of 70 and 87 and particular care was taken to ensure that all and any questions that they had about the research were answered to their satisfaction. As an example, the Spanish Dance Society members provided their consent to go on record unhesitatingly as they were keen to engage on Wilvan. Both had been examiners and one had a Spanish dance company for which a number of Wilvan dancers, including the principal of Wilvan, participated in dance productions.

3.9.3. Memory

As this was a case study where the youngest participant was in their mid-40s and the eldest in the eighties, interviewees would often refer to their inability to remember specifics such as dates and venues. However, their experiences at Wilvan, for example what the atmosphere was like ahead of a dance production or an exam, were often narrated and described in a detailed and animated way. The primary archival material such as the principal's reports and concert programmes were key in retrieving factual information such as dates. Chapter 4, which constitutes the findings section, is rich with quotations from interview participants that describe their recollections of their experiences of and reflections on Wilvan.

3.9.4. Time

The pressure to complete the dissertation within a two-year frame necessitated by a desire to complete due (1) to the advanced age and health of some of the participants as well as (2) my intention at the outset of the dissertation to complete within a two-year timeframe meant that I had to follow a strict timetable for the gathering, transcribing and analysis of data. The analysis phase was within its third month before the writing up of the findings began. This did not allow for as many iterative cycles of reflection and interpretation as could be possible in a study of this nature. This could be addressed in additional studies on the research question as the primary data gathered, as well as the literature reviewed, could be excavated for further reflection and analysis. The constant feedback from my supervisors was critical in the entire process including my readiness and decision to submit this dissertation within a two-year time frame.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

At the end of August 2021 ethical clearance was obtained from the Faculty of Commerce, a requirement as I would be interviewing live subjects. In order to meet my ethical obligations,

written and oral consent was obtained from all respondents before proceeding with the interview process. I ensured that respondents were provided with the consent forms ahead of the interviews, and spent time at the interview ahead of signature to clarify any questions that interviewees had. As I have already indicated all my interview respondents indicated that they would go on record, as the organisation which the research focussed on was also meaningful to them given their experiences as either teachers or student dancers over an extended period of time at Wilvan.

Chapter 4 Findings

4.1. Introduction

My research question was to investigate whether the Wilvan School of Dance, established in Kensington in 1968, was an arts organisation that was an example of an inclusive innovation during a time of repression. In this chapter I report on the findings that emerged predominantly from the primary data that included the semi-structured interviews as well as the primary data sources obtained during my investigation. These included principal's reports; exam results; correspondence and concert or performance programmes some of which are attached as appendices. I also situate the findings within the literature that related to the research question on inclusive social innovation which related it to social change, inclusive innovation, the arts and dance as a platform for empowerment, resistance and social change. Within the hermeneutic circle I circled back and forth between the primary data and the literature reviewed for areas where the data gathered in the findings link back to the concepts in the literature. The areas which emerged in the data collection phase and which I had not considered ahead of the interviews are included in this section. As an example, Section 4.4.2 elaborates on one of the findings with respect to the critical role the churches played in providing venues for the conducting of Wilvan's dance classes in the community.

Figure 3 is a representation of the major themes and concepts and the relationships between them. It demonstrates how Wilvan was a social phenomenon which was inclusive within the context of a disadvantaged and segregated community in a time of heightened repression in South Africa. There were seven major themes which emerged from the data. These were from left to right in a clockwise direction as follows: Theme 1: Agency and determination; Theme 2: Constraint management; Theme 3: Community support; Theme 4: Sense of belonging and safety; Theme 5: Professionalism and excellence; Theme 6: Political influence and Theme 7: Dance as a platform of agency. The themes link to four main concepts that are: (1) bricolage; (2) a strong tradition of social innovation; (3) positive organisation and (4) social change. Collectively these concepts constitute a social innovation which is inclusive. The arrows in **Figure 3** link the themes to the concepts and will be expanded upon in this chapter.

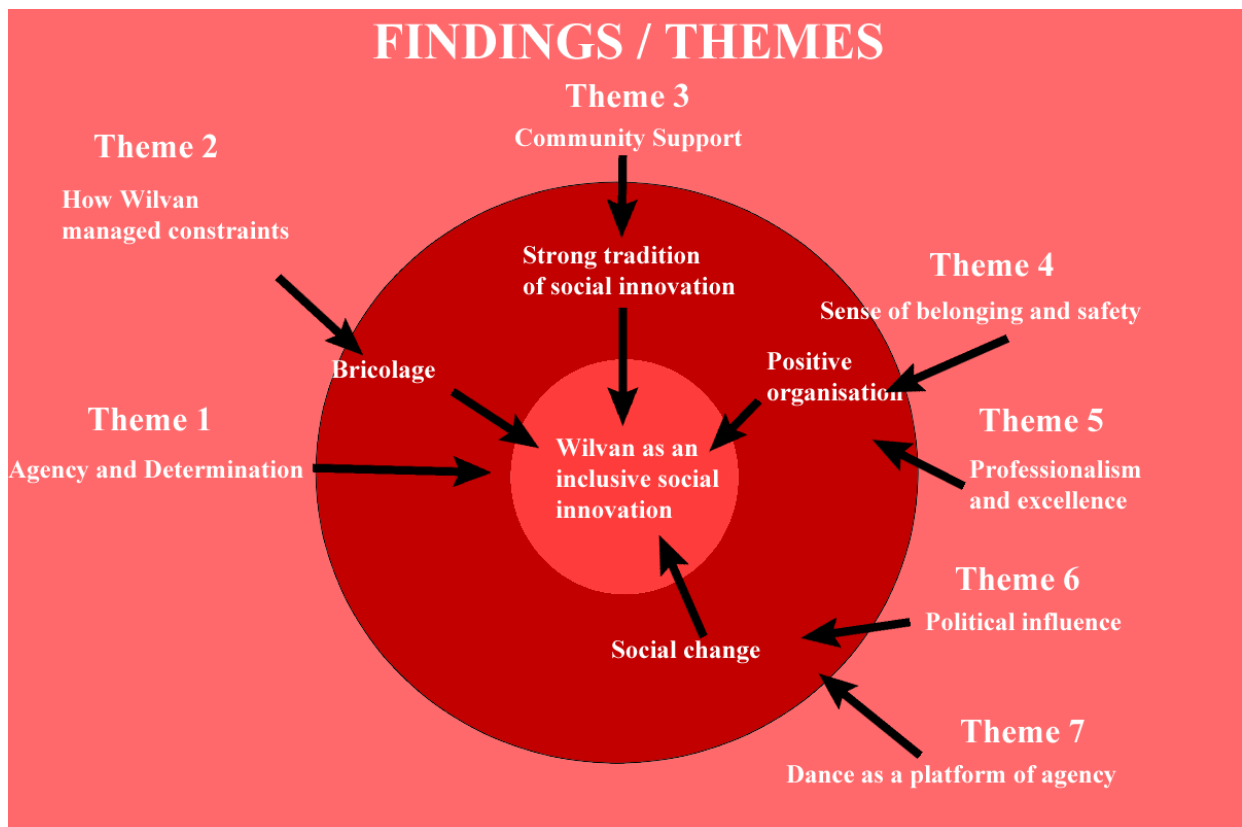


Figure 3. Findings and Themes

The findings which emerge through the interviews, particularly with the Wilvan students, report on the impact Wilvan had on their burgeoning political consciousness but also the impact this organisation had on their overall development as young people growing up within an oppressive system in which opportunities were limited for them. This latter aspect emerged quite significantly, whether it was in relation to timekeeping or their self-confidence, which bolstered their ability to hold their own despite the disadvantage of their circumstances.

4.2. Theme 1: Agency and Determination in the Establishment of Wilvan

The rules and beliefs which make up the cultures in which we live both defines and limits us and gives us the material we need to create novelty. This has been defined as the paradox of agency, that as individuals, as social beings, we are both deeply conditioned by and dependent on the continuity and stability of the social systems we have invented and capable of altering these through both conscious and unconscious effort. (Westley, 2008, p. 1)

As a child, who had grown up in District Six, Veronica Williams, who first had the vision to establish Wilvan, had attended dance classes at the Eoan Group from the age of three at the Isaac Ochberg Hall in District Six. This came to an abrupt halt when the Group Areas Act, 1950, disrupted her life and made it necessary for her family to relocate to Bridgetown on the Cape Flats in 1955 when she was 12 years old. She stated that the love for dance and music remained with her throughout her life. In 1965 she moved to Kensington with her family, her husband Michael and their young son, Brent. Sometime during 1968 she approached the UCT-established SHAWCO, which was located in 12th Avenue, Kensington to offer her services to assist with the teaching of ballet. Her offer was turned down on the grounds that no help was required. Ironically, it was this act of rejection that catalysed her initiative to seek a way to offer her dance skills to the children of the Kensington community. However, it was clear that starting a dance class was not something that could be a solitary endeavour. Venues and resources would be required and pupils would need to be recruited. It was through continuous discussion with friends such as sisters, Aisha and Ghairu Parker and family members, who included the late Ronald Petersen, a scoutmaster who was also living in Kensington, that her resolve to start a dance class was reinforced. Veronica recollected how Ronald Petersen secured Wilvan its first venue when it seemed an impossible venture to embark upon:

So I went to Ronnie and I said, Ronnie, I went to SHAWCO this morning and they said, they don't need my help. And you know, I so much want to teach, I so much want to get involved in dance. So he said to me, and I remember so clearly, I was sitting in his kitchen in Kensington and on this little three-legged stool. And he said to me, why don't you start your own school, your own dance class? ... They don't need you, start your own thing. So I said to him but Ronnie, how would I start this? I don't have the money, I don't have a venue. And he said to me, don't worry, I'm going to find a venue for you. (Veronica Williams, 25/09/2021)

The venue that Ronald Petersen organised was on the premises of the Methodist Church in Bunney Street, Kensington. As the idea to start Wilvan germinated, it became apparent that additional teachers would be required who could create a viable opportunity in the local community to cope with the anticipated numbers of students that could enrol. Veronica approached the van Staden sisters, Eunice van Willigh and Lola van Staden, who agreed to Veronica's request to join this new initiative.

Then I contacted two friends, two sisters, who were also dancing. And I knew they were dancing with the Eoan Group.... And they said, Veronica we'll come in and see what we can do and that's how Wilvan started from that little seed that got planted. (Veronica Williams, 25/09/2021)

As none of them had teaching qualifications, Eunice van Willigh approached Sophia Swartz, who was teaching at the Eoan Group and had the necessary qualifications. On joining, Sophia Swartz became the first principal of Wilvan.

...Remember, none of us were teaching. We didn't have any teaching qualifications. I knew nothing. I just started dancing as a little girl until the age of 12. What did I know about dance? So we had no experience. It was that determination to get this thing off the ground. (Veronica Williams, 25/09/2021)

Veronica indicated that she was not initially politically motivated as her political awareness of social injustice in South Africa was nascent and had begun to unfold alongside but did not precede the decision to start Wilvan. The motivation to start the school was as a result of wanting to contribute towards the development of the youth in the area by using her love for and basic skill in ballet. However, at that early stage there were some principles that framed the approach to the type of school Wilvan would be, based on discussions she was having with various community members. These relationships were a key element in the actions which brought the emergent Wilvan into being, a grassroots innovation, which constituted a purposeful and collective act of wanting to make a positive contribution to the lives of young people. However, as will be seen the political influences and ideas of social change that permeated the school as it developed were not present in the most overt way at the start but were percolating. Veronica said:

So when we decided to start the school, there was a little bit of influence as I told you, I was talking to certain people, and we decided that Wilvan was going to be established on very strict principles. Firstly, it would be non-racial. In other words, any child who wanted to learn to dance would be allowed to come and no child would be denied access, if they couldn't pay the nominal fee. At that stage, it was five cents a month. Okay, it would be non-sectarian, it would be non-sexist but most importantly, it would be non-profit making. (Veronica Williams, 25/09/2021)

The reference in this statement to the fact that the school would be non-racial in its character was an early signal of how this political stance became a feature of Wilvan as it became more established. This is being flagged for an expanded discussion in Theme 6, on political influence, in Section 4.7. However, the formation of this dance school was the beginning of an experience for many young people in a marginalised community that sorely lacked opportunities, including in the arts, which could shift their cultural and artistic life experience. As was evident from the interviews it enabled young people, young women in particular, initially mainly from the local communities of Kensington and Factreton, to access a dance form that would go onto to be evaluated within the framework of an international ballet standard, the Cecchetti method. This kind of access to an internationally recognised qualification was not generally available within disenfranchised, marginalised communities during this period and was an innovation initiated by members of that self-same community at Wilvan.

In 1969, when renovations on the Bunney Street venue began, Wilvan moved to the hall of the Anglican church of St. Timothy's in Vliegтуig Laan, Factreton. St. Timothy's was the second but by no means the last church venue that Wilvan would be based at. This mobility due to a lack of a permanent venue was intrinsic to the modus operandi of the school. In January 1969, the then Brown sisters, Elaine Cloete and Shirley Willenberg, who lived within walking distance of St. Timothy's, popped into a class, initially to join as students. Elaine and Shirley, together with Veronica went on to remain as the core teachers at Wilvan for the next four decades, although for shorter periods there were other teachers that included students of Wilvan in later years. In short, these three woman became the backbone of Wilvan across its lifetime and the fulcrum around which the school operated, with the support of the parents and community members who viewed this initiative as one that would play a positive role in the community. The involvement of disenfranchised community members, using their agency, in the founding of Wilvan was key to its formation as a dance organisation that was to serve the communities within which they were located for the next four decades. The synergies between its visionary founder, the procurer of the venue and the first founding teachers demonstrated the intensely social and communal nature of this innovation in which they used their agency to start a creative organisation. As apparent as the involvement of community members who were marginalised was at the moment of its establishment, it will be demonstrated that this was characteristic of how the dance school operated and sustained itself throughout its existence, including during the period being investigated and will be reported on more fully in Theme 3, community involvement and support, in Section 4.4.

4.3. Theme 2: How Wilvan Faced Constraints

The ‘bricoleur’ is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks...His universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with ‘whatever is at hand’, that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite... (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p. 11)

As indicated there were numerous challenges in the establishment of Wilvan that was located in a resource-constrained community. At the outset these included the need to find venues for classes and the lack of teaching qualifications. Additional limitations included the condition of the venues at which teaching, learning and performances took place as well as finance to sustain the school given that funds would be required for general running costs and to obtain the “tools of the trade” such as cassette players, cassettes and teaching manuals. The manner in which these constraints were addressed and how they were experienced by the interview participants was a key element of the research on Wilvan. The findings are presented below.

4.3.1. The Teaching and Learning Facilities

The initial venue that Ronald Petersen procured was an unused, dilapidated classroom at the Methodist Church in Bunney Street, Kensington. From the outset the conditions under which the Wilvan teachers and students had to ply their craft was less than optimal with no semblance of a dance studio. Given that the only choice for a dance venue was limited and they were faced with the decision to begin this venture or stop it in its tracks, the choice was made to proceed and to make do with what was available. In August 1968 the first Wilvan ballet classes began. Veronica Williams spoke about those initial experiences:

And we were using this classroom at the Methodist Church where every Saturday morning we had to sweep away the night soil, and the dirt and the dust. But you know, we just wanted to get this going, which we did. (Veronica Williams, 25/09/2021)

Veronica’s agency and determination despite the limitations of the teaching location was once again revealed in this statement. Amongst the first pupils were Denise Slingers (née Petersen) and Marlene Petersen, daughters of Ronald and Audrey Petersen, who both confirmed the decrepit state of the venue. Denise, who at the age of 10 was one of the older pupils and who was at Wilvan from the first day of teaching recalled:

The venue at the Wesleyan venue was very, very rundown, very derelict. As I said, children would throw stones in and you couldn't actually use the hall before the hall was swept in its entirety and then you tried to hold a class. (Denise Slingers, 15/03/2022)

Marlene Petersen spoke of the dark space with its broken windows and floorboards, while still being dressed in the proper attire for a ballet class – ballet shoes, leotards and pink tights, which was a firm expectation at Wilvan. Cheryl Samuel (née Oliver), who had also been one of the earliest and older pupils starting at the age of 14 in 1968, described the Bunney Street venue as “totally vandalised.” This was a description of the first venue in which Wilvan started, which was extremely broken-down. However, Shirley Willenberg, who taught ballet and later Greek and national dancing to the younger pupils and would take on the role of treasurer of Wilvan, spoke about the suitability of all the subsequent venues that Wilvan used in its lifetime and how they fell short of the correct specifications for dancing. Shirley also commented on the quality of the work, as per the feedback of examiners on the standard of ballet that was produced despite the shortcomings of the teaching venues. This will be discussed further under Theme 5, professionalism and excellence, in Section 4.6. Shirley said:

You see the floors, Zenny, were not suitable for our children and that was the one thing the examiners always spoke about. How did you get the girls to work so well and to jump in spite of them not having spec floors? (Shirley Willenberg, 26/02/2022)

One student, Althea Pilz (née Okkers) had requested her mother to send her to ballet school at age 10 in 1972, after spending time at the local library in Kensington. As a young girl who wanted to do ballet she had quite specific visual images in her mind about what a ballet studio should look like based on the library books she had been reading. Althea said:

Venue, I was disappointed because obviously I thought I was going to a ballet studio. As a child who read books you see. But it was this church hall and this hard floor, no mirrors and no barres. The kids were all dressed up prettily in their leotards, pink tights, pink shoes, black leotards... So I came there with this picture of mirrors. We all had our buns, but there were no mirrors and no barres and no piano. But that was okay and I was happy and I came back again. My mother said

you want to go and I said yes... After having done the class and meeting the girls. Initially I was shy but despite all of that I continued. (Althea Pilz, 15/03/2022)

Interestingly, due to the experience Althea had, she returned to the less than satisfactory venue after attending her first class at St. Timothy's in Factreton. The poor quality of the infrastructure was not a deterrent, which then led to the question of what the experience was that shifted Althea's decision and brought her back to Wilvan where she was to remain for 18 years. Althea, who now teaches ballet in Germany, further reflected on the experience of the venue and what was achieved at Wilvan despite these limitations:

I also believe you don't need a studio. I teach in one of the most beautiful studios and you still don't have the quality that we produced in our little... 'Cos with what we had, the equipment we had, we produced excellent dancers... That's what I learnt from our ballet school. That you could still do the art under those circumstances. (Althea Pilz, 15/03/2022)

The initial disappointment that Althea experienced was not felt by everyone. There were some students who did not find anything strange with the lack of studio conditions given what they were familiar with in the community in which they lived. Ronel Cornelissen, who started ballet at the age of four at a church hall in Bellville, joined Wilvan in 1982 as a 14-year-old high school student at Harold Cressy after being encouraged to attend by a classmate who was a student at Wilvan. Ronel stated:

I came from a very strict ballet background. And I didn't really, I mean with Wilvan things like, you know, dancing in the church or things like that were not foreign to me, because I'd never danced in a proper dance studio. I'd never had a proper dance floor, I'd never had things like mirrors and things like that. So that side of it was not foreign at all. (Ronel Cornelissen, 07/03/2022)

The obvious deficiencies of the venues proved not to be prohibitive as the determination to start this initiative overrode any reservations which they may have had about their appalling state. The deployment of agency and the will to act despite the constraints, were necessary components of getting the school out of the starting blocks. During its lifetime, including the period which this dissertation is focused on, numerous venues, mainly church and later school classrooms, served as locations for Wilvan classes. Elaine Cloete who would become the

secretary and administrator at Wilvan recalls access to venues as a major constraint for Wilvan. Often church venues could have other activities which meant that Wilvan would sometimes have to source a venue at short notice, which was a major challenge. Elaine stated:

So as I say venues. First of all was venues for teaching classes. The only people we could go to were churches and what would happen if they have a funeral and they need the hall for whatever? We don't have a venue. Now you must go look for another one and it was difficult, very difficult. (Elaine Cloete, 26/02/2022)

Veronica also indicated that this nomadic movement between the various church venues provided serious challenges in terms of planning, which the teachers were conscious of. In 1978, 10 years into Wilvan's existence they approached the local municipality so that they could build a more permanent structure but were rejected. Veronica said:

And when we celebrated our 10th anniversary, I remember we had approached the City Council to ask them whether they would give us a piece of land, which we could develop in Kensington to put up a dance school. And they refused because they said you only there for 10 years. We don't know how long you going to [sic], you won't survive for long. (Veronica Williams, 25/09/2021)

Faced with the rejection by the local municipality, Wilvan persevered and made do with the venues in the community, which were not conducive to dancing but somehow the quality of the tuition was not compromised. This was commented on in the Chairperson's Report⁵ on the 35th anniversary of Wilvan:

There was no suitable dance studio in the area; there was no sponsorship available to Wilvan, but despite these limitations the team did not compromise on the standard of the dance provided. (Maureen Adriaan, 2003)

This was in the main due to the resolve by the teachers that the best quality of tuition would be provided to Wilvan's students. The motto "Let us work for our children," which was an adaptation of the TLSA motto "Let us live for our children," was adopted by Wilvan and is

⁵The late Maureen Adriaan, a teacher at Harold Cressy, a member of the New Unity Movement and the TLSA was the chairperson of Wilvan between 1986 and 2008. She succeeded Ethne Stevens, the 2nd chairperson. Ronnie Petersen had been the first chairperson.

the last line of numerous Principal's reports⁶ to the Wilvan community. I provide further explication of the implementation of high standards of tuition at Wilvan in Theme 5, Section 4.6, on professionalism and excellence, where the attainment of teaching qualifications is also addressed.

