THE DANCE FACTORY

NEWTOWN, JOHANNESBURG

`a site of resistance'

THESIS

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Jeannette Ginslov

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this mini thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted previously as a dissertation for any degree in any other university.

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ABSTRACT

This mini thesis proposes that the Dance Factory in Newtown, Johannesburg, is a site of resistance. Its source and motivation are the personal, artistic and socio-political sites of resistance to mainstream forms of dance with nationalistic tendencies and to dominant ideological hegemonies that enforced apartheid or nationalism. Therefore, these sites or resistance are examined prior to and after the democratisation of South African culture. An analysis of the dances choreographed in this period of transition and changing hegemonies reveal shifts of resistance. These are traced within the development of the Dance Factory.

Chapter one explores the notion of resistance as a form of power and the notion of site, where the operations of power evoke resistance. Three sites of resistance within South African dance culture are identified and examined. These are the Dance Factory, the artistic site of dance and the site of the dancing body. The chapter reveals the development of these sites in a changed culture and notes a re-orientation of resistance within dance, namely Afro-fusion, and the subsequent development and emergence of 'alternative' sites of resistance. These reveal new-expressionistic tendencies, body politics and the feminist strategies of 'new poetics' and 'ecriture feminine'. The codified mainstream forms of dance, subject to nationalistic strategies of classicism and its inherent logocentricity are challenged and destabilised by the emergence of these alternative resistant forms of dance.

Chapter two examines the artistic policies of the Nationalist Government, the African National Congress and the Dance Factory from 1983-1997. It notes the effects of the changes in the artistic policies on sites of resistance in dance, performed at the Dance Factory. The chapter describes the development of the Dance Factory, its policies of diversification as a strategy of resistance, its promotion of praxis, its resistance to nationalism and the ramifications thereof. It also explores the effects of a governmentalisation of culture and the role of the organic intellectual within the Dance Factory.

An analysis of the alternative dance work "Torso-Tongue" in chapter three furthers the argument that the Dance Factory maintains and encourages the changing sites of resistance in dance. This analysis demonstrates the resistant aspects of dance as discussed in chapter one and thereby confirms the aims and missions of the Dance Factory.

The thesis examines the role of the Dance Factory as it develops, nurtures and responds to the shifts in resistance and changes in culture and dance. Most importantly the thesis exposes the resistance to and the effects of an imposition of a nationalistic ideology on dance. The resultant resistance to this form of domination is explored in dance within the site of the Dance Factory, thus supporting the premise that the Dance Factory is a site of resistance.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The simple clash between subject and style is a painterly one; the uncompromising line is made to yield to a curve. Only this defeat makes movement possible.

Jeanette Winterson, **Art and Lies**.

INTRODUCTION

For many South Africans, dance became or evolved as an expression of protest against the oppressive and racist policies of the Nationalist Government. In this manner it was politically motivated. Resistance also surfaced against mainstream forms of dance that were supported by the Nationalists.

This support was demonstrated in the establishment and development of the Provincial Arts Councils. These organisations received full state subsidies. This furthered the promotion of European art forms that were largely classical in orientation and appealed to the taste of the white, bourgeois audiences that attended these operas, ballets and plays of nineteenth century orientation. These classical forms of theatre were acceptable as they enshrined beauty, stability and harmony. The preservation of these classical forms was therefore important to the Nationalists as they were a perfect vehicle for the Nationalists to express civility in the face of political chaos and injustice.

However protest forms of art emerged and erupted in defiance of this colonialist ideal. These `agit-prop' forms of art questioned and disrupted the notion of stability and civility. Works of this nature questioned the racist ideology of the state and were therefore banned, denigrated, unsponsored but not ignored. Defiance in art therefore manifested in underground or alternative venues that sought to overthrow the injustice of apartheid and social inequality. Defiance was therefore registered at a micro-level, on the site of the body, and this had repercussions at the macro-level of the government.

An undercurrent desire for national unity amongst the disparate ethnic groups was expressed and resulted in the search for a common identity or a commonality. Dance practitioners explored commonality in dance and produced a uniquely South African dance called Afro-fusion. This synthesis of European and African dance forms demonstrated that practitioners of

dance from different stylistic backgrounds and ethnic groups could mix and exchange dance aesthetics, thereby contradicting the laws of separate development instituted by the dominant political hegemony. In the era of transformation and democratisation, Afro-fusion became a codified mainstream form of dance, representative of the ideologies of the Government of National Unity.

The Dance Factory played a vital role in the development of Afro-fusion. It was a site that nurtured the creation and evolution of this form. However, realising the dangers and implications of only developing this form in a multi-ethnic society, it instituted a policy of recognising and encouraging the diversity of dance forms. 'Alternative' and marginalised dance forms representative of marginal ethnic groups found an outlet and support for their evolution. The focus of these works are different as they represent 'alternative' discourses and are resistant to mainstream productions and the influences of artistic and governmental hegemonies. The development of these new sites at the Dance Factory supports the thesis that the Dance factory is a site of resistance. It continues to be so within a new political environment that constitutionally respects diversity and freedom of expression.

Primary sources

Information was collated from interviews with major players involved in the development of the Dance Factory, namely; Dr. Frederick Hagemann (Head of the School of Dramatic Arts, University of the Witwatersrand), Suzette le Sueur (Executive Director of the Dance Factory), Esther Nasser (Artistic Director of *Pact Dance Company*), Adrienne Sichel (Dance critic) and Christopher Till (Director of Culture for Johannesburg City Council). This researcher conducted an extensive interview with Johan van der Westhuizen, choreographer and performer, and director Diane Sparks, of the dance work "Torso-Tongue". Further information was gathered from telephonic interviews with Marilyn Jenkins (Dance critic), Vikki Karras (Head of Pretoria Technikon Dance Department), Gerrit Schoonhoven (actor and director) and Georgina

Thompson (Manager for FNB Vita Promotions). Lydia Molele, Trainee Stage Manager and Nonkululeko Thabede, Trainee Administrator of the Dance Factory was also interviewed. Dance practitioners such as dancers, choreographers and technicians who have worked at the Dance Factory since its inception and more recently at the Arts Alive Festival 1997, provided this researcher with their knowledge and experience of the development of the Dance Factory.

Other primary sources were minutes of Dance Factory Executive Committee meetings. Resolutions adopted by art and culture organisations such as the National Arts Plenary (NAP), the National Arts Initiative (NAI), the National Arts Coalition (NAC), the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG), and the Draft White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage were examined. Papers on dance or culture, written by South African cultural workers were taken into account.

I based my observations on experiential knowledge as I teach dance, rehearse and perform at the Dance Factory. I also served on the Dance Factory's Executive Committee as the Dancer's Representative from 1993 to 1995.

Secondary Sources

No secondary source material on the Dance Factory exists. It was a challenge for this researcher to set up a methodology to seek out material or information on the development of the site and the dance that was performed there. This researcher made comparisons with international dance trends and acknowledges them in the local dance scene in South Africa. International trends were recognised as being pertinent here and to the topic of resistance in dance. The Dance Factory embraces some of the trends, thus making the site a significant landmark within the global network of dance and culture.

The evaluation of the critique of the Dance Factory was therefore challenging and at times difficult for this researcher.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Dance must consider its constructions, its changes through time, its presents. Yet dancing, as a cultural practice that cultivates disciplined and creative bodies, as a representational practice that explores rigorously strategies for developing bodily signification, as a cultural endeavour through which cultural change is both registered and accomplished, provides a rich resource for any study of embodiment. [Foster 1996 XIII].

The primary site of freedom of expression is the body. If this freedom is subjected to a discriminatory and repressive hegemony the primary site embodies gestures of resistance. These are emotional and intuitive responses. These can be extended to the artistic site, dance, where the language of dance is choreographed to express resistance to a dominant hegemony. Alternatively, dance may not resist the hegemony but conform or evolve to conform, to the standards prescribed by the dominant hegemony. This is expressed in mainstream dance forms. As a consequence of the shift of a resistant form of dance into a mainstream form, new sites of resistance in dance will replace them. New sites of resistance emerge as resistance evolves together with the evolution and changes within a culture that is constantly in a state of flux. Attitudes to resistance within these forms are also forever changing. Within the context of South African dance history the differences in sites of resistance in dance are evident prior to and after democracy. Dance forms that were considered to be forms of protest prior to democracy are at present acceptable dance forms. The latter have lost their original attack or political motivation. They are now perceived as mainstream forms of dance and acceptable dance forms. Other alternative forms have now replaced these forms of protest. The body is at present engaged in different discourses of resistance.

Alongside dance studies that register dance and "identity in all its registers", are the studies of the body in civilised societies that require institutional regulations of violence. [ibid.]

> The growth of civilization requires simultaneously the restraint of the body and
> the cultivation of character in the interests of social stability. [Turner 1991 15].

Therefore it is the body that we turn to, if we wish to register any form of resistance to the civilising forces that are registered in cultural bodily constructions. "Bodily subjection, disciplining, appropriation, colonization, mobilization and agency", texts of gender and power are perceived and analyzed in dance works [Foster 1996 XII]. Susan Leigh Foster, dance

scholar, notes further that the late twentieth century recognises the body as the site of material inscription, of the ideological and socio-political determinations. These are embodied and materialise in dance forms. They are acknowledged and welcomed, embraced by the dominant hegemonic forces as they reflect their enshrined doctrines of civility and stability. Forms of dance that `rupture' or threaten this notion of tranquillity and equilibrium are seen as protest or resistant forms of dance as they revolt against the status quo.

Resistance as Power

> Power can only be analysed in its specific, conjuncturally articulated, forms...resistance (to it) is produced out of people's ongoing activities within specific conjunctures, activities that may be motivated by and directed toward very disparate effects. But resistance itself is never sufficient; it must be articulated into opposition which is effective and progressive within specific formations of power. [Grossberg 1993 32].

Power is real and operates at all levels of our lives. It is located at "conjuncturally articulated" specific sites. It shapes relations, structures differences, draws boundaries and has homogenising or destabilising effects at the sites of conjuncture. Power is always empowering or disempowering.

Resistance to power is apparent when the identity it constructs is forbidden and outside the

hegemonic confines of the dominant ideology. These are apparent in popular discourses, always inscribed upon the body and are sites of power or resistance. They are only granted status when they are "reclaimed to the operations of 'art' or perhaps ideology." [ibid.].

The Dance Factory's evolution is a conjuncture that allows for the analysis of dialectical interventions of power and resistance to socio-political and artistic events in South Africa. It is at the articulations of power and cultural difference and in this instance people and dance, that

resistance becomes evident. Different strategies of resistance within dance are evident at the Dance Factory and the differences in these resistant forms are evident prior to and after the political transformation. The Dance Factory is a site that exposes these forms and is therefore worthy of study and analysis, in the light of the cultural transformation of South Africa.

1.1. The notion of Resistance

A common sense assumption of resistance is described in <u>The Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English</u> (1961), in the passive sense, as a refusal to comply. <u>The Collins Dictionary</u> (1991) maintains that it is an act of resisting, or the capacity to withstand something, especially the body's natural capacity to withstand disease. <u>The Little Oxford Dictionary of Current English</u> (1996) also describes resistance as the ability or power to resist the impeding effect exerted by one thing on another, such as a secret organisation resisting a regime, especially in an occupied country. Padmini Monga, political theorist, furthers this idea and states that resistance is:

> The overthrowing (of) the hierarchy of the coloniser/colonised, the speech and stance of the colonised refusing a position of subjugation and dispensing with the terms of the coloniser's definitions. [Monga 1996 88].

It is important to acknowledge that these conjunctures of resistance are always shifting, just as the culture wherein it is found, is always evolving. Resistance therefore has several meanings or interpretations, depending on the context in which it is studied or found. Culture, the evolving dialectical relationship of the sociological, political and economic spheres, is constantly shaping and re-arranging the sites of resistance. Resistance therefore changes, evolves and shifts within a culture that is constantly redefining itself.

South Africa's history of political struggle and recent political transformation demonstrates the notions and sites of resistance in evolution. These are found in the socio-political, cultural and artistic spheres. They occurred when a large majority of people in South Africa, under Afrikaner Nationalist rule, were disenfranchised, powerless and dominated by a colonialist

hegemony. The colonised resorted to political and cultural resistance as means of survival and for the salvation of their African identity and heritage.

Resistance to a dominant hegemony became paramount to the oppressed as the colonisers had a tendency to see black culture as homogenous, "unified and transnational - (which was a) universalising myth of a unified black identity in the face of its multiplicity and diversity". [ibid.92]. The apartheid laws of South Africa created a racist hegemony that perpetuated this myth. Ethnic and cultural differences within black culture were ignored and denigrated.

The colonization and resultant apartheid that enforced separate development was established by "whites (who) saw only those surface manifestations of African culture and the African mind that conflicted with their own concepts of approved social behaviour." [Sparks 1990 20]. Blacks were viewed as a threatening black mass outnumbering the white population. They were perceived as a homogenous group. Whites were perceived as "us" and blacks were "them".

> Blacks (were) separated not only from the whites but also from "coloureds", Indians, Chinese, and to a lesser extent even from one another according to their ethnic classifications. The whole country (was) a honeycomb of cellular group ghettos, full of ghetto attitudes of "us" and "them". [ibid. 217].

Allister Sparks, South African newspaper editor, quotes Breyten Breytenbach, South African poet, who maintained that apartheid worked as it isolated the white man. "He (was) becoming conditioned by his lack of contact with the people of the country ..." [ibid. 218]. This was part of a master plan for a white country "whose main purpose (was) to see that overwhelming numbers of the black population live(d) and work(ed) in their own homelands, or Bantustans, as soon as possible." [cited in Andersson 1981 86]. Tribalism was weakened by this master plan. Chiefs of these homeland areas, selected by the state, were thus discredited as they were seen to be collaborating with the state. "White South Africans wanted the black man's service but not his presence." [Sparks 1990 136]. The whites remained in urbanised modern

cities where blacks were allowed to work but had ties with a homeland where they could develop along their own lines. It was a method of controlling the "noble savage".

Ironically black politics in South Africa is not structured "on tribal lines the way it is almost everywhere else in Africa." [ibid. 390]. Black South African politics is pan-tribal and its differences are ideological rather than ethnic. Ideologically defined political bases are the motivators for resistance rather than tribalism. InKatha, a Zulu based organisation is however the exception.

This ideological dimension is important to the notion of resistance in dance as it promotes the notion of cross-cultural development. It can be seen as the motivation for a resistance in dance, that is afro-fusion. This will be discussed later in more detail.

Hegemony

Cultural theorist Stuart Hall [1980] describes hegemony as a structure or construct that most directly expresses the power and the position of the dominant party in a society. Antonio Gramsci, political theorist, maintains that hegemonic force is

> at root a `subjective' phenomenon whereby the ideological supports of a given socio-economic and cultural-political system become presuppositions ingrained in individual and mass consciousness. Consequently, any attempt to bring about a radical change in such a system must involve a struggle to disengage the constructs of personal and social life. [Sillanpoa 1981 132].

Hegemony, according to Gramsci, a neo-Marxist, is one of modern capitalism's most salient features, that has a capacity to create political and cultural homogeneity. Fiske reminds us that "ideology works in the sphere of culture as economics does in its own sphere, to neutralise the capitalist system so it appears to be the only one possible." [Fiske 1989 14]. However, for Gramsci, hegemony is neither a static concept, nor does it remain fixed and impermeable. Like Gramsci, Hall believes that there is not only one set of ideas or cultural forms in a society. He

states further that

> There will be more than one tendency at work within the dominant ideas of a society. Groups or classes which do not stand at the apex of power, nevertheless find ways of expressing and realising in their culture their subordinate positions and experiences. In so far as there is more than one fundamental class in a society...there will be more than one major configuration in play at a particular moment. But the structures and meanings which most adequately reflect the position and interests of the most powerful class...will stand, in relation to all the others, as a **dominant** social-cultural order. The dominant culture represents itself as **the** culture. It tries to define and contain all the other cultures within its inclusive range. **Its** views of the world, unless challenged, will stand as the most natural, all-embracing, universal culture. Other cultural configurations will not only be subordinate to this dominant order: they enter into struggle with it, seek to modify, negotiate, resist or even overthrow its reign - its **hegemony**... (C)ultures always stand in relations of domination - and subordination - to one another, are always in some sense, in struggle with one another. [Hall 1980 12] (not my emphasis).

The socio-political and cultural transformation of South Africa demonstrates this struggle with the Nationalist hegemony entrenched by apartheid laws. Resistance to the homogenising effects of apartheid took place at a nexus or within a dialectic of the socio-political, cultural and artistic arenas. The dialectical struggle between these categories helped shape the new society and influenced the creation of a democratic heterogeneous society that accepted differences of race and culture.

1.2. The notion of site

The Pocket Oxford Dictionary (1961) describes site as being the ground on which a town or building stands, stood, or is to stand. It is derivative of the Latin word *situs*, meaning position. The Collins Dictionary (1991) describes site as the piece of land where something was, is, or is intended to be located. Therefore a site is a location where something is to be, or was built upon. A site is representative of something, an idea or construct. The extension of this concept can therefore be recognised in the more abstract notions of the socio-political, cultural and artistic spheres of a society. The *situs* can also be extended to a more personal level, the body. In the context of this thesis this *situs*, is the dancing body.

It is within an ethos of resistance and transformation of South Africa's socio-political and

cultural climate that the Dance Factory emerges as a site. In this climate that questions, investigates and challenges the dominant socio-political and artistic hegemony, the artistic site is important, as it highlights on a symbolic level resistance or acceptance. Dance, a manifestation of cultural and symbolic practice, needs to be examined if it is resistant to the mainstream of artistic endeavour, which reflects a dominant ideology. This is because dance has the ability to demonstrate physically the inherent sites of artistic resistance in a given culture. Artistic resistance is inscribed on the body, the personal site.

Therefore resistance takes place at three sites: the socio-political, the artistic and on the personal level, the body. The investigation of these three resistant sites is found in The Dance Factory, a dance work "Torso-Tongue" and the dancing body. These sites intertwine and feed each other in a dialectic.

It is important to note that the body as site, in South African history, was racially classified. It therefore became a political tool or a cultural weapon for control, change and resistance. However, now that democracy has broken the homogenising effects of colonialist rule on Black South Africans, new sites of resistance have emerged. This thesis will explore these new sites of resistance within this new hegemony.

1.3 Dance Factory as site

The Dance Factory is a renovated warehouse in the Newtown Cultural Precinct, Johannesburg. This site is where local, regional and international dance practitioners perform, teach and network. This cultural resource was born out of a need for dance practitioners to establish and confirm their identity in a time of political struggle and cultural transformation. The Dance Factory site emerged to meet the needs of the dance community. Its formulation policies are an extension of the political struggle and the development of the present

government's Reconstruction and Development Policy (RDP).[1] This means that cultural

workers who had been previously disempowered now have an opportunity to contribute to the

development and enrichment of their own culture. This supports Fiske's idea that the

individuals involved in the development of popular culture need a site or conducive

environment for their empowerment, as

> under the appropriate social conditions, they are able to act, particularly at the
> micropolitical level, and by such action increase their sociocultural space, to
> effect a (micro)redistribution of power in their favor. [Fiske 1989 161].

The Dance Factory was and is such a space. Here dance practitioners researched their

cultural identity and its acceptability through dance. These dance forms were freed of a

colonialist hegemony. Dance practitioners, in principle, decolonised their minds and bodies in

a neutral space, in a search for their roots and local or niche culture. In fact bodies of different

race groups worked together, and still do, intimately.

 The need for this site was also highlighted when the International Cultural Boycott[2] against

South Africa was deteriorating. In the late 1980s cross-cultural exchanges involving South

African and foreign artists were encouraged. This issue exposed several important issues in

local dance. It galvanised an awareness that dancers were not interfacing with each other in

South Africa. They were only doing so internationally, in foreign countries. South African

dancers from different cultural backgrounds never met on common ground, in a shared

environment, literally and aesthetically. The previous regime, through its separate development

policies, forbade sites that encouraged the breakdown of racial and social divisions. The

Dance Factory site however encouraged the mixing of races, ethnic groups and their different

dance aesthetics. The previously dominant position and elitism of classical ballet for instance,

was broken down in this way. Classical ballet as a result no longer maintains its superior

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[1]   "   RDP policy on arts and culture can be found in <u>The Reconstruction and Development Programme, A Policy Framework</u>, African National Congress, 1994. Chap.3.4.

[2]   "   During the socio-political transformation the isolating effects of the **International Cultural Boycott** against South Africa were still being experienced. Instituted by the American Actors' Equity (1945), British Equity (1956) and the United Nations (1960s), it was finally repealed in 1991. [cited in Eichbaum 1987 3-4].

position in the dance world as popular and local township forms are given equal status in the programming of the festivals and workshops that take place at the Dance Factory.

The location of the Dance Factory site is also important. The warehouse, located in the city centre, is easily accessible to all environs of Johannesburg and the townships surrounding it. This new site also caters for a progressive and a racially mixed dance audience, as audiences of all races or ethnic groups have equal access to it. The racial barriers that existed in audiences are dismantled in this manner. This structure therefore encourages multi-ethnicity in the city centre. This venue is associated with the New South Africa. Without direct state interference, it encourages the racial mixture of performers and audiences.

Debbie Rakusin and David Matemela, the 1997 joint winners of the Standard Bank Young Artist Award, bear testimony to the above. Their collaboration at The Dance Factory, which explores a fusion of their different dance forms, has resulted in Afro-fusion. They have mixed American jazz and Eurocentric contemporary dance with South African township and traditional dance forms. The site nurtured their collaboration. They will present their work on a mainstream platform at the Grahamstown Festival for the Arts in 1998. The site has therefore contributed to the evolution of Afro-fusion from dance as protest to a mainstream form.

The physical site, the Dance Factory is therefore a site of education, a factory, where dances are created and performed by and for people of all races or ethnic groups. This is a place for the workers of dance culture, to create dance works, perform them and educate others about dance and new sites of resistance within a changed environment.

1.4 Dance as site

Dance as an art form is a site where communication and meaning is transferred. Judith Lynn Hanna, dance anthropologist, cites meaning taking place in dance in the

> stylistic and structural manipulation of the elements of space, rhythm and the dynamics and the human body's physical control. In the embodied meaning of dance, one aspect of dance points to another rather than to what exists beyond the dance performance.
> [Hanna 1979 23].

Dance also utilises a whole complex set of communication symbols. These may be a paralanguage, which is a semiotic system "made up of signifiers that refer to things other than themselves" or other non-verbal communication systems. [ibid.p.24]. These systems of communication may support or refute the society's or group's normal cultural patterns, through rituals of rebellion or cathartic outlets of deviance. These sites of disorder or chaos in dance, are the sites of resistance as they disrupt the ordered academic codes of classical

or traditional forms of dance.

Those dances that are sites of resistance are part of "affective culture". They are able to affect the hegemony of the dominant community. Dance anthropologist Joan W. Kealiinohomoku claims that

> Affective culture is reflective **of** a culture, and also instrumentally affecting **to** the culture...If dance reflects its culture, it must be evident that any major culture change will bring about change in the dance. Culture change will be reflected in the dance as either consonant or dissonant. [Kealiinohomoku 1979 47] (not my emphases).

New artistic hegemonies are therefore created. These are either accepted or rejected by the creators and audiences of dance. They are either consonant or dissonant with the dominant hegemony. An examination of the sites of dissonance and the elements that make them resistant to the dominant hegemony will reveal the "affective" nature of a dance work.

The South African context

In a South African colonialist context, sites of resistance took place on a symbolic level in dance, theatre, and music. David B. Coplan (1985) describes how the Black Consciousness movement in South Africa influenced the Black theatre tradition in an attempt to restore Black

cultural identity and autonomy. Similarly, Temple Hauptfleisch and Ian Steadman (1983) point out that, it is resistant indigenous theatre works that represent committed and alternative forms as they reveal the discourse of 'the struggle'. This discourse is mostly improvised, ritualised and danced.

The role of Non-Governmental Organisations

Artists involved in 'the struggle' had to work in subversive organisations called Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), in order to create syncretic or anarchic forms of protest theatre and dance. These NGOs received funding from foreign embassies and organisations that recognised the need to develop the arts in marginalised and neglected ethnic groups. Their credo that, the "arts belong to everybody" [Friedman, Arabesque 1984 33], was reflected in their non-racial membership, policies and management. The following NGOs offered dance in their curricula; Alexandra Arts Centre in Alexandra Township, The Market Theatre Laboratory and Federated Union of Black Artists (Fuba) in Johannesburg, *Soweto Dance Theatre* and Funda in Soweto, *Jazzart* in Cape Town and Community Arts Project (CAP) in Langa Township. These NGOs as well as English-speaking University Drama Departments and independent choreographers all explored defiance and resistance in their creative works.

Dance as protest

Dance entered an arena of cultural resistance, in the streets and in theatres. This is because,

> (d)ance and music can often express sentiments of opposition and resistance
> and the aspirations of people who are denied verbal or literary expression of
> these feelings. [Glasser 1990 11].

The toyi-toyi, a popular form of protest dance, was performed in order to express the suppressed sentiments of the masses. This was performed spontaneously by groups of people in order to demonstrate solidarity and unity and provided an essential alternative outlet for the venting of dissatisfaction and anger. People, without permission to verbalise their opposition, turned to their bodies as a means of expression, the only personal locus of

experience and expression left available to the silenced Black masses. Dance academic, Dr Frederick Hagemann (1990), proposes that:

> By presenting the body in displays of resistance (and) by opposing an oppressive ideology with physical bodies in the actual space of the streets, (the oppressed) have forged a new culture which challenges the hegemonic codes of body perception sustained by the uncritical acceptance of the imposed status quo. [Hagemann 1990 7].

Via the body the oppressed felt empowered, as the feeling of defiance was immediately tangible. Here the body was not manipulated by laws but driven by a desire for personal liberation from an imposed hegemony.

Adrienne Sichel, dance critic, also cites political protest and resistance portrayed in the toyi-toyi, "the people's war dance". Other dance forms that were resistant or acts of protest were the township mpantsula dances and the marabi [Hammerschlag 1991 24-26], isicatamiya [Larlham 1985] and the Isishameni [Glasser 1990 7-11].

Afro-fusion

Afro-fusion as resistance

In the 1980's Afro-fusion was a site of resistance to mainstream dance forms specifically and racial discrimination, generally. The 1980's mainstream contemporary dance was largely influenced by American forms of dance, such as the Graham technique and the Horton technique. These were practised by mainly white dance practitioners. In order to resist this infiltration of dance that promoted a hegemonic colonialist identity, other dance practitioners set about creating a fusion of American and African dance forms. These dance practitioners were searching for a unique South African identity in their dance.

The Graham technique was readily absorbed and incorporated into African dance, as there were similarities between the two techniques. Both dance forms revere power and control of the body in a formal manner.

Aesthetically there are also many parallels between Zulu dance or warrior dances and the gravity bound Graham technique. Paul Mahgoba, a Sotho professional dancer in Johannesburg was impressed by the "virile, manly grace" developed in Zulu warrior dance teams. [cited in Hanna 1978 195]. The warrior dance is a display of strength, self-affirmation and their symbolic value in a post-colonial community is relevant to a re-emergence of negritude or authenticity. The latter are most valuable to those who have experienced cultural disruption and separation. "These may be a reaction, vengeance or more likely, a positive affirmation of self-instilling pride, obtaining inspiration from the past rather than returning blindly to it." [ibid. 96]. These symbolic forms of strength, virility and grace confirm the notion of black nationalism, independence, self-assertion and ethnic identity in a heterogeneous nation.

This synthesis of African and Western contemporary dance forms were sites of resistance which served 'the struggle' and liberation ideology in the years prior to democracy in 1994. The dance form as a site of resistance, was resisting the policy of apartheid. This it did by fusing forms from different sectors of the South African dance spectrum, as a means of defying 'separate development'. Resistance to racial separation was explored physically as bodies of different colour danced together, sharing a common time and space.

After 1994 the democratically elected African National Congress (ANC) came into power. Its cultural mandate, a reflection of its pan-tribalist character, accepted a diversification of cultural forms. The incorporation and assimilation of foreign Western techniques was therefore acceptable. The inclusion of Western dance forms were accepted for their potential to support a new modern hegemony.

Ironically Afro-fusion's resistant stance altered after democratisation. Afro-fusion had by this

time become an ethnic dance form, codified and formalised. The power and control found in this dance form served the political environment. Afro-fusion was now conservative and expressed notions of rationality, order, precision, agility, virility and modernist concerns. This dance form was no longer counter-hegemonic and did not express rupture. Afro-fusion was an acceptable dance form politically and served the new ANC government's ideology. Disruptive alternative dance forms that deconstructed the formalism inherent in many dance techniques, were treated with suspicion and ignored. These were, for example, contact improvisation, physical theatre and release techniques. The latter undermined the importance of form, virtuosity and competitiveness.

Sichel cites the beginnings of Afro-fusion occurring as a result of the toyi-toyi filtering into theatre in the 1980s. The mid-1980s saw the start of Afro-fusion in the townships. Dance practitioners blended Western and African forms of dance, producing new syncretic forms of dance such as the mpantsula, township jive or African Contemporary. South African protest theatre embraced the Afro-fusion dance form and it became "a mirror for socio-political issues, realities and conflicts." [Sichel 1990 12]. The productions of Percy Mtwa, Mbongeni Ngema and Barney Simon's "Woza Albert!", Mtwa's "Bopha!" and Ngema's "Asinimali!" incorporated resistance via song, movement and dance. In 1986, Ngema's "Sarafina!" revealed "a microcosm of South African dance styles and traditions." [ibid.]. Protest dances were mixed with the mpantsula, isicatamiya and traditional Zulu dancing. Ngema also created his own stylistic fusion, according to Sichel. A Broadway influence is apparent in the later version of "Sarafina!".

Several independent dance groups and ensembles practised Afro-fusion in the 1980's. Groups such as Sylvia Glasser's, *Moving into Dance,* founded in 1978, Adele Blank's *Free Flight Dance Company,* the Afrika Cultural Centre and Fuba, all based in Johannesburg, created fusions of traditional and contemporary dance forms. In Soweto, Sichel cites Afro-fusion

occurring in the Soyikwa Institute of African Theatre at Funda Centre. Here Soentjie Thapedi and Nomsa Manaka "use(d) traditional steps and dynamic (rural and urban) rhythms, combined with jazz and contemporary dance techniques and influences from West Africa and the Caribbean." [ibid.]. Furthermore, she states that Carly Dibakoane, based in Meadowlands at the Bapedi Cultural Centre, was the major force of Afro-fusion in the region. He later formed the *Soweto Dance Theatre* in conjunction with Jackie Semela. In Cape Town, the *Pace Dance Company,* lead by Val Steyn, experimented with Afro-fusion and *Jazzart,* "the oldest company of its kind", also "produce(d) challenging, politically and stylistically progressive work." [ibid. p.13].

Clare Lawson (1990), dance critic, cites 1989 as the seminal year for "cross-overs" or fusion. These were showcased at the first Dance Umbrella 1989. Sichel (1998) sites Christopher Kindo as the exponent of multiple fusion. He "transmogrifies classical ballet, contemporary, jazz, African and Indian dance." [Sichel 1992 5]. He explored this in his solo, "Me" (1992). This acted as a precursor to further explorations of the fusion of African and European with Balinese and Indian dance, by Vincent Mantsoe.

These attempts at fusion were sometimes met with criticism. Dr Hagemann noted that

> black township performance, like resistance theatre, has juggled backward and forward between the present tense of oppression and the future tense of an alternative, hopeful future... (These) are embodied in the eukinetic structures of the dance which are built on notions of buoyancy, vitality, flexibility, speed and a powerful physical presence. [Hagemann 1990 11].

These energetic dance sequences, found for example in the works of Mbongeni Ngema, were criticised negatively 'overseas' for the inherent contradiction of energetic dance in the face of "the dehumanising effects of apartheid." [ibid.]. Another criticism lodged at township dance was that the mpantsula was merely the repetition of step patterns, the body merely a technical tool of dance proficiency. Township dance was in danger of losing its historical roots. Dr Hagemann emphasised that "(w)ithout this historical perspective, the expression of the 'communal

liberation myth' (became) merely an empty slogan." [ibid.]. Furthermore the dance needed to be saved from the, "hallucinogenic powers of mass choreography." [ibid. 8]. In conclusion, Dr Hagemann writes that contemporary dance will only prosper if new sets of relationships between dancers are set up. These include the identification of personal movement signatures in relation to members of the group and then to her/his community and finally to the country. Apartheid relationships however never allowed this deep investigation, as bonds between different cultures were never encouraged.

Thus dance practitioners were searching for a unified vision of dance or commonality that would resist the racial divisions laid down by apartheid. Dance practitioners felt that through dance, this change could be expedited. They believed that the artificial barriers and divisions based on colour and made into law by the government could be resisted and subverted by identifying a unified culture based on a commonality that was in opposition to the dictates of apartheid. This was a difficult task as apartheid had led people to believe that the different racial groups had nothing in common with each other. The laws had ensured this.

Classicism and Afro-fusion

A brief discussion of classicism is necessary as Afro-fusion, in its development and evolution has become formalised and influenced by classicism. Afro-fusion and classicism have several characteristics in common. Both are pure dance forms and reflect "grace and clarity" (John Cage 1944), uniformity and virility.

Classical academic dance, namely classical ballet is governed by logocentric codes.[3] It is governed by rules of harmony, beauty, balance and line. Arnold Haskell quoted in Alastair Macaulay's article Notes on Classicism (1987), provides a definitive description of classicism

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[3]   " Logocentricism , a term coined by Jaques Derrida. Cited in Madan Sarup, An introductory guide to Post-Structuralism and postmodernism, University of Georgia Press (1993).

in ballet.[4]

> Classicism, very freely translated, means pure dancing that is based on the five positions, that produces long graceful lines, that is neither acrobatic, violent, nor lacking in dignity; the **classical** dancer, the dancer of perfect build and technique, who has sought no short cuts to proficiency, and who can hold her audience **by her movements alone, with no extraneous literary conception to divert them;** the **classical** ballet, ballet that is designed first and last for the maximum exploitation of the dancer's gifts, physical and artistic. [Macauley 1987 8] (not my emphases).

Macaulay notes the most pertinent issues that Haskell uses to describe classical dance. These are that there are no extraneous literary concepts and that an expressiveness of pure form is found in classical and even modernist neo-classical ballet. Cage notes that personality and individual messages are not found in classical dance forms. "Grace and clarity" are the driving forces behind these forms.

These two criteria may be applied to more modernist or neo-classical dance forms of the twentieth century. They are not confined to classical vocabulary exclusively. The neo-classical ballets of George Balanchine and Merce Cunningham, are prime examples. Despite the fact that Cunningham was the precursor to the post-modernist movement in dance, his work is considered to be self-reflexive and formalist and at best a demonstration of "grace and clarity". His work is not following a classical ballet tradition but is influenced by, what Macauley refers to as the manners, etiquette and morality of classicism, that is more philosophical than technical.

> Manners are to do with outward behaviour. Dance classicism is not an introspective or expressionistic presentation of people. It shows life as lived in present action. Often it gives an ideal or idealist view. The use of dance techniques, ballet or other, that demand clarity, precision, rigour, propose some kind of perfection. [Macauley 1987 37].

This form of dance expresses purity of form and expresses nothing but itself. It is self-

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[4]   The reader should refer to Arnold Haskell's notes on dance classicism. It is not within the scope of this thesis to describe classicism in dance in great detail. There are exhaustive accounts on dance classicism available. The reader should refer these for further information.

reflexive. The form may be abstract "and none the less sensuous, insofar as the perception of the form is capable of inducing modes of kinetic and kinaesthetic pleasure" [Levin cited in Copeland and Cohen 1983 130]. It is therefore anti-theatrical and the content is structural which is reduced to pure self-reference. An essentialist modernism is present in this form of dance. Here the form of the work and the content are one and the same. "Modernist art, to speak paradoxically, reveals ... itself." [ibid. 127].