4.3.2. Performance Venues

It emerged that between 1968 and 1994 Wilvan only held concerts in municipal and church halls. This was because they refused to perform in venues which required permits because of Apartheid legislation. The reason for their position is reported on in Section 4.7, the political influences on Wilvan. Their first public performance, while Sophia Swartz was principal at Wilvan, was held at the Woodstock Town Hall in November 1970 and would be the first of many Wilvan productions. This section considers the condition of the venues at which they had to perform that did not conform to theatre specifications and not the performances themselves which are elaborated upon in Section 4.6.3. Denise Slingers, stated that despite the fact that they did not dance in venues that had all the facilities it did not reduce the eagerness with which a performance was approached:

Do you know, something? I think in life due to the whole Apartheid system, we were used to crumbs. And we made the best of those crumbs to make a loaf of bread. So, it didn't matter where we danced. The effect was still the same. We got the same feelings of excitement, feelings of joy, interaction, a different environment. (Denise Slingers, 15/03/2022)

Belinda Jacobs, began dancing lessons at Wilvan in 1973. She recalls that she was not very sporty and began to enjoy ballet after she was introduced to it at the age of 10. Belinda spoke about the audience expectation of a high-quality performance despite the completely inadequate material conditions under which they rehearsed:

And our shows were, you know, at community venues and I think people knew when they come into a Wilvan show, they were going to have a good show, you know. Despite, you know, the fact that we had our venue in Kensington, in I think it was a nursery school, Gateway. Yeah. And, you know, we practiced, I think on

⁶ Veronica Williams, Wilvan principal, states in her 1977 AGM report that 'Let us work for our children' should be adopted as the motto of Wilvan as the model of the school should be based on service to benefit every Wilvan pupil.

cement floors. And, you know, we made the best of what we had. And we were encouraged to give of our best. Yeah, I think that's what we learned. That's what I took from from Wilvan. But also that connection to the community, you know. (Belinda Jacobs, 26/03/2022)

Charlene Gillies (née September), who started at Wilvan at seven or eight in early 1973 or 1974, spoke about how, by using their imagination, the lack of knowledge of theatre facilities was addressed as they rehearsed for Wilvan productions:

We did a lot of professional work, and obviously it's new. So we create this theatre that we really don't have, we've never seen. We don't know what it is. Our theatre or our space would be a classroom, you know, and then we create these aisles, we don't know what it is until you actually get into a theatre. So a lot of learning on a whole lot of different levels that informs you later on, because you do become aware of things, and you look for things and you learn. Listen, you don't need to have it all be so perfect, you can work with what you have. And then you know, see something come to fruition. (Charlene Gillies, 16/02/2022)

This was echoed by Ronel Cornelissen who stated that the quality of performance was not affected by dancing in a venue that did not have all the required facilities, although she conceded that it made it easier when there was a proper backstage with changing rooms, Ronel said:

Look, I think for, for me, every performance is a performance, you know what I mean? So whether it's a, you know, official well-known theatre versus a school hall, you know, somewhere someone's asked you to be part of a birthday celebration or something... I mean, in terms of performing, it's not that you're going to do a lesser performance in a venue that, you know, is not kind of kitted out completely. (Ronel Cornelissen, 07/03/2022)

Despite the constraint of access to venues and their suitability for the teaching and performing of dance, Wilvan persevered thereby creating a viable community dance organisation albeit with limited resources. Responses from the interviewees for some of the main reasons why it attracted and retained students included: (1) the excellent quality of the teaching and (2) the

way in which the students experienced the school as a place of belonging and safety which is explained in Theme 4 in Section 4.5.

4.3.3. Financial Constraints

Wilvan set out to provide a service to the community as a non-profit entity. A nominal fee was charged and often this was not paid which posed a serious challenge to their sustainability.⁷ What emerged from the interviews was that the teachers were not remunerated for their services initially, and even though they were eventually provided with an annual honorarium, Elaine Cloete stated that this enabled them to attend movies once a year. No child was ever turned away due to the fact that they were unable to pay their fees which made Wilvan accessible to low-income families as was the intention. One of the student interviewees stated that she and her sibling were beneficiaries of the stance that Wilvan took, not to turn anyone away due to their inability to pay fees. This was something she only discovered in later years as no child was made to feel any lesser due to this policy. Therefore the position Wilvan took to be completely independent meant that they had to find mechanisms to raise funds to ensure the continuity of the school. In this regard the parents were a key component of their strategy and a Works Committee was formed comprised of Wilvan parents. Audrey Petersen was one of those parents and she spoke of the activities that they held which enabled the school to raise funds:

And then, because the fees were so low, we used to have a lot of fundraisers. Then we had cake sales outside in the mall in Kensington at Shoprite. Mrs Maureen Adriaan, sometimes only the two of us, because parents were all busy working, not free on a Saturday morning and we would be helping there and of course with the dances selling the tickets. That is what we would do. (Audrey Petersen, 15/03/2022).

Elaine Cloete indicated that not all the parents were active but that those who were committed could be relied upon:

Look, if we needed some donations, we would find people who were on the committee perhaps, committed parents. You know you can get parents and parents and some of them are there just because their children are there, but you never see

⁷ While it is not the focus of this thesis to consider the reasons for Wilvan's closure in 2013 due to the period I am investigating, I am aware that the lack of finances was a key reason for that decision.

them. There are others again who are committed, really committed, who want to play a role you know, come to meetings and offer services if they could. So parents would then also get donations. (Elaine Cloete, 26/02/2022)

Despite the fact that not all parents were active, the parents and active supporters of the school, many of who did not have children at the school, were a key component of the sustainability of Wilvan. Given their contribution to ensuring that the community-based school would be a viable entity for four decades made it worth exploring how members of the community contributed to Wilvan, including supporting productions that were costly and a regular feature of Wilvan's existence.

A bricoleur makes use of the tools at hand and has to be resourceful and inventive. The teachers at Wilvan, supported by parents used their agency and engaged in acts of bricolage to create a viable community dance organisation in a resource-constrained community that did not have the facilities to accommodate the endeavour they embarked upon as a consequence of Apartheid spatial planning. Nonetheless, they persevered to create a performing arts organisation which, from the accounts of the teachers interviewed, served and benefited thousands of children and young people, particularly disenfranchised young women during its 45-year existence.

4.4. Theme 3: Community Involvement and Support

Looking at these examples, we can see that behind each of them is a group of people who have been able to imagine, develop, and manage something new, outside the standard ways of thinking and doing – to shatter mainstream ideas about how to solve problems. To do so, they had to: (1) (re)discover the power of cooperation; (2) recombine, in a creative way, already existing products, services, places, knowledge, skills, and traditions; and (3) count on their own resources, ... We refer to these groups as creative communities... (Manzini, 2014, p. 61)

4.4.1. The Role of Parents and Supporters

As has been indicated the parents played a critical role in the Wilvan community. Many of the committed parents that Elaine Cloete referred to, such as Audrey Petersen, were part of the Works Committee whose tasks included the organising and managing of fundraising efforts and in the early days before Wilvan expanded its student base, hosted general meetings at their

homes. Veronica Williams reiterated the contribution made by parents including that of my father, who had been part of the backstage team for her first production in 1975, *The Magic Toyshop* and *The Parade*, after she became Wilvan's principal:

We received no funding, no funding whatsoever. The parents were the ones who worked. The parents were the ones who sewed, the parents were the ones who came to work backstage, who helped us with productions. Your dad was one of them, building sets. I remember for my first production, your dad made those masks. So beautiful. (Veronica Williams, 25/09/2021)

Veronica indicated that these were all volunteers whose innovative contributions were not about advantaging themselves but using their skills in a purposeful manner to the benefit of the organisation. The experience of the students with regard to the role the parents played was expressed by Denise Slingers:

Lots of effort by parents, those with sewing skills, hell's bells, they were put to work. And we were fortunate having Mrs. Fisher, I know was one of them... And Mrs. Daniels. Mrs Daniels made probably 90% of Wilvan's Spanish clothing and I'm sure she helped with the other, with the other outfits. What needed to be made, was made in-house. And people were not paid. People did it because they realised the importance of a Wilvan Ballet School. They realised that they would also like to put on a production which was professional. (Denise Slingers, 15/03/2022).

Malcolm Campbell, a then UCT architectural student, became involved with Wilvan in 1977 and took on the role of stage manager for one of its productions that was presented at a church hall in Elsie's River. Malcolm elaborated upon the reason for his involvement with Wilvan:

So, I have a strong interest in the arts. I had always wanted to become involved in a production. I felt I had something to offer. My skill set in terms of my creative, artistic, graphic abilities and photographic as well. And I also enjoyed the prospect of working with people who have a high level of commitment to what they were doing. They were doing it because of the need to contribute to the development of the community, not out of self-interest. (Malcolm Campbell, 29/03/2022)

The impulse to support the Wilvan endeavour stemmed from a place to assist what was identified as a positive initiative. This organisation was driven by individuals with high levels of commitment to make a contribution to the development of young people from a marginal community and not by self-seeking, self-interested individuals seeking to aggrandise themselves.

4.4.2. Role of the Churches

While the role of the community-based churches in providing venues for Wilvan is not the focus of the dissertation, the number of churches that provided venues to Wilvan in mainly Kensington but also Factreton became quite evident in the interviews. I had asked the students to indicate where they had gone for lessons. While Gateway at the Methodist Church in Bunney Street and St. Timothy's Anglican Church in Vliegtuig Avenue, Factreton were well known to the first students of Wilvan it emerged that at least five churches provided facilities for Wilvan to conduct its work. These included the Good Shepherd Anglican Church in 7th Avenue; the St. John African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church on 5th Avenue and the Kensington Evangelical Church Strewers in 9th Street. The churches in the area were therefore key to the provision of venues to Wilvan, which although not proper dance studios, became a regular space for dance classes and rehearsals for the many dance productions that Wilvan presented throughout its existence. Gateway remained as a consistent venue for ballet lessons throughout Wilvan's life and is often associated with Wilvan as its core venue. Later in the post-Apartheid period school classrooms like that of Maitland High provided venues for Wilvan to conduct its Spanish dance classes. In a Wilvan 35-year history pamphlet the then chairperson, Maureen Adriaan, stated:

From the outset Wilvan depended on well-disposed churches and schools in the Kensington/ Maitland area for the use of their halls at very low or no cost. (Maureen Adriaan, 2003)

What was observed here was that the support came from well-disposed churches of varying denominations. The fact that they provided these venues at low or no cost indicated that they supported the work that Wilvan was doing and were not seeking to profiteer at the expense of the dance school. While this was not the subject of my investigation, the contribution of the churches as part of the community support for Wilvan hinted at the fact that they contributed in no small part to its sustainability. Their role as churches rooted in the community, all of which still exist today, in supporting the dance organisation was therefore quite pivotal to the

Wilvan experience. In addition to municipal halls such as the Kensington Civic Centre, Wilvan also performed at church halls including at St Marks Church Hall in Athlone and at a Catholic Church hall in Elsie's River, which is an additional dimension of the role that churches played in the absence of viable theatres for performance for community arts organisations.

4.5. Theme 4: A Sense of Belonging and Safety

If individual safety remains the one uncontested element in Maslow's otherwise much criticized hierarchy of needs (1970), then it seems reasonable to argue that collective safety, both psychological and physical, is just as crucial for groups if they are to strive for virtue, extraordinary performance, and lives that are worth living. Enacting that safety is virtuous organizing. (Weick, 2003)

This was a finding that emerged during the process of data gathering and one which I had not anticipated. From the interviews with the teachers and the majority of students, they were quite emphatic that they experienced Wilvan as a place of belonging where they felt safe and accepted. The former students interviewed represented dancers that had begun in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s – across three generations of dancers spanning more than 30 years of Wilvan's 45-year history. Whether the students had begun in the 1960s, 1970s or 1980s, there was a consistency in how they experienced the school as family especially when they responded to the question about how they experienced the teachers at Wilvan. This indicated a strong, coherent culture at the school that was consistent over decades. The fact that the teachers were quite different with Veronica being described as a hard taskmaster, something she herself indicated in her interview; Elaine being referred to as the stern one, who just got things done and Shirley as the loving and fun one who embraced and hugged all the girls, was stated repeatedly. Elaine Cloete, in speaking about what differentiated Wilvan from other organisations, said:

That is the difference. That is why those ladies could say, you know, what they got out of it, over the years, there was this whole family affair happening. Everybody felt part of the family. You know, you could come there, you could enjoy the dancing, learn. But it went beyond that even. (Elaine Cloete, 26/02/2022)

Elaine and Shirley's home became a base away from the ballet school where the students, as they became older, went to after class on Saturdays that reinforced the sense of family for both

teachers and students. Their mother, Mrs Summers, was a well-known figure at the school due to her active involvement in supporting Wilvan. In the interview Shirley expressed her joy that a number of Wilvan students continued to keep in touch with her and Elaine underlining the many sustained connections that were established at Wilvan that continue to the present day:

Because even like now, Althea, okay we keep in touch, we chat all the time. But it's like we saw her yesterday, we will pick up where we left off. Myrna them all, Charlene... that is how close we were. So it didn't matter if we didn't see each other for years. When we saw each other, "you know what happened... Zoe got married, this, that aah." Just so beautiful, just really, really special. (Shirley Willenberg, 26/02/2022)

Carlyn Adams (née Cupido), who started at Wilvan in early 1969, aged six, expressed that growing up, dance was her greatest passion and she recalled a sense of joy when she first started ballet at Wilvan, which she considered family. Her older sister, Wynoma Stockenstroom (née Cupido), was older by two years and they came together and were joined by two cousins. Carlyn related the experience of the friendships formed in between classes, the sharing of refreshments and feeling really happy. Carlyn went on to attain the most advanced teaching exam qualification, the Maestro de Baile (MDB) with the Spanish Dance Society (SDS) in 2008, which at that time according to Carlyn, was not commonplace in South Africa and along with Cheryl Samuel, a first for Wilvan students. Both Carlyn and Cheryl became teachers at Wilvan in the post-1994 period and Carlyn later became principal for a period. Carlyn said of those early days at Wilvan:

I thought we were like a family. I remember ... really distinct memories of us at the place. Sitting... kind of between classes you know when we'd get dressed and we'd sit there on the floor with our eats, whatever we would have... And I don't remember the actual eating. I just kinda remember us sitting there and chatting and, you know, while you're changing and it was, it was just so, it was just (smiling) ... Imagine us all packed into that place and I mean life was, I mean for me, it was a highlight, like getting ready on Friday night. Going to ballet. It was like a big thing. (Carlyn Adams, 15/02/2022)

Marlene Petersen, who danced with Wilvan for a period of 15 years, experienced Wilvan as a place of safety that was critical in her development as a young woman:

For me, I just remember them being and starting to develop into a space, a safe space to go to and where we danced. It was like a family, another family, extended family space that we could go to. I think all of us as, as girls and as the teachers ...because at the end of the year we would, I mean, I know I was five to start with, you know, but we would go and have end-of-year functions at the Cloete residence in Mustang Street. So we really, we were a close-knit bunch, and that became a valuable space for me in those years, my early years and 15 years of my life. (Marlene Petersen, 04/02/2022)

Ronel Cornelissen, who danced at Wilvan over a period of 31 years, from the age of 14 until it closed its doors in 2013, spoke about the ethos of the school which she described as non-competitive and inclusive:

When I'm saying all encompassing, I just mean, kind of inclusive, you know it was really like a family. It was really like a closely knit family. And yeah, I think that just fizzled through in terms of a caring, loving, just nurturing ethos. And it didn't have to just stem from a principal member. It was you know, it just spread laterally. I don't actually think that there was ever any kind of antagonistic stuff between members of Wilvan you know. (Ronel Cornelissen, 07/03/2022)

Fahiem Stellenboom was one of the few male students at Wilvan. He started at about 13 or 14 while a high school student at Harold Cressy in 1976 or 1977. His younger sister, Waseemah, had at been Wilvan for a few years when on collecting her after class one Saturday afternoon he saw a Spanish dancing class in session and "fell in love" with what would become his "first love" in dance. Fahiem went on to study dance at UCT after he matriculated in 1982 and also returned to Wilvan to teach. He said:

Veronica was also more than just a teacher. You know Veronica was also like a mama bear, to many of us. Shirley and Elaine, exactly the same. You know, they were sort of like the aunties at the dance school. And then later on, when I look at other dance studios and dance schools and stuff, and often that is the case, you know, that the teachers become that, but it felt more. Even now, if I look back, in

retrospect, while I'm thinking about it, as we're talking about it, it felt like a little bit more. It felt like, it was that other mommy and those aunties that, you know, that's what they were. Incredible commitment, incredible passion and tenacity, which I think really made a big difference for many of us. You should know, you've come from there. (Fahiem Stellenboom, 07/02/2022)

Naiemah Eksteen, a second cousin of Fahiem and Waseemah, had started dancing as a child at the Marion Institute in Woodstock. She was persuaded by them to join Wilvan where she began in 1985 when she was eight years old. This is how she experienced Wilvan:

My family. I don't see it as a dance school. That was my family, my friends. Not even my friends, they were my family... Family is where you love them, you hate them... (Naiemah Eksteen, 12/02/2022)

Naiemah's comment about what family meant indicated that tensions did exist at Wilvan, but her overwhelming experience of Wilvan was an empowering and positive one. Jill Levenberg, who as a professional actor has continued as a performing artist, spoke about the nurturing that was provided at Wilvan and indicated how the Wilvan experience made a difference and contributed to her development as a young woman from a disenfranchised community:

But they were so selfless, to be there for so very many hours teaching, giving of themselves, you know, giving freely... But I mean, if you look in hindsight, it wasn't really much money that they were making, it was really just a contribution of theirs to the community. To growing so many young women to walk taller, you know, to be proud, to walk taller, to have discipline to have an awareness of self you know. We could have grown up so much differently... Yeah, the love that they had for all the girls, you know, shone through because there was a nurturing there, you know, there was a nurturing there, definitely. (Jill Levenberg, 18/03/2022)

Jill also referenced the fact that the teachers were providing this art form to the community as a contribution to the development of young people, young women in particular. The sacrifices and selflessness of the teachers were mentioned by the majority of the student participants. The fact that they were barely compensated was confirmed by all the Wilvan teachers. Jill also experienced the Wilvan teachers as having an empowering and affirming impact on her life, which in her "walk taller" comment references identity formation and the dignity and

pride that disenfranchised young women could embody, in defiance of an overarching political system that marginalised and denigrated them. While gender empowerment has not been a direct focus of this study, the data certainly lends itself to further exploration given that the majority of the Wilvan pupils were disenfranchised young women. Belinda Jacobs pointed to how the differences between the teachers were experienced as synergistic at the ballet school and that the students felt safe with all of them. She also commented on the involvement of the parents in Wilvan, which has been discussed in Sections 4.3 and 4.4.