Macauley states that because classicism in dance is not expressionistic "it can seem escapist" [Macauley 187 39]. It represses violent urges, the irrational and deviant behaviour that circumvents rational, ordered manners and etiquette. Dance that is classicist in nature avoids the expressions and gestures of anger, violence and psychological narratives. It therefore is appealing to mainstream audiences as it is not confrontational.

Within the South African context, Afro-fusion best exemplifies the influence of classicism. This self-referential dance form demonstrates dynamic "grace and clarity", virility, control, power and the manners of classicism. Afro-fusion posits no socio-political standpoint, no narrative and is not counter-hegemonic. It displays no rupture in the development of South African dance history. Afro-fusion embraces and reflects the ANC's standpoint of accepting all or differences in culture and race, and the notion of the "rainbow nation". Ironically Afro-fusion started as a reaction to the hegemonic control of European white dance practices. Yet by selecting and fusing modernist and classicist forms of Western dance with African traditional dance it has now become an acceptable form of dance that does not contradict the new form of nationalism of the ANC government. Afro-fusion speaks for nationalistic tendencies of stability, civility, acceptance of otherness and above all the concern of modernity and progression that post-colonialist countries strive toward. Afro-fusion expresses in its modernity a concern for positive affirmation of self-instilling pride, obtaining strength from the past and the present.

The progression of Afro-fusion from protest to a modernist dance form is demonstrated in the works of several South African dance companies. Sichel describes *Pace Dance Company's* work as "wonderfully entertaining" and having "a unique dynamic and aesthetic." [Sichel 1989 6]. Similarly, Boyzie Cekwana's work, which was presented on the Main Programme at the Grahamstown Festival in 1995, is described, as demonstrating "synchrony and harmony" [Daily News 1996 5]. Vincent Mantsoe's choreography best demonstrates the quality of classicism in South African Afro-fusion. Sichel describes the work of *Moving into Dance,* at the Dance Factory in 1994 as, "organically structured, (a) fluid abstraction of African motifs and dynamics", which were performed with finesse. [Sichel 1994 2]. The term "finesse" incorporates a concern with "grace and clarity".

Similarly, at the Dance Alliance Liberty Life Conference in August 1994, *Free Flight Dance Company* stated:

> Our style encompasses joy, fun, excitement, the cohesion of muscular skills and the exploration of new rhythms and syncopated patterns. But most of all our objective is to entertain, to uplift, to infuse a spirit of daredevilry and youth, of boundless energy and limitless imagination. [Dance Alliance, 1994].

This shift of focus from protest to "boundless energy", is a reflection of the socio-political transformation. In the early 1990's up until 1994, the thrust of resistance in dance and theatre became redundant in the light of liberation and democracy. Resistance and protest in dance was replaced by an ethos of exuberance, virility and "grace and clarity" serving a new nationalism that reveres dignity and pride in its non-racial democracy. Afro-fusion became a mainstream form of dance in this manner.

Afro-fusion as mainstream dance

According to Marilyn Jenkins, dance critic, mainstream "has the connotation of (being)

common, conventional, safe and widely accepted." [Jenkins, 1998]. At present Afro-fusion falls within this category. In the 1980s it was a provocative and resistant dance form. By the early 1990s it had established itself at all major dance events. The slow absorption of the classical aesthetics of line, balance, uniformity, beauty, "grace and clarity" throughout the 1990s, assisted in its evolution from a marginal to a mainstream form of dance.

Jenkins maintains that 1996 saw the establishment of Afrofusion on the mainstream through the choreography of Vincent Mantsoe of *Moving into Dance*. Mantsoe received the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for 1996. His work was presented on the mainstream platform at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival. His choreography is described by a critics as, "infinitely graceful...combine(d) with disciplined athleticism." [Jordan 1996 B9]. Jenkins describes his "Gula Matari" (1994), as displaying "beautifully controlled, evocative movement." [Jenkins 1994 18]. Sichel also remarks on the beauty inherent in Mantsoe's "Men-Jaro" (1996); "in the premiere of 'Men-Jaro', beauty was one of the words that kept ricocheting around my senses." [Sichel 1996]. The key words used to describe the works are beauty, control, grace and athleticism. These are the underlying standards of a classical vocabulary.

Now a mainstream and acceptable dance form, Afro-fusion is performed in most theatres, dance centres, schools and Outreach programmes. Afro-fusion is considered to be a South African dance form, a style, a unique blend of African and Western dance, that can be taught and used in choreography as a codified language. This usually transpires as a result of the pedagogical nature of dance, where dance practitioners in order to pass on their personal dance form or language, codify the dance form.

This codification requires planning, a strategy or curriculum, which ultimately takes a conservative stance, as rules and codes are obeyed in favour of a personal expression. The establishment of schools of dance, as in the case of *Moving into Dance*, demonstrates this

strategy and transition.

Thus Afro-fusion has become a conservative form of dance as a consequence of codification. It does not de-stabilise dance conventions. The form has become acceptable, even to mainstream audiences.

The acceptance of Afro-fusion onto the mainstream demonstrates the transition of resistance to acceptance. The theme of protest in Afro-fusion has been replaced by ordered and acceptable classicist themes and formalised movement. Alternative sites of resistance have emerged as a consequence of this dynamic shift.

Strategies of resistance

Alternatives to Afro-fusion as mainstream

According to the manager of First national Bank Vita Promotions for the Dance Umbrella,[5] Georgina Thompson, South African 'alternative' dance moves away from pure dance and Afro-fusion by using more "physical theatre" movement, speech and "alternative styles of movement". [Thompson interview, 1997]. She notes that established dance companies such as *Pact Dance Company (PDC)*, now the *State Theatre Company* will not invite choreographers of 'alternative' work to choreograph for them. According to Thompson, Ester Nasser, Artistic Director of *PDC* will not or cannot afford to alienate the audiences with such alternative work. The choreographers of alternative forms must therefore be exploring alternatives not considered appropriate for mainstream consumption. They are considered to be too resistant to the mainstream.

The *First Physical Theatre Company* in 1994 produced "Shattered Windows", an

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[5]　　　"　The FNB Vita Dance Umbrella was launched in 1989 to provide a free platform for the full spectrum of contemporary South African choreography and dance. The focus of the Dance Umbrella is on original contemporary choreography.

expressionistic dance form utilizing a physical theatre technique. The work was acknowledged and awarded the First National Bank Award for Best Contemporary Choreography. The prize was shared with *Moving into Dance* Artistic Director and Choreographer Sylvia Glasser. This rupture of expressionism on local dance platforms, heralded in an alternative dance discourse that previously had not been fully acknowledged, realized and truly accepted.

Sichel sites resistant forms at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival in 1995. Here the barriers between drama, dance and opera shifted. *Jazzart*, for instance, "fused classic Greek theatre with cutting-edge, cross-cultural dance." [Sichel 1995 20]. The Dance Factory in the same year provided a platform for such work in Performance Art I and Performance Art II. This provides, according to Sichel, "(a subversion of) reality and creates a rollercoaster of lateral thinking, (and) a safety valve for the imagination - a social catharsis. It is a provocative peepshow into the ritual of survival and individual expression." [ibid.].

The eruption of expressionism in local dance is evolving. This is an alternative to afro-fusion. Sichel also notes this occurring at the Arts Alive Festival 1997. In "squatter camps of the SOUL", she states that

> Living in violence-swamped Gauteng isn't easy. So it's no surprise that its dance makers are obsessed with the violation. Their choreography interrogates the violation of personal space, violated relationships and scarred identities under siege. [Sichel 1997 2].

She describes the vocabulary of the pieces as projecting raw physicality, electric release, urgent with a "biting edge", surging, purging, powerful and confrontational. Vocal accompaniment of screams and cries and percussion are striking. Sexual scenes, rapes, and sodomy are some of the topics that are dealt with. She critically notes however that in the attempt to relay an artistic message, some of the works are self-indulgent. This stands in opposition to Afro-fusion that, in the work of Debbie Rakusin and David Matemela, has a tendency "to be overshadowed by energy-driven spectacle." [Sichel 1997 2]. The latter takes

precedence over choreographic substance.

Jenkins describes resistant dance to the mainstream as not "dance" but movement

> which challenges **today's norms** mentally, emotionally or physically, or in any combination of the three. Body and voice are extended into new realms, natural elements (gravity, space) are explored and countered in different ways, emotions are soaked, wrung out and held up to dry in a myriad of contexts, and props drawn from everyday life add new textures. [Jenkins 1998] (not my emphasis).

These expressionist works, performed mainly at the Dance Factory's Arts Alive Festivals, have always been described as difficult to view. The audience is made uncomfortable. Sichel reminds them to

> Be prepared for uncomfortable moments during the Dance Factory festival as choreographers and dancers explore their urban environment and challenge prevailing sensibilities. [Sichel 1995]

Hazel Friedman, arts critic, quotes Candice Breitz, an artist, on this shift of perspective in the arts. Within this new socio-political context there is a difference between "'aestheticising the political' and 'politicising the aesthetic'." [Friedman 1996 30]. Breitz maintains that the former is "when one becomes too precious about the work and its surface glamour. Its formal seduction becomes an end in itself and distracts from the content. In the latter, (-) formal seduction is used as a strategy to lure the viewer inside, to convey the content and then dislodge the comfort zones." [ibid.].

Afro-fusion is never described in such a manner. Virtuosity and "grace and clarity" are always commented on. Afro-fusion and classicism are closer together aesthetically than expressionism and classicism. These stand diametrically in opposition to each other. Expressionism destabilises the classical or traditional modes of dance found in contemporary dance and Afro-fusion.

Resistance to Afro-fusion and classicism

To resist "grace and clarity" in dance, contemporary choreographers must therefore transgress the rules of classicism. One method of transgressing this mode of dance performance is to utilise altered states of consciousness, as this disrupts the ordered logocentrism found in classical styles.

Western thought and philosophy is based on logocentrism. This cartesian logic is committed to a belief in some ultimate word, essence, truth or reality that acts as the foundation for all thought, language and experience. The binary opposites of these truths or realities are hierarchically defined in their opposition. The superior term belongs to the logos and the inferior serves to define its status. Rigid boundaries are the result of this binary logic. Binarism serves ideologies. They have a tendency to draw rigid boundaries between what is acceptable and what is not, what is central and what is marginal. The affirmation of the superior nodes in the binarisms that exist between classicism and expressionism, form and content or line and feeling are evident. These binarisms are not destabilised by the inferior opposites. The perfection of the first or former criteria of the form is paramount and never confrontational nor subversive. It is palatable and acceptable for mainstream audiences.

Dance is resistant when the deconstruction of the binarism inherent in classicism and traditional dance forms is employed as a deconstructive strategy. Dance that deconstructs the binary codes in mainstream dance must attend to issues that are subservient to the superior logos or presence. This will destabilise the binarism, challenge the dominant ideology, open up new discourses and place the new work in opposition to the mainstream work. Issues that were previously inferior will be highlighted and the dominant ideological framework that insists on a certain form, will be challenged and perhaps be changed. In this manner dance is resistant to artistic or socio-political ideologies and credos.

Altered states of consciousness

Altered states of consciousness deconstruct and challenge the binarisms that enable distinctions like the rational or irrational, acceptable or unacceptable and mainstream or experimental in forms of dance in South Africa.

Hanna (1979) states that altered states of consciousness disrupt the familiar, comfortable experience for both spectator and performer attending classical dance performance. The disruption lies in the suspension of the rules governing the familiar experience. Here surprise, incongruity, uncertainty, conflict, ambiguity, absence of clear expectations, multiple meanings and instability are utilised to transgress the expected experience. The dancer and audience experience a shift in thought processes, a re-patterning of logocentric thinking. There is a

> disturbed time sense, loss of control, body image change, perceptual distortion, disorientation, change in meaning, sense of the ineffable, feeling of rejuvenation, and hypersuggestibility. The pursuit of vertigo, self-loss, or giddiness through high speed is common in dance. Altered states of consciousness may be achieved through rhythmic stimulation in more than one sensory mode; aural, visual, or tactile reception can convey the impact. Kinesthetic stress, overexertion, and fatigue increase susceptibility to rhythm. [Hanna 1979 26].

The sense of chaos disrupts the old orientations to controlled lines and expression found in classical dance forms. The superior status of control in the binary relationship with chaos is dismantled. This is a strategy that can be used locally to challenge and resist the mainstream forms of dance, such as Afro-fusion, which relies heavily on form and structure, order and clarity of meaning and movement.

Trance and ritual

Anthropologist Mary Douglas (1970) claims that where social structures are strong, in order to control individual behaviour, trance like states are feared as they subvert logocentricism. Trance, as part of ritual, resists the conscious control of the influence of language on culture, which is a logocentric rational discourse. Trance and ritual have the ability to give expression to bodily states of abandonment, the irrational and intuitive forces.

Johan Degenaar, Jungian philosopher based in South Africa, takes this further. He maintains that above all, "(ritual) helps the conscious ego to make contact with the rich contents of the collective unconscious". [Degenaar 1986 44]. The collective unconscious is the opponent of the conscious state, as it utilises a language not understood by the conscious mind. Verbal language cannot describe or articulate this non-verbal mode of discourse.

According to anthropologist John Blacking (1985), one must acknowledge the language of dance as the site where this occurs. Here, "the transfer of decision making from verbal to non-verbal discourse constitutes the core of the dance experience". [Blacking 1985 67]. He maintains that it is not the loss of reason for emotion that induces trance but the introduction of "another kind of reasoning, whose grammar and content are most effectively, though not exclusively, expressed in non-verbal language." [ibid.]. The dancer stimulates the imagination and brings out a sensuality and feeling that is not reasonably described in a logocentric mode. The right brain is galvanised into action to produce what is described as the, "intelligence of feeling." [ibid.72].

In this manner trance is resistant to dance forms influenced by classicism. This utilises left brain activity associated with analytic thinking, language, logic and linear processing. Classical academic dance utilises formalised movement. Trance utilises expressive movement and transcends the sequential modes of linear logocentric thought.

According to Hanna, dance that is based on or inspired by ritual is also purposeful and serves a sociopsychological function within its community. The dance is "meshed with the socio-cultural system," in order to create, "a cultural consistency for those who partake in the ritual." [Hanna 1979 24]. Paul Spencer, dance anthropologist, furthers this communal perspective by stating that the !Kung and Khoi San people also dance so that

> (t)hrough dancing, the individual is caught up in a very dynamic way in the powerful forces underlying community life. It is not just his (sic) imagination that is stirred, but his whole body. [Spencer 1985 35].

During ritual there is a shift from "structure as applied to the power relations of everyday life, to communities at times when normal life is suspended." [Victor Turner cited in Spencer 1985 34].

Ritualistic dancing is therefore a highly social and a levelling activity that, draws people together in solidarity. It is also frequently marginal and anomalous in its own way.

> In their **ecstasy** they (the dancers) literally **stand outside**. Frequently the dance stretches beyond the immediate social milieu to some higher association with spiritual beings, who possess the dancers." [ibid. 28]. (not my emphasis).

Similarly, Bob Ernst, a performer of experimental dance theatre in California feels that

> in order to get possessed, to let a character enter your consciousness from your unconscious, you have to get what he calls 'neutral'. For just perhaps a few moments, you have to abolish the 'profane human condition'. [cited in Steinman 1986 33].

This character is an archetype which literally means "the first pattern" [ibid.41]. They are found immersed in our everyday life and in our most essential patterns of behaviour and perception. They are

> root ideas, psychic organs, figures of myth, typical states of existence, dominant fantasies that govern consciousness...the deepest patterns of psychic functioning. [Steinman quoting Neo-Jungian James Hillman 1986 41-42].

They "inform" the dancer with knowledge of the ancestral spirits who are able to divine and treat sickness and affliction in the community. The dancer becomes a shaman and "a hostage to the spirits". [Lewis 1989 45].

Ritual as theatrical performance

It is important to note that the performer's act of possession is different from the !Kung, the

shamans of ancient cults and witches' covens. In theatrical performance the performer must

maintain a dual consciousness. Louise Steinman, dance academic, believes that

> contemporary performers may also regard themselves as vessels for
> information or unconscious content, but they can never entirely forget where
> they are or become amnesiac like the Bushmen; because if their experience
> becomes completely private, they risk losing the audience's attention.
> [Steinman 1986 36].

Therefore trance, ritual and possession stand diametrically in opposition to classical academic

dance forms. Transcendence in the latter is achieved in the perfection of the execution of

"grace and clarity" and not in the execution of raising the unconscious content to

consciousness. The latter promotes self-realisation in the performer. It therefore resists the

homogenising effects of the codes of classicism.

Expressionism

Another site of resistance to classicism in dance is the use of expressionism. Here

ambivalence, reactivity, rebellion and the need to explore the inner psyche are important.

Practitioners of expressionism proceed from outer description to inner experience. As

expressionism stems from the self, the form of the dance is idiosyncratic to the author. These

idiosyncrasies resist the formalist rules laid down by classicism. The body becomes the site of

expression at an immediate level. This form of dance is created usually with the use of

improvisation.

In dance, expressionism is regarded as a counter artistic movement resisting the traditional

modes of production that are governed by classicism, the classical paradigm set up by Carlo

Blasis in his Code of Terpsichore of 1820.

New - Expressionism

The term new-expressionism is utilised to describe and categorise the dance work "Torso-

Tongue". It is coined in this manner, as it is similar to but also different from previous forms of expressionistic dance. It is therefore difficult to identify an alternative precise term to describe this work, as it is not entirely based on the principles of the early expressionists, such as the 'Ausdruckstanz' practitioner, Mary Wigman, of the 1920's in Germany.

New-expressionism does however have a few things in common with 'Ausdruckstanz'. Like 'Ausdruckstanz' it rejects the use of the classical academic style, utilises a liberated technique and pursues mysticism. Thus the personal experience of the author is expressed. The site of expression is the body of the creator. The creator, who is the dancer, is also given the role of auteur.

It is not entirely a reflection of the later expressionist's development of 'Ausdruckstanz', best exemplified by the work of Martha Graham and Anna Sokolow. A more appropriate term is needed to distinguish the difference between this form of expressionism, 'Ausdruckstanz' and formalised expressionism of the 1940s and 1950s.