So I think the teachers got on well, they complemented each other very well. And they, you know, always felt that they had, I mean, I always felt that everyone had our back... Sometimes after ballet, I would go with Veronica to visit Shirley and Elaine's place. I knew their mom. Their mom was also part of the ballet school, you know, all the various parents were part of the ballet school. So it was quite a connected little family concern. And I think that was quite different from other schools that I've seen. (Belinda Jacobs, 26/03/2022)

The cooperation between the teachers was emphasised by Veronica Williams and she recalled how she had reflected on, about a year prior to this interview, how they had worked together, making sacrifices, to sustain Wilvan:

And I'm telling you, the things that I remember and I sat here one day, and I phoned them. It was now maybe a year ago, and I wept as I was talking. I said, you know I will never forget Elaine, how you would leave your work and go to Salt River to buy the cords for the castanets. There was only one place where we could get the cords for the castanets. She would go to Salt River, she had a half an hour lunch, she would go from her place of work... Shows come, exams, Elaine would go and get the pink ribbons for the ballet shoes, the pink elastic that gets stitched at the back for the ballet shoe. The pink bands for the ballet shoes, the pink tights for the ballet shoes. She would do it and then of course everybody would buy it from her. Costumes, Elaine would go and fetch material here... Shirley would make the headgears for our performances... The best headgears because Shirley was working at the milliners, Wilvan's dancers had the best headgears.
(Veronica Williams, 25/09/2021)

Bernadette Kolbe, who started at Wilvan in the 1980s, expressed the respect that she still carries for the Wilvan teachers who she described in terms of dance styles capturing the different personalities of the teachers from one student perspective. Bernadette said:

Teacher Shirley was always the lovely one. I remember calling them all teacher. That's the first thing, Teacher Shirley. If I saw Shirley today, I probably would still call her teacher. Teacher Shirley is like Aunty Shirley. It's a form of acknowledgement. And you know, Teacher Shirley was very nice. She seemed that she was always gonna be someone who's gonna hug you... Shirley was more expressive and like I think if I had to explain them now as dance styles, Shirley would be like the contemporary people that throw themselves in the air and fall on the floor and roll around and like move your body. Whereas Elaine was probably like, more regimented, like dance moves would be more her thing... I mean Veronica would be like – precision! (Bernadette Kolbe, 02/03/2022)

Expressing a dissenting view about her introduction to Wilvan, Charlene Gillies spoke about her culture shock on arriving at the school as a seven-or eight-year-old in early 1973 or 1974. Unbeknown to Charlene, a decision had been made in her family that ballet would be good for her development as she had experienced bouts of ill health between the ages of five and six. She recalled being bundled into a vehicle on a Saturday morning by Mrs Africa, her friend Felicity's mom, and had no idea where they were being driven to when they arrived at the ballet school in Bunney Street. Charlene was from an Afrikaans speaking home and expressed her introduction to Wilvan as an experience of bewilderment and alienation:

Felicity was sort of my little clutch there. Everybody who I encountered spoke English. I didn't know them. Not from school, not from church, not from the community. There was nobody that was sort of in my frame of reference other than Felicity... And there was the language issue. And you know, Afrikaans is my first language. But talking about language and just sort of pursuing that for a minute there. I had, probably because of the dancing, I had such a lot of English on my ear. It made it easier for me to communicate in English. (Charlene Gillies, 16/02/2022)

Charlene went on to remain at the school for 18 years joining the Spanish dance class run by Veronica Williams along with many of the ballet students. After completing a Grade 5 ballet

exam she focused on Spanish dancing for the rest of her time at Wilvan. Her experience had begun as one of alienation but when asked to reflect on what Wilvan means to her now, Charlene said:

Then, just the fact that we could live so many things. That to me is really very comforting. I would not have had some of the experiences that I had, had I not been in the school. There is also the fact that there isn't continuity, and that there could not be continuity for whatever reason is rather sad. Now, I don't believe continuity means that the same people need to be there all the time. I do believe that there is a legacy that has now sort of really had to die a painful death... there could have been continuity just in terms of the name, but now it's just history. So that saddens me.
(Charlene Gillies, 16/02/2022)

Charlene's experience of Wilvan evolved as she acclimatised to and thrived in the environment which was initially alienating for her. The sense that the students felt safe at Wilvan in a community in which gangsterism was ever-present speaks to the welcoming and inclusive environment at Wilvan. The fact that Wilvan was different to other organisations that they had experienced was mentioned repeatedly by both teachers and students. All the students were exposed to the three teachers in the first decades of Wilvan, even if they were not being taught by all of them. As Wilvan developed, Shirley Willenberg⁸ taught the children and young girls ballet, Greek and National dancing; Veronica taught the older students ballet and Spanish dance after it was introduced and Elaine, while mainly teaching ballet, assisted with teaching wherever she was required. Eventually Veronica only taught Spanish dancing which became a Wilvan signature.⁹ It is noteworthy that their distinctly different personalities, approaches and styles were not experienced as conflictual by the students but as complementing each other. The teachers worked closely together and this cooperation over decades, would have contributed to the sense of safety felt by the Wilvan students. One of the students mentioned that friendships between the students were encouraged, especially by Shirley Willenberg, who became the confidante for many a Wilvan student experiencing personal challenges at home or in life. This encouraging of friendship bonds would also have

⁸ In 1979 Shirley Willenberg left her formal job at Union Milliners to teach at Wilvan full-time. She also began to teach at primary schools in Kensington including St. Johns Primary School in 8th Avenue for 10 years and Kenmere Primary in 10th Avenue. Both Veronica Williams and Elaine Cloete were in formal employment and taught at Wilvan in addition to their formal jobs, in a volunteer capacity.

⁹ Appendices 5 and 6 – Wilvan Spanish Dancers (pages 124 and 125).

contributed to a sense of belonging, creating an environment in which individual identities and healthy relationships could thrive. The fact that the relationships of many of the former Wilvan students and teachers endured, as expressed by Shirley and others is indicative of the type of organisation it was. My interpretation based on these interviews, which were often quite animated with laughter, was that students and teachers experienced Wilvan as a positive organisation in which they were allowed to flourish as individuals, not only as dancers, given that it became more than a place where dance classes were conducted. The fact that all the students I interviewed remained at Wilvan for an extended period, ranging from between eight to 30 plus years does indicate that the disciplined but nurturing atmosphere created was conducive for optimal teaching and learning to occur. I posit that it was one of the retention elements for Wilvan students, the other being that it offered talented dancers from a marginalised community a track to pursue dance as a professional career, even if doing so in South Africa in the 1960s and 1970s was not possible for disenfranchised dancers. It also emerged that three of the dancers that I interviewed also sent their daughters or granddaughters to Wilvan that also indicates that their experience was a meaningful one. This was confirmed in the interview with Elaine Cloete and Shirley Willenberg, especially if the parents, who had been students at Wilvan still resided in Kensington or Facticeon. This alludes to the inter-generational nature of the community-based dance school and the importance of strong community-based organisations that are available for young people over a period of time. Initiatives such as Wilvan could enable access to a meaningful pursuit such as a performing art, with quality tuition within a community that could enable young people to thrive, which they could potentially pursue professionally, particularly in marginalised communities. Although, this inter-generational element is one I will not be exploring in this dissertation, it was one of the unanticipated elements that emerged in the interviews and one that I reflected upon.

4.6. Theme 5: Professionalism and Excellence at Wilvan

POS¹⁰ is concerned primarily with the study of especially positive outcomes, processes, and attributes of organizations and their members. POS does not represent a single theory, but it focuses on dynamics that are typically described by words such as excellence, thriving, flourishing, abundance, resilience, or virtuousness. (Cameron et al., 2003, p. 4)

¹⁰ Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS)

In every interview conducted, emphasis was placed on the excellent quality of the tuition at Wilvan that, in ballet for example, emphasised technique. Ballet was taught in accordance with the Cecchetti method, which was evaluated by the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing based in London and was an internationally recognised ballet qualification. This quest for excellence in teaching was initiated within the first year of Wilvan's existence when the dance teachers initiated a process to attain teaching qualifications.

4.6.1. The Process of Obtaining Teaching Qualifications

From the interviews it emerged that all four founding teachers in 1968 at Wilvan namely, Veronica Williams, Sophia Swartz, Eunice van Willigh and Lola van Staden, had been dance students of the Eoan Group, where they all learnt the art. Elaine Cloete and Shirley Willenberg, who became teachers at Wilvan in 1969 had also been students at the Eoan. Veronica Williams recalled the experience of being at the Eoan as follows:

Well, look, while I was at the Eoan Group, I attended dance classes. I didn't do any formal exams, because it was kind of very informal. The people who were teaching at the Eoan Group at the time, were all connected to the, I think the Cape Town Ballet Club. It wasn't the ballet school yet. And Dulcie Howes was involved there. And she would send teachers to the Eoan Group to teach. (Veronica Williams, 25/09/2021)

However, since Sophia Swartz, the first principal of Wilvan, was the only one who had the requisite dance teacher qualifications, the teachers were encouraged to attend additional classes that the UCT Ballet School was offering in the evenings. Without a dance teacher qualification it was not possible to enter students for examinations under one's name even if teaching, as was the case in the very early years of Wilvan. In 1969, the teachers, including Veronica, Elaine and Shirley began attending evening classes. Veronica, who was working in Parow at the time was subsequently invited to join formal afternoon dance classes by one of the UCT dance teachers, June Hattersley. In 1970 June Hattersley entered Veronica for the Cecchetti method Grade 4 ballet examination, which she passed with distinction. She recalled:

Now remember, I was 26 years old at the time, in a Grade Four class. She entered me for the exam. And when the results came out, I passed the exam with Honours. (Veronica Williams, 25/09/2021)

Veronica was then approached by the founder and then Principal of UCT's Ballet School, the late Dulcie Howes, to enrol for the teacher's course. Dulcie Howes also offered to find the funding to sponsor her studies. In 1971 she enrolled at UCT to attain a ballet teaching diploma which was a three-year course. As Veronica recalled, her political education must have been underway because when she realised that the bursary would be provided by the Coloured Affairs Department (CAD) she immediately refused it. She indicated that by this time she was attending political meetings and had come under the influence of people attached to the Non-European Unity Movement that followed a policy of non-collaboration with Apartheid institutions, which the then CAD was part of. In the first year the parents of Wilvan raised the funds for Veronica's tuition and in her final year in 1973 she was awarded a UCT scholarship after being nominated by Dulcie Howes, which attests to the quality of Veronica's dancing as a UCT ballet student. Veronica said:

So in my first year at Wilvan the parents raised the funds to pay for my first year. ... Then Dulcie Howes retired in 1973. At the end of 1972, again, she called me into her office. And she said to me, Veronica, you have never allowed me or anybody here to do anything for you. But, she said, my going away gift to you is this, the Music College has... What you call it? ... instituted or has arranged for a scholarship to be given, to be awarded to a ballet student. It has to be a third year student and it has to be a student doing the teacher's course. And I have nominated you for the award... and I received that award. (Veronica Williams, 25/09/2021)

Elaine Cloete and Shirley Willenberg had both obtained dance qualifications while at the Eoan Group but not as teachers. In the process of obtaining her teacher qualification in ballet, Elaine spoke about the challenges she faced. Elaine worked full-time at the City Council in whose employ she was till her retirement in 2012. She therefore taught on Saturdays for over four decades while in full-time employment during the week. In addition to teaching every Saturday at Wilvan, she studied after hours during the week to obtain the necessary qualification, a junior teacher certificate, which she obtained in September 1978. This qualification enabled her to enter students to the level of Grade and Test four (later Grade and Test five) for ballet exams. She also spoke about the commitment and sacrifices made to obtain the qualifications:

I used to sit here on weekends with books and books, writing and I even got a ballet dictionary, you know, that type of thing. I bought a manual, a Cecchetti manual. I

had to buy all that so that I could be properly equipped. That's why Shirley said earlier, we don't do things halfway, using half-measures. If you do something, you must do it to the best of your ability, you must commit yourself. That's what I had to do, make sacrifices. (Elaine Cloete, 26/02/2022)

Shirley, who taught the young pupils of Wilvan ballet for many years, embarked on attaining qualifications in Greek dancing in the early 1980s, which she described as the freest style of dancing. This resonated with her sense of the freedom of movement. While this dance form was not formally evaluated at Wilvan, a number of the younger students joined the classes. The dance form was often used in the dance productions of Wilvan. Shirley said:

Now with the Greek we used to have overseas examiners, hey. I mean because we didn't have many people doing Greek. I think we were like five students in Cape Town over the years who did classical Greek. But for me it was this, Greek is the most natural form of dance. (Shirley Willenberg, 26/02/2022)

4.6.2. The Evaluation of Wilvan Students

In 1971, three years after Wilvan was established, the first pupils were entered for ballet exams. Veronica Williams, reporting as principal to a Wilvan Annual General Meeting in 1978, its 10th anniversary year, reported on the accomplishments of the school. She referred to the first dance production staged by Wilvan at the Woodstock Town Hall but indicated that staged productions were not the primary reason for starting Wilvan:

... this I must stress very strongly, was not the prime objective when establishing this school. It must be remembered that some of the founder members who were ballet teachers were aware of the general poor quality of teaching at that time and saw the need to improve the standard of training and of dancing. Since 1971 pupils have been entered for the Cecchetti Society examinations. They have maintained a very high standard and pass rate for which the present staff can be highly commended. (Principal's Report to the Wilvan Annual General Meeting, 1978)

The excellence of tuition was mentioned by parents, students as well as by examiners of the Spanish Dance Society (SDS).¹¹ This external validation was based on the level of skill that the students demonstrated during examinations of ballet and Spanish dancing. Examiners commented on the quality of the teaching and the fact that it was produced under substandard conditions. Veronica Williams stated that:

I must tell you that when they came to examine my pupils for ballet, Zenny can tell you, we worked on a concrete floor that had the, you know that, what do you call that tiling over it? Kentiles you know. So I had to teach... I entered all my pupils for the ballet for the Cecchetti exam, because when I completed I became a member of the Cecchetti Society. And I said to the parents, I'm going to enter the pupils, because this is an internationally recognised organisation. This is an international certificate that they will receive. I refused to enter Wilvan pupil into any Eisteddfod. I said to them, it is an Apartheid institution. I'm not entering you for the Eisteddfod. (Veronica Williams, 25/09/2021)

Students interviewed spoke of their learning experience with reference to the teaching they received at Wilvan. Ronel Cornelissen, like many other students, spoke about the context of the material learning conditions and the excellence that emerged from Wilvan despite this:

I mean, there was just, there was an underlying brilliance, you know. And I think that we all got very good. Basic, not just basic, we learned very good skills... So I think we've definitely got a background of a very strong skill set that was, you know, implemented and taught. And as I say, even with exams and things, we know that the world, ... considering that we were dancing, you know, we had to move school benches out of the way and dance and not see ourselves in a mirror. We've got no idea what we look like, but every year when the exam results come, then you know, Wilvan's students shine and they do very, very well. (Ronel Cornelissen, 07/03/2022)

¹¹ The Spanish Dance Society was founded in South Africa in 1965. Founding members had all undergone dance training in South Africa and in Spain and included Marina Keet de Grut, Mavis Becker, Mercedes Molina and Deanna Blacher. It went on to establish the International Spanish Dance Society (ISDS) that has branches abroad, including in Spain, the United Kingdom, Thailand, Mexico, Russia, Greece and Canada. Veronica Williams became an examiner for the SDS in 1994 (Becker, 2015).

Naiemah Eksteen, who went on to attain her Spanish dance teaching qualification, the Instructor de Baile (IDB) while at Wilvan, spoke of her experience of being taught at the Kensington based school:

I mean even being in Kensington that was like the pinnacle for me because you know Veronica was so professional. And she just put everything into it, you know, ... you would never say that we were living in a community that was not, you know, impoverished or anything like that. I mean at that time when I got to Wilvan we didn't have ballet floors or barres. It was just that cement tiles and no mirrors but you still danced like a professional. (Naiemah Eksteen, 12/02/2022)

Fahiem Stellenboom defined what he meant by the professionalism engendered at Wilvan:

I think, most importantly, again, from Wilvan was that professionalism. And in fact, that word was also often used by Veronica when we were busy with productions, and anything that we touched and did. There was always a sense of professionalism ... Your hair must be right. You must wait in the wings, you mustn't be seen. You don't touch the legs, little simple things like that, which makes sense to me now... You come on time for your rehearsal you know, all those sorts of things, that kind of sense of professionalism. (Fahiem Stellenboom, 07/02/2022)

Denise Slingers related a story about an encounter where disparaging remarks had been made to her about Wilvan because it was a community-based dance school. Denise had responded quite strongly as follows:

She said all schools like Wilvan are rubbish and the only true school to go to is UCT. I could then tell her and where do you think people have money to go to UCT's Ballet School, first of all? And why do you think that a product of UCT cannot produce the same results... And the history speaks for itself. Look at the people that have achieved being Maestro¹² at Wilvan. It is, I can only believe it was phenomenal. Phenomenal! (Denise Slingers, 15/03/2022)

¹² Maestro de Baile (or Profesor de Baile) which translated into English means Master Teacher, is the most advanced teaching qualification at the SDS. Two students of Wilvan attained this qualification in 2008 viz. Cheryl Samuel and Carlyn Adams. Six Wilvan students have attained the teaching qualification, the Instructor de Baile (IDB) including Naiemah Eksteen. Cheryl, Carlyn and Naiemah later taught at Wilvan.

Wynoma Stockenstroom (née Cupido) reflected on her experience of the teachers at Wilvan and the work ethic that was expected. She also spoke about the different approaches of the Wilvan teachers that echoes the experience of other Wilvan students interviewed:

Shirley was, my little bit of Shirley and maybe not as a student of Shirley's, but almost as just seeing another teacher around. She was just fun. She tried to ease the girls' burden of hard work with a joke, motherly. Elaine was a bit strict, stern. Veronica, she was a perfectionist... Yeah, she demanded a high standard of work. But I think in that she was, she was actually quite understanding. She wasn't despotic, she was a soft perfectionist... I don't think there's anyone really that can look back and say: 'oh, it was a drudgery, we suffered.' We didn't suffer. We thought we were suffering. But we knew we had to work hard because she demanded hard work. (Wynoma Stockenstroom, 03/03/2022)

Cheryl Samuel, who obtained her MDB in 2008, spoke about the standards that were upheld at Wilvan and how this influenced her own approach as a teacher:

And I think I'm a good, I'm a good teacher, because of Veronica. Because Veronica taught me the standards, there are standards, there are certain ways of doing things, you don't just, you don't just do it "slapdash."¹³ (Cheryl Samuel, 23/02/2022)

The attainment of high standards at Wilvan was also reflected on by Myrna van der Venter (née Abrahams) who started at Wilvan in 1971 at the age of 10 and remained for a period of 35 years with breaks in between. Myrna was one of four family members at Wilvan and a cousin to the then Cupido sisters, Wynoma Stockenstroom and Carlyn Adams. Myrna said:

We were encouraged to perform, not only to the best of our ability, but also to kind of predetermined standards, which were always very high. And, you know, almost you kind of aspire to a sense of perfection. And, that is the way I started interpreting dance. Mostly, it's good. Sometimes, it makes one critical. So, the bar was set quite high. So they influenced, Wilvan influenced my appreciation and my evaluation of dancing at a pretty, pretty high level. (Myrna van der Venter, 28/02/2022)

¹³ Slapdash

Audrey Petersen, now in her 80s, one of the founding parents of Wilvan, was active in the Works Committee for decades. She recounted the way she experienced Wilvan, which she described as being one of the highlights of her life. She stated that:

I was grateful that the kids were active, you know in the culture and learning to dance. And I must say they were excellent, excellently taught, well taught, well trained... We were amazed at I mean the end result. I mean from the beginning of every event, inside and outside and here they were doing perfect pirouettes and stretching their legs way up there. It was too beautiful to see. And the production itself was perfect. Everything was in place and on time. They were properly attired and you know what, the shows itself, it was excellent. I mean, I love ballet. I love it. I love it. That definitely was a high part of my life. (Audrey Petersen, 15/03/2022)

Another parent, Lorraine Peters, who had sent her two daughters to Wilvan, one of whom was interviewed, after their family moved to Kensington in the 1980s stated that:

I think that those teachers were very disciplined and they were very focused on what they were doing. And the children all felt safe and loved, and no one actually said they don't want to dance anymore, which is what children normally do if they don't like it or the teacher is not nice to them or kind to them. I never heard any of those stories. (Lorraine Peters, 10/02/22)

As indicated, ballet was the initial offering at Wilvan with Spanish dancing offered from around 1975. Wilvan first entered their students for Spanish dance examinations through the Spanish Dance Society (SDS) in 1976 with the majority of them receiving Honours passes.¹⁴ Dame Mavis Becker, who professionally danced as Marina Lorca, has been called a doyenne of the Spanish dance form. She had firstly taught, then later worked and danced with Veronica Williams and Wilvan, and expressed how she had experienced the skills of the Spanish dance students at Wilvan. In her capacity as an examiner of the SDS, Mavis Becker said:

They had very high regard for her and her students. The fact that she taught them so well. They were so meticulous. I mean she put them in for an exam and they were meticulous. Absolutely. And basically most of her students got Honours in

¹⁴ Appendices 7 and 8 – Wilvan SDS exam reports (pages 126 and 127).

every single exam she entered. They were really... Everybody I mean, Geoffrey would come to me and say: ‘Wow, Veronica’s pupils were terrific, you know.’ And so mostly they got Honours. (Mavis Becker, 15/06/2022)

Geoffrey Neiman, who went by the name of Enrique Segovia, was the dance partner for many years of the late Mercedes Molina, a key founder member of the SDS. He developed the male syllabus for the SDS and as an examiner of Wilvan’s pupils echoed the view expressed by Mavis Becker about the integrity and excellence of the dance skills of the Wilvan students.

The skills that were acknowledged in the examinations were as a result of the hours spent teaching, and correcting students according to particular standards laid down in the syllabus. This was followed by the Wilvan teachers who had overcome numerous challenges in obtaining their own qualifications in order to provide quality dance tuition to the students. Shirley Willenberg indicated that they were well organised at Wilvan as it was a necessity in order for students to progress. Elaine Cloete jumped in at that point in the interview to elaborate on what the process of teaching the students entailed even when students were not formally evaluated as with the Greek and National dance that Shirley was teaching:

There was a firm road. You start a child, now next year the child is bored. Look, what do you want to teach them, so now they go to the next level. Even without an exam, you take them up, because now they must learn something different. They must improve. Where they didn’t point their toes when they were little, “nou moet jy jou toontjies, en jy moet jou voetjies. Nou so.”¹⁵ (Elaine Cloete, 26/02/2022)

Veronica Williams related a story about the late Dulcie Howes coming to observe her teaching a Wilvan class and recalled her comments that Veronica was too strict with her pupils. She expressed that the reason for this was because she was aware of all the restrictions her students had to face, that she herself had experienced as a dancer. Veronica said:

She didn’t understand why I was being strict. When you’re denied so much what do you do? You demand quality. That’s what you wanted. I wanted quality. And I don’t know, maybe you would have left by that stage already Zenny, but I remember, particularly when I was working, when I was doing the Spanish with the

¹⁵ Translation: Now you must (point) your toes and your feet. Now like that!

older dancers, I would say to them, that I never want you to stand back. We might be working in a room that is completely not, it's not conducive to teaching dance. But I said, I want to teach you professionally so that when you go anywhere, you don't have to stand back for anybody because you've been taught in a professional manner. That's why I demanded high standards from our dancers. (Veronica Williams, 25/09/2021)

In this latter statement, Veronica expressed that she did not want Wilvan dancers to feel that they were any lesser than other dancers who could access all the necessary facilities and platforms because they were privileged by Apartheid policies. These privileges were denied to Wilvan's dancers who faced daily discrimination due to the political macro-environment which was exclusionary of them, denied their humanity and frustrated their possibilities to reach their full potential. Veronica emphasised professionalism and used her agency, despite the limitations of the external environment, to empower her students so that they too would have agency, so that they too could perform with professionalism and excellence on any stage when the opportunity arose.

4.6.3. Wilvan Dance Productions

Wilvan regularly exhibited the dance skills of their students through dance productions.¹⁶ The value of performing for an audience was expressed by the teachers, parents and students interviewed. What was clear was that these productions were resource intensive which could be a prohibiting factor. This meant that there would be repeat performances of some of the productions, given the expense that went into costumes, lighting, backstage props and a quality production. As indicated, funds would have to be raised in order to stage these productions, which, as has already been explained, Wilvan parents and supporters raised through cake sales and dances. This meant that there were not annual productions and in those years that productions were not held, dance demonstrations to parents and guests were held at the school. In addition, once Wilvan began with examinations in ballet and later Spanish dancing, the pressure on time was also a factor, with teachers and students often spending an entire Saturday at Wilvan, which even extended far beyond that, with rehearsals scheduled for week days as well. Nonetheless, during the years that productions were held, examinations continued as the emphasis on technical skills in the dance form was stressed at Wilvan.

¹⁶ Appendices 9 to 14 – Excerpts of Programmes from Wilvan Dance Productions (pages 128 to 130).

Elaine Cloete spoke about the experience of getting the many students ready for a production by recalling the early years of Wilvan:

Well, at the very beginning obviously we just had all these children there, we started to teach them how to point their toes and things like that. Now to put a performance on, it can't happen in that first year, because the children know nothing, they've never danced before. They don't know how to point their toes, and how to hold their arms, and just stand up straight. So that all takes time. Now, we are sitting with all these children, what can you do with them, so that you can accommodate everybody, all 40 or 50 of them? (Elaine Cloete, 26/02/2022)

Malcolm Campbell, stage manager for the 1977 production held in a church hall in Elsie's River, expressed why it was critical for the students to display their skills to an audience as it was in this framework of performing their art that they flourished:

I think there are a lot of dance schools where they train people to get the steps right, to become comfortable with the routines. But I think it's very important that as often as possible, you allow people to put their skills on display... So I think that experience is a very important experience and I think young people thrive on that. (Malcolm Campbell, 29/03/2022)

All the students referenced the intense rehearsals that preceded any Wilvan production. Five of the students expressed that they were introverts and the persona that they adopted on stage enabled them to transcend this. Marlene Petersen said:

You know I was actually and am an introvert. So we were so rehearsed for those concerts. And I think once you had your costume, once you had your make-up done... You were transformed. I wonder if that's how actors felt when they go on stage. I don't think I was conscious of it then, but in looking back, I think you adopted the personality. You had the nerves, because you wanted to do your best. But once that stage curtain opened, I think we were just so well-rehearsed... I remember sometimes Saturdays, we would spend the whole day in Bunney Street. (Marlene Petersen, 04/02/2022)

The responses of the student interviewees, who referenced their introverted natures and how performance had an affirming and transformative effect on them in terms of their self-confidence, were illuminating. This was a finding that I was not prepared for and was not core to my research question. Although my research was not focused on the element of introversion, it came across in a number of interviews and therefore stood out. It is a possible area for further exploration in terms of the performing art of dance, performance and the positive impact it may have on young people with introverted personalities.

Myrna van der Venter sketched the experience of the excitement that descended upon the school when a production was being planned which she described as a highlight of her time at Wilvan. Myrna also surfaced the collaborative nature of a production:

I think that clearly, that the highlight, you know, were the shows. I enjoyed the development of the shows, first and foremost... watching this thing unfold... So you know the whole development of a production was quite meaningful for me to see this thing, you know, grow from nothing. From a group of all of us sitting on the floor waiting to be told you know, what your role is, to eventually getting this thing come together until you know, we run the whole thing together. (Myrna van der Venter, 28/02/2022)

Belinda Jacobs reiterated Myrna's comments about the atmosphere that prevailed in a production year. This included both excitement and anxiety for Belinda, who had also described herself as an introvert. Belinda said:

It was great excitement, you know, to be part of a show. I think part of it was quite anxiety provoking because of probably being on stage and not messing up. But I think it was great excitement and preparing for the show was always a big thing. ...and I think we were taught that we were there to also give to our audience. The importance of the audience... No shoddy preparations... So I think the shows were great. It just solidified that sense of community... I think they were exciting and demanding, but I think they were a great experience. (Belinda Jacobs, 26/03/2022)

Many of the students recalled the experience of being in the show itself. The tools that they were required to provide included hair nets, hair pins, brushes, their tights and the highlight for almost each one was the application of make-up which for young girls was a rarity.

This all contributed to the transformative nature of the experience. Ronel Cornelissen also confirmed the necessity of performance for a dancer:

What do I remember? Just always having to have everything and the La Pebras (laughter). Have all your goodies together and all the time it takes to prep and rehearse and things and concerts... So I think to be a dancer you, you have to perform. So you know the places that you dance for must just create a platform for you to perform. I think that is very important. (Ronel Cornelissen, 07/03/2022)

The quotes selected from the interviews are representative of the student experience of the Wilvan productions. The empowering effect of performance for students emerged quite forcefully. The fact that they were well rehearsed due to the insistence that they would provide the audience with a professional and excellent show was reiterated by all the students. The appreciation for the performances were rewarded with many letters of acknowledgment from audience members, who also expressed their astonishment at the high level of skill demonstrated by the dancers, as they too were aware of the limitations that Wilvan produced these shows under.¹⁷ The professionalism and excellence that Wilvan epitomised were not a figment of the imagination of the Wilvan teachers or students but were confirmed in the results in formal examinations in both ballet and Spanish dancing in which Wilvan students excelled as confirmed in the interviews with Dame Mavis Becker and Sir Geoffrey Neiman of the Spanish Dance Society.

The dynamics that have been highlighted in this section and in other sections of the findings point to the positive experience that Wilvan was for students, teachers, parents and those who supported the organisation by volunteering their skills such as Malcolm Campbell, Ian Adams and other backstage crew members.

4. 7. Theme 6: Political Influence at Wilvan

The discourse of the apartheid government in the sphere of social practice and social structures was interrogated by the critique and spirit of the NUM. Against a background of colonial and apartheid legacy, the NUM's voice aimed to elevate an

¹⁷ Appendices 15 to 17 – Letters of appreciation and support from audience members (pages 137 to 141).

oppressed people to assert, and later occupy, their rightful place in society. (Braam, 2018, p. 4)

4.7.1. The Emergence of Social Consciousness

The concept of inclusive social innovation being synonymous with social change was a key conceptual element of my thesis. In this section, I explain how Wilvan increasingly came to define itself in opposition to Apartheid and aligned to the struggle for social and economic justice as a core feature of their organisational identity. The influence of the Unity Movement and Teachers League of South Africa (TLSA)¹⁸ emerged quite prominently during the interviews with Veronica Williams. She spoke about her growing involvement with the NEUM and the TLSA during the early 1970s, which included her attendance at NEUM influenced societies such as the Cape Flats Cultural Society¹⁹ (CFCS) where political discussions were held. She attributed her political awareness of social injustice beyond South African borders to these political discussions at the CFCS where books were read in advance and then discussed. These discussions centred the struggles for social justice that had happened or were happening in other countries as well. Malcolm Campbell, stage manager for a Wilvan production, who had also attended the CFCS expressed the role that it played:

There were a few of them. There was one in Elsies River... and there was one South Peninsula Education Forum (SPEF). They were all like sister organisations. And they played a very, very important role in terms of encouraging debate around topical issues and they were very well attended by progressive youth at that particular time... So there were mainly topics related to imperialism, the role of imperialism. So I remember one of the popular readings was EH Carr's, What is History? There was the whole trilogy of Isaac Deutscher on imperialism and Trotskyism... So we were encouraged to read these kinds of works. (Malcolm Campbell, 29/03/2022)

The stance that the school took during the Apartheid years emerged from the interviews with all the teachers and the students. For some students their activism went beyond the dance

¹⁸ Appendix 18 – A TLSA thank you letter to Wilvan from Helen Kies (page 142).

¹⁹ The formal name of the Cape Flats Cultural Society was the Cape Flats Educational Fellowship (CAFEF) that was based in Athlone and established in 1951. It was a cultural society of the NEUM and an objective was to raise political awareness to counter the pervasive influence and hegemony of the Apartheid regime (Hendricks, 2018).

classroom with participation in social movements that included the United Democratic Front (UDF)²⁰ in the 1980s. Nonetheless, the early political influences at Wilvan were via the NEUM and TLSA, which in 1944 was taken over by NEF and NEUM aligned members, displacing the conservative politics of the TLSA.²¹ On its formation in December 1943, the NEUM adopted a 10-point programme, rejecting segregation in all its forms and adopted a policy of non-racialism and non-collaboration with Apartheid linked institutions, with the resultant boycotting of such institutions by its members (Hendricks, 2018). While this dissertation does not engage with the politics of the NEUM²² or its associate organisations such as the TLSA, it was relevant in the context of the influence it had on the formation of the political consciousness of a key founder of Wilvan, Veronica Williams. She subsequently deliberately and consciously brought that influence to Wilvan, incorporating overtly political themes about oppression, social justice, resistance and social change in the dance productions, particularly in the post-1976 period, after the national student uprising which began in June 1976²³ in Soweto.

The political influence on Wilvan was demonstrated in a number of ways over and above the increased incorporation of political messaging in the Wilvan dance productions. A number of children of NEUM / TLSA members, who lived outside of the immediate location of the school joined dance classes. I interviewed two of those students. In addition, 10 of the 15 students (66, 7 %) I interviewed had attended Harold Cressy²⁴ which was known to be a Unity Movement aligned school. The motto that Wilvan embraced in the 1970s “Let us work for

²⁰ The UDF launched in Rocklands, Mitchells Plain on 20 August 1983, was more closely aligned to the ANC, which was still in exile in the 1980s.

²¹ The TLSA was formed in 1913 and went on to represent the interests of “coloured” teachers. From 1937 onwards they were penetrated by members of the New Era Fellowship (NEF) including Ben Kies, Allie Fataar, Willem van Schoor and Solly Edross. In 1944 the NEF took control of the TLSA, which resulted in a split with the more conservative members establishing the Teachers’ Educational and Professional Association (TEPA) (Hendricks, 2018).

²² The NEUM was established in December 1943 in Bloemfontein and adopted a Declaration of Unity and a Ten Point Programme that stressed the political unity of non-Europeans against increasingly segregationist policies. They adopted an anti-racist agenda with the rejection of race as a biological or scientific concept. Founders included IB Tabata, Ben Kies and Goolam Gool (Khan, 1976).

²³ The Soweto uprising began on 16 June 1976 in response to the introduction of the Afrikaans language as a medium of instruction in Black schools. The uprising spread throughout the country with students at the forefront of national protests. The 1976 uprising catalysed the momentum of mass protests throughout the 1970s and 1980s which was met with brutal repression but the 1980s would also be the final decade of Apartheid.

²⁴ I attended high school at Harold Cressy, matriculating in 1979 and was taught by the late Helen Kies, the late Maureen Adriaan, Lionel Adriaan, the late Peter Meyer and Sedick Williams – all known to be members of the Unity Movement and TLSA. At the time Helen Kies was the editor of the TLSA journal, the Educational Journal.

our children,” was an adaptation of the TLSA slogan “Let us live for our children.” In addition, Maureen Adriaan,²⁵ a Unity Movement and TLSA member became the Chairperson of Wilvan in 1986, a position she held for 22 years until 2008. As indicated, Veronica related her growing consciousness to her becoming a member of both the NEUM and the TLSA in the 1970s, which increasingly influenced the stance that Wilvan took in their refusal to attend performances at any venue that required a permit or to collaborate with any institutions that were funded by the Apartheid government. Veronica said:

...I didn't fully understand the situation that was happening in the country because I didn't grow up with parents who were politicised. So I was only beginning to understand. But for me, that I was able to take such a strong stand was an indication that the little bit of knowledge that I was gaining through my association with Pam and Les had made a powerful impact on taking my way forward...both Pam and Les were members of SPEF and also the Non-European Unity Movement and the Teachers League. They were all members of that you know. And then of course, the Cape Flats Cultural Society, they were members of the Cape Flats. (Veronica Williams, 04/11/2021)

Elaine Cloete and Shirley Willenberg ascribe their politicisation as being linked to their time as dance educators at Wilvan as the political situation in the country was not a discussion item within their family home. Elaine indicated that she joined the Unity Movement in 1985 as a result of being at Wilvan. Shirley stated that:

For me it started when I was in Wilvan.... I don't remember we weren't quite... my family, they were not interested. My mom and dad were never. I was 20 when I started at Wilvan, you understand? So I think most of the influence came from there and of course, I would go with Marlene and some of you guys to UDF things. I would go to some of the meetings, you know... (Shirley Willenberg, 26/02/2022)

What was interesting in the account of the teachers is that although they had all learnt their dance skills at the Eoan Group after having been sent there by their parents, they rejected any engagement with the Eoan after they became politically aware because the Eoan received funding from the Coloured Affairs Department. In the 1970s there were calls to boycott the

²⁵ See Appendix 19 – 1997 Letter from Maureen Adriaan, in her capacity as Wilvan Chairperson that provides an overview of her experience with Wilvan (page 143).

Eoan on account of the support they received from the Apartheid authorities. Consequently, Wilvan supported the boycott of the Eoan Group for political reasons.

4.7.2. The Political Influence on the Wilvan Students

Due to the political stance of Wilvan that became more pronounced in the 1970s many students acknowledge that their political awareness and consciousness of Apartheid began there. There were no overt attempts at recruitment to any particular political organisation in the classroom but discussions of the system of Apartheid were held. The reasons why Wilvan did not attend performances at theatres such as the then Nico Malan or Three Arts were made explicit to students in class, especially as they grew older, as well as to parents at general meetings. There were a number of students who indicated that they came from homes where politics was discussed and their awareness was reinforced at Wilvan. Students who attended high schools such as Harold Cressy indicated that their growing political awareness was augmented at the high school.