This new-expressionism is closer to the expressionism of Pina Bausch, The New Dance Theatre, 'Tanztheater' or dance theatre, although this is not entirely a true reflection of this convention either. However, there are two principles that link the expressionism of "Torso-Tongue" to 'Tanztheater' and 'Bewegungstheater' or theatre of movement. Dance historians Hedvig Müller and Norbert Servos stress that, firstly, 'Tanztheater' is "best described as a theatre of experience" that "aims at an emotional involvement with the problems raised - not with the characters." [Müller and Servos 1983 13]. Secondly, the aim of this form of dance is not to develop a logical plot, but to encourage free associations with images and actions. There is a return to feeling. Direct involvement and bodily experience becomes a means of allowing the body to tell its own story. The physical experience necessary for change is more essential than intellectual insight. The repressed emotions in the body are revealed.

Thus, this form of expressionism allows for the expression of the pre-linguistic states and the notion of subjectivity and the power inherent in that subjectivity, to be revealed. It is not within the scope of this thesis to discuss this further, however the links and differences with previous expressionistic forms makes "Torso-Tongue" new-expressionist, as a feminist discourse is highlighted, and issues of homosexuality and gender inscribed on the body by body politics are more apparent and pertinent.

Improvisation as a resistant strategy

Improvisation relies heavily on intuition, the expression of an idea, thought or feeling rather than a codified and prescribed code of conduct. Improvisation "is a form of immediacy, a discipline of spontaneity and awareness." [Steinmann 1986 78]. According to Blacking, during improvisation or free dance the dancer has an innate ability to respond, organise and create to sound. Dancers also respond to given themes or emotions upon which they base their improvisation. This happens below the conscious level of awareness. [cited in Spencer 1985 10].

Intense kinaesthetic awareness and deep emotional and physical sensations are required for the improviser to initiate movements. Improvisation encourages an internal initiation of movement, "as contrasted with those imposed from the outside". [Steinmann 1986 78]. The body responds and acts from the unconscious in this manner, much like the dancer in a trance state. Risk taking and the unexpected outcome thereof, is the goal of such exercises.

It is therefore a tool used by choreographers who wish to express the emotional and sensual side of themselves. This makes their vocabulary idiosyncratic and ungovernable by codified techniques. Everyday experiences and everyday emotions are embraced by a free technique that enables the choreographer to convey and express personal issues, with a personalised signature. This strategy makes the dance works that they produce resistant.

1.5 The Body as site

Douglas is concerned with the notion that

> The social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived. The physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society. There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience so that each reinforces the categories of the other. As a result of this interaction the body itself is a highly restricted medium of expression. The forms it adopts in movement and repose express social pressures in manifold ways. [Douglas

1970 65].

Thus, "`the body' is inevitably caught up in a symbolic congruence with 'the social body' of one's society." [Polhemus 1988 22].

The `symbolic congruence' or bodily expression is learned, according to Marcel Mauss (1936), Irving Goffman (1971) and Ted Polhemus (1975). According to these cultural and social theorists, bodily expression is a culturally learned phenomenon, not biologically transferred.

In order to resist this cultural phenomenon, repressed groups will tend to find "their most effective and confident expression through the body's wider resources rather than within the enclosure of verbal language." [Benthall 1975 11]. This confirms Fiske's thesis (1989) that the body is capable of being a

> "site of resistance" where ordinary people - those who have no political power - become empowered, creating their own social identities by manipulating and reworking the oppressive body images produced by the dominant ideology. [cited in Banes 1994 64].

Such resistances on the microlevel will, according to Fiske, have further ramifications at the macrolevel. Resistance transgresses notions of homogeneity, hegemony and discipline. It enters the sphere of the popular that are constantly in a process of struggle and resistance.

Monga cites the areas of resistance found in irrational "informal texts" in a society under colonial rule:

> There is of course abundant evidence of native disaffection and dissent under colonial rule, of contestation and struggle against diverse forms of institutional and ideological domination. Inscriptions and signs of resistance are discernible in official archives and informal texts, and can be located in narrativised instances of insurrection and organised political opposition. Traces of popular disobedience can also be recuperated from unwritten symbolic and symptomatic practices in which a rejection or violation of the subject positions assigned by colonialism is registered. Here the modes of refusal are not readily accommodated in the anti-colonialist discourses written by the elite of the nationalist and liberation movements. Since they were not calculated to achieve predetermined political ends or to advance the cause of nation building, the anarchic and nihilistic energies of defiance and identity-assertion, which were

sometimes nurtured by dreams, omens and divination, and could take the form
of theatre, violated notions of rational protest. [Monga 1996 85].

In South African colonialist history, the site of the body was the "informal text". That was the site of protest. This is best exemplified by the 1976 Soweto Riots. Here the performance of resistance is highly visible and physicalised in the toyi-toyi at mass demonstrations of resistance to the dominant hegemony. It is the body that produces these "informal texts", the "unwritten symbolic" or irrational resistant practices in the Soweto Riots.

These are aspects of culture and subcultures that possess a semiotic value and a signifying practice, according to Dick Hebdige (1989), cultural theorist. These can be read as signs, "as elements in communication systems governed by semantic rules and codes." [Hebdige 1989 13]. He continues this thesis by stating that there is "an ideological dimension to every signification." [ibid.13]. These ideological dimensions are texts that are found on the body.

Reflection-theory

Reflection-theory dance historians, according to dance critic Sally Banes, advocate that dance reflects or mirrors the texts or "workings of culture, everyday life, and even government ... (These) are actively registered from above on passive bodies below". [Banes 1994 44]. Banes maintains that the "body has become a battleground". [ibid 45]. Cultural and dance theorists working from a feminist Foucauldian perspective, like Hanna and Professor Susan Leigh Foster, maintain that the emancipation of the body within certain texts is possible. They contend that within a Foucauldian perspective bodies are disciplined, moulded, and rearranged by a dominant hegemony. However, "Foucault draws attention to the irrational pull of desire. The body, for him, is a central but potentially irrational entity within discourses which are structured linguistically." [Burt 1995 45].

If we view dance within this perspective dance will be liberated and "capable of slipping out of any fixed role or `voice', entering into a flux of `endless complication and creative movement.'" [Suleiman, cited in Banes 1994 46]. The development of strategies that subvert the reflection-theory perspective will be discussed.

Feminist discourse and dance

In order to learn about the new sites of resistance inscribed on the body, Polhemus (1993) advocates that we examine dance, as it is the embodiment of a stylisation or abstraction of a particular physical culture. If we analyse the physical culture, 'the body' caught up in the 'social body', note the sites of resistance, we would glean much information about the inherent struggles against the mainstream. The body politics and issues of gender which are inscribed on the body by a dominant patriarchal hegemony or ideology, will reveal whether or not the moving body is resisting the status quo and the patriarchally dominated post colonial capitalist mind set.

If we examine alternatives to the stable ideology and alternatives to the mainstream hegemony, resistances will be revealed. Feminist discourse has opened the closed systems bound by patriarchal systems in capitalist societies. The discourse has,

> revealed the centrality of the body as a site of discourse and of social control. They have elucidated how bodies have been objectified and subjectified through a range of discourses...they have argued for a rewriting of the body on the grounds that the feminine has been devalued and repressed through the logocentric structure of language in patriarchal culture. [Thomas 1995 20].

This discourse has also liberated the body bound within racist ideology. Racism as ideology has a homogenising affect. Feminist strategies encourage heterogeneity and subvert hierarchical tendencies. This is extended onto the site of the body. The dichotomy and hierarchical relationship between the mind and body is broken down. The reflection-theory is challenged. The nexus of power shifts to multiple sites, rather than two sites, the one controlling and the other resisting or conforming. Thus, the liberated body is a site of political

debate and not a field of neutrality and acceptance.

The feminist strategy

Feminist discourse has attacked the enlightenment project and patriarchy by focusing on the non-verbal communicative abilities of the body. Since the nineteenth century the body in western theatrical dance has been associated with the feminine body. These classical dance treatises written by men reinforced the dominant ideology of gender in dance. The movements and the choice of dance steps are therefore determined by gender. They set up a hierarchy of difference between the sexes. The woman's role is portrayed as a sexual object of desire and the male as the hunter of that object, according to feminist Sue-Ellen Case (1988). The female is the object and the male, subject. Feminist Ann Kaplan maintains this is because the female or sign of "`woman' is constructed by and for 'the male gaze'." [cited in Case 1988 118]. The `male gaze' asserts that representations of women are perceived as men see them.

The `woman as sign' is a fictional construct made up from the dominant discourses in Western culture. The sign `woman' is therefore based upon the audience's, the performer's and the creator's cultural associations with the female gender. Feminists however prescribe a strategy of deconstructing the sign of `woman', in order to "distinguish biology from culture and experience from ideology." [ibid.]. The process requires that women take on the role of subject and the producer of symbolic expressions.

Women as subject

Women involved in the performing arts can become subjects rather than objects in productions. The subject in semiotics is, "that which controls the field of signs". [ibid.121]. It represents a point of view.

However, this self that is empowered with a sense of the personal pronoun "I" is now

perceived as a cultural construction and a "semiotic function". [ibid.]. The subject has in effect become a narrative at an intersection of cultural codes and practices. It is no longer perceived as the basis of experience. This challenges the dominant representations that are encoded in patriarchal discourse.

`New poetics'

The utilisation of new and alternative forms of theatrical modes will expedite these challenges. Case describes these as a 'new poetics'. These new critical models and methodologies support women's liberation from the "cultural fictions" [ibid.] of the female gender and deconstruct the valorisation of the male gender. This deconstructs the traditional systems of the representation and perception of women. Most importantly this places women in the position of the subject.

Feminist writers such as Hélène Cixous call for a rewriting of the female body. "By writing her self" women will return to the body which has been denied its expression in classical texts. [ibid.128]. By focusing on the non-verbal communicative abilities of the body, the body has been revealed as the site of `other' discourses.

According to Case the central focus in male forms is labelled phallocentric. This reflects the nature of the male's sexual physiology. However,

> (a) female form might embody her sexual mode, aligned with multiple orgasms, with no dramatic focus on ejaculation necessity to build to a single climax. The contiguous organisation would replace this ejaculatory form. [ibid.129].

The concern of this work is therefore a form without formal closure, no real sense of a beginning, middle or end. It also refuses the hierarchical organisational principles of the traditional theatrical form, tragedy. This requires a catharsis, a phallocentric theatrical mode. Classic narrative requires a disruption of equilibrium and then a resolution to coincide with the end of the story. Roland Barthes, philosopher, maintains that there is a sense of pleasure in

closure or resolution. `Bliss' or jouissance is felt when the text challenges closure, is unsettling and moves beyond "or is outside, the pleasure of the fixation of the subject-reader of the classic narrative." [cited in Kuhn 1982 17]. This breaks the linear mode of classical narrative. Ramsey Burt (1995), dance theorist, claims that this `jouissance' is a female sensibility that is marginal. `Jouissance', a desire rather than a rational intellectual discourse, breaks free from the bounds of language. This "disrupts and exposes the patriarchal order." [Burt 1995 66].

Feminist works are therefore fragmentary rather than whole, ambiguous rather than clear, elliptical rather than illustrative and interrupted rather than complete. Feminist Luce Irigaray describes this contiguity as a "`nearness', creating a form `constantly in the process of weaving itself...embracing words and, yet casting them off...'". [cited in Case 1988 129]. Another feminist Jane Gallop describes it as "`the register of touching, nearness, presence, immediacy, contact.'" [ibid.].

`Ecriture feminine'

Furthering the feminist discourse Cixous proposes that there is an 'ecriture feminine'. Burt claims that this acknowledges the physical and bodily qualities that are denied in male writing. For Julia Kristeva, French feminist, language is male and femininity cannot exist in language.

> It can be identified only through that which is subversive of, or resistant to, language - the Symbolic - and is a memory of the pre-social, pre-linguistic, bodily experience of polymorphous perversity - the pre-Symbolic. [cited in Burt 1995 66].

The irrational and pre-linguistic states are emphasised in 'ecriture feminine'. This refers to the state before the development of the ego. Kristeva calls this a "semiotic chora", that is a residue of somatic stages. This is therefore a site of opposition to language and the "law of the Father". [ibid.]. This links up with Kristeva's call for a free discourse that uses "the enigmas of the body, the dreams, secret joys, shames, hatreds of the second sex." [Moi 1986 207]. Here desire and sexuality are pitted against the rational and intellectual discourses represented by

the Symbolic.

Neo-feminist Camille Paglia (1990) refers to the pre-linguistic state as the "chthonic" realm. The Dionysian forces drive this. The "chthonic" represents the subterranean force which is found in the female body which she refers to as the "occult" which means the "hidden". She maintains that because male sexual physiology is visible, the Apollonian drive of verification that is dominated by seeing is present. Conceptualisation is therefore clear and unambiguous. All Western art is an Apollonian strategy whereby the intellect represses the chaos of nature. Woman's genitals are however hidden and therefore ambiguous, dark and concealed. This sets up the conditions of subjectivity in the female psyche and objectivity in the male. Here, the male blocks from consciousness the "long slow suck, the murk and ooze". [Paglia 1990 6]. Western science and aesthetics, according to Paglia, were developed to circumvent this chthonic realm in order to "revise this horror into imaginatively palatable form". [ibid.]. The Judeo-Christian traditions and religions, where the body is a site to be marginalised, denied and denigrated, furthered this idea.

The denigration of the body

Christianity and Western ideology were instrumental in the condemnation of the body, more especially the female body. Saint Augustine (354-430) believed that the body was an evil site "responsible for the mindless continuation of a damned humanity, through the act of intercourse." [Brown 1988 415]. Adam and Eve, according to Augustine, made their own wills independent of the will of God when their bodies touched and "the sharp **summa voluptas** of orgasm notoriously escaped their conscious control." [ibid.] (not my emphasis).

The body and dance

Expressionistic theatre dance and ritual embodies and reveals these experiences of the ineffable, non-verbal and pre-linguistic modes of the body. These forms of expression are resistant and subversive of "dominant forms of social knowledge". [Burt 1982 17].

Experimental and expressionist dance liberates ideas that are governed by words, logocentricity and cartesian logic. The body becomes a marginal site of opposition to language. Foster refers to these forms of dance as resistive to, "the body's placement within a system of power relations and its concomitant role as a locus of ideological commentary." [cited in Burt 1995 46].

Seeing masculinity differently

The cultural construction of gender options is played out in the visual imagery of dance. Burt claims that

> the idea of the body as a marginal site of opposition to language is one that is potentially useful in understanding how gender representations work in theatre dance. [Burt 1995 67].

The language of dance is therefore able to comment on sexuality and in doing so, remodel gender issues. According to Hanna, this is because of its

> motion-attracting attention, language-like qualities, multisensory assault, composite of variables that change attitudes and opinions, and accessibility and humanity. [Hanna 1988 22].

Furthermore, the sexuality inherent in dance is able to excite and lead the dancer to "altered states of consciousness". Hanna states that this can alter social action for all participants of the event. Dancers, choreographers, directors and producers are able, through the medium of dance, to "interpret, legitimate, reproduce and challenge gender and associated patterns of co-operation and conflict that order their social world." [ibid.23].

When moving images violate the expected male and female roles and their conventional expressions, both the performers and audience confront the possibility of altered life-styles. The performers and viewers therefore identify themselves, maintain or erase their own boundaries about sexuality and sex roles. Their standpoint on sexuality could be either challenged or satisfied.

Of interest to Hanna is the role of the marginalised homosexual males in the dance world. Homosexual men for instance, are creating new images of themselves on stage. This tactic facilitates the erosion of rigid sex roles. The use of androgyny, the combination of feminine and masculine qualities, eradicates the notion of either/or binary sexual orientations inherent in, for example classical ballet. They have already broken the heterosexual compact in mainstream sexual behaviour. The arts profession accepts this deviance and resistance to conventional sexual orientation. Emancipation from inflexible sex roles demands could free men to enjoy the emotional rewards conventionally found in woman's domain and free women to enter men's competitive arenas. [ibid.12]. Their dance is more emotionally expressive than mainstream dance due to a combination of their maleness with femaleness. This has resulted in the replacement of form with feeling. Their works are expressionistic rather than formalist. This challenges classical ballet pas de deux, which adequately demonstrate denial of "the sensuous materiality of the body". [Burt 1988 22].

Alternative strategies

In order to create a sensual language, some homosexual choreographers utilise alternative modes of moving to counteract the linear quality of classical dance forms.

Ralph Lemon, an American choreographer gives his male dancers movements that are not fully extended, "thus refusing to make them conform to expectations of male bravura display." [ibid. 171]. He contradicts the way the rules that dictate how male dancers should appear as dancers. His use of naturalistic gestures furthers this refusal to conform.

This alternative, or deconstructive practice, demonstrates a new politics of the body. This "radically challenges the traditional ways in which dance movement creates meanings." [ibid.163]. Previously repressed aspects of the construction of masculine identity are made

visible. The revelation of repressed conflicts have the effect of subverting norms and changing attitudes and making audiences see differently. The expression of repressed emotions alters the preconceived notions of the masculine body and asserts the possibility of alternatives to more traditional forms of dance. These choreographers have taken on the feminist treatises to guide their expressive form and to 'rewrite' the culturally defined male dancing body. This has resulted in the reversal of gender roles or the creation of unisex patterns. They are therefore considered resistant to the mainstream.

Conclusion

In conclusion then, resistance as a form of power counteracts dominant hegemonies. This is noted as occurring on three sites involved in dance performance: the Dance Factory, the artistic site and the body as site. It is important to note that these resistant sites were involved in the process of the democratisation of the socio-political arena. They were not merely a reflection of this process of transformation.

The sites expose shifts of resistance prior to and after democratisation. These shifts of resistance within the three sites are a result of the dialectical relationship of the socio-political, cultural, artistic and personal spheres. In the dance arena, this resulted in Afro-fusion, a dance form expressive of a need for commonality in a divided culture. After democratisation, Afro-fusion became a mainstream dance form and a less resistant form of dance. It has transformed itself into a mainstream form of dance that is acceptable to mainstream audiences. The socio-political ruptures which it first evoked have been translated into a pure dance form that reflects the new socio-political environment. That is a "rainbow culture", that is modern, vibrant and youthful. In this manner it is a perfect cultural vehicle for pride and confidence in a new nationalism. It therefore endorses the new dominant hegemony which revers pride in strength, control, fusion, modernity, the belief in a central vision or power source, an ancestry coloured with modern forms.