Ronel Cornelissen, who started at Harold Cressy in her second year of high school in 1982, was one of the students who repeated her final high school year in 1986. As a result of the intense political upheaval, a State of Emergency had been declared in 1985 under President PW Botha. It was a time of intense repression with mass detentions and the suppression of organisations such as the UDF and mass gatherings. This was also a period that preceded the release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990 and the unbanning of the ANC and other political parties. Harold Cressy took a decision that the matric students of 1985 would repeat their final high school year which affected Ronel. By that time she had become politically aware due to her attendance at Wilvan and Harold Cressy. Ronel said:

I think Wilvan obviously opened up a big like political awareness in association with also Cressy, which was, like completely absent before, you know, because it just wasn't things that were communicated in my family, or discussed or anything.
(Ronel Cornelissen, 07/03/2022)

Suzette Afonso-Emballo (née Adriaan) who joined Wilvan in 1976 as a five year old and remained for 22 years, was the daughter of the late Maureen Adriaan who had been a chairperson of Wilvan for over two decades. She spoke about her mother's reasons for being involved with Wilvan due to her identification with its values and the principled political stance the school took:

I mean, you know my mom was always a woman of excellent morals and high standards and huge intelligence... And when she took on this role of a chairperson for Wilvan, she did it for me, but she did it for the children you know, the children of South Africa, the oppressed children of South Africa as she did many other things. So just by the mere fact of her being chairperson you would know, you would know that Wilvan had high morals. (Suzette Afonso-Embalo, 30/03/2022)

Charlene Gillies, who had attended both Salt River High and Trafalgar High that historically had a strong Unity Movement presence, also spoke about the principled stance that Wilvan took and how this was an education for her, given that politics were not discussed at her home:

Wilvan also had this very, very strong, principled way in which business, dance, everything at the school was conducted. And that was also an education. Much later, maybe not so much later, but later, you learn that there are differing opinions, but the principled stand in terms of how we will engage in the world of dance, even though we are a school, you know, in a community, that was all learnt in Wilvan. Certainly for me. (Charlene Gillies, 16/02/2022)

Wynoma Stockenstrom spoke about her dawning understanding of what Apartheid was and how the omission of engaging with others who were not from the same community caused her to question the status quo:

Because at Wilvan, although I didn't understand how different my life was to other people I think I got a sense that somehow there was a difference. Somehow there was a difference, because why did we never, ever get to dance and mix with other kinds of people, you know? And so I think that was probably my introduction to what Apartheid actually was on a small scale. (Wynoma Stockenstrom, 03/03/2022)

Denise Slingers spoke about the active process of political education that took place at Wilvan and the growth of her understanding that the landscape that the students, their parents and teachers inhabited was circumscribed and limited for disenfranchised people:

Look, the Wilvan ballet school made us very much aware of the fact that there were no real opportunities for us in terms of going to see live ballet other than at the Little

Theatre. And whenever there was we'd be informed when there's a big performance happening there. It was a lot of conscientising. Making people just aware of what the Apartheid government at the time was doing and had subjected one to. (Denise Slingers, 15/03/2022)

Fahiem Stellenboom indicated that his political awareness was a feature of all his main spheres of existence – his home, his high school and Wilvan acting in concert with each other to shape his consciousness:

But the fact that it came through the Wilvan as the vehicle, is probably the fundamental here because, how shall I put it, the values that the Wilvan were based on politically, were precisely the values that were shared by my family, by my peers, the school that I came from, and you know, many people in our community at the time. So that was a perfect fit from the very start. (Fahiem Stellenboom, 07/02/2022)

Bernadette Kolbe referred to the explicit manner in which the political conversation was held at Wilvan and how this influenced what Wilvan meant to her:

I think they were also very brave hey. I mean, they took on a lot of topics that were taboo, to talk about, they were very, like, vocal about their political stance, although that sort of slightly misaligned with some other people's political stances. But at least it was a stance that maybe with no shyness about being able to talk and be. And that's the thing, expression of art, an expression of mind, an expression of purpose. And all of those things, I think, is what drives what Wilvan means to you, you know. (Bernadette Kolbe, 02/03/2022)

For students who attended Wilvan in the pre-1994 period, it was apparent from the interviews that many of them gained an understanding of their disenfranchised and marginalised position in South Africa at Wilvan. While some expressed ambivalence about this stance especially when it came to the performances, as is demonstrated in Section 4.8, the post-1976 period productions were increasingly infused with political themes. Others were unhesitating and embraced the role that Wilvan played in growing their awareness and their understanding that they were human beings first and foremost. This underpinned their sense of self and identity and gave them a sense of dignity and purpose that they carried into adulthood.

4.8. Theme 7: Dance as a Platform of Agency

...dance is a mechanism through which we can develop affective feelings and sentiments that empower collective groups of individuals to compassionately work together to spark positive social change. (Vanderburgh, 2018, p. v)

The education that went beyond dance at Wilvan led the members to question the legitimacy of the oppressive Apartheid system and then articulate it through their dance performances. Veronica Williams spoke about the conscious incorporation of political themes as part of the dance productions of Wilvan:

I also started thinking about what role does dance really play, you know? Am I going in the right direction, by focusing only on technique, only on exams, and doing a production with just staging a ballet? I then decided that dance is more than that. Once I became involved with Cape Flats, and with the League, I realised that the arts has a role to play in society. And I felt that Wilvan has to make a contribution on that level. Wilvan has to use the medium of dance, to convey a political message. And so that was the route I took... This is what we saw at Wilvan and to associate Wilvan with being part of that struggle, and that we were using dance as a political tool to convey a political message. (Veronica Williams, 25/09/2021)

A number of the students expressed their experiences of the use of dance as a platform to communicate political themes. Belinda Jacobs said:

And you know, you learn about the arts world and also how people use the medium of art to you know overcome oppression or to speak to oppression because the shows always had a message in it. You know, I think we were socially conscientised through the dance world and Wilvan particularly, I think... I think the arts world does always try to speak to some issue and I think Wilvan did that well. And you know through its connections to various people in activist movements, I think they ensured that kind of messaging through the dance, which was great. (Belinda Jacobs, 26/03/2022)

Suzette Afonso-Embalo referenced the Spanish dance classes that she took with Veronica and emphasised how dance was used as a mechanism to educate the dancers in the process:

And it wasn't just the dance that she was teaching. It was also, all of them actually, it was the South African circumstances that we were living in. I mean, politics was taught as well through dance. And none of our shows were solely just dance for dance sake. There was always a message in it. There was always, they were always teaching us about life as we knew it yeah, there was never just dance. (Suzette Afonso-Embalo, 30/03/2022)

There was not a unanimous endorsement of this stance by all the students, especially as they became older. Althea Pilz expressed her disappointment that dance performances were used as a mechanism to communicate political messages. She was one of two students who regretted that the classics such as Giselle and La Sylphide, were not done at Wilvan. She was only really exposed to the classical ballets when she moved to Germany. She indicated that she was not politically inclined and in that sense she did not connect with Wilvan's political identity. Despite these misgivings Althea said, revealing a nuanced position, that she also contributed to the delivering of the Wilvan message and acknowledged how it influenced her till now:

Like I said, I was never politically motivated. It wasn't the reason why I went to ballet. Even though I was not politically motivated, I still did my part to get the message across... But it has given me... I am very moral... And I think this also had to do a lot with Wilvan. I cannot explain why. It has to do with my ballet and being at Wilvan as well. But what that instilled in me, standing up when things are not done properly, unfairness, all of that. I still do that today. (Althea Pilz, 15/03/2022).

A perspective on how the Wilvan dance productions impacted audience members is expressed in this extract from a handwritten letter of appreciation from Simon and Lynne Banda, written in 1984 after attending a Wilvan performance that is included as Appendix 16:

You have with almost professional perfection used an art form not only for its beauty, but more than that you have used this art form as an educative device to convey a profound message relevant to our situation. No lecture, however detailed,

could have the same impact. By means of the dance drama you have transported your audience into the pathos, the callousness, the treachery and absolute lack of conscience of regimes that have no regard for human dignity. (Simon and Lynne Banda, 1984)

Along whichever route their political awareness occurred, the students commented on the role that Wilvan played in the transformation of their consciousness in understanding social injustice not only in South Africa but also beyond. The introduction of Spanish dancing in the 1970s and the discussions that were held about the Roma people introduced Wilvan students to the fact that oppressive and exclusionary practices were not limited to South Africa. In this way the concept of solidarity with other oppressed groups across the world was introduced into Wilvan and built into their performances in general but particularly in their Spanish dance productions. Veronica Williams spoke about the connection she found between the struggles of the Roma people, who she associated this dance form with, and the struggles for social justice that were happening in South Africa. She indicated that Spanish dancing, particularly flamenco, became a medium of expression of their lived experience and was a way “to give voice to community struggles and as an antidote to the oppressive racial discrimination.”²⁶ The intensity of the emotions released in the dance form was something that was distinctive from the ballet form. Veronica said:

I think it's over the years, learning about the struggles of the Romani people. I could connect with that. And the style of the dance, it was very centred, and very earthed and I could connect to that. The ballet, I think had its value in that it taught me the discipline you know in terms of how to use the body, etc. But it was the Spanish that really gave me the passion. And I could connect to it because of what I was experiencing personally in my own country. And that is what made me so passionate about the Spanish. (Veronica Williams, 25/09/2021).

The process of social change involves organisations and individuals who attempt to understand the environment they have to contend with when contemplating and driving social change. Even though all the students interviewed came from disenfranchised families, where they were compelled to live in particular locations and attend schools according to their racial

²⁶ Notes for Mavis Becker, Veronica Williams, 14 September 2020.

classification, as well as live in areas in which social amenities and access to the arts were limited or non-existent, it was clear that political issues and the socio-economic conditions that pertained were not freely discussed in many of their homes. One of the contributing factors was the fear that existed about the possibility of arrest and as occurred, the detention, death or even disappearance²⁷ of many young people who chose to resist the Apartheid authorities. Another was the hegemonic position that Apartheid occupied in the lives of the oppressed, where internalised oppression was accepted as normal by many oppressed people and reinforced by Apartheid education. Wilvan, as a dance school provided a space in which dance was taught but due to the political stance that the school took, it became a space of political education for its students, its teachers and members of the Wilvan community, which included the parents and audiences who attended their productions. As indicated by Veronica Williams, Wilvan chose to be aligned with the struggle for social justice in South Africa. At the micro-praxis at the community-based dance school, awareness was cultivated which enabled them to interpret the political dynamics of the macro-environment. For some it was the primary place where this occurred, for others it was a continuum of the education that they received at home or /and at school.

While the NEUM /TLSA influence was evidenced at Wilvan, it was not overt in terms of recruiting its constituency to join its ranks. The message of social injustice and the formation of political consciousness and awareness was made explicit but as it was the platform of dance, Wilvan, as an organisation, was not singled out for closure by the authorities. The message to students was that they were human and that they had every right to dance and to express themselves and live beyond the limitation of Apartheid's total attempt to dehumanise them. From the teachers, parents and students that I interviewed, this affirmation of self was evident and an indication that Wilvan had, in this regard, accomplished a mission to disrupt Apartheid's negative effect on disenfranchised and marginalised people.

4.9. Conclusion

The findings that have emerged through this study have pointed to Wilvan as an organisation that was an intensely social phenomenon in both its formation and operation. This community embeddedness manifested itself through the active and voluntary support of parents, churches

²⁷ In the 1980s I worked in Johannesburg with Stanza Bopape, a Mamelodi activist who after his detention in 1988 disappeared without a trace. Policeman applied for amnesty at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) where it was determined that he died under torture and his body disposed of in the crocodile infested Komati River. I was head of the TRC Western Cape Investigative Unit between 1996 and 1998 and became aware of this information around that period.

and community members who valued the work it was doing. While there were a few dissenting voices expressed about Wilvan, which have been surfaced in the study, they were not the majority of the views represented and even those who expressed dissenting views were nuanced in their overall responses about Wilvan as they acknowledged the significant impact it had on the trajectory of their lives. Given that it was a dance organisation in a disenfranchised community, established by and for marginalised people, Wilvan can be regarded as an inclusive social innovation as well as a bottom-up social innovation (Heeks et al., 2013; Manzini, 2014). This statement will be expanded upon in Chapter 5 that follows.

As one of the sub-questions was related to the impact that Wilvan had on their constituency, this chapter concludes with quotes from seven of the student interviewees regarding the impact that Wilvan had on their lives:

Do you know how can you define being punctual? It happens from Wilvan ballet school to your workplace. Your level of organisation. You couldn't come without your ballet shoes or stuff. Your ballet bag was organised. Because you had a place to go to at that organisation. Look, we were at Wilvan Ballet School for very many years. So that kind of thing was inculcated in you. (Denise Slingers, 15/03/2022)

I had the greatest respect for them. I mean, till today I still do. They're like my mother and my father in one because what my parents didn't teach me, they taught me, like values and, you know, always being on time and respect for each other. You know, those type of values, which your parents don't really teach you, they just, you know, you must say, please, and thank you. But at Wilvan it was a different culture, you know,... just the way they speak to each other and the way you respect each other and you dance – family! (Naiemah Eksteen, 12/02/2022)

And I feel that those women who opened Wilvan, who started Wilvan and carried on for years and years without any kind of payment or recognition, really. They should really go down, will be written down, as legends in our history books for the contribution to our communities and what they did to shape many a young girl you know, who otherwise would not have had access. Simply because of, I don't know, where we grew up or simply because of where we found ourselves living. I don't know how you can put that? We would not have access simply because of the

colour of our skins. Actually, maybe we should just put it like that. (Jill Levenberg, 18/03/2022)

I think a huge impact on the community it served because it allowed people to experience difference. It allows us, it allows all its students, its audiences, its backstage people, its musicians, its seamstresses. It's the community at large. It's allowed them to see there is something different in life, to the norm... So, I think that's what Wilvan did. It showed people that there is something different in life, to suffering and drudgery man. You know there is something different. So I think that impact Wilvan has had, I say on, not only us as students of Wilvan, but on the greater community because we can still talk the Wilvan talk and talk to our families and our social circles. And so, the name will continue you know. And yeah, but definitely in the phase where I was physically at Wilvan, it played a huge role in that community. (Wynoma Stockenstroom, 03/03/2022)

So yeah, it was I think the amount of people that passed through the doors of Wilvan. Yoh!²⁸ Lots of people and there can be no way that Wilvan didn't impact their lives positively at all. It must be. Wilvan definitely impacted their lives. And even if it's just the discipline that Veronica brought to each person. And I think that has made a big difference in people's lives as well. People I think, who maybe would not have gone to universities and things like that, because you know, it's not expected, but now coming into contact with the people at Wilvan. Oh, but this, I can actually do this. And I've learned this discipline, I can actually take this discipline forward with me and push myself further than I would have if I hadn't been involved. That's my perception that I get when I look at the grand parade of people that walked through Wilvan hey. Yoh! Definitely! (Cheryl Samuel, 23/02/2022)

I mean, if you think of those days, though, that was the days of, you know, some teachers not always been very kind to students, putting them down, having corporal punishment, you know, not encouraging them, reinforcing bad kind of Apartheid messages. But Wilvan was just the opposite of that. So teaching you that you could

²⁸ Wow!

give out your best, encouraging you, supporting you, just as you know, people. So I think it had that impact. (Belinda Jacobs, 26/03/2022)

And this whole thing about like, there are people that can't – either through hierarchy, either through the history of race and oppression, either through whatever their upbringing was, can't walk into a room and feel empowered enough to engage with another person sitting on the other side of the table, ... Yeah, like, whatever the barrier that is being put in front of them, shows for them. And I think schools like Wilvan for me were part of the mechanisms and the tools that I had at a very young age, to take that barrier away. I have no problem walking into a room, sitting across the table and talking to the next person regardless of who they are. Now I'm not being arrogant, or stupid. I think that's because I had practice and practice of affirmation, practice of affirming practice, that you are purposeful practice. And those things come through the exhibition of art and dance and a place like Wilvan. (Bernadette Kolbe, 02/03/2022)

These quotes point to the myriad ways in which Wilvan impacted their students ranging from their punctuality, to levels of self-organisation and self-discipline, identity formation, affirmation and the imparting of values such as respect for others and encouraging the striving for objectives such as higher education, which the circumstances of their birth may have appeared to place out of reach. These are surfaced throughout the findings chapter, but not necessarily expanded upon in great depth. The relevance of some of these findings for scholarship, praxis and future research possibilities are discussed in Chapter 5 that follows.

Chapter 5 Discussion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter considers this study in terms of its contribution to (1) scholarship, (2) organisational praxis and (3) identifies areas for possible future research. The discussion in this chapter is focused on the interpretation of the findings and situates it within the context of the literature reviewed. Some of what is discussed has already been surfaced in the findings chapter but not analysed or elaborated upon in depth. As indicated in the literature review chapter, research into social innovation, while certainly not new, is still an emerging field of research (Ayob et al., 2016; Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2017). In this regard, I shall further tease out some interpretations that emerged from some of the key findings and indicate how this could add value to the scholarly conversation on inclusive social innovation and positive organisational scholarship in particular. The discussion integrates the three areas of (1) the contribution to scholarship, (2) implications for organisational praxis and (3) possible areas for research.

5.2. Micro-Praxis, Social Innovation and Social Change

The role of smaller, community-based or micro-organisations in the process of social innovation and social change and how they converged was of particular interest in this study. An ‘eccentric’ community-based dance organisation such as Wilvan has not received focussed attention in scholarship. Nilsson (2019) asserted that the crux of social innovation is in the dynamic interaction between micro-praxis and “macro-systemic grand challenges” (p. 287), which is a dialectal process. My research rationale was that smaller community organisations, hence micro-praxis, had been understudied in the academy particularly in the context of Apartheid South Africa, the “macro-systemic grand challenge,” (Nilsson, 2019, p. 287) during a period of extreme repression. Nilsson (2019) posed the question about how linkages are effectively made between micro-agency at a grassroots level and macro-system forces, which he contended were non-linear and connected in a dynamic engagement. In their comprehensive bibliometric studies of social innovation Ayob et al. (2016) and Edwards-Schachter and Wallace (2017) found that civil-society organisations and grassroots movements emerged quite prominently as drivers of social innovation as did terms such as social change and social justice. This research was therefore an effort at focussing attention on the micro-praxis of a civil-society organisation such as Wilvan and its contribution to transformative social change processes, which a number of scholars have asserted is at the nub of social innovation (Dias & Partidário, 2019; Heeks et al., 2013; Mulgan, 2006; Mulgan

et al., 2007; Nicholls et al., 2015; Nilsson, 2019; Unger, 2015). This research was also motivated in part so that the social contributions and value of smaller organisations in social change processes from an Apartheid South Africa to a democratic country are recognised, made visible and not erased from our present, either by omission in the academy or in the public domain. This case study has provided some insight as to how certain elements intersected by illuminating the political influences and practice that acted in concert with the agency of marginalised women to create a politically conscious community-based dance school in a resource-constrained community during Apartheid. Despite the external limitations imposed by Apartheid that presented barriers to their endeavour they proceeded anyway. The agency of the teachers, despite the limitations that they had to face, was activated and deployed to advantage the young people of a marginalised community (Westley, 2008). There were some distinctive features at Wilvan, in that there was a confluence of the practice of dance and political consciousness (Friedman, 2012; Vanderburgh, 2018) that was infused into the school as the teachers or leaders became more aware of their oppressive conditions. As reported in Section 4.7 of the findings chapter, this awareness in turn enabled them to use their agency to foster political consciousness in their constituency and to prioritise issues of social change through the platform of dance.

It was indeed (1) the element of disenfranchised women propelling the awareness of social injustice and the quest for social change, (2) integrating it into the dance school and (3) nourishing it as part of their practice that made Wilvan an example of a social innovation. This was social innovation within the framework of social change as they addressed one of the most complex societal challenges of their time (Dias & Partidário, 2019; Nicholls et al., 2015; Nilsson, 2015, 2019), which was the oppressive system of Apartheid. Through the educational work of consciousness-raising within the Wilvan constituency by “self-consciously political actors” (Nicholls et al., 2015, p. 3), the capacity to challenge the oppressive socio-political Apartheid framework took root and grew from there for many of the Wilvan members, as reported in Section 4.7 of the findings chapter. While Wilvan was not an overtly political party or organisation, its identity was as a community-based dance organisation that took a principled stance, educated its members about Apartheid, equality and social justice and allowed them to see beyond the confines of the ghettos that they had been relegated to. Within a context of the social innovation movement, Unger (2015) describes those who have a larger aspiration for their societies and dedicate their energy in this direction as the “lifeblood of the social innovation movement” (p. 235). In this respect, individuals such as the teachers of Wilvan: Veronica Williams, Elaine Cloete, Shirley Willenberg and

Wilvan chairperson, Maureen Adriaan, exemplified this characterisation given the aspirations they had for their students and importantly through their vision for a just and humane society that they actively pursued through their engagement at Wilvan. They did not bow down to the “dictatorship of no alternatives” (Unger, 2015, p. 237). They engaged in organisational micro-praxis, in a dynamic process that aimed to teach core skills in dance, catalyse political awareness, shift ideas and practices and connect it to the substantial issue of social change at the macro-level (Dias & Partidário, 2019; Mulgan et al., 2007; Nicholls et al., 2015; Nilsson, 2019; Westley, 2008).

Mulgan et al. (2007) commenting on the centrality of ideas, asserted that the success of a social innovation lies in the ideas that develop a momentum beyond the innovation itself. The ideas that were implanted at Wilvan inspired a number of young people to participate in more overtly political spaces as activists and change makers. The ideas lived on through the students beyond the innovation itself, with many recognising the value of their Wilvan experience on reflection, as they matured.