However as this new hegemony entrenches itself new sites of resistance emerge. The discourse arising out of this force during a time of socio-political transition, concerns itself with exploring the `other', the personal, the individual, the feminine side of a largely patriarchal hegemony epitomised by the new Nationalists. This expressionism reveals alternatives to the notions of control, line, form and acceptability. Expressionism insists upon rupture by certain individuals who describe the dancing body in alternative means. Experimentalism is an imperative to this form of dance. The body is portrayed as an organic form, the content

concerns itself with the irrational emotions and the unconscious. This is a breakthrough in South African dance. The warrior dance of the Zulus, and modern neo-classical dance for instance and their insistence on regimentation of perfection has at last been brought to question. It is not the only mode of dance to speak for the nation. The repressed `voices' have been liberated.

Chapter two discusses how the artistic policies of the Nationalist government, the African National Congress government and the Dance Factory furthered this shift of resistance in the arts. This reflects Bennett's "governmentalisation" of culture, currently employed to circumvent resistance and assist in the transformation of culture.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

In the international environment, the state-centric view of a nation is expressed. This tends to "dismiss the complexity and multiplicity inherent in the notion of international identity." [Lambrechts 1997 7]. What is accentuated is the hegemonic articulation of an acceptable identity presented by the state apparatus. The identification of a South African dance culture or form to represent South Africa, is therefore complex and confused as there exists a remarkable degree of diversity. The Dance Factory can address this problem in its policies, platforms and presentations of dance performances. Dance practitioners must question and probe the aesthetic, the influences and the environment in which they work and ultimately project. They need to do this in order to identify their unique voice and not one motivated by nationalist political agendas.

Artistic policies of Government need to nurture the cultural diversity and full range of dance forms that exist. They need to reconsider the notion of a single dance form that represents all South Africans. This chapter examines the policies of the ANC and the Dance Factory that entertain the notion of diversity.

2.1.   Artistic policies of the Nationalist Government (1983-1994) and of the African National Congress Government (1994–1998)

It is important to understand the impact of the apartheid laws[6] that existed in South Africa before the first democratic elections of 1994. This provides the reader with a socio-political context and understanding of resistance, both political and artistic.

I will focus on the political policies of the National Party and the ANC that affected the transformation of South African culture, set in motion a few years before Nelson Mandela's release. The transformation that took place politically after this, in the 1990s, had enormous

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[6]   "   Please see Appendix 1 for Apartheid Laws.

consequences on the arts in general. However democratisation in the arts and more specifically dance, existed well before the first democratic elections of 1994. The syncretic forms of dance and theatre of the late 1980s bear testimony to this.

Commonality

Barbara Masakela, speaking for the ANC at the 1990 National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, noted that as early as 1912, the ANC had encouraged the idea of a unitary culture. She believed that the act of nation-building would be accomplished by creating and using "common symbols and shared experiences." [Masekela 1990 7].

Jay Pather (1990), choreographer, also expressed a desire to breakdown the alienation between dancers and their identity, between performer and their community, which apartheid fostered. He wished to see a new South African dance aesthetic based on "the body in its original form, its original shape," as he believed that at "some stage of our lives we had bodies that were basically the same in their natural inclinations to move and to express." [Pather 1990 4]. He advocated a return to the unifying rituals and communal dance forms that create a sense of oneness within the community. This he believed would aid in the creation of a new society.

The establishment of the Dance Alliance in January 1990 also espoused the desire for unity. The aim of the Dance Alliance was to

> unite all those who are interested in promoting dance as a progressive expression in relation to all the people of South Africa. In order to promote this aim the Alliance commits itself to the use of dance to advance a just and democratic society. It will also strive towards the elimination of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, class or creed. [Sichel 1990 2].

However, Professor Albie Sachs in both his papers of 1991, <u>A Freedom Charter For South African Artists</u> and <u>BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL, BROWN IS BEAUTIFUL, WHITE IS BEAUTIFUL. Towards a Rainbow culture in a united South Africa</u>, recognised the degree of diversity ignored

and denigrated by the apartheid regime. It also highlighted to the bearers of the liberation struggle, that diversity be regarded, instead of the homogenising effects of commonality.

Nationalist and ANC government policies for cultural transformation and the recognition of cultural diversity

The Minister of Education, FW de Klerk, introduced the Second Reading of Culture Promotion Bill in March 1983. This Bill acknowledged that the government no longer viewed culture as being the preserve of one cultural group. The Schutte Commission of Inquiry into the promotion of the creative arts, started in 1981 and submitted in 1984, emphasised further that South African culture was heterogeneous. It recognised the

> cultural profile of the population of South Africa, with the large number of languages spoken, the different cultural accents and the appreciable differences in the knowledge of and sensitivity to art in the community. [cited in Steinberg 1994 69].

It also recommended that the government establish a National Arts Council (NAC). However De Klerk in his White Paper on the Creative Arts rejected this idea. He, together with the Commission, believed that

> the various artistic bodies should combine in an umbrella body or bodies... (and) deriving its authority from the artistic community, would be able to negotiate with the State as a truly autonomous and representative body. [de Klerk cited in Eichbaum 1986 20].

Arts administrators and artists who attended the National Arts Conference in Stellenbosch in 1988 subsequently expressed their concern about who would represent the entire arts community, encompassing all racial groups, in the proposed NAC. All committees stressed the need for the de-politicisation of the arts before this could happen.

FW de Klerk, then the State President, established the Foundation for the Creative Arts in 1990. This organisation was established to provide funds for artists and arts organisations previously excluded from government subsidies. "But it was instantly discredited by cultural activists as being little more than the covert intelligence and propaganda wing of the cultural

old-guard." [Friedman 1997 24].

By 1990 notions about South African culture began to shift. Artists, politicians and even supporters of the ANC began to respect the diversity of South African culture. The notion of respecting cultural diversity is found in all the resolutions adopted by the National Arts Plenary (NAP) of 1992, the National Arts Convention (NAC) and the National Arts Initiative (NAI) of 1993. The Education Department of the Nationalist Government funded these conferences.

The constitution of the democratically elected ANC controlled government, as well as the ANC's RDP, started in 1994, also aimed at building "a unifying culture, reflecting the diversity of our society." [ANC 1994 15]. This was emphasised by Sibusiso Bengu, Minister of Education at the Ilitha Arts Education Conference of 1995. He claimed that the ANC wanted to implement this RDP programme in order to create a national unity whilst respecting a cultural diversity.

This is also reflected in the Draft White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage. The formulation of this coherent national policy for arts, culture and heritage began in 1994. The Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG) consulted arts practitioners, held regional conferences, public hearings and a broadly representative national conference to prepare the draft. It was submitted to the Minister of the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST). In 1996 it was passed by cabinet and became The White Paper. The DACST annual report notes that

> For the first time in its history democratic principles have been brought to bear on the arts, culture and heritage in South Africa in the form of the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage. [cited in The Cultural Weapon, June 1997 9].

Through two complementary mechanisms the White Paper sets out to transform existing arts, culture and heritage institutions. Frameworks are set out to restructure the Performing Arts Councils (PACs) so that they are more representative of the nation as a whole and serve, for

the first time, the diversity of our culture. The other mechanism is the establishment of the NAC that will fund the full diversity of South African arts, culture and heritage "within an overall framework of transformation, equity and redress". [ibid.]. It was established in April 1997.

This is an independent statutory board established to allocate funding for the arts, at arm's-length from DACST and government interference. However, a clause, Section 13, gives "the director general of the DACST - in the case of appeal - to override any decision made by the NAC." [Friedman 1997 26]. Ministry spokesman Frans Basson has assured the NAC that this appeal clause will be amended so that the "principle of arm's-length independence free from government intervention will be honoured" when he steers the Bill through Parliament later this year." [ibid.].

Despite this, it is the first statutory cultural body to be established in accordance with the principles laid down by the White Paper. The Minister of DACST Dr Lionel Mtshali noted at the launch of the NAC that it "serves as a concrete example of what can be achieved in a democracy when the art community and government co-operate in establishing policies and structures which the art community has itself called for." [Friedman 1997 24]. Furthermore, the NAC chair John Kani stated that it "is the logical outcome of the struggles that were waged in the 1970s and 1980s to take control of our lives and develop our culture. " [ibid.].

Nationalism

Lastly, this newly formed nationalism of the ANC needs a brief examination. The notions of national unity and diversity encountered in their artistic policies seem to contradict each other.

The notion of nationalism is described by the <u>Oxford Dictionary</u> (1988)

> a patriotic feeling or principles or efforts (and) a movement favouring independence for a country that is controlled by or forms part of another.
> [ibid. 542].

A national identity is formed by loyalties based on common historical traditions, language and

the way of life.

In the previous Nationalist government, Afrikaner nationalist politics according to Sparks, was intensely personal, authoritarian and patriarchal. Followers developed because of personalities involved in the movement rather than ideas and philosophies. This entrenched a deep conservatism and established an infallibility in matters of doctrine.

On the other hand black nationalism since the 1940's meant

> resistance and protest movements against colonial rule, and political parties demanding independence for each colony. [Bohannan & Curtin 1988 367].

Sparks acknowledges the nonracialist outlook of mainstream black nationalism. The ANC is committed to establishing a nonracial democracy committed to a Bill of Rights constituted in 1988. This was an extension of the Freedom Charter that guaranteed recognition of the linguistic and cultural diversity. Group values and interests that are manifested in culture, religion and language were protected.

Driving the notion of a nonracial democracy is `ubuntu'. This emphasises and captures the essence of a participatory humanism.

> It is a subtle and not easily translatable concept which means broadly that each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his relationship with others and theirs in turn through a recognition of his humanity. [Sparks 1990 14].

It thus places a high value on the communal experience rather than the individualism of the West.

However any form of nationalism requires a group following, with common aspirations and desires. Hegemonies and ideologies are therefore established to maintain a status quo, a stability within the group. Any resistance to these constructs of power over culture is seen as a rupture, a deviation and therefore a threat to a commonality that binds a group of people

together.

Nationalism continues to inform the bearers of the liberation struggle. It has been criticised by intellectuals who state that, "(i)t is a modernist discourse in a post-modernist age, enforcing a uniformity where a diversity should be acknowledged and respected." [Degenaar 1994 26]. Others maintain that African states that have been colonised "need to lose the heritage left by colonialism, namely, nationalism." [Tamarkin quoting Ives Person ibid. 28]. What we should be looking for is a commonality that is a diversity, where "'(t)he nation of citizens does not derive its identity from some common ethnic and cultural properties, but rather from the **praxis** of citizens who actively exercise their civil rights' (Habermas 1992 3)." [cited in Rhoodie 1994 18]. (not my emphasis).

The idea of eclecticism within culture is more relevant and accommodates differences between the various ethnic and regional groups, "while still rejecting the negative aspects of racism." [Hauptfleisch 1992 161].

Mike Featherstone, cultural theorist, maintains that all the countries of the world are at present subject to this post-modernism that respects "diversity, variety and richness of popular and local discourses, codes and practices which resist and play-back systemicity and order." [Featherstone 1990 2]. Kato Lambrechts, a politicist for the Foundation for Global Dialogue, like many of the leading theorists believes in,

> the contingent and non-essentialist nature of nations, nationalisms and national identities. (The) multitude of variables such as history, culture, religion, language and so on can shape the identity of a nation. The decisions as to what is relevant and how it should be used in establishing the national identity almost inevitably rests with the state. [Lambrechts 1997 7].

In order to remain resistant to dominant hegemonies within a changed culture, the Dance Factory needs to be aware of the effects of nationalist strategies. However, le Sueur believes that the policies of the Dance Factory ensure that it acts autonomously of any national artistic

strategy. The examination of its policies and platforms for resistant and 'alternative' dance works provides evidence of this. Above all it liberates the dance practitioner to exercise praxis within a relatively conservative art form.

2.2. The Dance Factory - Policies and development (1990-1998)

Introduction

The Dance Factory is the only venue in South Africa that is dedicated entirely to the showcasing of dance. It developed at a time of political and cultural transformation and emerging democratisation. It is a site that embraces resistance. Its policies and structure prior to and after 1994 demonstrate its nurturance of sites of resistance.

The embrace of alternative sites of resistance is an extension of its policy of resistance. This was done in order to remain relevant in the context of an evolving culture in an era of democracy.

An historical account of the establishment of the Dance Factory

The idea of the Dance Factory was born in the late 1980's. Lucky Diale, a Black South African dancer, was the instigator, according to Dr Hagemann (1997). Diale had danced and performed for local choreographers such as Adele Blank, Robyn Orlin, Sonje Mayo and Jeannette Ginslov. Later, working in an administrative capacity he came into contact with Liesl Quarmbasch, the Head of the German Chamber of Commerce. Through this connection he met James Saunders the Artistic Director of the Tanzprojekt in Cologne, Germany. This was supported financially by the German Chamber of Commerce. James Saunders, an African American, encouraged Diale to create a similar dance venue in South Africa where a commonality could be explored and a common South African dance identity could be nurtured.

The idea was promoted further when a number of South African dance companies performed

at the <u>COME TOGETHER, DANCE TOGETHER FESTIVAL</u> in Cologne in 1989. The following choreographers presented their work at the festival: Adele Blank for *Free Flight Dance Company*, Jackie Semela and Carly Dibokoane for *Soweto Dance Theatre*. Diale and Dr Hagemann were also present. These dance practitioners realised that it was only on foreign soil that they performed together. This nurtured their belief in a venue such as the Dance Factory that would expedite a unity in a very disparate artistic and social environment.

Suzette le Sueur, previously with the Market Theatre as Marketing Manager, took over the task of making the Dance Factory become a reality. She approached Christopher Till, then the Director of Culture for the Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Chamber, for financial support. He was determined to give a home to the dance community. He believed that dance had expedited the breaking down of the Afrocentric and Eurocentric barriers of art that had been in existence in the apartheid era.

The Selborne Hall, located in the Johannesburg City Hall, was allocated to the Dance Factory. It was later moved from these premises to make way for the ANC's Gauteng legislature. Till immediately searched for and found an old disused warehouse situated in the Newtown Precinct. The Dance Factory's Executive Committee viewed these new premises, thus ensuring complete transparency in the transaction.

As part of a strategy of the RDP, The Dance Factory became part of the Urban Renewal Development Strategy. This strategy, for the development of the inner city as well as the development of the Newtown Cultural Precinct, started in 1989.

Dance, for the first time in South African history, was the catalyst for the involvement and support of local government, namely the City Council. The involvement of the City Council, instigated by dance practitioners, demonstrates how the micro-political empowerment of

cultural workers had ramifications at macro-political levels. Peter Brinson calls this Dance

Power. It enables dance practitioners to

> have power to help others. The power they need to help themselves which
> comes from national organisation. This is the political action that matters. Only
> through their own national organisation are dancers likely to win from national,
> provincial and local authorities the rightful place of dance in national life,
> national culture and national priorities. [Brinson 1993 15].

The Dance Factory's policies and strategies of resistance

Mission Statement

The mission statement of the Dance Factory is a reflection of its resistance to the previous era,

that is

> To create, equip and administer a dance centre as a means of fostering dance
> culture and developing dance audiences through classes, workshops and
> performances; and to make such facilities available in particular to those who
> have been culturally, educationally and economically disadvantaged. [le Sueur
> programme 1990].

In order to be relevant today le Sueur, Executive Director of the Dance Factory, said in an

interview:

> The Dance Factory is always trying to respond, not to be rigid...that gives a
> flexibility to respond to what is being asked for...It is not about trying to promote
> a particular thing. I want them *all* to be rubbing shoulders...the physical space
> opens people up...the level of support for each other's work is extraordinary. [le
> Sueur September 1996].

The Dance Factory is responding to the needs of dance practitioners. It resists the tendency of

mainstream theatres that make demands on the creators of dance to produce works that are

financially successful and unchallenging.

A platform for diversity

Since its inception the Dance Factory's Opening Night, Arts Alive Festivals, Alternative Nights,

Dance Classes and Workshops have demonstrated an acceptance of all dance forms across

the entire spectrum at varying levels of expertise. The Dance Factory, by doing this, is resisting

the policy of only showcasing work that is polished, or in other words, meeting the requirements of Western nineteenth century dance forms that call for a perfection of form.

The Opening night of the Dance Factory in 1992 demonstrated its policy of showcasing and supporting the diversity of dance forms. This is discussed below in more detail. The continuation of this policy was further demonstrated by two recent events in 1998. The first was the establishment of a dancer's co-operative called the Dance X-Change, controlled by the dancers and teachers participating in the co-operative. A variety of dance forms and choreographic strategies are being explored. The second was a lecture and choreographic workshop by Dr Claudia Jeschke, The development of dance in both parts of Germany after World War II. This highlighted the effects of expressionism and 'Tanztheater' on traditional classical dance. Above all it confirmed the importance of respecting 'alternative' forms of dance that are counter-hegemonic or resistant to mainstream forms of dance.

Opening Night in 1992 and beyond

The Dance Factory showcased African dance, Afro-fusion and experimental forms of dance in the 1993 Dance Factory's Arts Alive Festival. According to Sichel, this was

> another big leap into history and a benchmark for community dance and a springboard for more experimental work or performance art. An all inclusive theatre/dance tradition had become a reality for the first time. [Sichel interview 1996].

The Dance Factory captured the essence of what dance, since the mid-1980s had attempted to do. That is, it encouraged the fusion of African and Western contemporary dance, namely Afro-fusion, which had not at that time acquired a mainstream status.

The opening of the Dance Factory on 1 August 1992 revealed a resistance to exclusivity of forms. This festival of dance showcased dancers from all backgrounds. Dancers who normally

perform at street flea markets were invited to perform alongside a cross-section of the existing dance companies. Sichel calls this opening "the beginning of a great chapter in South African dance history... for the first time you didn't just see classical ballet and stuff like that, you saw mpantsula and indlamu." [ibid.]. A transition had taken place in the Selborne Hall "from being that rigid, elitist, western place where you had chamber music," to a place that reflected the true nature of South African culture. [ibid.].

The Dance Factory encouraged choreographers of African Dance to perform their work, as a means of empowering and instilling a sense of worth in their previously denigrated traditional dance forms. Amateur dance groups were afforded status by performing alongside the more established dance companies such as *Free Flight* and *Moving into Dance.*

This transition was furthered by the workshops held there. Local and international teachers from Australia, the United States of America, France and most importantly from other African countries namely, Zimbabwe and Senegal, gave dance workshops. All dancers of varying skill and stylistic background were invited to attend. This furthered the notion of dance at the Dance Factory being available to everyone and not just an elite few who practised classical forms of dance, as in the past. The African dance component placed an emphasis on local dance forms, thereby confirming its worth and importance.

This policy, still in existence today, has a two-pronged effect. Firstly, it enlightens the audiences about the diversity of our dance culture, and secondly, it gives the amateur dance groups an opportunity to witness a professional dance company in action. Access to professional events had previously been out of reach for amateur groups. Obviously this policy redresses the imbalances of resources which the past regime had installed in order to further the aims of an elite culture. The reconstruction and development of neglected cultures is still high on the Dance Factory's agenda and therefore resistant to PACs" policies of perpetuating

classical forms of dance, theatre and opera.

Other attempts at resistance

Sichel cites that the Dance Umbrella of 1990 bridged the schism between the various dance communities. Like the Dance Factory, it showcased and served as a platform for all types of local dance "with the emphasis on contemporary work and the emergence of new indigenous forms." [Sichel 1990 13].

This challenged the PACs who were still showcasing classical ballet. In order to rectify this imbalance, the Natal Performing Arts Council (NAPAC), in the 1986 and 1988 Dance Forums, showcased a broader spectrum of dance. The Dance Forums however demonstrate a superficial acceptance of resistant dance forms.

A closer examination of the 1988 programme reveals that half of the programme was devoted to ballets, none of which were locally produced. A National Folk Dance Day was planned for the various nationalities that make up South Africa. This took place, in the street outside the Natal Playhouse, not inside on the main stage. A traditional Zulu dance group was given the opportunity to perform once. Contemporary dance represented by Sonje Mayo, Robyn Orlin, Sylvia Glasser and Esther Nasser also received only one showing. A competition was organised for all the dancers, however on looking at the judges and the ballets that were to be presented, the competition must have favoured a classically ballet trained person, thus excluding many other dancers who might have had training in other forms of dance. Workshops and classes also appeared biased toward the Eurocentric classically ballet trained person. [Eichbaum 1986 5-7].

This corroborates the idea that the dance sector was a catalyst in trying to overcome the stultifying effects of apartheid by creating dance platforms for a diversity of dance forms. I do

however think that in the case of the <u>Dance Forum</u>, the attempts at uplifting and empowering all the various dance forms, was a failure. Perhaps it was because the PACs in the 1980's were at that time obliged to follow an agenda from the government in order to receive continued funding from the Department of Education. Too many deviations from a Classical Ballet paradigm would have placed NAPAC in financial jeopardy. The <u>Dance Forum</u> was however an attempt at artistic resistance within a mainstream structure.

Financial support - Micro to macropolitical ramifications

The site is also important in the economic sphere. Initially, sponsorship was sought from foreign embassies and business for the establishment of the Dance Factory. Sponsorship from the Nationalist government money was ignored. The elitist structures that previously had Nationalist government sponsorship for Eurocentric dance forms, such as classical ballet, designed for a predominantly White dance audience, were therefore challenged. Later in the 1990's, funding came from Regional and National ANC government offices. Again, this demonstrates Brinson's Dance Power at work. The dance community is now making financial demands on local government, hitherto only done by PACs.

The City Council gave the Dance Factory R40 000,00 for the first Arts Alive Festival of 1993. The budgets increased with each festival so that by 1997 the Dance Factory submitted a budget of R82 000,00 to the City Council for the festival. It received R70 000,00.

The Dance Factory received R200 000,00 from DACST, in April 1996, after making a direct application for funding. Projects like the Inner City children's dance programme "The Gift" was created with these funds. DACST allocated funds of R150 000,00 to the Dance Factory in September 1997 for the 1997/98 Budget, thereby making it a national project.

The development of Newtown is made possible by funds from the Urban Renewal

Development Strategy for which the City Council has earmarked R 20 million. [Eichbaum 1993 3]. This development of Newtown is also part of the Mayivuke Project, "a R2 billion kick-start for (the) Johannesburg CBD revamp." [Lipman 1997 12].

Le Sueur and her staff do not receive salaries from the City Council. They draw salaries from the funds allocated to the Dance Factory and rentals from dance companies utilising the studios. This is an important factor in the context of resistance. Le Sueur refuses a salary on the grounds that if she did, the city council would regulate and prescribe the forms of dance that should be performed at the Dance Factory. In this manner she is resisting the local government structures and the demands it could possibly make on her and the Dance Factory. With this independence and autonomy she feels that the Dance Factory is able to respond more effectively to the needs of dancers and creators of dance. She refuses to be dictated to by an outside force that has no deep understanding of the medium of dance and the real needs of artists and dancers.

The Developmental Programme

A unique feature of the Dance Factory's policy is the Developmental Trainee Programme of Technicians and Front of House Management. This was instituted in January 1994. It aims at developing the disadvantaged and unemployed youth from community dance and theatre groups interested in theatre management. Since 1996 the Dance Factory, with funding from First National Bank, has assisted a group of students with their final years of formal schooling. In exchange for this training, each student works several hours a week at the Dance Factory. The most promising Trainees of the past few years are now staffing the venue. Visiting international as well as local dance practitioners, remark on the high degree of professionalism the Trainees have attained.

The Trainee Administrator, Nonkululeko Thabede is also the first Black woman to be trained as

a dance administrator at the Dance Factory or at any other site. Her two year training period which began in 1996, is funded by the Standard Bank Developmental Programme. This Developmental Programme was instituted by the Standard Bank in 1994 in order to develop and train future theatre administrators, curators, theatre technicians and management from disadvantaged backgrounds. She is a Black woman and perhaps one of the few women training in dance administration. This reinforces notions of present day resistance in terms of gender equality and woman's empowerment in dance.

Other policies of resistance at the Dance Factory:

Alternative Nights

The Alternative Nights platform is described as being

> Another **Arts Alive** regular, the night that features the weird, the wonderful and the wacky. Come armed with an open mind and a sense of humour. [programme notes September 1997]. (not my emphasis).

It is ironic that the audience should "come armed" in the context of this thesis. It is rather the artist who is "armed", ready to fight for a space to convey her/his unique, personal artistic vision. Perhaps it is a prerequisite for the audience to come "armed", as the dance that is performed on this platform is experimental, according to Gerrit Schoonhoven, theatre director and audience member. [telephonic interview 1997]. Within the context of South African dance, he maintains that this is the only outlet for choreographers who are creating alternatives to mainstream choreography. The latter concerns itself with "naive cross-overs of African and Western dance forms". [ibid.]. He thinks however that the Alternative Nights has lost a certain momentum that used to exist in the 1980s when artists were making political statements. He feels that the present platform needs to be encouraged as it "opens (him) up to an inner life", that he does not experience in drama that is just "talk, talk, talk". [ibid.]. Seemingly the desire for an alternative discourse to logocentricism is being asked for.

In the context of a transformed sociopolitical climate, it is obvious that the concerns of the

creators and audiences of dance have changed. Jenkins who reviewed this particular show, called the word `alternative'

> an apt title for a programme which explored the by-ways, detours and secret culs-de-sacs of physical movement... (Furthermore) it was a case of anything goes, and that went for the audience - literally - but most of those who were there were prepared for the unexpected. [Jenkins 1997 25].

The unexpected has become synonymous with the `alternative'. The "by-ways, detours and secret culs-de-sacs" all indicate an alternative to the mainstream discourse of South African dance by choosing different modes of production and issues. However an irony is evident within this context. "Torso-Tongue" is based on ritual and on the 'Digomana', a sacred drum cult of the Mujaji or the Sotho of Southern Africa. The work is deeply embedded in the ancient cultural practice of Africans, Southern Africans, not imported Eurocentric ones, yet the work is considered "weird", and alternative, and is set apart from the mainstream on an Alternative Nights platform. At least the Dance Factory accommodates this form of work. The only other platform to do so is the Dance Umbrella. All other theatres avoid such alternative forms.

Interestingly, resistance to the word `alternative' has surfaced. Van der Westhuizen, choreographer, feels that the word `alternative' is incorrect, as it implies to audiences that the work being presented is only experimental and therefore ill prepared and badly executed. South African dance audiences, he believes, have not been sufficiently exposed to alternatives to the mainstream. He maintains that the number of choreographers practising 'experimental' or 'alternative' work are few, and those that create good 'alternative' work are even fewer. Being experimental means that the form and content is new or dealing with taboo subjects or ones that are not palatable for the general theatre or dance audience such as, issues of gender, the mystical, sexuality and death. Within the context of the South African socio-political transformation this is an appropriate course of action. More personal concerns have replaced the intensely political ones of the past.

Thus the creators of these forms have a prejudiced audience opinion to work against, at the outset. Dance audiences need to be educated and shown that 'alternative' work is as relevant as mainstream work. The artists working in this paradigm therefore are the educators, leading and finding new issues and new ways or 'alternative' modes of presentation.

What is essential to note is the fact that Alternative Nights have been regular features on the Arts Alive Dance Factory Festival for the last five years. The Dance Factory has therefore nurtured different and 'alternative' presentations of dance. It provides a much needed and deserved platform for artists who work beyond the jurisdiction of what is acceptable within the patriarchally driven dance world in South Africa. These Alternative Nights are therefore sites of resistance that will constantly push the boundaries, possibilities and artistic paradigms that are entrenched in the safer realms of the mainstream. The inclusion of the Alternative Nights programme challenges the Dance Factory to continue its resistant role in the dance culture of South Africa.

However, because `alternative' works are placed on a separate platform, a polarity is set in place. This is a modernist paradigm. A post-modernist strategy would be one that is inclusive of such `alternative' forms. A post-modernist paradigm accepts the experimental, the ruptures in dance as part of its history. There is no either/or. Post-modernist discourse accepts the fragmented nature of dance, its multiplicity of divergent forms. Perhaps the Dance Factory should be challenged on this issue.

Diversification as a tool of resistance

The Dance Factory has always encouraged a range of activities to take place in its studio and stage. For example, in 1994 it hosted auditions for scholarships to the Rambert Dance School in London. Workshops for the Dance Umbrella were also held there. It provided rehearsal space for visiting and local dancers and companies. Outreach tuition programmes in Soweto

and Thembisa were facilitated there and a two week itinerary of visits to dance schools and companies for the Directors of Mozambique's National Dance Company and School, were arranged by the Dance Factory. In 1997 it held a seminar, <u>Women in Dance</u>, the first of its kind in the history of South African dance.

As the dance interest and practice evolved and developed, encouraged by free platforms such as the Dance Umbrella, so did the Dance Factory. Both 1995 and 1996 saw an increase in community groups and the more alternative dance practitioners, using the space for performance as well as rehearsals. Le Sueur envisions that it will become part of a network of theatres, local and international, as many companies have their opening nights at the Dance Factory before moving on to more prestigious theatres or to venues overseas. This confirms Fiske's proposition that

> (p)opular culture is made by the people at the interface between the products of the culture industries and everyday life. Popular culture is made by the people, not imposed upon them; it stems from within, not from above. [Fiske 1989 25].

The Dance Factory is such an organisation. It promotes national and international dance culture stemming from the creators of dance, working in democratic processes. Each ethnic group is therefore acknowledged in the eyes of the other. Tolerance, understanding and respect of difference are nurtured.

2.3. Current policies of Transformation

Fiske (1989) maintains that culture is a living active process. It is developed from within and not imposed from without or above. Popular culture is then relevant to the immediate social situation of the people. However all popular culture is a struggle over the meanings of social interaction with the texts and orders of that culture. "Social agents" form shifts of social allegiances. They exist in a social terrain that is hard won, mainly by their refusal to cede to "the imperialism of the powerful." [Fiske 1989 46].

Popular culture has the political potential to effect redistribution between macro and micro-politics. A citizen in effect has to develop the notion of praxis. With the notion of praxis the citizen is able to derive her/his identity from a common ethnic and cultural property. It is at this micro-political conjuncture that the social conditions for further macro-political actions can effect cultural change. Tony Bennet (1993), cultural theorist, maintains that this does not call for revolutionary resistant tactics against generalised sources of cultural domination. He advocates that the agents of culture work within institutions, which are supported by the government and work on policies of transformation of culture. He calls for a

> governmentalisation of social relations - that is, the management of populations by means of specific knowledges, programmes and technologies. [Bennet 1993 70].

This is aimed at producing in a society the capacity for new forms of thought, feeling and behaviour. Alternative policies dismantle the elitism of cultural practices and connect them to the population at large wherein they function as instruments of cultural improvement. This is also a means of resisting the hegemony enforced by the state. Carol Steinberg's thesis discusses this. It advocates the means for the transformation of PACs. She argues that the PACs promotion of 19th century high art appealed to Whites only. For Black artists and audiences to feel welcome in such institutions the management of these state organs of racism must be dismantled and rebuilt. She advocates the use of the ideas of Bennett for the transformation of the state funded PACs.

Bennet claims that the definition of culture is changing. Culture is no longer seen as the manifestation or standard of achieved perfection but "a field of social management". [Bennett 1993 70]. This facilitates the "emergence of the modern relations between high and popular culture" [ibid. 71], Their difference or previous hierarchical relationship is blurred with the utilisation of the above strategies. This undermines cultural resistance to a central or "generalised source of cultural domination." [ibid. 71].

Gramsci calls for the need of "organic intellectuals", as opposed to traditional intellectuals, for this to take effect. [cited in Sillanpoa 1981 125-130]. New art or a new culture only stems from these new social relations in cultural organisations. Gramsci proposes an organised dialectic exchange between the intellectual and the popular base. The knowledge and the expertise of the intellectual would therefore be transformed into a passionate force. As a consequence the passion and the force of the subordinate classes would be transformed into consciousness and knowledge. The bonds between the material and spiritual dimensions of social life are strengthened. This provides the artist or citizen with access, equity and empowerment. Above all, this form of transformation does not require overt resistance and powerful force for liberation.

It is in the light of these ideas that I view the role of the Dance Factory. The Executive Director, le Sueur, can be seen as facilitating cultural change through dance. The dance practitioners are encouraged to develop a new ideology free from hegemonic programmes. They therefore demonstrate praxis formerly denied them under the previous regime. Through the implementation of democratic principles the dance world is capable of delivering a new view of a New South Africa. Voices that were previously stultified are now nurtured and empowered. These voices persist in uncovering the silent and repressed language of the body in its new social context.

Conclusion

Political changes and new policies instituted in government organisations need constant readjustment. The power of transformation lies in the notion of praxis, in the people's hands, not the government's. This needs to remain constantly supervised to ensure that cultural change remains at the micro-political levels of culture. Dance, because of the involvement of the body as a primary site of communication, is the perfect vehicle for such controls of cultural identity and empowerment. The recognition of a post-modern era needs to be constantly addressed. The modernist tendencies of Nationalism with which this country has been governed for the last fifty years also needs constant readjustment. The post-modern condition is here and needs to be respected. This includes a feminization of culture, feminist discourses in culture, praxis by the people, diversification in culture, multi-disciplinary culture, and multi-ethnicity.

The support of experimentation within the dance is in evidence at the Dance Factory. Its strategies, vision and mission allows and encourages alternative and destabilising sites of dance. These are given a platform in its festivals, programmes and projects thus ensuring a post-modern ethic or an acceptability of difference, otherness and diversity. The Dance Factory is a site for the transformation of dance in the face of the stronghold of mainstream dance.

The notion of the centre or essentialism is challenged in this manner and government and cultural organisations need to take cognisance of this if South Africa wishes to continue its transformation and acceptability within the global environment. The Dance Factory is a home, a conduit for the continuation of rebuilding and preserving the primary expressions of the multi-ethnic identities found in South African dance.

The following chapter will discuss in detail how this is furthered in a dance work that explores gender issues and body politics that is a strategy for furthering the argument for the return of a

discourse that breaks down the increasing polarisation of the mind and body so prevalent in mainstream dance.

CHAPTER 3

Introduction

Dance analysis enables the examination of

> the body's role in the production of narrative, in the construction of collectivity, in the articulation of the unconscious, in the generation of postcoloniality, and the economics of gender and expression, they contour new relations between history and memory, the aesthetic and the political, the social and the individual. [Foster 1996 XV].

> Wanneer ek dié sfeer bereik, konsentreer ek op my emosies en gee uiting daaraan deur te dans. As ek die emosie kwaad ervaar, dans ek die woede uit; of as ek vreeslik hartstogtelik voel, dans ek só. So kommunikeer ek met my Afrika-voorsate ... [van der Westhuizen 1998].

Chapter three is an analysis and examination of a dance work that will expose what Foster describes as the "physical concreteness and interdisciplinary connectedness." [Foster 1996 XV]. These are inherent in a dance work and a dancing body. Van der Westhuizen's work is a prime example of this "interconnectedness" that deserves examination within the dance.

Chapter three will investigate how the dancing body has been `rewritten' in a dance work performed at the Dance Factory. This `rewriting' is perhaps a new site of resistance in the context of South African dance. This new context is pertinent as we are in a new socio-political environment and new sites of resistance have surfaced in South African dance. These must be uncovered to reveal a feminist discourse that is found in resistant works. The sites of resistance are found on and through the moving body. This chapter will investigate the change of sexual orientation in dance practice.

The dance "Torso-Tongue" as a site of resistance

The following chapter will include a description and analysis of the dance work, "Torso-

Tongue" by Johan van der Westhuizen presented for the Arts Alive Festival of Dance 1997 on the Alternative Nights, at the Dance Factory. This was choreographed and danced by Johan van der Westhuizen for his newly formed *The Performing Rites Company*. Diane Sparks directed it. This work demonstrates notions of artistic resistance.