I have stated in Section 3.7 of the methodology chapter that due to the specificity of this research it was not a primary objective of this study to be transferable. However, the possibilities for future research have emerged in the research process. While this dissertation focussed on a single case study, it has made a case for scholarly attention on the micro-praxis of smaller organisations through its findings particularly during periods of repression or marginalisation from the macro-levers of political and economic power. The specific findings of my study are by no means a prescription for overall micro-praxis in terms of social innovation within smaller, grassroots organisations but does provide a window into the key conditions that pertained at Wilvan to define it as a social innovation within a framework of social change. The insights gained could be extrapolated for further research on micro-praxis in community-based or grassroots organisations. As Wilvan was a historical case study, a consideration of the role that other smaller organisations played in a particular historical context in South Africa i.e. the Apartheid period, to better understand the present, is a possible avenue of further research. As stated by McGowan and Westley (2015) “history can provide a rich resource” (p. 53) in understanding how social processes unfold and in this respect Wilvan has provided an example. However, in this respect there were many other community-based organisations, like sporting codes such as soccer or hockey clubs for example that existed in disenfranchised communities over decades during Apartheid. Such organisations, working in deprived areas would have had to make do with what existed in as much as Wilvan

had to. These organisations would have had to innovate in order to play a positive role in marginal communities where amenities such as adequate sports fields for example were lacking. However, they may or may not have approached it with the same level of political consciousness as the Wilvan teachers eventually did and may have remained at the level of the initial motivation that drove the establishment of Wilvan. Their initial objective was to make a positive contribution to the young people in the community and not necessarily challenge the status quo in what Unger (2015) refers to as a minimalist view of social innovation where the vision was not geared to pursue social change. Not all social innovations are about social change or vice versa (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014) and some of the impact that Wilvan had on their students, such as professionalism including timekeeping and self-discipline, resilience, safety and a sense of belonging may well have occurred as a result of the work engaged in by these smaller organisations, thus potentially providing a developmental and identity forming foundation. Umbrella organisations such as SACOS that operated at a national level and under which many of the school sporting codes in disenfranchised communities fell, were instrumental in facilitating the international sports boycott during Apartheid between the 1970 and 1990s (Hendricks, 2018). SACOS also spearheaded the boycott of local institutions such as the Eoan Group in the 1970s and 1980s, which they regarded as an Apartheid aligned organisation due to the funding that they received. However, I am unable to comment on the degree to which they actively conscientised their student members at individual schools about the political environment, as the political drive was at the leadership level of the organisation, many of them teachers, who were also driven or influenced by the politics of the Unity Movement and the TLISA (Hendricks, 2018).

There were also a number of Western Cape cultural formations in the 1980s that were active proponents of the performing arts and its relationship to the struggle for liberation. These included the Athlone-based Musical Action for People's Power (MAPP) that Coplan (2005) described as the primary political voice for musicians that focussed on music tuition and performances at political rallies and the Lansdowne-based Action Workshop that focused on the dramatic arts. These were organisations that engaged youth from disenfranchised communities and like Wilvan they regarded the arts as central to issues of social change and a necessary condition for a healthy society. As with Wilvan, when I first set out to find available information online, a cursory search on the internet provided minimal to no information on MAPP and Action Workshop. These were dynamic and engaging cultural spaces during the last decade of Apartheid especially for activists who had a keen interest in

the arts. I would argue that excavating these smaller organisations in the arts and culture space through research and investigating their contributions and innovations may provide a rich understanding of the centrality of different modes of performing arts in the struggle for liberation and expand the scholarship around the arts and social innovation in Apartheid South Africa.

I have made a case for a scholarly consideration of smaller organisations and micro-praxis in a historical context and their possible significance. This does not preclude the possibility of considering a study of such organisations in the current South African context. South Africa has had to and continues to contend with corruption within key organs of state; the breakdown in electrical, rail, health, and water infrastructure, to name but a few, at national, provincial and municipal levels in what can only be described as a weak state faced with serious governance challenges (Madonsela, 2019; Momomiat, 2022; Salahuddin et al., 2020). According to a March 2022 report released by The World Bank (2022), South Africa has been assigned the unenviable position of being the most unequal country in the world based on a number of indices, and not for the first time. Increased numbers of previously disenfranchised areas and communities remain marginalised from the macro-levers of political and economic power and the legacy of “colonialism and apartheid, rooted in racial and special segregation, continues to reinforce inequality of outcomes” (The World Bank, 2022, p. 3). Exploring the current micro-praxis of grassroots organisations, particularly non-profit civil society organisations in marginalised communities where intergenerational disadvantage continues, and the innovative role they play in catalysing resilience, self-empowerment and creating places of psychological safety are possible avenues for future research. The Community Action Networks (CANs) that were established to respond to the practical condition of food insecurity in many marginalised communities in South Africa in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic springs to mind as one such possible avenue of research (Ntseku, 2022; Odendaal, 2021).

5.3. Wilvan as a Study in Positive Organisational Scholarship

Another scholarly contribution of this dissertation is that of Wilvan as a case study in Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS) which Cameron et al. (2003) indicated remained a marginal area of research. The findings in Section 4.5 on the environment of safety and belonging created (Weick, 2003) and Section 4.6 on the centrality of professionalism and excellence at Wilvan align with key elements that constitute a positive organisational framework (Cameron et al., 2003) in this eccentric community organisation (Nilsson, 2019).

In the context of the fragmented Apartheid education environment, segregated schools were supposed to serve as reproducers of and buttress the hegemony of the Apartheid system (Kallaway, 1986; Karlsson, 2004). This occurred in a number of ways. The education curriculum in primary and high schools in which history for example was taught reinforced a colonial and Apartheid viewpoint of history (Fiske & Ladd, 2006; Kallaway, 1986; Lemon & Battersby-Lennard, 2009). As an example, the 1652 landing at the Cape by Jan Van Riebeeck and the Dutch East India Company (VOC) which entrenched colonisation was presented as a positive process to students of history (Mellet, 2020).²⁹ The history of indigenous populations such as the Khoi and San or the history of slavery at the Cape were conveyed from a colonial or Apartheid viewpoint including to disenfranchised students, many of whom were descendants of indigenous people or of slaves (Mellet, 2020; Smith, 1983).

In addition, schools attended by disenfranchised children lacked the basic amenities to provide a quality all-round education such as science laboratories, sports facilities, libraries and school halls (Lemon & Battersby-Lennard, 2009). Arts, including performing arts education that included music, drama and dance, was low on or absent from the agenda of schools of the disenfranchised (Johnstone, 2012). The lack of provision of school halls for example that would have provided suitable spaces for performances to the broader school community, including parents, is a key indicator of this sub-standard and unequal education agenda (Lemon & Battersby-Lennard, 2009). As indicated in Section 2.4 of the literature review and Section 4.7 of the findings chapter, politically and socially aware teachers certainly existed such as those who were members of the TLSA (Braam, 2018; Hendricks, 2018) but often the behaviour of many teachers reproduced an Apartheid education agenda as they did not necessarily see their role as nurturers and creators of safe spaces for students who lived in disenfranchised communities. These methods would have had the opposite effect of a practice of affirmation and could discourage the drive for excellence and disempower students unless the teachers were conscious about their role as all-round educators, who encouraged such positive practices and created spaces of safety where deep learning was enabled. Corporal punishment was often the manner in which dissent or a perceived lack of discipline was dealt with and verbal abuse of students was commonplace (Karlsson, 2004; Lemon & Battersby-Lennard, 2009; Morrell, 2001).

²⁹ I was a student of history choosing it as a subject up to my final year of high school. I reflect on how the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck and the building of the Castle of Good Hope was presented and learning about the five architectural points of the Castle in primary school for examinations. A visit to the Castle in recent times brought me to a room where slaves were tortured which was completely absent from the school curriculum then.

What differentiated Wilvan as a community-based dance organisation was that it was a counter to Apartheid-based education with the clear objective of serving a developmental and aspirational goal encapsulated in their motto “Let us work for our children,” a practice that they executed over decades. Section 4.5, Section 4.6 and the conclusion of the findings chapter, demonstrate how Wilvan was a counterpoint to the formal education system of the time albeit on a micro-scale. As stated by one of the Wilvan student interviewees, Belinda Jacobs:

I mean, if you think of those days, though, that was the days of, you know, some teachers not always been very kind to students, putting them down, having corporal punishment, you know, not encouraging them, reinforcing bad kind of Apartheid messages. But Wilvan was just the opposite of that. (Belinda Jacobs, 26/03/2022)

Nilsson (2015) enquires into how organisations that facilitate striving occur. A contribution to scholarship by engaging this enquiry, was in identifying Wilvan as one such organisation. The ingredients which infused Wilvan’s understanding, approach and praxis denote it as an example of an “aspirationally motivated institution” (Nilsson, 2015, p. 388). This informed the manner in which the teachers approached their work at Wilvan. Their approach included their social consciousness, their quest for professionalism and excellence, their determination and agency and were among the key catalytic elements that they brought to the equation. These were implemented consistently despite the resource-constrained environment within which they operated and resultantly the outcomes exceeded expectations, breaking the Apartheid mould, in what Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2003) refer to as positive deviance, which is underpinned by creativity that is intentionally aimed at elevating the “human condition” (p. 209). As reported in Section 4.3 of the findings chapter, the Wilvan constituents that included teachers, students and parents made do with the tools at hand, while striving for professionalism and excellence. Despite the constraints, which were many, including decrepit venues, funding challenges, a lack of access to professional ballet performances in proper theatres, they proceeded to create a dance school that epitomised excellence. They innovated and adopted the stance of ‘bricoleurs’ (without being conscious of such descriptors), which was an imaginative and creative act given the circumstances they faced (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Johnson, 2012; Lévi-Strauss, 1962). As also elucidated in Section 4.6 of the findings chapter they provided professional tuition, producing excellent results in facilities which were not conducive to their craft. This created the appropriate mix of ingredients for creating a

cohesive and developmental space, which supported the production and reproduction of a culture of excellence.

Marginalised lives are deeply compromised and limited not only by material conditions but also by the lack of affirmation, a denial of dignity and a weakened sense of self. What the findings of this study established in Section 4.5 and 4.6 was that the psychological safety that students experienced at Wilvan created a conducive environment that was core to the thriving of positive attributes within the dance school (Weick, 2003). From this perspective, Wilvan cultivated positive, life-affirming experiences with a performing art as its base that enriched the lives of all involved. It promoted attributes such as the development of core skills and competency in dance, professionalism, excellence, respect for others, resilience, achievement within a context of teamwork, positive emotions and identity formation, a sense of dignity and enduring relationship bonds (Cameron et al., 2003). With regard to the formation of their identities students were enabled to narrate a story of their existence and an understanding of their lives that was enhanced by the Wilvan experience as demonstrated in Section 4.9, the conclusion of the findings chapter. A direct consequence of attending the dance school was that it influenced their development and their life trajectories positively, although not necessarily in a uniform way. While there were students who studied dance at post-secondary school level and danced professionally, not everyone who attended Wilvan would go on to become a professional dancer. However the skills and attributes acquired as young people, transcended the actual practice of dance and seeped into other spheres of the student's lives. This included their approach to work, their value systems, their sense of identity, their sense of dignity and empowerment, their self-confidence and self-discipline that has influenced and served them well into their adult lives.

The Wilvan model of education that went beyond dance, bucked the model of Apartheid-based education and therefore positive deviance could flourish within the context of a positive organisational framework (Cameron et al., 2003; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003). Freire (1970) argued that those who are oppressed need to have life-affirming experiences that enable them to assert their humanity. The practice of affirmation and the emphasis on excellence enabled the teachers and students to thrive, rise above and not submit to what was intended for them by Apartheid, a system that was declared a crime against humanity by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966 (Slye, 1999). In this respect, the work of an organisation such as Wilvan, which began two years after this declaration was made, was a powerful antidote to the intended mediocrity that was meant for disenfranchised people.

With regard to organisations that provide a performing arts platform for youth and adults in predominantly marginalised communities, a non-profit Western Cape based organisation, the Cape Cultural Collective (CCC), was started in 2007.³⁰ The CCC, an inter-generational organisation, which aims to build social cohesion through the arts celebrated its 15th year in 2022 (Ford, 2022). In terms of organisational praxis, the findings of this study may be of value to the CCC as they may recognise similarities between the values that they and Wilvan espoused such as a commitment to non-racialism, non-sexism and social justice as well as a shared understanding of the pivotal role that art has to play in society. The students of Wilvan were drawn from marginalised communities, such as Kensington, Facticeon and Elsie's River, many of which remain on the margins of socio-economic opportunities in 2022 as a consequence of Apartheid and the resultant inter-generational trauma, deprivation and disadvantage in the post-1994 period (Adonis, 2016; Lannoy et al., 2015; Seekings, 2007). Similarly, the programmatic work of the CCC is predominantly with people resident in marginalised communities such as Manenberg, Langa, Gugulethu, Bonteheuwel and Mitchells Plain and they also face resource constraints such as adequate funding to conduct their work. The findings of my research may provide some insights and a lens to consider the work of the CCC albeit in the current South African socio-economic context. Following from this, I propose that there are possibilities for further research within the context of positive organisational scholarship and inclusive social innovation. The organisational praxis of the CCC could provide for an interesting and valuable study which at this stage has not yet been undertaken. One avenue for further research could include how the CCC, via the arts, contributes to social cohesion through a study of their Rosa Choir and Junior Rosa Choir (Cancellieri et al., 2018). Performing songs in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa, an objective of the choirs is to unite people through the medium of music and its members are drawn from diverse communities in the Cape (GroundUp, 2013; Kasa, 2022).

5.4. Bottom-Up: A Strong Tradition of Inclusive Social Innovation

Ayob et al. (2016) argued that the elements that define whether a social innovation is a weak or strong one is determined by the objective of whether it is to gain individual advantage or whether it is about the interests of the collective and the shifting of power relations respectively. As reported in Section 4.4 of the findings, it was confirmed that individuals that included parents and other members of disenfranchised communities, actively and consistently supported the work of Wilvan without the expectation of financial or material

³⁰ I was a founder member of the Cape Cultural Collective in 2007 and the chairperson of its board between 2018 and 2022.

reward. This community participation and the mobilising of the creative energies of a collective is a key element in driving social innovation (Dias & Partidário, 2019; Edwards-Schachter & Tams, 2013; Edwards-Schachter & Wallace, 2017; Manzini, 2014; Mulgan, 2006; Mulgan et al., 2007; Nicholls et al., 2015; Nilsson, 2019). I argue that one of the motivating factors for the support was the praxis of the teachers at Wilvan that was acknowledged and acted as inspiration for these volunteer acts of service. This constituted an organisational praxis which was selfless in that the teachers made many personal sacrifices to educate Wilvan's dance students consistently and over an extended period of time.³¹ Volunteers willingly contributed their own resources, which included specific skills sets and created an eco-system of support that reflected the commitment of the teachers thus creating a virtuous circle that enabled Wilvan to sustain itself, albeit with severe resource challenges. The collective contribution of all the stakeholders created the conditions for a community-based dance school to flourish and in that way constituted what Manzini (2014) refers to as a "creative community" (p. 62), who used their innovative abilities to "shatter mainstream ideas about how to solve problems" (p. 62). In the case of Wilvan this developed into a creative eco-system that facilitated the thriving of the organisation. This largely volunteer effort negated the self-interested "what's in it for me?" motivation that is so often prevalent in society today (Peter, 2016). The range of services provided included parents involved in fundraising initiatives, community seamstresses who could sew custom-made costumes for Wilvan productions and backstage crew who could assist with stage design and all related tasks such as building sets, and the provision of sound and lighting. This level of engagement pointed to a deeper strength that enabled self-organisation from within the community. The depth of involvement is characteristic of a bottom-up social innovation as members of an oppressed community were actively involved in the innovation (Manzini, 2014).

As social actors they used their agency, took initiative to support what they saw to be a positive shift in the community thus moving the innovation along (Edwards-Schachter & Tams, 2013). Demonstrating the paradox of agency (Westley, 2008) in that they were restricted by the external environment, experienced discrimination, faced exclusion from educational and other opportunities, they acted anyway. They used their agency to educate, impact on the identity development and empowerment of young people, particularly young women in

³¹ Weekly classes at Wilvan were conducted on Saturdays from 8.00 to 15:00, in addition to supplementary classes during the week. During productions and examination periods, these hours were extended. This was the case for 40 plus years, which provides an indication of the sacrifices that the teachers and their families made over decades.

disenfranchised communities. Viewing Wilvan through the lens of Ayob et.al (2016), in the period under study (1968-1994), it was and can be regarded as being within a strong tradition of social innovation as its members and supporters were not self-serving and self-interested but consistently acted to benefit a disenfranchised community.

In addition, as reported in Section 4.7 of the findings chapter and discussed in Section 5.2 of this discussion chapter, Wilvan teachers viewed themselves as change agents in relation to their opposition to Apartheid. This was actioned through their conduct and the manner in which this manifested at the dance school. Membership of the NEUM and TLISA meant that their work was informed by a certain political viewpoint which rejected collaboration with Apartheid institutions (Braam, 2018; Hendricks, 2018; Khan, 1976). They projected the possibility of a democratic South Africa, and through the medium of dance they enacted their position in their productions (Vanderburgh, 2018). Their questioning of the status quo, the awareness this created in the Wilvan constituency, including its audiences indicates a demonstration of a strong tradition of social innovation and in this respect their work was about the shifting of consciousness and power relations (Ayob et al., 2016). The similarities between a bottom-up social innovation and one which can be characterised as a strong tradition of social innovation point to an inclusive social innovation which at its crux is about marginal communities, involved at some level of the innovation (Ayob et al., 2016; Heeks et al., 2013; Manzini, 2014).

In considering Wilvan within the framework of the six levels of the ladder of inclusive innovation as argued by Heeks et al. (2013), it would fall between levels four and six. At these levels marginalised community members are core agents in terms of the conceptualisation or framing, vision and the execution of an innovation. According to Heeks et al. (2013) this combination of elements, which point to members of a disenfranchised and marginalised community as primary drivers of the innovation, constitute a genuinely inclusive social innovation. The collective findings of this study have provided the basis to affirm the question as to whether Wilvan can be regarded as an inclusive social innovation. It was one in which the social actors envisioned and executed a transformative and impactful process which mobilised the collective efforts of disenfranchised community members. While Wilvan can be contextualised within Apartheid as an inclusive social innovation arising from the ground up, the resource challenges that they experienced were constant, reflective of the challenges experienced by organisations in the non-profit sector. In 2013, Wilvan shut down primarily

due to these challenges. However the work over a 45 year period ensured that their efforts were not completely lost.

As was discussed in Section 4.6 of the findings section, Wilvan provided professional training to their students and several attained qualifications as dance teachers. During interviews with two of the former Wilvan students, who had attained Spanish dance teacher's qualification, the Instructor de Baile (IDB) and Maestro de Baile (MDB) respectively, they spoke of the challenges they were having with securing venues in 2021 in their communities to teach Spanish dancing. This was not reported on in the findings as it was outside of the scope and therefore a limitation of this study. However, it was in one of these interviews that I was once again struck by the issue of inter-generational deprivation reproduced in a post-Apartheid South Africa 28 years into our democratic dispensation (Lannoy et al., 2015; Seekings, 2007; The World Bank, 2022). The Wilvan student interviewee, Naiemah Eksteen, had come from a working-class family who had encouraged her dance education at Wilvan and had attained the IDB in Spanish dance. At the time of the interview in February 2021 she was continuing with her Spanish dance teacher education. A number of scholars have indicated the value of dance for empowering young people (Brinson, 1983; Côté, 2006; Sanderson, 2008; Sheets-Johnstone, 2005). Brinson (1993) argued that “dance can make a significant contribution – no is essential – to resolve the problems of multiculturalism in political, educational and cultural national life” (p. 8). Naiemah expressed her wish to teach young people in the Blue Downs community, indicating that she wanted to offer her services to facilitate what Wilvan had enabled in her life. However, she not been able to access a suitable or basic facility to activate the process. Naiemah stated there was no community hall in the area within walking distance or a theatre for performance, indicating that amenities are still woefully inadequate in her community. There was not a tree in sight in her community, which I noticed as I drove to her house in Blue Downs to interview her. This area represented a continued pattern of impoverishment, both materially and culturally in spatial planning in post-Apartheid South Africa (Berrisford, 2011). This inter-generational reproduction of deprivation speaks to diminished possibilities in terms of access to the life-affirming activities that a performing art such as dance could provide in many marginalised communities. The lack of amenities curtail the possibility for young people from marginal communities to engage in the performing arts or other extra-mural activities within the communities that they live.