The analysis is an in-depth discussion of this choreographer's work which displays artistic resistance to the mainstream, the more traditional and acceptable notions of South African dance by being strongly ritualistic and in a new-expressionistic style. The alternative discourse that arises in and out of the performance of such a work is also discussed. This discourse includes gender-related issues, trans-sexualism, the mind-body polarity and body politics. These are salient components of the themes of resistance as they uncover new sites of resistance in a changed hegemonic framework. These new sites are indicators that as societies change new sites of resistance emerge. The hegemonic boundaries are forced to shift. The dialectic that feeds both the environment and the artist is forever present in works of art. It is the artist's job however to continue questioning the status quo. Ironically the rituals are ancient African ones. Van der Westhuizen explores the fusion of traditional African dance and ritual as a source. Afro-fusion also explored this root but with different results.

Primary source information was collated from the observation of the performance on Sunday 28 September 1997, from an interview on 11 October 1997, with the choreographer and director of the work and a review of the work. Secondary sources that aided in the analysis, include, readings on the historical, sociological, anthropological, choreographic and gender related issues associated with dance studies and research.

3.1. A description of "Torso-Tongue"

"Torso-Tongue" is symbolic of the three Lovedu or Sotho drum and rain cults. It is an eight-minute dance solo with amplified vocal percussion by Hermien de Vos. This is the only sound

that accompanies van der Westhuizen. He stands front centre stage, a single spotlight illuminating his torso. This is the only part of van der Westhuizen's body that is exposed. De Vos sits stage left, very close to him, her body half turned away from the audience. His head is covered with a mask-like piece of pink tulle. The arms are covered with long black gloves and his hips, legs and feet hidden in a long multi-layered black tulle skirt.

The vocal percussion, using sounds like "tayte te te", highlight and accentuate the undulating movements of van der Westhuizen's torso. As de Vos rhythmically makes sounds with her voice, tongue and lips, van der Westhuizen undulates his torso in tandem with the vocal percussion. No extraneous movements are added. The torso moves spasmodically and rhythmically to the vocal sounds. Different parts of the spine are engaged in response to certain rhythms and sounds. The arms are held out away from the body so as not to intrude on the undulations. These undulations are highly structured and choreographed.

His use of space is limited to the spotlight and the dynamic actions of his torso are anti-gravitational. The torso, in the spotlight, remains in a seemingly static position in space, weightless and in suspension due to the effect of the light. Jenkins notes that "all visual concentration (is) on his remarkably fluid and fluent upper body." [Jenkins 1997 25].

The emphasis is placed on non-literal movement. There is no narrative as such, with a beginning, middle or end.

3.2. Tools of analysis

The interpretation of a dance work reveals the worth and the merits of the dance. It is obviously personal and a subjective experience. However a kinetic discourse is embodied in the choreography of the work that reveals itself to the viewer, during performance. This is what the viewer 'reads' and interprets according to her/his background. The viewer's discourse and

the discourse inherent in the choreography interact and meaning is, or is not, generated. The description of the means of understanding a work is beneficial here, as the dance work is evaluated within the socio-political and artistic context of its creation.

Decoding the dance

Hagemann (1990) in his article maintains that a good starting point for decoding dance performance

> would be to examine the dance vocabulary and technique of choreographers. Technique and movement choices are not made in isolation but occur within the context of an historical and socio-cultural background...contemporary techniques carry overtones of their origins. [Hagemann 1990 4].

Furthermore in Corporealities (1996) Foster notes that dancing is

> a cultural practice that cultivates disciplined and creative bodies, as a representational practice that explores rigorously, strategies for developing bodily signification, as a cultural endeavour through which cultural change is both registered and accomplished, (and) provides a rich source for any study of embodiment...Choreography (is) a theorisation of relationships between body and self, gender, desire individuality, community and nationality...the crafting of moving bodies into a dance reflects a theoretical stance towards identity in all its registers. [Foster 1996 xiii].

Dance is therefore a meaning-filled physicality. This physicality embraces notions that the creator upholds and reveals her/his stance on feminist issues, anthropological, textual and political studies of the body. The latter includes "bodily subjection, disciplining, appropriation, colonisation, mobilisation and agency, ...gender and power." [ibid. xii]. This will bring to dance studies, according to Foster, "new stagings of dance's cultural practice." [ibid. xiii]. A physical manifestation of resistance, if there is one, is made evident.

It is with this in mind that I interpret the premier and first version "Torso-Tongue" and arrive at the decision that it is the one dance work on the Festival that is resistant and challenging to the conventional and mainstream modes of dance production.

Methodology

In order to `read' the vocabulary and produce the resultant interpretation of "Torso-Tongue" I utilised some of the tools for analysis suggested by Janet Adshead (1988). I utilised the four stages that she advocates for the analysis of a dance work. It is a structural approach. This compartmentalises the physical aspects and the theatrical or visual aspects of the performance into separate texts, thereby making it easier to `read'. When the texts that made up the components of the vocabulary and theatricality were identified, I then set about analysing how and why "Torso-Tongue" is resistant within today's mainstream artistic milieu.

The four stages for discerning the characteristics of a work according to Adshead, are firstly discerning, describing and naming the components or elements in the work. These elements are the movements, the dancers, visual environment and aural environment. Secondly discerning, describing and naming the form of the work or its structure. Thirdly recognising, describing and understanding the character, qualities, meanings and significance of the work. This is the interpretation of the work. Fourthly judging and appraising the work. This will present an evaluation of the work. This appraises the work's genre and style that embraces the societal contexts wherein it is produced. This evaluation is related to the worth, effectiveness, technical competence and interpretative abilities of the dancer or dancers and choreography.

The other methodology of analysis utilised contains a more feminist materialist approach. This, according to Carol Brown, dance scholar, enables the researcher to not only study works according to notions of individual creativity and style but also to consider "how sexual differences are constructed within dance as a cultural practice." [Brown 1983 210]. It allows the researcher to examine the cultural construction of sexuality and "how sexual identities are arrived at through their demarcation within social relations and institutional systems." [ibid.]. Above all the acknowledgement of feminism and the feminist text in dance traces the "dispersed traces of marginal experiences ..." that rupture the tradition of dance history that

"masquerades as `truth' ... through a radical reformation of knowledge. [ibid. 212]. This it does by "expanding the discourse of dance by privileging what has been previously silenced or left out." [ibid. 213]. It also investigates the processes, procedures of the choreographer, as well as the finished product.

In this manner gender relations that are normally "left out" in historical writings on dance are resituated to become key determinants in the cultural production and signification. This is exemplified in the analysis of "Torso-Tongue".

3.3. Resistant aspects of Torso-Tongue

Personal history

I have included a brief description of van der Westhuizen's personal history, as it explains his fascination with ritual and possession. It also completes the dialectic within which this creator works. This highlights how the personal informs the political, a typical feminist strategy that subverts patriarchally and hierarchically driven methods of working.

Van der Westhuizen as a youth, used to be part of the Apostolic Faith Mission. Here, from an early age, he used to 'speak in tongues', which is an irrational or pre-symbolic language. He experienced trance states, possession and spiritual journeys into the unconscious and subconscious. This was a highly emotional experience and "a right brain experience." [van der Westhuizen interview 1997].

At present he is in discussion with local sangomas in Yeoville, in order to learn about African ritual. He notes that because of urbanisation, the old rituals are changing perspective and losing their importance. He therefore practises possession and is often possessed by archetypes that he maintains will help him make tangible the esoteric and problematic areas in his life. This is therapeutic for him.

His personal dresscode is what he describes as "drag". He wears the crossed over cloths of

the sangoma and mixes in an effect of the Indian sari by draping cloths around his body. It is a

dress. He wears many beaded bracelets, necklaces and rings. This, he feels helps him

explore the feminine side of himself.

3.3.i. New-Expressionist qualities

The work is based entirely on undulations in response to a vocalised percussive score. Van

der Westhuizen finds these undulations expressive of emotions. "The undulation is where you

find the emotions. I want to externalise these emotions." [van der Westhuizen interview 1997].

He did not use his limbs or head in order to further the movement as he

> wanted the purity of the torso undulations. The arms create external shapes.
> The pelvis and the torso are intense. This is where the core or the temple of
> movement lies. Everything else becomes decorative and you are not hitting the
> movement immediately. [ibid.].

In the creation of the dance piece Van der Westhuizen is scrupulous in his choice of

movements. He does not think in terms of "steps...putting them together...working out a

sequence." [ibid.]. Rather, the choice of movement is "an issue of passion, and when I say in

terms of passion, I mean the release, of a certain emotion, or that your dance must become

the vehicle of a certain emotion." [ibid.]. His final choice is based on whether or not the found

movement is profound enough to express the feeling he needs to release in the work. There is

a direct connection between the emotion and the movement. The limbs that usually create

shapes and forms in more traditional modes of dance are not utilised. The torso literally

becomes the tongue speaking in an expressionistic or pre-symbolic language.

Van der Westhuizen's concern is the content of the message inherent in the undulations of the

spine and not the form or shape of his whole body. The viewer is left free to interpret the

movements of the torso. Barthe's state of 'bliss' or 'jouissance' is acknowledged in the process

of this interpretation.

> The effect was extraordinary, and quite hypnotic. As De Vos' tongue alternated between whimsical, playful, angry and plaintive expression, building to a kind of vocal orgasm, so the chest rippled, subsided, curved and rippled again before finally sinking to earth, seemingly exhausted. [Jenkins 1997 25].

Van der Westhuizen addresses the expressionist qualities of ecstasy, release, possession, trance, sensuality, universal emotions and anti-intellectualism in "Torso-Tongue". These expressionistic qualities in "Torso-Tongue" were previously explored by the Expressionists. Ironically the work reflects a Modernist concern with essentialism and notions of control that are evidenced in more classical and traditional forms of dance. In an interview with reporter, Ieteke Oggel, it is noted that "(hy) verseker sy medemens dat as hy in 'n trans is, hoewel heeltemal begeester, sy verstand hom nie sal toelaat om beheer oor homself te verloor nie. `Ek sal nie val of myself stamp nie. Ek dans die perfekte transdans.'" [Oggel 1998 16]. He confirms the notion of the "perfect trance dance" by maintaining that undulation is "'n gekontroleerde dans wat dui op die golfbeweging van die bolyf en uiteindelik daarvoor verantwoodelik is dat jy 'n spirituele sfeer bereik en met jou voorsake kan kommunikeer." [ibid.].

The utilisation of control and perfection of movement is present in Afro-fusion, as previously discussed. Yet "Torso-Tongue" invites a contradiction to this pattern. The contradiction lies in the inherent issues of gender and related body politics that break down the premise of it being a modernist self-referential work. The feminist strategies in the process of making the work and the discourse that arises places it in a post-modern era. Van der Westhuizen has taken an anthropological and historical journey to nurture a place for his lost Afrikaner identity, and placed it within a context of feminist post-modern discourse. The language of "Torso-Tongue" seemingly contradicts this stance, however the "voice" that surfaces, or the text that is delivered is a feminine one, told by a male body. It therefore raises the feminist concern of releasing the repressed marginalised "voices" or texts that are unacknowledged in mainstream

performance. The pre-conceived notions that are requirements for Afro-fusion are dismantled in this manner.

Thus the work reflects the strategies of feminist writers, such as 'new poetics' and 'ecriture feminine', as discussed in Chapter One. These strategies liberate the dance from prescribed and codified forms. Above all they liberate dance from patriarchally driven codes and binarisms. The dance then reveals a discourse of the pre-symbolic, the irrational and the 'other' discourses which 'ecriture feminine' encourages. The choreographer of "Torso-Tongue" acknowledges that his performance is an enactment of possession, a ritual in a theatrical context and an enactment of a possessed state. The work was choreographed however with the use of trance and ritual.

It is these aspects that make the work new-expressionistic and therefore resistant to afro-fusion, formalism and classicism, previously discussed in Chapter One, Dance as site.

3.3.ii. Altered states of consciousness

In describing the ritual upon which "Torso-Tongue" is based, van der Westhuizen notes the relation between ritual, possession and altered states of consciousness.

> The Digomana (ritual), is closely associated with the welfare of the heartbeat of the community, is the doorway to the spiritual spheres like possession, trance and ancestral singing and drumming. During possession, the spirit determines the rhythms, intensity, steps, mime and song...The movement employed in this piece, the undulation of the spine, also a Sotho movement in the fourth, third, second and first speeds, stimulates altered consciousness or trance which accesses contact with the unconscious or the Ancestors. [Dance Factory Programme September 1997].

This was again confirmed in the interview with van der Westhuizen as he stated that with hours of undulating his spine, whilst sitting or standing, he altered his state of consciousness. He feels as though

a huge amount of energy is built up in your spine, because of the undulation.
The energy which flows up into your head, because of the natural energy flow
in the body, then alters the consciousness. So it's like feeding your brain with
extra energy. [van der Westhuizen 1997].

In our logocentric Western industrialised Christian society, trance and possession is pagan, unacknowledged, anti-intellectual and socially deviant. The intellect loses control and the Dionysian forces are in charge. It is therefore artistic resistance if used in performance, as it does not meet the criteria set up for acceptable and conventional modes of dance production. The content and the process are of more importance than the form and the product. The passionate and the emotional aspects of the performance and the work are elevated in status. It thus calls into question the dominance of the Intellect, the mind, that the Western world gives precedence over the emotional, the physical and the spiritual components of human kind. The former usually shapes theatrical dance and highlights the more formalistic modes of a dance piece. However, the esoteric beliefs of the East and Africa acknowledge the fusion of opposites such as male and female, creation and destruction, mind and body, for example. Van der Westhuizen's concept of being in trance is similar to the martial arts concept of " 'mu-shin' or 'no mind', meaning no separation between mind and body." [Steinman 1986 34]. The Eastern martial art of T'ai Chi similarly achieves this unity.

3.3.iii. Ritual

"Torso-Tongue" is inspired by African ritual. It is based on the utilisation of trance and possession of Digomana, a sacred drum cult of the Mujaji who are Lovedu or Sotho. The Lovedu fertility and rain cults constitute the broader sacred drum cult.

Such cults, Vyali, Vuhwera and Gomana, are characterised by esoteric masks, mummeries, mysteries and philosophies of the Lovedu. The cults ritualise the gift of life, the seasonal changes, physical and cultural survival and procreation, genetic continuance and cultural growth. The rituals are also the affirmation of ancestral contact and communication. Gomana

affirms the symbols of their culture and stirs the soul.

> In these cults everything is stopped and postponed for intensive cultural practice dealing with Goma, song and dance, mythological figures, metaphors, messages, secrets and codes, strange tongue, riddles, symbols, ritual, vocalisation, costume and mask, mummeries and archetypes, mysticism and philosophy. Goma is something secret and wonderful...men and women make goma. Goma has a supernatural connotation. [Van der Westhuizen 1997].

These were the reasons for his research into Southern African ritual. He wants to reconstruct and adapt ancient rituals, recontextualise them for an industrialised and urban environment. By utilising the archetypes of ritual, van der Westhuizen can facilitate healing in the form of identifying a common consciousness that will unite all South Africans. Van der Westhuizen quotes psychologist Carl Jung in the interview and expresses the latter's belief and concern that Western society no longer believes in spiritual guidance from God or a Supreme Being.

> All our previous religious symbols have been exposed as being based on the superstitious. We do however still have the same need for spirituality, mysticism and sensuality. We need therefore to reconstruct our cultural and spiritual sphere by taking that which was good in the previous culture into the new culture. Because God has been exposed as a conman, we are now godless and we   need to find another god-like thing in our psyche. We cannot leave it unattended. [ibid.].

Most important to Van der Westhuizen is the collective objective. The ritual facilitates communication with the ancestors. In other words, the unconscious, which determines survival and fertility.

The mask

The masks, inspired by African ritual, aid the dancer to achieve states of trance and possession by Ancestral beings in African mythology. In "Torso-Tongue", the mask is a modern day mask made of pink tulle. It is based on the mask of the Khiudogani, the great bird of Muhale. The mask in "Torso-Tongue" is an evolutionary step in the development of African ritual in urbanised areas, according to Van der Westhuizen.

During performance the mask hinders Van der Westhuizen's view and helps him to reach the trance performance state, as he is only capable of viewing "pink bubbles" when looking through the tulle. In the context of ritual it aids Van der Westhuizen in the impersonation of an archetype that is found in the ritual. The archetype also becomes tangible for the viewer. Above all it sharpens the viewer's focus on the torso.

The drum

The drum in African ritual, according to Van der Westhuizen, is not just percussion, "it is also words...So in a way you could also see it as messages because it's words, and it's sounds and it also relates more directly to song then, or messages." [ibid.].

The use of vocal percussion is therefore a natural progression. It is based on the Digomana drums and rhythm. The score that Van der Westhuizen had written for a percussionist to play was altered and re-interpreted to become a vocal percussive score. Van der Westhuizen made up words and sounds, so that the score has a "song-like feel to it." [ibid.]. The sounds and unrecognisable words are based on messages, secrets, tones, vocalisation and mystery. This relates to the new-expressionistic elements of the work, extending the notion of Kristeva's pre-symbolic language. The drum also stimulates the passionate side of oneself, creativity and the desire to express an emotion, according to van der Westhuizen. He feels that it provokes the right brain, the seat of emotion and intuition.

The personification of archetypes

The archetypes for healing are personified by the dancer in ritual. The esoteric is made real and tangible by the dancing body. The personification of an archetype, provides a form of therapy for a psychological affliction, for example, depression, "when one's psychic energy is low" [ibid.]. The participant is able to communicate with the ancestors through the archetype, who will provide insight for the dilemma facing the afflicted person or persons. The dancer in

this case is similar to a medium through which the ancestors speak.

Van Der Westhuizen believes that there is a sense of being in control at the same time as "giving in to the sense of character" [ibid.] or archetype that the possession or ritual demands. The performer learns to control the phenomenon of possession for stage performance. Craft and technique are needed, as well the assistance of an 'outside eye' or director, to redirect any aspect of the performance that is unclear or too introverted.

In "Torso-Tongue", van der Westhuizen personifies Khiudogani or the great bird of Muhale, the Goma of the men. Hermine represents the Khirurvele or the butterfly, the goma of the women. The bird reveals secrets to the butterfly. Van der Westhuizen explains this as

> the ego, the domineering and sensual nature of the male archetype ritualised. Something like coming to terms with the male creation and procreation. The women feed and keep the bird alive. It manifests itself only in moonlight and returns to the pool when the moon is dark. This symbolises the unpredictability of unconscious forces through the unpredictable nature of the bird. This ritual is performed during periods of hardship. [ibid.].