In Section 4.4.2 of the findings it was established that the local community-based churches were a critical element of the support for Wilvan. However, as indicated, all of these church

venues did not have the most suitable facilities such as wooden floors, mirrors, barres that one takes for granted for the teaching of certain forms of dance. Nonetheless, these were the only options available for disenfranchised communities and I would venture that they were the venues for other extra-mural activities in these communities not only in the Western Cape but throughout South Africa. However, the legacy of Apartheid is stark in such communities and the irony is inescapable where even the venues of the past in a disenfranchised community, (that did not have the required specifications for the teaching of dance), seem like havens given the innovation their availability catalysed in the case of Wilvan. Questions which arose as a result of the interview with the former Wilvan student were what innovative praxis can be activated in the current circumstances? What is the contribution of the performing arts and cultural formations in building stronger communities? How can agency and determination overcome what appears to be a basic issue such as the absence of a viable venue for teaching and learning the arts within one's community? Are there possibilities to mobilise community members to approach the local authorities in this regard? In addition, it would suggest the possibility of research to look at what makes for strong resilient communities that continue to be marginalised in present-day South Africa, which as has already been indicated is currently the most unequal country in the world (The World Bank, 2022).

5.5. Conclusion

I focused on a few aspects that emerged quite prominently with respect to the scholarly value of this study. In particular I focussed on those areas which the literature had indicated were understudied such as 1) the place and contribution of micro-praxis; 2) positive organisational scholarship as well as 3) inclusive social innovation. Historical and contemporary areas of research avenues emerged from my study which included the proposed investigation of other cultural organisations such as MAPP, Action Workshop and the CCC. With regard to micro-praxis, the value which the findings of this study could have for the praxis of an organisation such as the CCC was indicated, given the common understanding, albeit in different time periods scaling the Apartheid and post-Apartheid contexts, of the value of the performing arts in society and its relationship to social justice. While not discussed in the findings of the study, the challenges faced by marginal communities in present-day South Africa were surfaced in the discussion section based on one of the interviews in which a highly trained Wilvan dancer was unable to put her training to use, given the paucity of suitable venues for extra-mural activity, including for dance education, in her community. This is 28 years after democracy and the expectation was that the lives of disenfranchised and marginalised people in South Africa would have transformed significantly.

In 1995 Wilvan was given an opportunity to perform at a theatre that they had boycotted for years, the then Nico Malan Theatre. As democracy was being ushered into South Africa the teachers were overwhelmed at the gravity of the moment. I reflected on the long journey that Veronica Williams and her colleagues, Elaine Cloete and Shirley Willenberg had been on as teachers at Wilvan before they arrived at this moment. The final quote in this dissertation by a key Wilvan “knowledgeable agent” (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 17) reveals that the decision to enter a theatre, which had previously been boycotted during Apartheid, was still a difficult one that challenged the teachers and was debated vigorously before arriving at a final decision. In agreeing to participate it suggested that they were hopeful that the new democracy meant that the conditions for transformative social change had arrived. Veronica Williams expressed how this momentous occasion affected them:

And the other thing is Zenny, is about, you know, working in a space that wasn't conducive for dance. How do you tell a child this is how you must dance when you're working in a dilapidated building? What does this child know about a theatre you know? So your pupil has never experienced that, has never seen a dancer on stage, has never seen the lights. So when we did go to Artscape³² in 1995, when we were invited to participate in the Dance Indaba, which was a sister thing to the Dance Umbrella, you know we never performed in any of the theatres and Fahiem had received this letter and Fahiem spoke to me. He said to me, look Veronica it's about time, it's 20 years now, we've made our statement. We need to give our dancers the opportunity to perform in a proper theatre. So of course we had to raise this at the meeting and some people were happy and some people were not happy. But I think Maureen understood and you know, she gave us her blessing. Because Fahiem just said, you know, we've got dancers who have been with us since 1968, they've never danced in a theatre. You're getting the opportunity now. It's post.. [sic], please, we must do it. And so there we stood, Elaine, Shirley and I holding each other's hands and crying our hearts out on the stage because our children are onstage and we've never been able to dance there. Can you imagine what it was, what it did to us to see our pupils onstage? We were never given that opportunity and we all loved dance. We wanted to dance and we were denied that access. (Veronica Williams, 25/09/2021)

³² In 1995 the Artscape Theatre Centre was still called by its original name, the Nico Malan Theatre Centre, which Wilvan had boycotted during Apartheid.

Undertaking this study has assisted me to frame the Wilvan experience and has contributed to my understanding of how it was an inclusive innovation within an oppressive macro-environment. This study has also elucidated the impact that Wilvan had on its members, including myself, but in addition it has transcended the specificity of the scope of the study by suggesting additional avenues for scholarly enquiry.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

The objective of this study was to investigate whether a community-based dance organisation, the Wilvan School of Dance was an inclusive innovation during Apartheid, beginning with its establishment in 1968 to 1994, which constituted 26 years of Wilvan's 45-year history. As a smaller organisation there was a dearth of information on the contribution and impact of such organisations to the process of social change and individually on its stakeholders. My nascent understanding of how to approach this was through a literature review. There was minimal information on Wilvan itself but enough to point to the rest of the literature reviewed in the area of social inclusive innovation. I reviewed literature that equated social innovation with social change, inclusive innovation, the traditions of social innovation and how social innovation intersected with the performing arts. As I had attended this school as a young girl and woman it was important to declare this upfront and through my methodological choices ensure that the issue of subjectivity, as a consequence of my experience, would be factored into the study as an acknowledged component of the research process. Hence hermeneutic phenomenology that acknowledged subjectivity and the experience of the researcher was selected as the primary research methodology. This was supported by a grounded theory approach to my research data collection. A reflexive approach was deployed throughout and as the research unfolded I kept an online journal of my reflections and observations as well as less formal notes along the way.

As the research into Wilvan was a case study, I interviewed 24 individuals who had been involved with Wilvan including teachers, dance students, parents and backstage crew. With regard to the teachers, I focused on the three teachers who had taught at Wilvan for over four decades. This included founder member and my dance teacher, the late Veronica Williams, who had also been its principal for several years and therefore key to a full understanding of Wilvan's history and described by Gioia (2013) as a knowledgeable agent. The descriptor of knowledgeable agent also applied to the teachers and students who had been at Wilvan during the period under investigation for an extended period. This included students who had started in the 60's, 70s and 80s spending a minimum period of eight years to a maximum period of 35 years at Wilvan, thus having a deep experience of the dance school. The analysis of the primary data, situated within the context of the literature review, was a deeply reflective process, which affirmed the research question posed at the outset. The study confirmed that Wilvan was an inclusive social innovation as its vision, establishment and operation were driven by women from a disenfranchised and marginalised community. The support of

community members, which included parents and community-based churches, deepened, fostered and enabled this innovation. The attributes that the teachers exhibited such as their selflessness were mirrored by those who provided support, which was free of the expectation of remuneration thus creating a virtuous eco-system which allowed Wilvan to flourish. The (1) psychological safety and an environment of belonging created by the teachers and (2) their emphasis on professionalism and excellence through the formal evaluation of ballet and Spanish dancing as well as through performance in Wilvan dance productions generated the formation of a positive organisation. The growing political consciousness of the teachers, who were directly influenced by the political position of the NEUM and TLSA, contributed to shaping their approach to the arts. They regarded the arts as core to the struggle for social change as well as to affirming the humanity of oppressed people. They infused this understanding into the dance school and aligned themselves with the struggle for social change. This was evidenced through their conduct, such as boycotting Apartheid institutions, including those in the performing arts, their open discussions on the conditions of Apartheid and social injustice in South Africa and internationally with members of the Wilvan community and in incorporating political themes into their dance productions especially in the post-1976 period.

The findings that have emerged through this study are a contribution to scholarship on a few levels. At the most expansive level it is a contribution to scholarship on social change and social justice and its relationship to social innovation. In addition, it is a contribution to positive organisational scholarship. It provides insight into the organisational and individual attributes required to create the conditions for the growth of excellence and a sense of striving. It invites us to consider the requirements to create meaningful and transformative experiences that allow people, especially young people to flourish within challenging circumstances. The study is also a contribution to inclusive social innovation scholarship. The study has emerged how certain attributes are transformative and can be propagated by smaller organisations facing obstacles created by a macro-environment that does not facilitate excellence by design. However, the study also demonstrated that these very limitations can catalyse and fuel an innovation. As was the case with Wilvan, the agency and determination of the women and community members in a disenfranchised community acted as ‘bricoleurs’ and catalysed an innovation that had significant social impact that reverberated beyond its lifetime.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Veronica Williams





Appendix 3 Some of Wilvan's Earliest Pupils, 1969, St. Timothy's Church, Factreton



Appendix 4

Wilvan Student Interview Questions

1. Please tell me something about yourself.
(e.g. Where you were born, where you live now, family circumstances, schools attended, education, age, interests, work etc.)
2. When did you start at Wilvan (year)? How old were you? What do you remember of the initial experience? (the venue, the teachers, meeting classmates etc.)
3. How long were you at Wilvan?
4. Why did you attend (parents sent you, own interest?) What other arts or other opportunities were available to you?
5. Who were your teachers? What can you recall about them?
6. What did you learn from them/Wilvan about dance and in other ways, if any?
7. What dance forms did you enroll for?
8. Which exams did you do? What level of proficiency did you obtain?
9. If you did Spanish dancing – what was the appeal of Spanish dancing for you?
10. How did Wilvan impact you in terms of your values, how you acted in your community/country, your world view /consciousness and creativity for example?
11. The concerts of Wilvan. What do you recall most? What did performing for an audience mean for you? How did it impact you?
12. In 1993 or 1994, Wilvan danced in a proper theatre for the first time (the Nico Malan, now since 1999 - Artscape). Were you part of this? If so, what did this mean for you?
13. What limitations or possibilities for dance (or other aspects of your) life did Wilvan facilitate?
14. What impact or contribution if any, did Wilvan have / make on the community it served or beyond?
15. Looking back, what does Wilvan mean to you now?





(Photographer: George Hallet)

Sociedad de Baile Español

EXAMINATION: INGRESO

NAME: RONEL CORNELISSEN

HELD AT: RONSEBOSCH

AT: 4.00 P.M.
7th JUNE 1989

PLEASE BE AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS AT LEAST 15 MINUTES BEFORE THE TIME OF EXAMINATION
BRING THIS CARD WITH YOU AS YOU CANNOT BE EXAMINED WITHOUT IT.

~~27/5/85~~

Preparation	
Palillos	bestanets well played.
	Waltz: good.
Brazos	Well done. Lovely arms!
Zapateado	Very good.
Vueltas	Well done.
Pasos	good.
Escuela	
Palmas	Rhythmically clapped.
Dance	Very well danced + presented Good work.
Theory	Known.
General	

RESULT: **HONOURS**

EXAMINER: Hazel Acosta.

Sociedad de Baile Español

EXAMINATION: SEGUNDO AÑO

NAME: BERNADETTE KOLBE

HELD AT: U.C.T. BALLET SCHOOL

AT: 2.55 pm
MAY 1993

PLEASE BE AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS AT LEAST 15 MINUTES BEFORE THE TIME OF EXAMINATION
BRING THIS CARD WITH YOU AS YOU CANNOT BE EXAMINED WITHOUT IT.

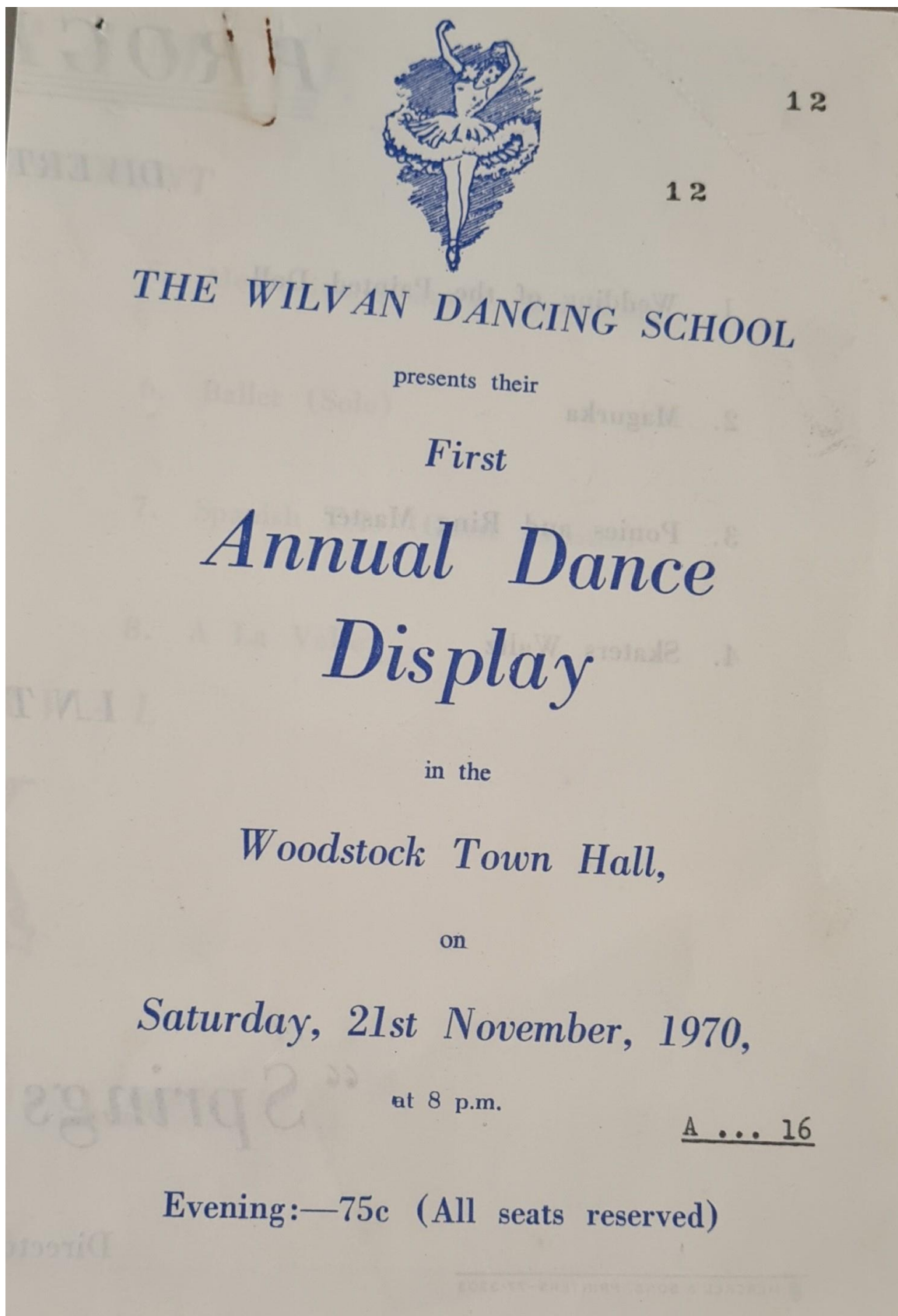
Preparation	Body + arms well held.
Paillos	Castanets well played.
Brazos	Waltzes - good. well done.
Zapateado	Very good strong footwork.
Vueltas	More classical style.
Pasos	well done.
	Sevillanas - well done with nice style.
Escuela	
Palmas	Very good.
Dance	Alegrías - well danced with nice style + use of arms. good footwork.
Theory	
General	

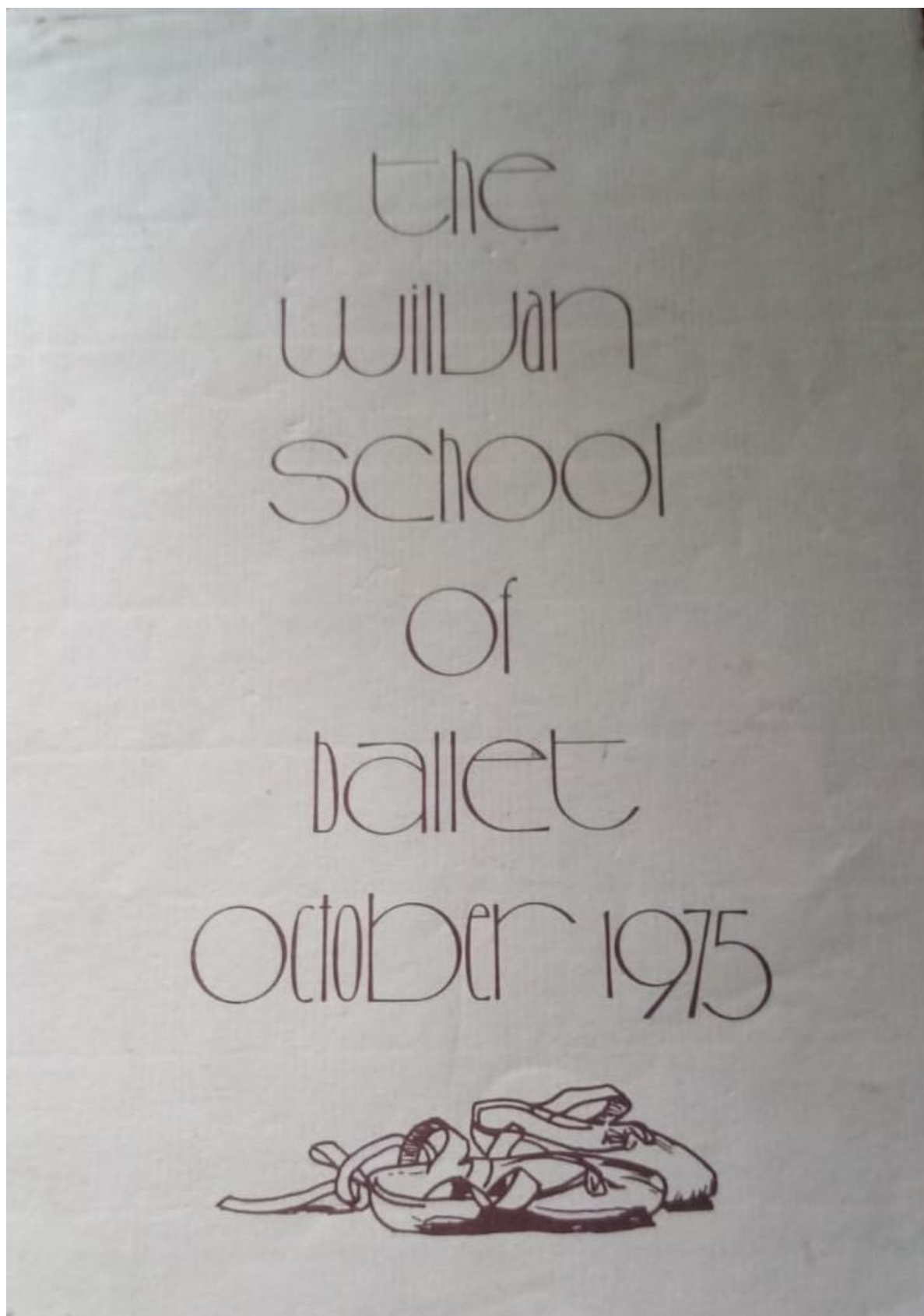
RESULT: HONOURS

EXAMINER:

Juana Cortés

Damax





souvenir album

WILVAN 1975



Anthea Fisher



Carlyn Cupido



Wynoma Cupido



Bruce Mitchell



Sandra Abrahams



Sandra Alexander



Wendy Abrahams



Denise Petersen



Marlene Petersen



Sharon Lakey



Brigitte Mally



Zenariah Barends



Eleanor Kleyn



Naidia Stevens



Noleen Blows

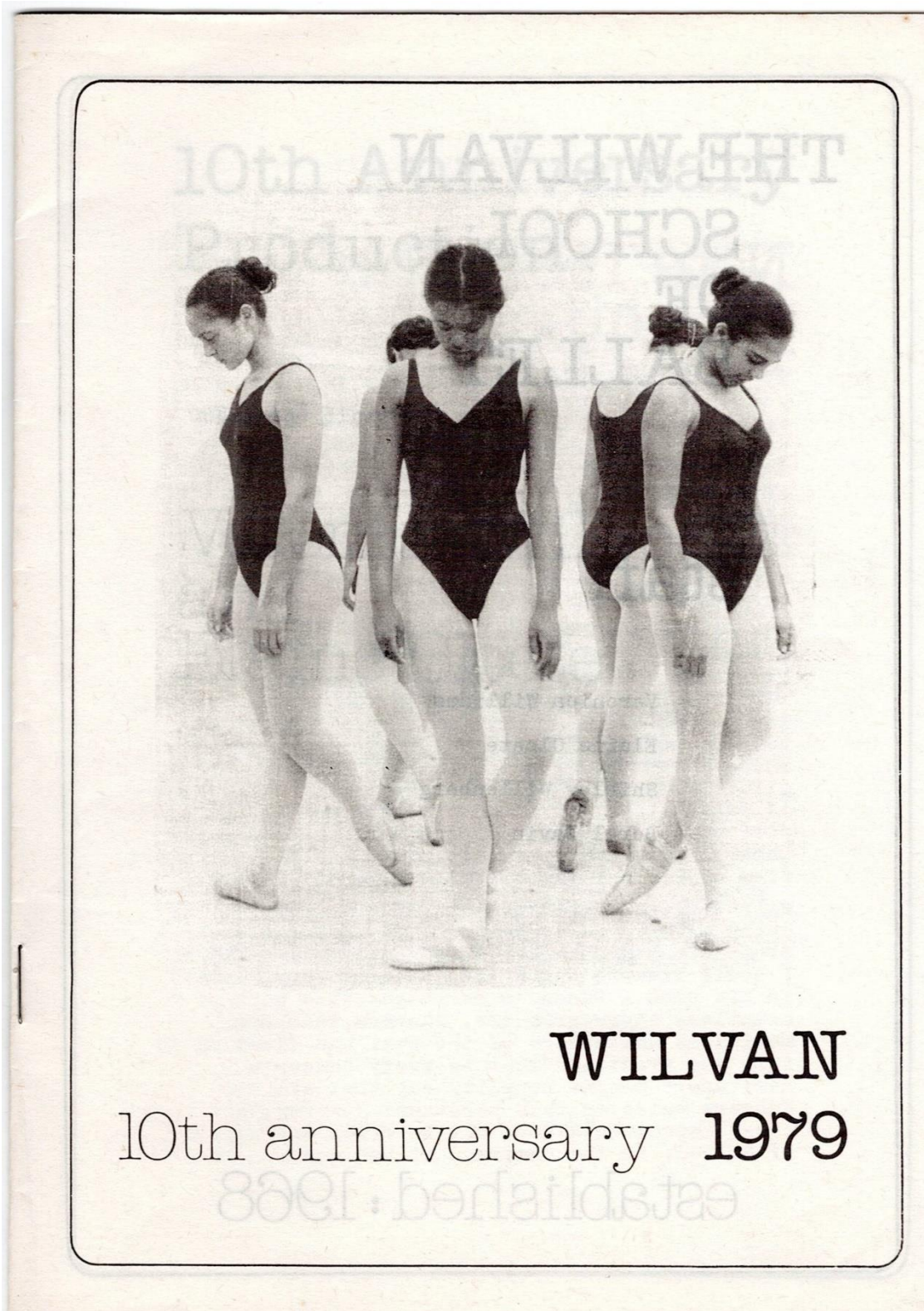


Myrna Abrahamse

Appendix 11

**Zenariah Barends and Wynoma Stockenstroom (née Cupido)
Wilvan Dance Production, The Magic Toyshop, 1975**





Note from the principal

My colleagues and I are honoured to share with you this very special occasion, the 10th Anniversary of the Wilvan School of Ballet. I can assure you that our pupils also share in this honour. We are sincerely grateful for your invaluable support and must extend our heartfelt thanks to you for your support now and in the past. For us this is a very auspicious occasion as many of the pupils dancing in this production have been in the Wilvan School since its inception

The road since 1968 has certainly not been without frustrations and impediments; it has, in fact been a hard one. We have been faced with the problem of how a dedicated teacher can develop the potential of a pupil who loves the art of ballet, has the physical and technical ability, shows potential as a dancer and, over and above all this is faced with problems such as the lack of facilities to train, unsuitable venues to perform etc. Also, our dancers have no access to theatre unless they accept that they are different from others and therefore do so under permit.

With these conditions pertaining therefore, our children have never seen a live performance by a professional company. CAN WE CALL THIS BALLET? I would like to share the words of Ivor Guest in his book A Dancer's Heritage: "The work of countless choreographers, dancers, teachers, musicians and others of the past has lived on to form the tradition that is every dancer's heritage." Can we honestly say that all our dancers share in this heritage? However, all these impediments have not deterred the pupils of Wilvan. On the contrary it has spurred them

to greater efforts and together with the relentless spirit of the teachers Wilvan shall succeed.

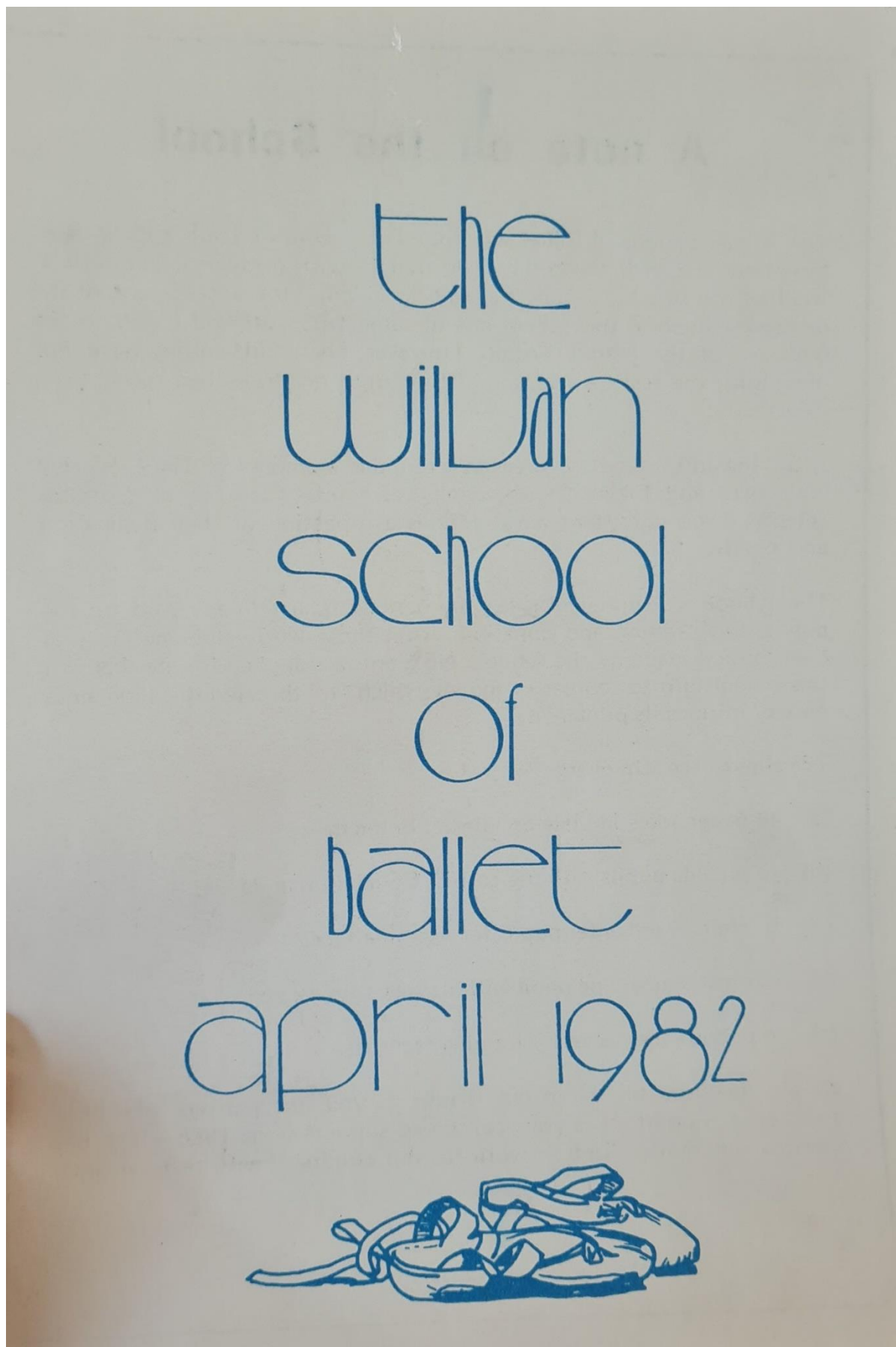
Having given you some idea of the difficulties under which we work and perform, I wish to comment on the ballets you are about to see.

The first ballet which is called THE BIRTHDAY; was choreographed with the purpose of creating a party effect. We have included all the pupils in the junior section ranging from beginners to test three.

The second ballet, IMPRESSIONS, which is an abstract ballet caters for our pupils just entering Elementary and Intermediate standard. The music is perhaps not commonly used for ballet; yet offers them a wide canvas to display their skill and technical ability.

To conclude the evening you will be presented with a lively Spanish ballet. The story has been extracted from a poem written by Austin Cloete, an intimate associate of the school. The choice is a natural one. We wish to present to you a story in which class distinction plays an important role. One is limited when choosing Spanish music as there does not appear to be a wide range to choose from. However, we chose Enrique Garcia Asensio's Zarzuela.

I would like to use this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all those who have contributed in no small way to the success of these performances. To them I wish to say, that they, together with the pupils and teachers, have given our motto LET US WORK FOR OUR CHILDREN true and real meaning.



Animal Farm

Based on George Orwell's Novel

Music:

Kurt Weil

Igor Stravinsky

George Gershwin

Erik Satie

Dutilleux

"The Internationale"

Note:

The Internationale was chosen as a finale to this ballet because it is widely acknowledged and is an expression of our solidarity with the continuing struggle of workers throughout the world against oppression and exploitation, as is depicted in Orwell's book.

We apologize for the quality of some of the recordings due to the unavailability of the most recent recordings of these particular pieces of music.

Choreography: Veronica Williams, Shirley Willenberg, Cecelia Arderne, Elaine Cloete.

Synopsis:

ACT 1 MANOR FARM BECOMES ANIMAL FARM

- SCENE I Farmer Jones and his family live in luxury on Manor Farm while the animals (except Jones's favourites – the raven, Molly and the cat) starve and suffer.
- SCENE II Major calls the animals together and gives them a vision of freedom. Jones however interrupts their meeting.
- SCENE III The animals rebel against the cruelty of Jones and the other humans. The animals stage a revolution and are victorious in chasing the humans off the farm, which now becomes Animal Farm.

INTERVAL - 10 MINUTES

1984

To the dancers of the Wilvan Ballet School.

A very big thank you for your exciting and very moving programme of Spanish dance.

Some time has passed since your last performance, allowing time for some reflection on your collective effort. The more I think about what you have achieved, the more impressive it seems.

That you achieved such high standards in the dancing is to you, and your director's, credit. But the fact that the dancing meant something, that it did much more than simply impress and entertain the audience, has meant a great deal to many people.

There are 2 schools of thought on this matter: those who have always maintained that art and politics have nothing to do with each other, and those who have believed that they are integrally connected. We suffer from an isolation in this country that helps keep a division between art and the struggle.

Both these groups of people must be thanking you now, for proving that such a beautiful art form can be so politically meaningful and inspiring.

That you are to take this creation to more people, thus comes as a specially encouraging piece of news, and I wish you "luck" and full houses.

Pam Hicks.
(Iwingstone)

Dear Mrs Williams and the pupils of the Wilvan

Language cannot always express human feelings especially a deep appreciation. And this is precisely my dilemma at this moment because I wish to convey to you my absolute appreciation (and that of my wife) for the experience you have afforded us.

Unfortunately, when one talks about culture in South Africa the disenfranchised have been limited or associated with the 1st and second of January. You have exploded this myth and you have indicated, beyond all doubt, that art, its performance and appreciation ~~is~~ ^{is} universal.

You have with almost professional perfection used an art form not only for its beauty, but more than that you have used this art form as an educative device to convey a profound message. relevant to our situation. No lecture, however detailed, could have the same impact. By means of the dance drama

you have transported your audience into the pathos, the callousness, the treachery and absolute lack of conscience of regimes that have no regard for human dignity.

My wife and I lost ourselves and were completely captivated by the vibrance and controlled uninhibitedness of that final act.

I do understand that a production of such a standard does not come by accident. It involves continuous hard work and a battle against the decrepid facilities which is our unjust position. Yet you have done better than those who work under more favourable conditions.

I trust that you will ^{continue to} defy the limitations imposed upon you and with a tutor like Mrs Williams, I exhort you never to grow weary.

of using the arts as a means not only
of enjoyment but especially to speak
volumes to even to those who do not want to
listen.

Thanks for your production

Yours faithfully
Simon and Lyne Sarda

1984

7 (busho) September 1993

The Wilvan Dancers,

Congratulations on your first theatre performance!!!

That you alone have been invited to dance tonight testifies to your talent and your hard work.

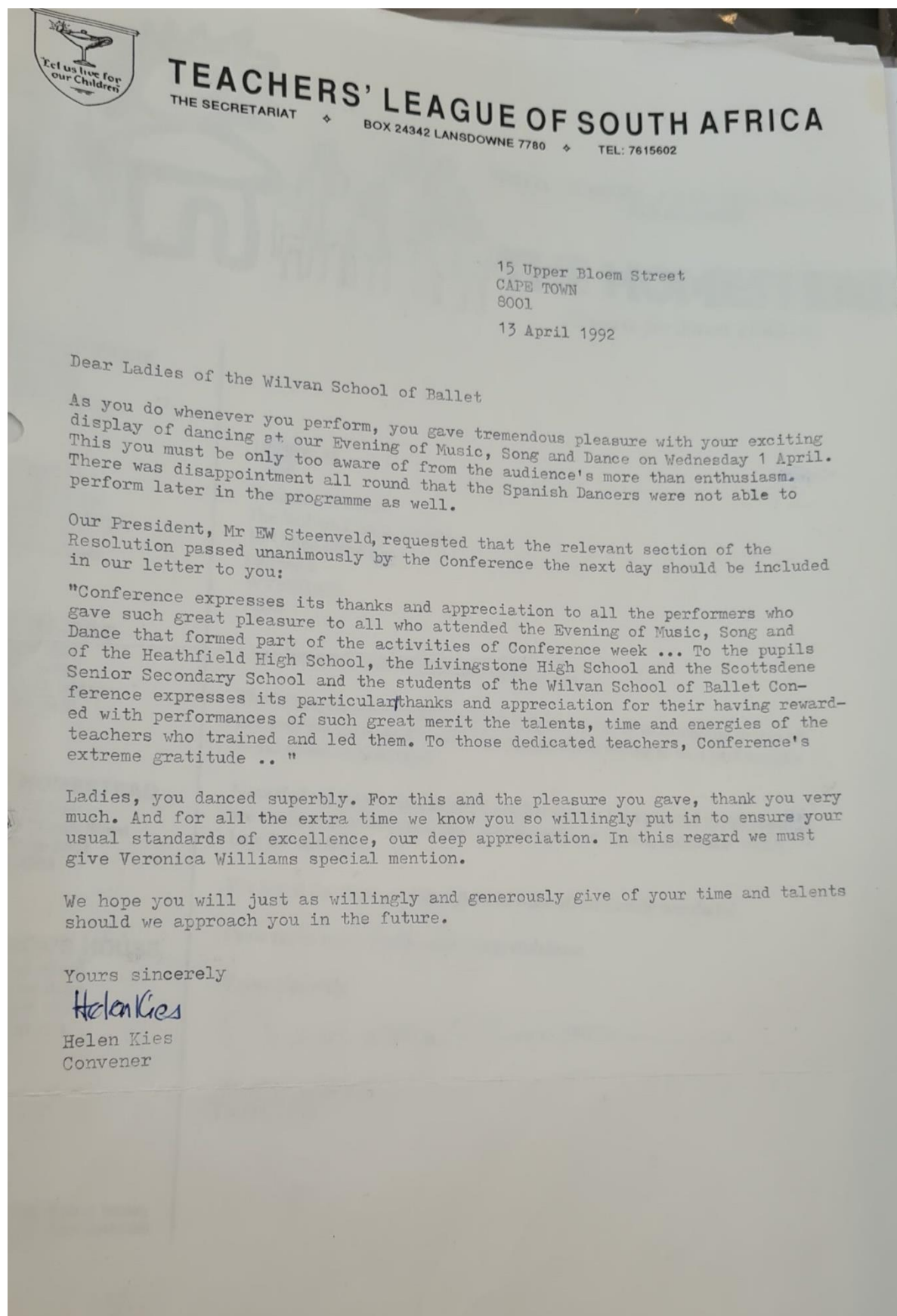
By focussing your dance on child abuse you show that art is life, that your art is part of a process of changing the apartheid-capitalist system that deprives you and leads to the degradation of so many children.

May you inspire the conference and may your dancing hasten a truly new South Africa in which the rights and dignity of all its people are upheld.

Best wishes from A Kensingtonian ever
impressed with your perseverance.

Viva!! The Wilvan School of Ballet!!!

faiza bardien



The Wilvan School of Ballet
(Association incorporated not for gain)

Tel: (h) 021-9323617

11 Thirteenth Avenue
Elsies River
CAPE
7490
15 May 1997

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, the undersigned, have known VERONICA WILLIAMS since 1975 when my daughter started doing ballet at The Wilvan School of Ballet.

At this time the school was housed in a church hall which was a most unsuitable venue for Ballet. Veronica and her two assistants improvised and did their best to overcome the physical handicaps. There was very little money in the community which Wilvan served and Veronica and the other two teachers sacrificed every Saturday and two afternoons per week absolutely free of charge. The contributions made by parents could just about cover the hire of the hall and the purchase of music tapes.

It was only after 10 years of Wilvan's existence that parents could manage to increase their nominal monetary contribution to pay something towards Veronica's travelling from Fairways to Kensington.

I was and still am amazed at the amount of energy, enthusiasm, dedication and dogged determination Veronica brings to bear on her teaching pupils, who often have nothing but their natural talent and love for dance. Veronica educated parents to such an extent that they could inspire their children to appreciate the art of dance, drama and music which they themselves were denied.

Acts of Parliament, such as the Group Areas Act, the Separate Amenities Act and other discriminatory laws of the Apartheid era made it virtually impossible for Wilvan to be part of the Cultural scene in Cape Town. Veronica was therefore working in isolation and her pupils could not attend performances by other Ballet schools nor could they perform at most cultural venues without losing their dignity. Despite this fact of history, Veronica's love for the Arts, her concern for the underprivileged and her belief in the worth of her pupils, made her work extra hard to overcome the disabilities and inequalities.

Had it not been for her fiery determination and excellent ability to motivate and inspire others, Wilvan would not have survived for almost thirty years.

It is therefore with great admiration and humility that I hereby bear testimony to Veronica Williams' character and ability as principal of The Wilvan School of Ballet.

Thank you

Maureen Adriaan
MAUREEN ADRIAAN
Chairperson