This renewed interest in healing via African ritual and performance is resistant to the mainstream of theatrical dance performance. Resistance operates on two levels. Firstly, "Torso-Tongue", has a therapeutic value and so undermines the premise of mainstream theatrical dance in its need to entertain and revere the spectacular and the virtuosic. Secondly, it is ritual performed by a white homosexual Afrikaans male. His desire to redefine his identity in a society that has transformed itself culturally and politically is evident. Ironically, it is now the Afrikaner who needs to find her/his cultural roots and identity in a country in which the Afrikaner finds her/himself marginally represented. In the previous era the Afrikaner's identity was entrenched in South African culture, legally and culturally. Now the Afrikaner, having relinquished her/his power to the African Nationalists, is undergoing a crisis of identity. Van Der Westhuizen is therefore proceeding to find a new identity by fusing African mythology with more Western ones. He has not, as many other dance practitioners have, opted for a form of

dance that only reflects her/his culture. He has opted for a form of dance that reflects the diversity of our country, as discussed in chapter two. He has extended his interest in possession and trance and fused it with African ritual and mythology.

3.3.iv. Body politics and issues of gender

Van der Westhuizen has 'rewritten' the male body in the dance performance of "Torso-Tongue". The trans-sexual nature of the dance and visual image of the dancing body in "Torso-Tongue", reveal counter hegemonic tendencies to mainstream discourses of dance. Issues of gender representation are challenged. New strategies of movement and choreography encourage the investigation of the inherent body politics. The body as site is now a tool for discourses on gender related issues and not racial ones.

The undulating body in "Torso-Tongue" reveals a discourse on spirituality and emotions, which are feminine discourses. Both males and females perform the undulations in the original Shangaan, Xhosa and Sotho ritual. The emotions expressed by the undulating torso are non-discriminatory. Van der Westhuizen finds the transexual nature of the undulations appealing as he "can't choreograph as a man." [ibid.]. The movement utilises the "feminine centre". [ibid]. The undulating torso translates sensuality. The limbs, capable of describing lines and shapes, are extraneous to the centre of emotions. The limbs, for van der Westhuizen, are male or in other words based on masculine principles of line, "grace and clarity", where kinaesthetic energy is expansive and extrovert. In "Torso-Tongue", the torso is strong and virile yet introvert. It is associated with an emotional force and not formal arrangements.

The feminine aspect of dance is something that van der Westhuizen does not merely draw from. It is rather a need for expression.

> It's a need to feel a certain way...to appear like that...so I think I work with feminine lines and feminine movements for males. That's why I also like the skirt so much because that brings me to that...femininity. And immediately with

> costume and with mask...you just **go** there to that sphere...for that's the perfect
> combination. Trying to release something of femininity, which I relate to so well,
> but still within the man's body. The trans-sexual mode for me is normal. It
> comes back again to the anima, animus of Jung. [ibid.].

The Vyali ritual, used as a base for "Torso -Tongue", also ritualises the empowerment of women and affirms the rain queen as ancestral and cultural mother, according to van der Westhuizen. The bird, Khiudogani, personified by the men, dance for the women. Khiruruvele, the butterfly, represents the women. The butterfly teases and chases the bird. The bird acknowledges that its end is near and dies. Metaphorically the girl initiate in the ritual becomes wife of the rain queen. These transactions affirm the fertility of women and the need to nurture the male creation and procreation. The cultural power of the queens' metaphors are founded in reality and thereby affirmed.

Trans-sexuality

Trans-sexuality is a taboo subject. Not many choreographers broach the subject. Drag artists perform mostly in private clubs. Van der Westhuizen is personally striving for acceptance and `coming-out' in a public manner. He quotes Jean Genet:

> the more specifically and the more focused you live in your life, the quicker and
> the harder you get confronted with the bi-sexualness of your nature and you
> almost start losing the line between being strictly male and strictly female.
> [ibid.].

Similarly, the German Expressionists also sought sexual liberation and freedom from sexual stereotyping. Donald Gordan describes the sexual discourse of the Expressionists as encouraging "anarchic lawlessness". [Gordan 1987 26]. Sexuality suppressed in society "could be depicted in art only through indirection." [ibid.]. It was safer to ban erotic objects and accuse the Expressionists of appealing to "the lower instincts of the masses and not to their best sentiments." [ibid.]. The public celebration of sexual activity was taboo. Similarly in South Africa under Nationalist rule erotic art remained underground. However with the new political dispensation gay rights are written into the constitution and are open for public debate. This does not mean that the discourse that arises out of such dance works is necessarily

acceptable. These dance works still have a tendency to destabilise the heterosexual and patriarchal systems that govern acceptable and conservative art forms.

The utilisation of trans-sexuality in choreography destabilises the stereotypical movements usually associated or selected for male bodies. The encultured norms of gender stereotypes found in mainstream forms of dance are challenged. The dancing body in this case, becomes a tool for an `ecriture feminine'. The compartmentalisation of the binary codes that determine sexual characteristics, such as strong/weak, light/heavy, virtuosic/expressive, are questioned. These binarisms set up by logocentric systems, are eradicated or challenged.

The personal becomes political

In this new political dispensation, a new discourse is evolving, one that concerns itself with more personal issues. The body is liberated from racial classification. A more personal discourse based on the classification of gender has emerged in "Torso-Tongue".

Feminist strategies, as discussed in chapter one, have facilitated this reclassification. This liberated body is now free of hierarchies. There is an equality of body parts. The usually elevated status and domination of limbs that trace formalist patterns are replaced by a focus on the seat of emotions, the torso. Feminist discourse has liberated feminine qualities of the body, long denied by codified classical forms of dance. A new democracy in the body is revealed. Within the new social context the body has become a political tool fighting for gay rights and the recognition of personal issues that concern the immediate moving body.

3.3.v. Conclusion - An evaluation of "Torso-Tongue" as a site of resistance

A personal and original syncretic form of dance has therefore evolved. Because of its originality there are few criteria for the viewer to judge it upon. It therefore is artistically resistant, as it challenges the viewer to make it acceptable, as a piece of art dance and

performance.

Resistant works instigate questioning and open up new discourses that are 'affective' [Keliinohomoku 1979 47] to the society in which they are created. This is the way that hegemonies are infiltrated and broken down.

The dance work "Torso-Tongue" is resistant and "affective" as it is concerned with the micro political, the personal, the individual and her/his identity in a transformed society. The site, being the dancing body, is subliminally and indirectly connected in a dialectical relationship with the new socio-political construct. The "affective" [ibid.] notions of the work require that audiences redefine their definitions of dance forms in South Africa. The safe definitions of contemporary dance are challenged. Audiences will therefore need to reassess the criteria by which they describe and define a dance work that breaks certain rules and modes of production. Works that are 'resistant' require such tactics.

It is now evident that the concerns of van der Westhuizen are different to those during the years of struggle and political resistance. The dancing body is liberated from the dogmatic, homogenising and hegemonic oppressive past. Dance is presently exploring and questioning alternative issues such as gender stereotyping and sexuality, rather than racial issues and 'the struggle'. An extension of the range of form and execution manifests itself artistically in the dance work of "Torso-Tongue". A personal and idiosyncratic new-expressionist form is evolving and challenging mainstream dance audiences. The 'alternative' or 'other' dance has found its voice.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is apparent that the Dance Factory is a structure that evolved out of the political and cultural struggle and transformation of South Africa. It is the socio-political and cultural environment that fostered the development of this site. Here, the previously silenced majority was politically, culturally and personally empowered. This occurred at a time when minority groups were realising their liberation after years of resistance and political struggle against the homogenising and stultifying effects of apartheid. The establishment of a democratic cultural identity became paramount.

This empowerment generated resistance to previous forms of subjugation and a dominant foreign hegemony. Liberation in turn fostered cultural pride in the various ethnic groups' cultural activities. The Dance Factory facilitated this and fulfilled a need that existed in the dance world. It raised a repressed people from a position of denial and denigration to dignity and pride. Dance practitioners did this by exploring their cultural heritage in their dances.

The Dance Factory continues to be a conduit for this vital aspect in the reconstruction of a country previously divided by the destructive laws of apartheid. Most important of all, the state-imposed idealisation of 19th century European classical art forms have been challenged and toppled by this site of resistance. The Dance Factory is seen as empowering minority dance groups, resisting the classical ballet form, mixing a diversity of local and international dance

forms giving them equal status and by so doing challenging the dance audiences and practitioners who patronise the theatre. Classical ballet is replaced by a multiplicity of popular forms that flourished with the birth of democracy. The Dance Factory supported and nurtured this ethos throughout its development and subsequent growth. It therefore was resistant to other venues in that it provided space and time to the resistant popular dance forms such as Afro-fusion. It was guided by the groundswell that was in opposition to the previous government.

Furthermore, the recent history of the Dance Factory demonstrates its capacity to facilitate new sites of resistance. The Dance Factory's strategies of resistance prior to and after democratisation have ensured that the imposition of a state-centric hegemony has not become institutionalised. It has not nurtured a nationalistic form of dance. `Alternative' or `other' forms of dance are presented at the site. These embrace feminist and postmodern discourses that challenge patriarchal forms of dance, still so prevalent in the dance world in South Africa. These forms are important to the development of South African dance as they force the established mainstream dance forms to question their status. This places South African dance on a par with international dance. These trends were explored previously in Europe and America, at least forty years ago. We are now in a position to address these issues. Racist and political agendas are no longer such important issues to artists as South Africa is now a democratic society with laws that prohibit racial discrimination and guarantee freedom of expression.

New sites of resistance are therefore emerging. Choreographers, as "organic intellectuals", acknowledge and question the status quo. For them the personal has become political. It is at the personal site of the body that resistance and a new South African identity that is now being investigated. New strategies of subversion are practised. These reveal the personal struggle of the body in the grip of social or encultured behaviour. The conjuncture of power and resistance is found between the immediate site of the personal body and the environment in which it finds

itself. This reflects the premise of Fiske's notion and of this thesis that the body is a site of resistance. Furthermore, the Dance Factory's strategies of resistance prior to and after democratisation have ensured that the imposition of a state-centric hegemony has not become institutionalised. It has not nurtured one single form of dance, neither has it selected a form of dance to represent a new post-colonial South African identity.

The site of the Dance Factory bears testimony to a remarkable process of transformation that empowered and changed people's lives. The site nurtures the dancing body exploring alternative sites of resistance in a changed socio-political environment. The dancing body in turn reflects, rejects, accepts or challenges the cultural and socio-political environment and what it stands for within this site. The three sites operate in a symbiotic relationship, furthering the culture and development of South African dance as it dances its way to the next millennium and global acceptability.

Appendix 1

Apartheid

The government enforced several Acts to systematise and legalise apartheid. The Acts touched every aspect of life in South Africa entrenching them deeply in the psyche of each South African. I therefore present them in some detail as it important to appreciate the extent of the state's power on the individual and the resultant resistance to its domination evident in everyday life and in dance.

Apartheid Acts (1948-1970's) cited in Davenport, T.R.H. South Africa - A Modern History, Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1978.

For social apartheid the following were created:

The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (No 55 of 1949), The Immorality Amendment Act (No 21 of 1950, Section 16) prohibiting sexual intercourse between the different race groups. The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (No 49 of 1953) enforced the segregation of lifts, toilets, parks, beaches, hotels, cinemas, restaurants, theatres and so on. The Population Registration Act (No 30 of 1950) made provision for the classification and registration of people as Whites, Coloureds or Blacks.

For **residential apartheid** three Acts were created:

The Group Areas Act (No 41 of 1950), The Natives Resettlement Act (No 19 of 1954) and The Natives (Urban Areas) Amendment Act (No 16 of 1955).

For **economic apartheid** existing laws were supplemented by:

The Native Labour Act (No 47 of 1953) and The Industrial Conciliation Act (No 28 of 1956), forbade Blacks to strike, The Native Trust and Land Act (No 18 of 1936), " which enabled the government to control every aspect of the black economy.." [Louw & Kendall 1986 41]. The

Physical Planning Act (No 88 of 1967) forced industries to decentralise to borders of homelands and locations, keeping workers out of urban areas.

For **political apartheid** Black, Coloured and Indian representation in White government was abolished. Black self-government was promoted in the eight Black satellite Homelands by The Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act (No 46 of 1959).

For **cultural** apartheid certain Acts were enforced to prohibit cross-cultural interaction. The Extension of University Education Act (No 45 of 1959) and The Bantu Education Act (No 47 of 1953) ensured segregated education. A State-Aided Institutions Act of 1957 enforced segregation in libraries and places of entertainment controlled by public authorities. The Native Laws Amendment Bill of the same year prohibited Bantus attending classes, theatre performances and church services in White Group Areas. A Prohibition of Improper Interference Bill of 1966 made it illegal for a person to belong to a mixed political party or any other kind of racially mixed organisation, which could discuss or study political views.

The Publications Control Board could scrutinise and ban art and literary works, films and live entertainment that questioned in any way the authority of the state. Artists feeling threatened and under constant surveillance therefore resorted to self-censorship. The Riotous Assemblies Act controlled illegal public gatherings and The Affected Organisations Bill of 1974 empowered the state to penalise organisations that were thought to be subversive and dangerous to the security of the state.

Appendix 2

Dance review of "Torso-Tongue", Jenkins, Marilyn. <u>The Citizen,</u>

<u>Evening of Alternatives</u>**, 3 October 1997. p.25.**

Appendix 3

Excerpts of the interview with Johan van Der Westhuizen and Diane Sparks on "Torso-Tongue", 11 October 1997.

This is a direct transcription of the recorded interview.

Undulation and trance

Well basically it's a voluntary movement. It's like ballet, you lift your chest...it's a muscular control thing. And then in the first speed, what happens is a huge amount of energy is built up in your spine because of the undulation, The energy which flows up into your head, because of the natural flow in the body, undulations then alters the consciousness. So its like feeding your brain with extra energy or another word, contemporary word, would be almost like speed, feeding your brain with speed which is generated by the undulation. After a few hours your spine becomes like a supple branch, like a green thing you could just bend over. You almost don't feel your spine afterwards. Just all this wonderful energy that builds up...The purity is found in the white pipe which I seek in the trance state. This is the spiritual part of the trance state.

The inspiration for "Torso-Tongue"

I want to base the performance out of the cultural roots of the country...I don't want to make performance out of the air. I want to say that, I've taken this performance out of this root, this root is an archetype in this country. For me it's the foundation of the performance.

Ritual

Ritual is supposed to evolve. It never did in South Africa because of the struggle and cultural negligence. It's supposed to suit whatever time phrase, if its modern times, post times, this or that time, or space time, its supposed to evolve and take on the style of the time, so that you can go on ritualising. African ritual is still so strong in rural Africa because it never got the opportunity to evolve. For some people ritual has now become impossible to execute because thay have to go to their ancestral home...the strength that held African culture has been scattered...For that reconstruction I always feel that, doing these rituals, because not strongly

in the rural context, we are trying to find a contemporary way, because the archetype is still so strong. The archetype will survive ages and any style. In breaking it down and adapting things like this, one is almost approaching ritual in an alternative way as opposed to the way its always been approached in.

In dialogue with the ancestors

The dialogue is a dialogue between you and Life. Life is actually presented by someone who wears the shiyahamba costume and takes on the shiyahamba impersonation. So you see this impersonation is Life impersonated and you go into a literal dialogue with Life. What is esoteric is made tangible. Archetypes are the drive force of the world. Male, female, life, death...they are not tangible. I can't show you in my hand what the greed for power is like or what it can do...We are driven, we are manipulated - our lives get shaped through the archetypes. By wanting to deal with that that archetype, actually ritualising it, (we are) stopping time and saying we are now investigating this archetype or giving time to this archetype, in order to celebrate something or in order to come to terms with it.

Spiritual and cultural practice

People think that spirituality can only be drawn from specific religious practice. Where it's not true. Spirituality can also be drawn from cultural practice and cultural practice also sharpens us spiritually. Cultural practice, dancing, stories, to act out the archetype, the archetypes of destruction, of love, of affection, of jealousy, of all the possibilities in the human psyche. We act that out through story, dance and through mask. The artist is the voice for issues, environmental and psychological. Spirituality can't always be drawn from religious matter.

The influence of Jung

Jung said that now that so many of our previous symbols and our previous spiritual paths and previous spiritual endeavours are broken down by the fact that the community and society has evolved, the church doesn't keep so much power anymore, democracy has come and god is almost been destroyed...at the same time the human being still goes on with exactly the same need for spirituality, for mysticism, for the same need of sensuality, but now we've destroyed all

our previous religious symbols and we've exposed them as being superstitious or as not being the real thing, the same thing has happened to African culture...But Jung specifically said that now we are to reconstruct our cultural and spiritual sphere by that which was good and the things that worked against us, to let that go and to keep what was good, to reconstruct a new culture and a new spirituality, because we are in need of culture and spirituality.

Performance and ritual

The performance is not the ritual, but it's based on the ritual. People don't usually sit and watch a ritual performance. It's a participation thing. Everyone participates...So one is performing, one is presenting oneself and if one were to fall into a deep trance one would probably spoil the rest of the performance and land up in the dressing room though audience is still sitting there in the theatre. For the trance stuff I'd rather go to a disco or club and undulate and I do the whole trance thing.

Possession in his youth

I used to be possessed by the Holy Ghost and speak in strange tongues or do other people's clarification of what someone else has said, their revelation or prophesy. I now understand how ancestral possession works. It's exactly the same thing. It happens in exactly the same way. The only difference is that it's two different ideologies.

Trans-sexuality

Very often there's this kind of sensual thing in it which don't necessarily see coming from a straight male choreographer...When I think about myself as dancing and choreographing as a male, my head goes blank...but I'm still a male and I'm sure that I don't look like a female dancing. You can still see that I'm a male. I'm probably heavier and sweat more...that's why I like the skirt because it brings me to that kind of thing of femininity. And immediately with the costume and with the mask, you just go there to that sphere, that's the perfect combination - trying to release something of femininity, which I relate to so well, but still within the man's body.

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